

1. God, the source of good

SHIVARAATHRI is a very auspicious day for all. It is the fourteenth day of the lunar fortnight, when the Moon is waning and the Sun is in the sign of Aquaries. The festival is, however, related to the Moon rather than the Sun. That is the reason why it is called *Shivaraathri* (the night of Shiva). Unlike other nights, this particular night is the night consecration, of dedication, of illumination.

The mind is intimately associated with the Moon. *Chandhra* (the deity of the Moon), is the presiding deity of the mind. He loses one sixteenth of his brilliance every day after the Full Moon day and continues waning until on this night he is left with just one sixteenth of his power. The waned Moon may be taken to stand for the mind with all its vagaries and waywardness reduced after it has been conquered by *saadhana* (spiritual discipline). On this night there is just a minute part of the mind left to be conquered and that can be done by keeping vigil and dwelling on the Glow of God. The vigil that is prescribed is symbolic of the eternal vigil one has to observe, while the rite of fasting is symbolic of divesting the senses of the pleasures they crave for. The night-long *bhajan* (congregational singing of devotional songs) is significant of the life-long consciousness of the Divine Presence that every one should cultivate. The rites and vows laid down for *Shivaraathri* being absent on other nights of the year, their observance on this day comes as a reminder that they are useful.

The thoughts we indulge in, shape our nature

There are three types of men—the multi-centred, the uni-centred and the non-centred. The first group, who allow their senses, mind and intelligence to wander where they will, is a very populous group. So also is the third group, which comprises people who flit from one object to another, hop around from one thing to another in listless flippancy. For earning the concentration and single-centredness characteristic of the second group, the festival of *Shivaraathri* is very propitious. The *bhajans* and the ceaseless flow of *keerthans* (songs) and *naamasmaran* (remembering God's name) on this occasion help in the attainment of single-centredness.

You must realise that *bhajan*, *naamasmaran* and puuja (ritualistic worship) are not for pleasing or propitiating God, but for our own spiritual progress. Frequently people flatter the rich and the powerful—especially when they are in their employment or are beholden to them for some precious help—in order to induce them to shower gifts on them. But God does not shower Grace on people because they sing His praises. Nor does He come down upon them because they do not deify Him. Recitation of the Divine attributes only enables us to dwell on elevating ideals and approximate ourselves more and more to the Divinity that is our nature.

We become what we contemplate. By constant thought an ideal gets imprinted on our heart. When we fix our thoughts all the time on the evil that others do, our mind gets polluted by the evil. When, on the contrary, we fix our mind on the virtues or well-being of others, our mind is cleansed of wrong and entertains only good thoughts. No evil thought can penetrate the mind of a person wholly given to love and compassion. The thoughts we indulge in, shape our nature; along with others, they affect us too. For example when a flash is released to photograph someone, his face is lit; but so, too, to a certain extent, is the face of the photographer.

Effect of thought on mind cannot be avoided

When a municipal truck full of refuse passes by, you are affected by the bad smell even though you may be standing afar. Similarly, a thought may be momentary, it may be trivial, yet its effect on the mind cannot be avoided. It was because the ancient sages knew this important truth that: they declared: "He who knows *Brahman* becomes *Brahman*." The only way to become *Brahman* is to be ever immersed in contemplation of *Brahman*. With a lump of salt; on one's tongue, how can any one relish the sweetness of honey or fruits? With a lump of candy on the tongue, how can the taste of salt and savoury be known?

Immerse your mind in good thoughts and world will be good; soak it in bad thoughts and the world will be bad for you. So, recollect only good, think, plan and do only good, speak and act only good. Then as a result you will approximate God, the source of all good. This is the message of *Shivaraathri*.

Significance of Cosmic dance of Lord Shiva

According to numerology, the first three syllables of the word *Shivaraathri*---*shi*, *va* and *ra*---connote the numbers 5, 4 and 2, and the fourth syllable, *thri*, means 'three.' 5, 4 and 2 make one whole, one composite picture of the eleven *rudhras*. *Rudhra* means, "the one who makes man weep." The eleven *rudhras* are: the five senses of perception, the five senses of action, and the mind. These, by leading him astray in pursuit of trivial and transitory pleasures, ruin him and make him weep. But the *Aathman*, if it is sought and relied upon, sheds its rays on the eleven and makes them meaningful partners in the progress of man towards self-realisation. The rays from the *Aathman* illumine the intelligence, the illumined intelligence alerts the mind and the alerted mind gets control of the senses, making the path clear for the person to proceed through knowledge to wisdom.

Another significance of *Shivaraathri* is this: Shiva, or the *Paramapurusha* (the Eternal Absolute Person), in His desire to attract *prakrithi* (objective world), engages Himself in the *thaandava* (the Cosmic dance). The dance is a divine plan to attract the material creation, for all divine miracles like those of *Raama* (He who pleases and delights) and *Krishna* (He who attracts), are for drawing people to the Divine Presence for the purpose of correcting or cleansing them, or for confirming their faith and then leading them on to the *saadhana* (spiritual effort) of service so that they may merge in ecstasy, in the source of all *ecstasy*---*chamathkaar* (miracle) resulting in *samskaar* (transformation), leading to *paropakkaar* (helping others) and finally conferring *saakshaathkaar* (direct vision of truth).

The *thaandava* dance is so fast that fire emanates from Shiva's body because of the heat generated by activity. In order to cool Shiva and comfort him, Paarvathi, his consort, places the Ganga on his head, makes the crescent Moon rest amidst the coils, of his hair, applies cold sandalwood paste all over his body, winds round the joints of his hands and feet cold-blooded snakes, and finally, being herself the daughter of the Himaalayas (the mountains with eternal snow), she sits on his lap and becomes a part of Him. At this Shiva rises, and both *Purusha* and *Prakrithi* dance together to the immense delight of the Gods and of all creation. This happens, according to the *Puraanas* (mythological legends), on the *Shivaraathri* day.

There are no shortcuts on the spiritual path

The significance of this myth lies in the secret taught by it of pleasing the Lord and winning His Grace. What a pity that a day of such sanctifying significance is being celebrated through a routine of meaningless and even harmful pastimes. Since a vigil is laid down, some people spend the night in witnessing a series of films or in playing cards. Can a person, rolling in bed because he does not get sleep, claim that he is observing the vow of vigil? Can a stork, standing on one foot on the bank of a stream to pick up a fish and gulp it, claim that it is practising meditation? Can a person who refuses to eat his lunch because he has had a quarrel with his wife claim that he is observing a fast? There are no short cuts or tricks possible on the spiritual path.

A story of *Shivaraathri* festival at Shrishailam

Shivaraathri is celebrated in all Shiva temples, Shrishailam is a particularly famous temple of Shiva. There is a fine story told about this festival at Shrishailam. At the foot of the Shrishailam range of hills there is a village, where a boy of nine years named Baala Raamanna, attended primary school. He learned from his friends at school that their sisters and brothers-in-law were coming to their homes in order to attend the *Shivaraathri* celebrations on the Shrishailam Hills.

Raamanna came home and wanted that his mother should send his sister and brother-in-law too to the festival. His mother told him that he had no sister and, therefore, no brother-in-law. But he would not listen. He said he must have a sister and a brother-in-law like his friends. So his mother just to quieten him, said, "You have a sister and a brother-in-law, but they are in the temple on the Shrishailam. Their names are Bhramaraamba and Mallikaarjuna." She gave him the names by which Shiva and His consort are known---Bhramaraamba meaning 'bee' and Mallikaarjuna meaning the 'white jasmine.' These names are very apt, because the consort draws inspiration, instruction and wisdom from the Lord even as the bee draws its sustenance from the jasmine flowers.

When he was told that his sister was in the temple on the Shrishailam,. Raamanna insisted that he would go and invite his sister and brother-in-law to come home and stay there for some time. He wanted to take some presents for them, but his mother said that they were far too rich and that younger members of the family should not present anything to the elders. The mother sent the boy with a neighbour who was going to the temple to see the festival. She gave him some money so that he could get presents for the boy.

Raamanna hastened up the hill and rushed into the temple, crying "Sister...Brother-in-law," and fell at the feet of the idol of Bhramaraamba. He held the idol in embrace and began dragging it, wanting it to accompany him. He clasped the idol of Mallikaarjuna and would not leave it. At last the priests in the temple drove him away as a mad boy.

Shiva and His consort appear before Raamanna

Then in despair, he climbed a high rock and threatened to jump from that height unless his sister and her husband came with him. Just then he heard a loud voice from the temple "Brother-in-law!...Raamanna! Don't jump! We are coming with you..." and soon Lord Shiva and His consort presented themselves before him and accompanied him to his cottage in the valley below. The mother and son were so overwhelmed with Divine Bliss that they merged in the Divine phenomenon and were seen no more. This story has added to the sanctity of the shrine of Bhramaraamba and Mallikaarjuna at Shrishailam.

Children in those days, and elders too, had innocent minds, simple hearts, and high ideals. Nowadays cynicism and disbelief have become rampant. There is a wave of negligence and sloth sweeping over our people. For one word uttered they ascribe ten meanings to it and not one of them is correct. When a subject is mentioned, they start a series of arguments and counter arguments and in the dust that is raised, the truth is ignored. Their life is largely artificial and ideals shallow, so Divinity is beyond their reach.

Baala Raamanna had unadulterated faith, so he was able to dedicate his pure self to the Lord and reach the Goal. You must always exalt low things to a higher level by infusing them with higher meaning. Raamanna believed the stone image to be God; he did not bring God down to the level of a stone image. You may worship a picture as God, but you should not posit God as a picture. Wood, stone or mud may be assumed to be Divine, but Divinity should not be limited to wood, stone or mud.

Dual attitude must be given up

Have high ideals. Strive to elevate yourselves. Make for the Highest Goal, God. Whatever the obstacle or opposition, do not be disheartened. Give up the animal in you, stabilise yourselves in human virtues and proceed boldly towards the achievements, of Divinity. Do not waver, going today to *bhakthi* (devotion), tomorrow to sensual gratification and the day after again to *bhakthi*. When everything is successful you are all for devotion; when something goes wrong you are filled with despair; when discipline is enforced you start, holding back and when love is showered, you are foremost. This dual attitude must be given up.

The very Divine Principle which seekers strive to visualize by means of years of asceticism-and *renunciation*, *japa* (recitation of holy names) and *thapa* (penance), is before you here and now; realise the good fortune you are endowed with. I have this day, the holy day of *Shivaraathri*, granted pardon for all the errors you have fallen into knowingly or unknowingly up to this time. Have auspicious thoughts, speak auspicious words and do auspicious deeds. And as a result of this, attain the Embodiment of *Mangala* (auspiciousness), Shiva Himself.

Mahaashivaraathri, Brindhaavan, 7-3-1978

Just as there are four stages in the life of everyone---boyhood, youth, middle age and old age---there are four stages in his acquisition of jnaana (knowledge of Supreme Being), contemporaneous with these stages. Jnaana is the ripeness of the fruit; which is the consummation of a long process, from the first appearance of the flower in the tree.

The first stage is the apprentice stage: being trained by parents, teachers, elders; being led, guided, regulated, warned, reprimanded.

The second stage is the junior craftsman stage: eager to establish happiness and justice in society, eager to know the world and its worth and values.

The third is the craftsman stage: pouring out energies to reform, reconstruct, remake the human community.

The fourth stage is the master stage: realisation that the world is beyond redemption by human effort, that one can at best save oneself by trying to reform the world, that it is all His Will, His Handiwork, His World, Himself.

Sri Sathya Sai

2. Tender saplings

STUDENT Inmates! Though you have to observe a rather strict regimen of duties in this institution, you should find in your stay here a valuable opportunity to mould your lives and shape your character for the better while there is time. A sapling can be helped to grow straight, but once it becomes a tree it cannot be guided in its growth. In your childhood you were led astray because you did not know which act was right and which wrong, There was no one to guide you along the good path. You fell into bad company because no one warned you or rescued you when you had done so. No one pointed out to you the way to God and goodness. If they had, you would have quickly absorbed the advice, for the minds of children are capable of imbibing the good as well as the bad. No one around you had faith in your innate Divinity or compassion to save you from evil and guide you into good ways.

Well, forget the past. It has already elapsed. The present is the most important time for us. Hold on to truth and follow the right path now. *Sathyam vadha; dharmam chara*---speak the truth, act righteousness---say the *Vedhas* (ancient scriptures of spiritual wisdom). Do not entertain thoughts of despair or dejection. Be happy that you have this chance of rebuilding yourselves into fine boys and girls with loveable manners and behaviour.

The Name of God on your tongue will guide you

People from the *Seva Samithi* (voluntary service organization) come to you and through *bhajans* and prayer raise an atmosphere of love and mercy. They tell you of God, the *Avathaars* (divine incarnations) and saints. Have Raamakrishna and Vivekaanandha as your ideals. Follow their ideals. In this institution you are given training that will liberate you, unlike the training which you had when you were children and which put you in bondage. Absorb the lessons you are taught here to the fullest possible extent and put into practice the guidance given to you.

Do not have any ill feeling amongst yourselves. Help others when they need your help and when you can really help them. Do not think that it is enough if you just sing *bhajans* (congregational singing) when the people from the *Seva Samithi* come and join you. Sing them in your minds, silently and sincerely, when you are at work with your friends, or even alone by yourself. Just as a torch in your hand shows you the way if you are walking at night in the dark, the Name of God on your tongue will guide you through the night of ignorance in your journey of life.

Resolve to be good and loving from this moment. Do your duties gladly and well, to the satisfaction, to your well-wishers. If you feel sorry for the wrongs you did, that itself will please God and He will pardon you. If you endeavour to turn a new leaf and become better, God will shower His Grace on you. Here you are given protection and education and an opportunity to learn how to be useful sons and daughters of your great land.

Whenever an idea of hurting others or taking some one else's belongings or spreading falsehood about others enters your mind, turn to God for help. Ask Him to give you strength, for all these ideas are born of fear and cowardice, qualities which in turn come from weakness. Repeat the name of God or hum a *bhajan*, and you will find that all your bad thoughts-will flee, leaving you free from evil.

When you leave this institution, you must serve as examples for others by leading active, useful lives. This is a workshop where you have come like cars damaged through ignorance and neglect. You must leave the institution in fine running condition, rid of all your faults, and

attractive in appearance and character. Your kith and kin, your friends, the elders of your village and all who have the welfare of the country at heart, must be happy and proud to see you acquiring new skills, fine character and eagerness to serve others.

Remand Home, Hyderabad, 19-3-1978

3. New version for Gurus

THE Baala Vikaas (organizational wing for children's development) is the primary basis of the great movement to restore *dharma* (righteousness) in the world. The elders are far gone in their ways, and it is difficult to expect change in their habits and attitudes. Children have to be led into good ways of living, into simplicity, humility and discipline. The parents have to be persuaded lovingly, through the example of bright, cheerful and co-operating children from the Baala Vikas classes, to send their children also to these classes. As you know, you cannot draw children to your side if you hold a stick in your hand; you will have to hold some sweets instead. So the *Gurus* have to be embodiments of love and patience.

The ideal of the Baala Vikas is to raise a generation of boys and girls who have a clean and clear conscience. The actual syllabus is not so important as the creation of an atmosphere where noble habits and ideals can grow and fructify. The Baala Vikas pupils follow Baala Vikas discipline and curriculum only for one day in the week and attend their usual schools on the other days. So the impact of the *Guru* has got to be extra strong if it has to act as a catalyst in the process of modification of the behaviour patterns of these pupils.

Promote respectful behaviour to elders

The home too must feel the change in the child's behaviour. It may be advisable to gather the mother of the children once a month, or even more frequently, and give them guidelines on child care and on the higher ideals of family and social life. You can suggest to them ways and means of following up the work of the Baala Vikas in proper upbringing of children, while allowing freedom to these children at home. While allowing them due freedom, they should nevertheless hold harmful tendencies in check. They should promote respectful behaviour to elders in the family. They should be careful how they themselves behave in the presence of children, for youngsters learn a lot by emulation. A spirit of understanding and sympathy has to pervade the home. This can be emphasized with the mothers at these gatherings. This would be a necessary supplement to the Baala Vikas. The homes in which the Baala Vikas children grow, as indeed all homes, have to be clean and with vibrations free from hatred, envy, greed, spite and hypocrisy. The food that the child takes in has to be *saathwik* (pure).

Between the age of two and five the child's mind is profoundly affected by the behaviour of those nearest it, so the parents must take care to set a good example.

Workers, office-bearers, *Gurus* and Seva Dhal (Service Crops) members of the Sathya Sai Organisation all over the world, all must remember that they are subject to the scrutiny of the public, wherever they are and whatever they do. They must be free from the habits and practices which they recommend others to give up. The *Gurus* should not leave their own children out of the Baala Vikas class; they should not lose their temper; they should keep their emotions under control and not exhibit depression, dejection or a wavering Will. The quality of work is more important than the quantity, so they should not undertake to do more than what they can render satisfactorily. Let their own conscience be the judge: if they feel that they have discharged their duty sufficiently to the children or to society, then they may rest content.

Solve the problems with discrimination and love

Of course the environmental conditions for the propagation of spiritual ideals such as simple living, spiritual search and loving service, are lacking. *Gurus* have to deal with the children of

families that are often not already devotees of Sai or of any other form of Divinity. Sometimes the husbands of *Gurus* may discourage the dedicated fervour with which the work is undertaken. But even as it is, I know that great success has been achieved in spreading the Baala Vikas movement in the country. There is, however, still much more scope of expansion of this work, especially in the slum areas and in the villages.

There are also other problems of all sorts. Solve them with discrimination and deep love. Meet these problems with a desire to serve the children better and they will be overcome easily. Gradually you will realise that the Baala Vikas is devised not merely for the education of the children but also of the *Gurus*. The Baala Vikas chores are bound to elevate and sublimate the thoughts and emotions of the *Gurus* far better than any other *saadhana* (spiritual discipline) can. Remember that as *Gurus*, you too have a *Guru* guiding you and overseeing your *seva* (service). So you too are pupils, and you too learn the lessons of equality, equanimity and selfless love while acting as *Gurus*.

Saints & seers of all lands are equally great

In the Baala Vikas classes you must try to have children from various faiths, so that friendship between them can grow into understanding, and the understanding into love. Do not talk about differences between religions in the beginning; rather stress the obvious similarities, so that the tender minds in your charge are not confused. Tell your pupils stories from the scriptures of all religions so that they can realise that the saints and seers of all lands are equally good and great,

Let the children realise that prayer is universal and that prayer in any language addressed to any Name reaches the same God. Let them understand that God can be invoked through a picture or an idol to fulfil man's sincere desire, provided it is helpful to others as well as to oneself. Love can bind all children together for they have not yet learned to hate. Love can, similarly, unite all mankind, provided man is cured of greed, envy, desire, and attachment. The *Guru* should bring into his pupil's way the common factor of good advice about human conduct contained in the scriptures of all religions.

The *Vedhas* teach that man should adore and worship God in gratitude for His benedictions. The Bible teaches: that he should pray for peace and practise charity. The Quran would have man show mercy to the suffering and to surrender his will to the All High. The Buddhist texts teach the lesson of detachment and sense-control. The Zendavesta exhorts man to get rid of evil propensities and shine in his own innate glory. The *Guru* has to imbibe all these qualities and then teach them to his pupils by precept and example.

Let your heart be not hardened by hatred

More than all else, the *Guru* must be equipped with *sahana* (tolerance) and a calm and quiet temper. He should be prepared to meet, without being ruffled, the buffetings of the environment. When some one inquires whether you have a calm temper, do not get enraged. Some people get angrier and angrier when they are asked this. Even when you have to speak harshly to a child or parent because all other means of bringing a point home have failed, let your heart be soft, let it not be hardened by prejudice or hatred.

You must equip yourself for this task of-seva (service) by some individual *saadhana* done daily with sincerity and regularity. The *Pranava* (primeval sound OM) recital is one form of such spiritual effort. It is laid down at Prashaanthi Nilayam that the early dawn recital of Om should

be done twenty one times. This number is not arbitrarily fixed; it has a significance of its own. We have the five *karmendhriyas* (senses of action) and the five *jnaanendhriyas* (senses of perception); we have also *praanas* (the five vital energies or airs) to sustain us. Then we have the five *koshas* (sheaths), enclosing the Divine Spark that is the Reality. These total up to twenty. Hence the recitation of *Om* twenty one times purifies and clarifies all these twenty components and makes man the twenty-first entity, ready for the final merger with Reality.

The *Jeevathathwam* (life-principle) merges with *Parathathwam* (the Supreme Reality). *The jeevathathwam* may be pictured as a rider on the twenty-headed horse. Finally, you end the *Pranava* recital with the recital of '*shaanthy*' three times. That completes the process of clarification and purification. The first call for *shaanthy* (peace chant) is for the purity of the *aadhibhouthik* (body) part of the Self. The second call is for the purity of the *aadhidhaivik* (the mind). The third is for the purification of the *aadhyathmik* (the spirit). This *Pranava* recital will tone you up, calm all agitations in the mind and quicken the downpour of Grace.

***Om* must be recited with deliberation**

Om is the primeval sound, the sound caused by the vibrations of creation through the Emergent Will of the formless and attributeless (the *Niraakaara*, *Nirguna Brahman*), and is referred to as *Sabdhabrahman* (divine transcendental sound). It is a composite of the sounds of 'A' 'U' and 'M.' Just as G, O and D, taken together is pronounced 'God,' (not 'jeeodee') so too the letters A, U and M are uttered as '*OM*.' 'A' emanates from the gullet, U from the tongue lying in the interior of the mouth and M from the lips. But when *Om* is uttered, the sound emanates from the region of the navel.

Om must be recited slowly and with deliberation. The sound must be like an aircraft, first approaching from a distance to the spot where you are and then flying away again into the distance (soft at first, but gradually becoming louder and louder and then slowly relapsing into silence, this silence after the experience being as significant as the *Pranava*). 'U' is the zenith, the *Kailaash* (abode of God), reached by the sound in its adoration. 'A' is the initial naadir, and 'M,' the final.

In the *Sri Chakra*, the mystic figure in which the *Paraashakthi* (the Cosmic energy principle, and the deity presiding over it) is invoked and installed, *Om* is the very centre, and around it are all the other symbols placed. Man too must do this installation. *Om* is the real life-principle of every *manthra* (sacred formulae), of every man (symbolically speaking). *Manthra* is what saves man, man being but the *maha* (mind), with which he can meditate on the *manthra*.

You can have this *Pranava saadhana* (practice of the transcendental sound) by watching the breath as it goes in and out, and listening in silence to the *Soham* ('so'---the 'silent' sound audible when the breath goes in and, 'ham'---the 'silent' sound audible when it goes out). You have to ponder over the meaning of *Soham* (I am That). What are you? You are That; you are a Spark of the Divine. You are not the body, senses, mind, intelligence, etc., with which you now identify yourselves. You are God, only caught in 'deluding yourselves that you are bound by this body.

Saadhana of this sort is a must for all Sai workers for that alone can give them *shaanthy* and the other most valuable gift, *prema* (love). It will change their vision and enable them to witness Unity where formerly they were confounded by diversity---diversity of language, religion, nationality, creed, colour and caste. Baala Vikas can be best served only after cultivating this

new vision. So both the *Gurus* and the pupils should decide to practise spiritual *saadhana* faithfully, and consider the Baala Vikas work too as a part of it.

Baala Vikas Gurus Training Camp, 6-6-1978

4. At every level of consciousness

It is the bounden duty of man in this life, as also in later lives, to know and experience the basic cause of the Universe and all the love and sweetness it evokes in him. When that is done, man can have uninhibited bliss. All his misery is due to separation from that Source of all. He is *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being, Awareness, Bliss Absolute)swaruupa (embodiment) and he must become aware of this fact so that he may be 'happy. If he believes that he is not *Sath*, but a lesser principle, subject to decline, decay and death, he will be haunted by fear and uncertainty. If he thinks that he is not *Chith*, he will be caught in doubt and dialectics and will wander on the devious paths of delusion. If he assumes that he is not *Aanandha*, he will be struck by every passing gust of disappointment and be subject to sorrow on every trivial defeat. The basic cause of the Universe is *Sath-Chith-Aanandha*, and since man too is a spark of the same first cause, he too is made of the same components.

The Original Will wished all this to be manifested. He who is the embodiment of that Will has to be adored and remembered in gratitude, for we are all expressions of that same Will. He is the One that deserves our love and homage. The *gopees* (cowherd girls) and *gopaalas* (cowherd boys), though they were not learned in spiritual lore or philosophic discipline, knew that Krishna was the visible embodiment of that Will and therefore poured their love at His Lotus Feet.

Man is Truth, his consciousness is Truth

The bubble rises from the water, floats on water bursts and finally merges in the water itself. The bubble is a temporary phase of water with a temporary name and a temporary form. If it should feel that being light and bright, it is separate from water, the idea is a delusion born of ignorance. So, too, with man. Man is *Aathman* (soul), lives as *Aathman* (divine self) and merges in *Aathman* (Infinite Self). Anything conceived besides *Aathman* is false.

The fear and anxiety, the grief and pain, the defeat and distress of man's earthly existence---these are the result of his identification with falsehood. Man is truth, his consciousness is truth. So he ought to proceed from one truth to another, from one facet of truth to another brighter and clearer one. No one really moves from untruth to truth. What is called untruth is only partial truth, or dulled truth or clouded truth. The ultimate goal is the uncovering of Truth.

The mind is like a boulder which the intellect transforms into an image, even as a sculptor does. If the intellect allows the senses to dictate the design, the boulder will be shaped into a horrid idol. If, however, the senses are sublimated by the spirit, the image wrought by the intellect will be simply adorable. One must have the mind fully co-operating in the spiritual discipline and not obstructing its progress at every step. Liberation is the goal and the mind must help the pilgrim at every stage of his journey. Mind should not admit any activity that is contrary to *dharma* (righteousness) or injurious to spiritual progress.

Women preserve the culture of the country

The *gopees* had trained their minds to help and promote spiritual discipline and so their minds never wavered or strayed into wrong paths. They stuck to Krishna---Krishna the Friend, the Kinsman, the Comrade, the Companion, the Lover and the Loved One. When Krishna was told by His friends and companions that the food packets that they had brought from their homes did not suffice to allay their hunger, He advised them to go a little way into the forest and ask food of the Braahmana priests who were performing a huge *yaaga* (sacrifice) there. But when they did

so, the priests would not even speak to them for their ceremonial purity would be undone by conversing with people born of lower castes! Besides, the *yaaga* was not yet finished and the valedictory offering to the fire had not been made, so how could they even think of handing out food to others before they had eaten themselves?

When the boys returned with long faces indicating their failure to get food, Krishna asked them to go again, by-pass the men and ask the women instead. Krishna assured them that they would return happy and with large quantities of eatables. The boys found the women engaged in the kitchen. When they told them that Krishna had sent them to get some food, they left the kitchen and hurried to Krishna with huge quantities of the delicious food which had been prepared for the big feast ahead. Their hearts cried at the thought of Krishna in urgent need of food. They had heard of the Divine *Leelas* (miracles) of Krishna which revealed His *Avatharhood* (nature of Divine Incarnation), such as the destruction of the demonic force sent by His wicked uncle Kamsa to slay Him. The priests peeped into the kitchen when the *yaaga* was over and found the vessels empty and the women gone to the presence of Krishna and His companions.

Every Indian has four mothers to be adored

Women preserve the culture of this country with greater tenacity and faith. They keep men on the moral path and inspire them to follow spiritual discipline. Their hearts are tender and full of compassion for the hungry and the distressed. That is why in this land women are adored and revered. Elders quote the *Shaasthras* (spiritual texts) which say that the home where the floor is soaked by the tears of a woman can never see peace or prosperity. Sri Raamakrishna Paramahansa took great care to see that Saarahamani Devi did not take his simple jokes and ridicules too much to heart, for then she might shed tears.

We honour the land where we are born as our 'mother country,' the language we learn on our mother's lap as 'mother tongue' and the Universal ancient scripture that teaches us morality as *VedhaMaatha* (*Mother-Vedha*). In this way every Indian has four mothers, including the mother who gave birth to him. According to Indian culture, all these have to be adored as Divine.

Cultivate non-violence, fortitude, equanimity

In order to live up to the high standards, of morality which Indian culture exhorts, you must cultivate love, non-violence, fortitude and equanimity. The last three guard and foster the first, the love that you go out to cultivate. Many people have succeeded, with the help of the latter three qualities, to get their minds established in Universal love, but a large number of *saadhakas* (spiritual aspirants) give up the ascent midway because they lose confidence in their true selves. They do not believe in God who is the Embodiment of Love and is their real sustenance. The first faint whisper of doubt disheartens them and they slide back into a life of sensual satisfactions. *Saadhana* alone can steel such people to forge ahead on the spiritual path.

The wise are buoyed up by the bliss of their genuine awareness; the seekers and aspirants have their urges satisfied by the experiences of people in whom they have faith. The atheists hang on, by the slim thread of reason, to the beliefs they have once entertained. If they had faith in their own selves, they would have inferred that their selves derive strength and joy only from the Overself or God.

Those who deny God or the Supreme Will or the First Cause, can give no really satisfactory justification for their stand; nor can those who assert that there is God. Both have to rely on their

own experience. After all how can sweetness be denied by one who refuses to taste sugar? How can one be convinced that sugar is sweet until one tastes it? We have to feel the great marvel of energy manipulating both the minutest atom and cell and the vastest, most distant star. How else can we understand this Omnipresence and Omnipotence except by accepting God as the Architect of the Cosmos?

You must have heard some people saying that no living person can be adored as God, even though the *shruthis* (revealed sacred texts) declare, '*Dhaivam manusha roopena*' (God appears in the human form). Perhaps they can revere only a corpse! Not *Shivam* (God) but *shavam* (corpse) is what they wish to revere.

Truth is God, Love is God, Dharma is God

Many people fight shy of truth for they are afraid of facing the truth about themselves and others. The *Vedhas* declare, '*sathyam vadha*' (speak the truth), but these people have become so accustomed to expediency and temporary profit that they cannot stand the full dazzle of truth. Nor is the path of *dharma* (righteousness) pleasant to them. They are used to byelanes rather than the straight highway of *dharma*. The *Vedhas* (ancient revealed sacred scriptures) say '*dharmam chara*' (walk on the path of virtue), but for people used to crookedness, how can *dharma* be pleasant? Thus people repeat like parrots the two *Vedhic* dicta mentioned above, but they do not feel the need to observe them in actual life. In reality, Truth is God; Love is God; *Dharma* is God. The *gopees* and *gopaalas* saw in Krishna the Embodiment of Truth, Love and *Dharma*. What He said was truth; what He was, was Love; what He did was *dharma*. They were so immersed in Krishna consciousness that they saw, everywhere and in everything, nothing but Krishna. Krishna for them did not exist as a separate entity in the home of Nandha; He was right in their own consciousness, at all levels of it. These *gopees* and *gopaalas* were true *bhaktas* (devotees) indeed.

Summer Camp, 6-6-1978

You know there is a rule here that you should come with empty hands, without even the traditional offerings of pathram, pushpam, phalam, thoyam (leaf, flower, fruit and water).

Come with clean hands, hands that supplicate, not supply; hands that proclaim that they have renounced attachment to rishes; then, I fill them with Grace.

I must say that I accept certain things before giving you that Grace: I demand and take Sathya, Dharma, Shaanthi and Prema (I seek the gifts of truth, virtue, peace and love.)

I draw you to Me and then re-form and re-shape you. I am a kind of smith who repairs broken, leaky, damaged hardware. I repair broken hearts and fragile minds, warped intellects, feeble resolutions and fading faith.

Sri Sathya Sai

5. Madhura bhakthi

THE Yamuna bank: calmness.....charm... inspiration thrill. The cool breeze brought soft and sweet strains of Divine music from the Flute of Krishna to the ear. Raadha came down from the high sand dune towards the waterline, with a big pot on her hip. Half way through she stopped short, for she heard her name wafted on the wind from where Krishna stood, 'Raadha, Raama.' With eyes wide open she looked on all the four sides. No one was to be seen anywhere. And no habitation around. Krishna was ever thus.

Raadha went off in a faint and fell down, the pot still in the fold of her arm. Then she suddenly awoke to the Reality: "There is no place where You are not," she said in her heart, addressing Krishna. "The call surely came from You, none else could be so soft. and sweet, so sincere and compelling. But let me ask just for one boon of You. You made us all act our roles; we played our parts as best as we could. You urged us to laugh and to weep, and enjoyed both to your heart's content. I have had enough. Please, please let me go back to where I belong. I addressed myself in desire and in disappointment, in anger and anticipation, in anxiety and aspiration. I fed myself with sensual thrills---melodious sound, smooth touch, ambrosial taste, bewitching sight, and bewildering fragrance. I had on my ankles the jingle of illusion. I met both the applause and the jeering of the world. When I sang, delusion marked time in accompaniment. The *thaamasik* (quality of inertia) and *raajasik* (quality of passion) encouraged me to dance with their background melody. Now my limbs fall. I am sick of the whole affair. May the play end. Please, please agree to this my prayer."

Raadha and Krishna were indivisible

But Krishna did not agree. He approached nearer and nearer. The Lord is a clear mirror wherein the pure heart is reflected clear. Raadha was His image, the embodiment of His ecstasy. Raadha was the *Aahlaadini Shakthi* (Gladdening Power) of Krishna, and so the two were inseparable, indivisible. That is why Krishna called out Raadha, Raadha, when she made her appearance on the Yamuna bank.

Raadha continued, "This is the best chance for me to lay the gem of my devotion at Thy Feet. Alas, it is still uncut and dull. I was misled for so long into the belief that the world is only sweet, but it is bitter as well. I have had enough. I am, as You know, *prakrithi dhaara* (uninterrupted flow of objective world), called Raadha. So I am burdened with three *gunas* (qualities)---the *sathwa*, *rajas* and *thamas* (goodness, passionate and dullness). Since *Prakrithi* (Nature) is feminine, I too, perforce am feminine."

Prakrithi is feminine and so its representative, Raadha, is also a *sthree* (woman). The Samskrith word *sthree* has three consonants - sa, *tha* and *ra*. These consonants signify the three *gunas* in that order - sa meaning *sathwa guna* (pure and good), *tha* meaning *thamo guna* (dull and ignorant qualities) and *ra* meaning *rajo guna* (passionate and aggressive qualities). Women have *sathwa guna* in ample measure. They are by nature helpful, tender, compassionate, humble and trustful. Next, they have also a good measure of *thamo guna*. They are timid, shy and unenterprising. It is good that women are such. They have been endowed by nature with only a small measure of *rajo guna*. Of course, this is only the general truth; there may be exceptions where the *rajo guna* predominates and the *thamo guna* recedes into the background. *Rajo guna* make women aggressively bold, adventurous and desirous of freedom from restraint. The day *rajo guna* is accepted as a mark of womanhood will mark the beginning of the end of feminity.

A woman is the first teacher of her children

Man has only one home, but a woman has two homes to guard from ill fame---the home where she was born and brought up and the home where she marries. When she breaks all rules and runs unbridled into freedom, she becomes dangerous to the reputation and good name of both families---that of her parents and that of her parents-in-law. Indian culture and spiritual traditions have always awarded a high place to women, since upon her rested the strength of the entire social fabric. She is a companion and guide of her husband and the first teacher of her children---an example for their social attitudes, a model for their speech and a guardian of their health and mental happiness. She is called the ardhagini (half body) of the husband. There are many temples where God is worshipped as *ardhanaareeshwara* (half woman and half man)---the right half being male and the left half female. The honour and glory of a country is held to be in the hands of the woman.

The wife can veritably make the home a temple

Whenever a religious rite is performed or the Gods or Goddesses propitiated by some ritual, the wife must sit by the side of the husband or else the rite or ritual is ineffectual. This is the high status given to the wedded woman in the Indian religious scriptures. No charitable gift can be valid without the wife's assent. Of course, she has no authority to perform these rites by herself, and so she is called *abala* (one without strength or power). The power implied here is "spiritual power over rites." Unfortunately, the use of this word has become so widespread that women themselves have come to believe that they are fundamentally weak and powerless in all fields. This is a big mistake; women are not weak, only authorisation to perform rituals is denied.

When Raama decided on performing the *Ashwamedha yaaga* (horse sacrifice), the objection was raised that Seetha was in exile in the forest, and so without his spouse he was not entitled to perform the *yaaga*. Some sages thought that a golden idol of the absent wife could be had by the side of the principal officiator, and so a golden idol of Seetha was made and placed in position by the side of Raama before the *yajna* (sacrificial rite) began. *Abala* does not mean lack of physical or mental strength. The wife can veritably make the home of her husband a temple, a school, a council-chamber or a hermitage.

Six streams of bhakthi that flow towards God

Raadha lived the life of an ideal woman in accordance with the standards set by the *Sanaathana Dharma* (Eternal Universal Religion) and kept her thoughts fixed all the time on the Lord in pure, unremitting devotion, and so she secured the bliss of merging with Him. This is the type of *bhakthi* (devotion) referred to in the scriptures as "*madhura bhakthi*" (mellifluous devotion). There are six streams of *bhakthi*, all flowing towards the Lord and characteristic of six different types of spiritual attitudes. They are *shaantha*, *sakhya*, *dhaasya*, *vaathsalya*, *anuraaga* and *madhura*.

Madhura is the highest of the six, since it gives the maximum bliss. Milk is curdled and churned, and butter produced and clarified into ghee. Ghee is the end, the final stage. So, too, *madhura bhakthi* is the last stage in the experience of merging in the Lord. The journey ends and the feet stop when the goal is reached. When the *madhura* (sweet) experience is achieved, there is nowhere else to go to, nothing more to do. The totality of God is experienced in *madhura bhakthi*, His Poorna (full) aspect, His *Prema* (love) aspect.

In *shaantha bhakthi* (calm devotion), the aspirant practises equanimity and considers all that happens to him as a gift of the Grace of God. Therefore he is unaffected by success or failure; he is ever grateful for whatever God grants him. In *saakhya bhakthi* (friendly devotion), the aspirant takes God as his constant counsellor, confidante, companion and mate. He feels the constant Presence of the Lord and is never unaware of Him. In *dhaasya bhakthi* (servitude of devotion), the aspirant feels that he is the servant, the instrument of the Lord, and revels in the role that God gives him on the stage of life. In *vaathsalya bhakthi* (devotion of parental love), the aspirant loves the Lord as the mother loves her child---with tenderness, anxiety, compassion and vigilance. In *anuraaga bhakthi* (devotion of deep affection), the aspirant is deeply attached to the Manifestation of the Lord, to all emanations of Divinity, and he is highly pleased when he gets a chance to serve them.

Since man has, as his essential characteristic, the quality of love, he has only to foster it and attend to it so that he might love the Lord to the fullest, by loving the Lord's Creation as much as the Lord Himself. Then the tree of life will yield the sweet fruit of *madhura bhakthi* (intimate loving devotion). The fruit will have the bitter skin of I-ness and My-ness, which has to be removed. Certain egoistic desires and attributes might persist as 'seeds' which, too, have to be removed before the sweet pulp of love is offered to the Lord. When Raadha said that she had the vesture of desire and anger, she meant that she was unaffected by them. When she said that she was wearing the five elements contacted by the five senses in five distinct ways---sight, smell, taste, touch and sound---as a 'garland' round her neck, she meant that she was not contaminated by their contact. Naturally, the Lord knew that she was completely dedicated to Divinity, that hers was *madhura bhakthi*, that her *prema* had no blemish. So He granted the final consummation of *bhakthi* to Raadha.

Summer Course, 9-6-1978

6. The teacher and his task

The Gurus, versed in yoga in ages past,

Shed all fascination for the physical,

All dependence on desire.

The Gurus, all through the centuries,

Lead such lives and lead others too!

EDUCATION has the responsibility of rendering every field of life fruitful and beneficial. It has a duty to the nation to make people skilful and upright. Unfortunately the educational institutions of today are following a contrary path. Man alone, among living beings, has the capacity to recognise the Divinity in himself and in all else, the sacredness of his mission and the capacity to realise his manhood, which implies detachment, renunciation, virtuous conduct and disciplined behaviour. But these qualities are not developed to any significant extent by our education today.

We now believe that the acquisition of knowledge is for the acquisition of wealth. But this is not right. True education is really related to the very consummation of life. It has to do with the goal of life more than the means of living. It is only through education and more education that we can instil into the mind of man the sacred ideals of human life.

Education is intended for the fulfilment of life

The cow yields milk only for feeding its calf. The calf after having its full, jumps about in joy and feels strong and happy. But we take hold of the milk intended for the calf and sustain ourselves with the strength it gives. So, also, education which is intended for the fulfilment of life is misused by us for the 'fill-fillment' of comfortable living. What we should do is to consider 'fill-fillment' as secondary and fulfilment as the primary purpose of education.

What we are today teaching and learning in schools cannot be considered *Bhaaratheeya* education. Though our present system of education, is extolled as national education, it is in fact anti-national. It sometimes leads to the impoverishment of families because they have to sell even their property to meet the expenses of the children. And what is the net gain? By education a young man gains a degree which is only another name for the bowl used for begging for jobs! Indian education should ideally emphasize self-reliance and independent living. It should confer on the student the courage to stand up against injustice, indiscipline, immorality and falsehood. It should grant steady faith in the *Aathman* (divinity) as the reality of man. These principles which should underlie Indian education are, to speak the truth, being gravely neglected by us.

Our ancient education gave scope for the exercise of the Divine qualities in man. India became celebrated for her culture because in the *gurukulas* (hermitages) of ancient times, great teachers taught these ideals to their pupils, having already realised them in their own lives. Today much of the reform in our educational system is going to bring down the quality of the teachers.

Teachers must make efforts to live uprightly

The profession of a teacher is the most responsible one in every country. If the teacher strays from the path of truth, the entire society will suffer. So you must make every effort to live your life uprightly. You have in your charge, looking up to you for guidance, children so innocent that they have no knowledge yet of the world and its ways. It is only when the teacher himself is

wedded to discipline and observes good habits that his pupils will be able to shape themselves into ideal individuals and citizens.

When the teacher falls a victim to bad habits, undesirable manners, bad company and evil behaviour, the children too will naturally be drawn into evil ways. Thus the teacher has to bear the responsibility of promoting the welfare of the world or bringing the world down to disaster. Of course even today there are some teachers who follow the ancient ideals. Indian culture is, even today, flesh and green only because there are in the country some teachers filled with holy feelings and sacred ideals.

In truth, teachers who got the chance to attend this camp are fortunate. From the vast expanse of Andhra Pradesh where we have thousands of teachers working in schools, you alone---about six hundred of you---have been selected to attend this camp. And you have been assigned the duty of moulding the children of your schools into ideal pupils.

***Rishikuls* have disappeared today**

Every village school is to be transformed into a *gurukula* and every teacher into a *rishi* (sage) who will lead the children along the material, moral, ethical and spiritual paths, until they become ideal citizens of India. You too belong to the line of the ancient *rishis*, because you have been chosen for this task. What has happened today is the disappearance of the *rishi* from the *rishikul* (abode of sage), so that it has become the miserable '*shkul*' or school!

Each religion teaches man the righteous path;

He has only to know it, and march along.

If the vision is straight, what can division do?

Listen to this truth, O child of India!

You should not give room for any doubt and discussion on religious matters. You must recognize the truth that can reconcile and bring together all religions without distinction. Teach the children this truth and instil love and harmony-in the tender minds of boys and girls. They are now lovely creepers who depend on you and your care for their proper growth and blossoming.

The holy undertaking has been started by the Chief Minister and the Minister for Education. They have planted the sapling. Your teachers are entrusted with the duty of tending it and making it grow into a fine tree which will offer its flowers and fruits to the world. You must help the flower of peace to blossom and the fruit of spiritual equanimity to be shared by all mankind. In fact you are not merely teachers at your own schools, but are teachers of the human race.

Therefore you have to cultivate in your own heart the spirit of sacrifice, the virtues of charity and the awareness of Divinity. Then only do you become entitled to cultivate these in the hearts of the children. But unfortunately these principles of Indian education are absent in schools today. You must try your best to reshape the system and make it really Indian. Of course in the initial stages you will find this task very difficult and exhausting, but be assured that as you proceed you will find your task more and more easy.

Students must lead lives of service & sacrifice

In the coming days we will take up each subject and the possibilities and implications of teaching it. Out of these discussions will emerge resolutions and programmes which we can all consider

later. During these ten days, each day will be devoted to the consideration of one aspect of spiritual and cultural education: How to develop the attitude of love among the children? How to make them recognise the kinship that unites all mankind? How to implant in their minds feelings against caste distinctions, regional differences and religious prejudices? How to bring out the Splendour of Divinity that is the core of humanity?---These topics have to be given special attention.

Among the students of today there is little trace of moral and spiritual consciousness and the desire to judge what is right and what is wrong, India is an ancient nursery of *yoga* and home of renunciation. The students of this land should not waste their lives in seeking material comfort. They must lead lives of service and sacrifice. We must resolve to guide the students in this direction. It is indeed a matter of pride that for the first time such an attempt on such a large scale is being made in Andhra Pradesh, through an institution established under the auspices of the Government. Remember that mere attendance at this camp cannot bring much profit. Your teachers have to play a really diligent role in making this experiment a success.

To-day humanness in man is absent

In schools we have teachers who teach history or geography or mathematics. The geography teacher opens out a map and points to some country and explains how people live there. The mathematics teacher writes on the black board: $13+3+3-9$. The history teacher relates the story of a kingdom. But the drill teacher has to stand before the lined-up pupils and himself demonstrate what they should do while he counts one, two, three, four, etc. Every teacher, like the drill teacher, has to do what he says. He must demonstrate in his own life, the truth and validity of what he advises the pupils to do.

For example, he punishes them for smoking, beedies and cigarettes. But when he is himself addicted to smoking, what authority has he to advise others against it? By this type of hypocrisy the teacher loses all respect in the eyes of his pupils. If, however, you observe the rules you impose and then try to put them in practise, your advise is certain to be followed. When can you reach this stage? It is possible only when you become at least embodiments of humanness and when you recognise what the essential human qualities are.

The thought that arises in the mind, the word that is formed on the tongue and the act performed by the hand---when these three form stages of the same process, they indicate humanness. Nowadays man *appears* to be man, but his humanness is absent, partly because he thinks one way, speaks another way and acts a third way. Speak what you think, do what you speak; that is the sign of true manhood. So you first act according to your own advice. Bring about consonance between your thought, word and deed, and then guide the children. Otherwise you, as teachers, cannot cut much ice with them.

Pupils in schools must have a strong foundation

Through the centuries India has nursed many religions, creeds and sects. But the essence of all *Shaasthras* (spiritual sciences) is that in every being there exists the Divine. The teaching of this essence is very necessary today. As the Minister for Education said just now, the foundation of an edifice has to be very strong. Even a small house requires a foundation. For a tree to grow, the roots have to be strong indeed. Without roots the tree will collapse with the first gust of wind. A house without a foundation will also fall down in a heap. Similarly, pupils in schools must have,

for their satisfactory progress in life, a strong foundation. And what is a strong foundation? Moral, ethical and spiritual knowledge and experience are the best foundation.

But there is no use simply talking about foundation. When are we to build on it? We are all the time discussing only the plan. This present movement for *Abhyudhayas* (Progressive Primary Schools) is only the foundation. High schools would be the walls, and colleges the roof. All the three have to be planned at the same time. They are going to complement one another. Today we are laying the foundation, but that is not the end. The building has to be erected. The sapling is planted but it still has to be watered, manured and carefully tended.

To be born as a man is the highest fortune of *jeeva* (individual being). So you must make the best use of this rare chance. You must practise in daily life what the *Aathman* (inner conscience) urges you to do. When this is done, the villagers will also be charged with spiritual adventure through their children, and the entire Andhra Pradesh will vibrate with a new enthusiasm. I desire that you should make all efforts in this direction. I wish you would take a vow in this regard for, believe Me, there is no sacrifice higher than this, no *yoga* nobler than this, no offering holier to God than this.

Give, and you gain. Grasp, and you lose

The children you claim to be yours are *kaamaputhras* (born out of lust), but the children who come to you for education are *premaputhras* (drawn to you by your love). In truth, more than your physical children, these children have a right to your love. So decide to make sacrifices for their sake. *Thyaaga* is the real *yoga*. Give, and you gain. *Bhoga* (enjoyment) results in *roga* (disease). Grasp, and you lose. Recognise the truth of these beliefs. Of course there are many among you who intellectually do recognise their validity. But so far you have had no opportunity to translate these beliefs into action.

In the Geetha, Krishna tells Arjuna, "Be an Instrument, O *Savyasachi* (skilled bow man)!" The present plan has become instrumental in bringing you all here and allowing you to share *aanandha* (divine bliss). This *Abhyudhaya* (development) scheme has brought us together and built a bridge between humanity and Divinity. Without this bridge of love, the journey from there to here and from here to there would be impossible.

Life is granted to spend in *karma* as duty

Embodiments of Love! I wish very much that you should fill your hearts with love and lead the children under your care along the path of Indian ideals. For this you have to form study groups in order to collect and codify your suggestions. You must analyse and examine the principles underlying the *Abhyudhaya* scheme and store enough of ideas during these ten days to help you to plan things for the next ten months. Time is most important. This body is given to us in order to use it efficiently every minute of its existence. Work has been visualized in all its details so that every moment of the assigned time can be made worthwhile by carrying out the selfless work of implementing the given scheme. Human life has been granted to us in order to spend it in *karma* (action), as duty. In fact time is to be considered Divine, and adored as such. God is described as *Kaalakaala* (He who is the Lord of Time), *Kaalaatheetha* (He who is beyond time) and *Kaala thathva bodhaka* (He who teaches the principle of time).

So do not waste precious time in wandering about; outside the camp, imagining that you have come here to somehow spend ten days at Brindhaavan. Participate for your share in the seminars

and in the study groups. Place before others your doubts and try to get them resolved. Spend your time in the company of others, not in gossip but in fruitful discussion. Even after you go to your village, take the children out for social service once or twice a week and help them to discard laziness. Laziness produces rust which in time turns man to dust.

If man wishes to be happy and healthy, the first exercise he must do is to remove from his mind every bad thought, feeling and habit. What is the next step? He must welcome good thoughts, good feelings and good habits. These exercises can be started even from childhood. Removing the bad and substituting it with the good has to be done by you as a teacher for your students. You must be vigilant to prevent the children from being spoiled by the evils of injustice, violence, immorality and falsehood. This is the '*thapas*' (penance) imposed on you as your duty. These ten days you must collect enough courage and inspiration to undertake this *thapas*. You need not go in for any other spiritual exercise. Dedicate all your skill, strength and scholarship to this great *yajna* (sacrificial rite). Dedicated *karma* is the *yajna*. Let this *yajna* of selfless discharge of work become the practice all over this land.

Bliss can be got only by dedicated work

The bliss does not come out of books, nor can it be bought for any sum. It can be got only by dedicated work. When you complete this training and go back, through you, three to four thousand teachers can get inspiration every year. This 'scheme helps you as an individual and also society at large.

After training, many continue to remain unemployed. But *udhyoga* (job) is not so important. What is important is *yoga* (divine communion). Without *yoga* how can *udhyoga* yield happiness? Everyone, from the watchman at the gate to the Prime Minister in the capital, is interested in *udhyoga*. But real *udhyoga* has its base in *yoga*, which harmonizes our psyche, enables us to stick to truth and keeps us on the path of *dharma* (righteousness).

"Books are packed with learned stuff.

Brains are stuffed with only dust."

You must get and impart education that would mould you into holy, full and free Divine beings.

The fool has mastered all knowledge.

He struts about as a scholar of repute.

Yet he knows not even who he is,

And he dare not shed a single vice!

His reputation comes from disputation,

But his scholarship leaks from many a hole.

He studies and studies until he dies,

But he still knows not how not to diet

Whatever one learns or does not learn, one must, after being born as man, learn about the *Aathman* (divinity), for that alone can confer bliss and immortality.

Resolve today to sacrifice everything you have for the sake of the pure-hearted children who rely on you for guidance. So long as you are caught in the coils of monetary considerations and so

long as you think that such benefit alone can make you happy, you will continue to be as you are. But you can gain *aanandha* the very day you decide on dedicated service. Whether you get or do not get the comforts you desire, you should pay attention to the task for which you have come and cultivate the means for realizing the *Aathman*.

Teachers' Training Camp, Brindhaavan, 25-7-1978

7. Teaching is a saadhana

THESE days India is fast advancing in the field of science and technology. No wonder there are many who lay excessive faith by the conclusions of the physical sciences and ridicule the science of the spirit. These science-minded people would answer the question, 'Who are you?' by saying "I am a body which contains about 10 gallons of water, 1 gallon of lime, lead enough to make 9,000 pencils, phosphorus enough to make 11,000 matches and as much iron as there is in a nail two inches long." All this stuff would seem to cost only about a hundred rupees, but actually even if you spend ten million rupees, you cannot make a human body. For, as spiritualists would put it, the human body has arisen out of Divine Will, it is alive on account of Divine Power and it is able to act as a result of Divine Grace.

Man must realize the immensity of the play of the Divine Will which manifests Itself in such abundant variety. But what does science say of this Will? It only declares that we should not believe things that we do not see. The Divine Will is beyond our power to see, so It cannot be testified to be real! This attitude is not correct. Take this kerchief which I drop from my hand. It falls to the ground instead of going up in the air. We attribute this to the gravitational pull even though we do not see the pull.

The mind is only a bundle of desires

Today man is found of accumulating information by studying books. He likes to indulge in argument and explanation. He can analyse matter and talk along about it. But in the field of the spirit, study, experiment and analysis do not take you a long way. What is required is inner experience resulting from actual practice. When we have before us a plateful of eatables, of what use is it to simply recite the names of the different items? What is needed to benefit from their goodness is to eat them. So also for cognizing the Divine, the mind needs to be used, it being the instrument that can either bind or liberate.

But when we use the instrument called mind, we must know all about it. Science would testify that the nature of the mind depends upon the food we consume. The gross material of food we excrete, but the more subtle part is used by our system to feed the intelligence and the most subtle part becomes the mind. In *Vedhaanthic* parlance we can illustrate this by an example: "What have I in my hand?"---"A piece of cloth." "What does the cloth contain?"---"Yarn." "Where did the yarn come from?"---"From cotton." First cotton, than yarn and, finally, cloth---the names and forms are different, but the basic material is the same. Without the more basic cotton and yarn, we cannot have cloth. So also without food, we cannot have mind to exercise discrimination, mind to exercise preferences and judge do's and don'ts. When every yarn is pulled out, the cloth becomes non-existent. So also when there are no do's and don'ts, the mind cannot exist. For the mind is only a bundle of desires, it is no real entity, it has no power of its own.

Thoughts of 'I and mine' result in bondage

Take another example. In whichever direction a camera is turned while its film is exposed, the resultant picture will be of the things in that direction. It; all depends on the turn of the lens. Similarly, the mind reflects the nature of things that we are attracted by. When some one blames us we get into fury and behave madly. When some one praises us we leap with joy and think well of the person who does so. In either case the reason is our emotional perturbation. We must

understand the secrets of the mind and the ways in which it plays with us. We must learn to be unruffled and steady, whether we are praised or blamed.

Another little example. When the mind is turned towards God or goodness, it becomes human. If it is turned towards evil thoughts and wicked egoism, it becomes demonic. When we turn the key to the right, it opens the lock; when we turn it to the left, it fastens it. The same key does the two opposite operations, according to the direction of turning. If mind is turned towards good thoughts, it establishes detachment. Turned towards thoughts of 'I' and 'mine' it causes attachment. Attachment means bondage; detachment, liberation.

In Telugu we have fifty letters and each letter has its special form, name and sound. The pronunciation of each letter has to be learnt from those who know it. Similarly we may have a heap of flowers and a length of thread, but some one has to string them into a garland. We may have a lamp with oil and a wick, but some one must light it to make it glow. We may have gems in plenty and all the gold that is necessary, but without a jeweller they cannot be turned into an ornament. Similarly man has in his body bones, muscles, blood, brain, etc., but there must be some power which can make them all work in concert. That is possible only for God to do.

How one God can have many names & forms

The sages and seers who have from time to time investigated the nature of God from the ancient past to modern times, have discovered that "there is only one God and that He is known by various names and say forms." '*Ekam Sath, viprah bahudha vadhanthi*', say the *Vedhas* (revealed ancient sacred scriptures). How can the One have so many names and forms? Well, don't we prepare sweets with various names and shapes, though they all have sugar and taste sweet because of it? When this fact of the One supporting all names and forms is firmly believed in, there is no more scope for delusion.

To recognise this Unity one needs training, though to be deluded by diversity one doesn't need any. For grass to grow rankly no effort on our part is needed, but if grain is to be harvested, the field must be ploughed, weeded, watered, manured and fenced. So also to get a harvest of virtue, intense *saadhana* (spiritual discipline) is needed, though no such effort is necessary to contract vices. Man has to struggle hard in order to attain the higher Stages of spiritual development. He has to overcome many hurdles and put up with many difficulties and disappointments.

Man can change his nature by disciplined effort

Man alone can rise through effort to higher stages of spiritual evolution. No other animal can do so. Animal tamers of the circus can train a tiger to perform various tricks, but they cannot change its nature. They cannot make it live on grass and completely deprive it of meat. But man is different. His nature can be changed by means of his own disciplined effort. He can control, by his will, the 'evil thoughts and ideas that arise in his mind. This is why birth 'as a human being is considered a rare gift.

Man is indeed the highest among living beings. The *Vedhas* proclaim four great truths about man: "Thou art That" (*Thath thwam asi*); "The Highest Wisdom is You" (*Prajnaanam Brahman*); "This You is Brahman" (*Ayam Aathma Brahman*); "I am Brahman" (*Aham Brahmaasmi*). How are we to prove the correctness of the assertion, "Thou art That"? Suppose there is a boulder on a hill. A sculptor spots it there and carves out of it a beautiful idol of Krishna which is installed in a temple and adored ceremonially with every prescribed rite. The

flaked pieces of the same boulder are 'lying about in heaps on the hill at the site where the sculptor chiselled the idol. These flakes are worthless---no temple is built to install any one of them as an idol, for they have undergone no transformation. Yet the flakes declare, "We are That: We are the same as that Idol there," though they have been discarded by the sculptor.

All is stone---we build with stone, we worship stone, we break stone with metal. Square stones are building blocks, fiat ones are used as steps and round ones are carved into figures. Stone is the substance and we use it according to its shape and structure. We can similarly recognise the Divinity that is latent in man. We imagine that the eye sees and the tongue eats but, in truth, the eye does not see, nor does the tongue eat. It is the Divine Will within us that operates every one of the senses. For example, at the moment you are all supposed to be sitting in the *Kalyanamantap* of Brindhaavan listening to Me, but some of you are thinking about your family back in your village and not listening to Me at all. My words fall on your ears, but your minds are not here.

We have to check up our faith off and on

What is the place of the mind with respect to the other faculties of man? Consider our body to be a car designed by God and having the four wheels *dharma*, *artha*, *kaama* and *moksha* (duty, wealth, desire and liberation). The car has two lights in the eyes. It has a loud horn, the mouth. It is equipped with a steering wheel, the mind, and a switch, the intellect. The four wheels outside are managed by the steering wheel within. The car travels in society along the road of life. The wheels have to be properly filled with the air of faith. We have to check up the faith off and on. If it is more in one wheel or less in another, it will spell danger. There must be a balance between the four goals in man's life.

Only a volunteer can grow into a leader

We have to cultivate some qualities and destroy others. We must do this with an eye to becoming eligible for *seva* (voluntary service). We are born into this world for carrying on *seva*. In this context, I intend to give you some advice. But teaching is primarily an act of *seva* along with which you have to practise a little renunciation. When you return to the schools in your charge you will have to exert yourselves more than hitherto, and so you will feel like asking for more pay. It is not wrong to do so. But let Me tell you that whether you ask it or not and whether you get it or not, you must take up this task in the spirit of *seva*. Only a *sevak* (volunteer) can grow into a *naayak* (leader); serve, and thereby gain the position of a leader. Only a *kimkara* can become a *Shankara*---only a good servant can become a great master.

During our lives we have to accept help rendered by many thousands. We have to pay back this debt by helping at least as many people as we can. With a genuine keenness or readiness to serve others, you can be happy in any group or community. Derive bliss through *seva* that is not done with any desire to get something in return. When you get a chance to help someone, rejoice at your good fortune. The very eagerness to serve others will endow you with the power and skill necessary for the required service.

Today we regard it derogatory to 'serve.' We ridicule those who wish to serve others. But in service is great worth. Service helps us uproot the egotism that burdens us. Egotism is an evil that brings downfall in its trail. We all know the ultimate fate of the seemingly high and mighty demons like Hiranyaaksha, Hiranyakashipu, Raavana, and Kumbhakarana. These people had undergone severe ascetic discipline and thus earned many skills and powers, but they were

ruined by the ego. The ego brings about the fall of man. When egoism is absent, the *Aathman* shines in its native splendour. The *Aathman* is bliss, it is beauty and wisdom, but we allow It to be tarnished by the ego. Engage in humble service and egotism will fade away.

Life is like a football ground and each one of you a ball. Your good qualities like truth, righteousness, peace and love are on one side, and bad qualities like attachment, pride and hatred on the other. Both sides kick the ball and try to score a goal. The poor ball must suffer these kicks so long as it is bloated with the air of egoism in it. But once the air is let out, the kicks also stop.

Is the 'I', this body or mind or intellect?

We must investigate what is meant by "I." When I ask your name you say, "Raamanna, Lakshmayya, Venkanna, Krishnamurthy," etc. When you are asked who this Raamanna or Lakshmayya is, you raise your hands and say, "I, I." I ask a number of people and use a number of names, but the answer is always 'I.' Where does this 'I' come from? It is found in everyone. Has this 'I' got a form? Is it this body or mind or intellect or consciousness? It is not any of these. The 'I' is not this body.

When I say my kerchief I imply that I am different from the kerchief. I say my table or my chair, because I am not the table or the chair. Now, if we have this 'I' in everyone, it must be the same in everyone. It is the One among the many. $1 + 1 + 1 + 1$ is equal to 4. But $I + I + I + I$ is equal to only 'I' for, the 'I' is, the same in everyone. To recognise this is to truly know one's real identity, the One, the *Aathman*. Without this knowledge, life is a waste.

Keep a balance between pleasure and pain

My dear students and teachers! You might have understood a little of My truth or you might not have, but if you grasp the truth of what I say, you will be free from anxiety and fear. Believe Me or disbelieve Me, it does not matter. I must reveal to you the Truth.

The castles and towers you see in dreams

They melt into nothing when you open your eyes.

I am now talking to you and you are all hearing Me. You look at Me with your eyes. You feel all this to be true. Certain things are happening to you, and to you this appears to be real and no dream. Later you proceed 'to the canteen, eat your dinner and go to bed. Then you experience a dream in which you are talking to someone in your village. While you dream, the thing is very real, but when you wake up it turns out to be unreal and the waking stage seems to be real. But both are dreams---one, a night dream and the other, a day dream. During both dreams you are present and you experience the events. So you alone are real; the rest is a mixture of true and false. Understand this and keep a balance between pleasure and pain, joy and grief.

You may think that Swaami keeps a balanced mind because unlike you He has no responsibilities. But remember, teaching in this college and various other kinds of work are going on in an ideal manner only because I am directing the show. You think that Sai Baba is comfortably sleeping in the *mandhir* (temple). Do you know where I find happiness? I am happy when I am with you. That is the reason why I declare "My life is My message." I am constantly engaged in some work or another at all hours. I do not get attached to anything nor do I need to detach myself from anything. I am ever in full *Aanandha* (divine bliss). Why? Because what happens must happen. Pleasure is an interval between two pains. Joy can never be derived from

joy. It can come only from pain and sorrow. If a person is always in an airconditioned room, he can never know what coolness means. He has to go, at least once, into the hot sun to realize the value of airconditioning. No lamp can glow brightly in daylight. Night alone can reveal its value.

All the dualities are part of Nature

Many people come to Me wailing, "Swaami! We are in great grief; we are suffering from deep anxiety." When I hear these words I know what is happening to them. I never had the experience of either grief or anxiety. I know that these are but dream experiences. They are not real. Some persons may praise you, others may blame you: both are in fact unreal.

When a well is sunk, the soil that is dug out becomes a mound by its side. Some pay attention to the pit, others to the mound. I consider both with indifference. The soil that was the well has now become the soil that is the mound. This is the eternal see-saw. The Sun sets in West when the Moon rises in the East. These dualities are part of Nature. So long as you are here, try to practise equanimity.

Embodiments of Love! Man has become prey to several bad habits, willingly or unwillingly, which are injurious to his health. It is rightly said that health is the first requisite for realising any one or all of the four *purusharthas* (supreme goals of life). But these bad habits will weaken him and rob him of his honourable status in society. On account of his being enslaved by them, he cannot discharge his duties properly. His wife and children suffer from neglect. This new educational venture also can succeed only if you are healthy. What can plans and projects of the government achieve? One flower cannot make a garland; all flowers must come together to make one. So you must equip yourselves with strong bodies, sacred ideals and unselfish intentions in order to serve your country. You can achieve any high ideal provided you are co-operative, well-disciplined, soaked in service and sacrifice and fully determined to succeed. The government can only then be properly guided by you.

Only the dedicated come by Wisdom

Thyaagaraaja sang: "Raama! Let me have the strength of Your *Anugraha* (Divine Grace) that will force all the *grahas* (planets) to augur well. Let us also be heroes full of the spirit of service and sacrifice. Is it ever possible for us to practise what we preach?" Without a seed in the past there can be no plant in the future. Do not feel that there is no seed of devotion or dedication in you. This seminar has been arranged in order to make you aware of the good that you possess and tell you the methods by which this good can be developed and cultivated. Do not be misled into the cynical thinking that you are sent here just for some training and that there is nothing here for you to learn. '*Shraddhaavaan labhathe jnaanam*' (Only the dedicated come by Wisdom).

Take the example of the eagle. It has big, strong wings, but until it has the will to fly it cannot move even an inch. And look at the ant, which can move something even ten times its own weight. Faith moves, doubt deters. When we develop faith and strength of will we can execute any kind of work, but when we feel we need not act, no activity is possible. A hundred men may carry a horse to the shore of a lake, but they cannot make it drink. It alone must will to do so. I desire that: you should develop faith and strength to foster the sacred ideals of Indian culture and spirituality in the children under your care, and cultivate in them the right priorities of life.

Teachers' Training Camp, Brindhaavan, 25- 7-1978

Hunger is the disease for which food is the medicine: thirst is the illness/'or which drink is the medicine.

Food and drink, housing and clothing must be subsidiary to the needs of the spirit, the education of the emotions and passion, and impulses. They must take the place that salt and pepper take on the dining table today; uppu must be subsidiary to pappu; that is, salt must be little and dhal must be more; you cannot have more salt than the quantity of dhal, not even as much.

So too, efforts to achieve health, comfort, etc. must be just enough for the purpose of sustaining the saadhana, not more, not less.

Sri Sathya Sai

8. Love must win

CONSIDER, O man, whether you earn any lasting joy at all from your toil from the time of your waking in the morning to that of going to sleep at night, a toil incessant and limitless, a toil which often does not leave you even a moment's interval to call to mind the glow and grandeur of God? No wonder that even though God is everywhere, those who have seen Him are few and far between. Govindha, as the proverb goes, belongs to all, but there are hardly any who actually claim Him as their all. Thousands there are who extol the beauty and majesty of God in glamorous prose or poetry, but a counted few are the souls that share His Grace. For the sweetness of nectar is known only to those who place it on the tongue, and not to those who collect it in cups, caskets or even barrels!

There were three Andhra mystics who had nectar on their tongues, so to speak, and so were able to sing of the ecstasy they experienced, the God they realized. They were, as you may guess, Potharaaju, Goparaaju and Thyaagaraaju. They were ever aware of the Divine Principle, the warp and woof, the cause and effect, the beginning and end of the entire cosmos. They did not deviate even a little from the path of devotion to and absorption in God. They had, each one of them, known once for all that they could rely on none other than Him as Master or Protector.

Today people adore the strong, the wealthy and the exalted as their patrons and protectors. They run after such persons and humiliate themselves by flattering them. But for these three the only Protector, Master and Patron, was God.

Raama in the heart can give unalloyed joy

Thyaagraaju could have easily bided beside the thrones of rulers for the asking of it. He could have received invaluable gifts from royal patrons. But he refused the honours his contemporaries were prepared to heap on him. He said, "O mind, tell me if it is the treasures bequeathed by high dignitaries or the Divine Presence of Raama in the heart that can give unalloyed joy?" The emissaries from the palace had to return, carrying back with them the presents they had brought.

Potharaaju also had the same attitude towards worldly riches for he too was immersed in Divine delight. His brother-in-law, Shreenatha, once advised him to dedicate the great Thelugu epic poem, Bhaagavatham, to the ruler of the kingdom, for the king would shower diamonds on him and free him from poverty for ever. Potharaaju replied "Rather than wed this lovely, tender, angelic maid of poetry to wealthy barbarians to earn polluted food in return, I would gladly feed myself, my wife and children on what I can find of fruits and roots in the jungles. I will dedicate this epic only to God, who inspired me and bestowed song upon my lips. No one else deserves this offering. I am bound by loyalty to only the Supreme Deity, Raamachandhra."

Follow in the footsteps of saints

Then we have Goparaaju, who built the temple at Bhadhraachalam. Today it is difficult to find men who would refrain from unscrupulously misappropriating temple funds. But Goparaaju used his life and his means, even the lives and means of his kith and kin, for rebuilding and renovating the Raama temple at Bhadhraachalam. Later, while in jail for the alleged misuse of state revenue, he pleaded with Raama, "By spending 10,000 *varaahas* I got made a green gem necklace for Seetha, the Mother. I got made a crown of diamonds for you, my Raamachandhra. You accepted them coolly and put on airs! No, no, Raama, do not get angry at my disparaging speech. When

these people here deal blows of injustice, I blurt out harsh words. Pardon me!" See how near and dear Goparaaju took Raama to be, and how full of *prema* (love) he was for the deity.

Such great persons are found not only in Andhra Pradesh, but in other regions too. The culture of India has ever extolled such embodiments of devotion and held them up as examples before the common man. You must read about these saints, revere them and follow in their footsteps. To do this, you must also keep yourselves in good company. In most of the Shiva temples you will find the idol of the bull installed right opposite the *lingam*. Devotees taking *dharshan* of Shiva look straight over the head of the bull, for the bull itself is taking *dharshan* with concentrated devotion which they want to share. Just as the devotees of Shiva keep company with His vehicle, the Bull, to earn His Grace, you too must choose friends who by their company would help in raising your aptitudes. Moreover, as teachers, you have to be models for the children as well as for their parents, who often look up to you as the only educated persons in the vicinity.

Treat the school always as a House of God

A little while ago, Nathaniel, a teacher from Warangal, promised that he would transform his school into a House of God. But the school is always a House of God. To treat it as a caravanseral or as a prison or a house of correction, is sacrilege. Treat it as a holy place where Saraswathi, the deity presiding over knowledge and the arts, is present and is worshipped. Then, in that atmosphere of veneration, the pupils will mould themselves into worthy examples for the entire world. By taking this care the teacher will be evincing an intelligent love towards the child. He will be prompting the pupils to accord their conduct with the sacred atmosphere of the school.

After all, even the mother of the child may ignore some of its faults or even appreciate some of its peculiar mannerisms, but the teachers must be vigilant enough to take note of them and correct them by soft, sweet persuasion. The pupil will surely, listen and obey if he senses the sincerity behind the teacher's love. If, however, the teacher preaches love but behaves as if he or she has no love, the persuasion would not succeed.

Be warned of falling into the easy path of moving with the current. Heroism demands that you should promote your individuality and follow the ideals you deem best. Do not imitate others through sheer laziness of thought. Aim high and do not be disheartened if you miss your mark. Better it is to fail in shooting a tiger than to succeed in shooting a sparrow.

Love will be rewarded a thousand-fold

Once you have placed an ideal before you or set a goal, stick to it through gain and loss. It is not for nothing that the songs goes:

Whatever you hold, once you have held it

Hold on to it, till you win.

Whatever you've asked, once you have asked it

Ask aloud for it, till you win.

Whatever you wish, once you have wished it

Wish deeper for it, till you win.

Whatever you've planned, once you have planned it

Plan firmer for it, till you win.

He must grant the victory to stop the wail---

Wail, weep and pray, till you win.

Beware ! Don't lose heart and lag behind in effort.

Goparaaju, the Raamdhas of Bhadhraachalam, said, "I will not permit my feet to swerve from the path; I will not leave You without being, assured of fearlessness."

There are two ways of accosting God. One is in the manner of the beginner, of the devotee who is still in the elementary stage. He rhapsodizes, "Lord! You are the embodiment of mercy, you are *Aanandha-swaruupa* (embodiment of divine bliss), you are All-powerful," and hopes thereby to win God's Grace. But the dearer the devotee holds God, the more this distance disappears. It is just as when an acquaintance visits you, you welcome him with a hand shake and smiles which are largely artificial. But when an old friend drops in, you receive him with an informal hello and show him a seat with a twinkle in your eye and warmth in your heart. In the flood of formal praise, love is mostly absent. As it happens, in dealing with the personal God, love is the preeminent requisite. Therefore have faith, have patience and do acts of love and service. Love will be rewarded with Love a thousand-fold.

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Saguna and Nirguna (with Form and Formless) aspects of God create the same doubt in the minds of saadhak, whether they can both be true. It is like hardened ghee and liquid ghee.

Ice and water are the same; water takes the form of the vessel which contains it. It is formless. But, there is no distinction between ice and water.

In saadhana, the saguna worship and the nirguna meditation are like the right and left feet for the journey.

Sri Sathya Sai

9. Music of the spirit

GOD is the echo of the hills, the flutter of the leaves, the whisper of men, the babble of children, the *Om* (divine sound) that is wafted everywhere. God is present at all places, but to recognise Him, saints have had to prescribe a thousand methods! He is in every one, yet he evades discovery by all but a few. Being all-powerful, he is the Giver of all gifts, the Providence bestowing upon us all the wherewithal. '*Sarvam Aavrithya Thishthathi*' (He remains All-encompassing).

There is nothing except God. Nature is His Manifestation. Man must recognise God in all human beings and in all else that exists. Since the *jeeva* (individual being) limits his viewpoint to the physical frame he occupies, and confines his attention and interest, to love and attachment to a small circle of relations and friends, he limits God also to a certain name and form, and sees His Compassion and Grace, Blessings and Benediction, limited to a small circle of 'devotees' who adore that specific name and form.

Human desires are narrow, so He who grants fulfilment is also imagined to be narrow in His Grace. Ideally, therefore, when one prays, one should in complete resignation say, "Thy Will be done," and ought not to ask for this or that, for he has neither the wisdom nor the foresight to know what is best for him.

Pranava, OM, is the Geetha of God

The Bhagavathgeetha teaches that envy and greed can be overcome by practising love and detachment. People have themselves resolved upon a day as the birthday of the Bhagavathgeetha, which they celebrate with pompous *puuja* and speeches! In the midst of this confusion the essential teachings of the Geetha are ignored. When exactly did the Geetha originate? What does Geetha mean? Literally the word means 'song.' Since God is Omnipresent, the Song of God, too, must be Omnipresent. So, in reality, *Pranava (Om)* is the Geetha of God. God's song cannot be only for a few or only for some people or in a language understood only by one nation. Om is Universal, eternal, full of the essence of all spiritual significance. So, Om alone, can be the real Geetha of God. And It can have no birthday that man should celebrate, having itself arisen before time began.

Our Self is resonant with *Pranava*. But amid the clamour of the market-place and the noise of the commerce of life, our little selves are not able to hear it. Our own senses lay claim to our attention. Our minds crave for being let free among the pleasures of the outer world. Obviously our passions and prejudices have to be calmed before we can hear *Om*, the Song of the Lord that wells up from the heart.

Do not accept even gratitude for service

March on with your eyes on the goal. Do not worry about the past, its mistakes and its failures. Do not follow the whims and fancies of the mind any longer. They will fill the ear with praise or blame and drag you away from the *aadhyaathmik* (spiritual) path. Follow the call of the Divine arising from the hearts of all living beings. Serve them in an attitude of worship, not expecting something in return. Do not accept even gratitude, having dedicated all your acts to the indwelling God. This will purify you so that you shall be able to listen to the '*Soham*' that your breath repeats every moment. *Soham* transmutes itself into *Om* when the distinction between He and I has dissolved in the process of *samaadhi*.

Believe that the *Soham* merging into *Om* is the *SAI thathwam*. *Sai principle* 'S' stands for *Sai*, 'A' for *And* and 'I' for the *saadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) himself. Thus SAI in fact symbolises the *Vedhic* dictum: *Thath thwam asi* (Thou art that). In the first stage the *saadhaka* says, 'I am in Sai,' in the second stage, 'Sai is in me,' and in the third and final stage, 'Sai and I are One,' the duality between the two having been shed. When truth strikes the individual like a streak of lightning in the midst of dark clouds, and abides, it confers Bliss, and in that moment of illumination *Om* is revealed in all its grandeur. By practising the teachings of Krishna, one gains that Illumination, the *Jnaana Jyothi* (Wisdom of Light), *Om*.

Krishna's flute is the expression, the elucidation of the four *Vedhas* and *Om* is their quintessence. 'A,' 'U,' 'M' and the dot (signifying the reverberation of the Sound in the depth of the heart), are symbolic of the four *Vedhas*. *Om* is also symbolic of the 'Raama-Principle. The four brothers, Raama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Sathrugna, represent the Rig, Yajur, Saama and Atharvana *Vedhas*.

When man neglects the Divine aspect of their nature and fails to pursue the *saadhana* (spiritual discipline) that ensures the awareness of the Omnipresent and Omnipotent *Om*, he falls prey to the impulses and instincts dominated by the "ego and develops faith in material gains. He spends his life in amassing wealth, power and authority over fellow beings and believes that holding others under his sway is a desirable achievement.

Man knows so little of what is worth knowing

If there were a vacancy in Heaven, man would surely apply for the position of God, for he believes that he has all the necessary attributes! He forgets that the real attribute for superiority is unshaken faith in one's *Aathmic* Reality. Of what use is it to only know one's puny self? It is like a so-called learned band of doctors knowing a bit here and a bit there but being ignorant of the treatment of maladies like cancer and the common cold. Science must make man humble by revealing that he knows so little of what is worth knowing.

The Divine aspect of your personality will encourage humility, adherence to truth, love and eagerness to serve, fortitude and detachment. Cherish the first; manifestation of these qualities in your life and practise them whenever you get a chance. The innate brotherhood that sanctifies the human race is destroyed by the weeds of envy that grow in the mind. These weeds ruin one's personality. They grow so rank that they strangle the individual himself.

Sorrow is the shadow that haunts the ego. When a neighbour of yours grieves over the loss of a loved one you console him by saying that it is not wise to weep over worldly losses, that weeping cannot bring the departed one back. But when death visits your own family, you grieve so much that the same neighbour has to repeat the same argument to console you. All this happens because neither has developed faith in the *Aathman*, and neither has *Naama* (name) on the tongue and *Prema* (Love) in the heart.

A man builds a nice house for himself and feels proud of the garden surrounding it, of the colour effect of the interior painting, etc. If during an election campaign, some urchins scribble slogans on the walls enclosing his garden, he flares up against them and threatens to thrash the young villains for having damaged" the immaculate whiteness of the walls. But once he sells the house and it no longer belongs to him, he is not affected in the least even if the house is reduced to a heap of bricks! Such is the insidious effect of listening to the ego. Before you were born you had

no kith and kin; when you die they leave you alone. Why, then, develop this bond with them just for a short intervening life, and for its sake forget the very purpose for which this life has been granted? Always be conscious of the flimsiness of worldly achievements while ever using your talents, skills and everything else to the best possible advantage in the service of Go in man.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 13-8-1978

10. Sneha

SNEHA is the eighth of nine stages of *bhakti* (devotion) described in the Bhaagavatha and other texts. It is usually translated as 'friendship,' a term that has been understandably vulgarized by application to certain transitory relationships between living beings. Friends come together as a result of a variety of reasons and circumstances which are mostly of worldly and temporary interest. People who have ample resources gain friends quickly, as do also those who have a great deal of patronage in their hands or can distribute favours. Those in authority also gather friends, who, of course, stay on during fair weather but disappear when the authority fades. Most friendships are based on selfish considerations and last only as long as selfish interests are promoted thereby. As the proverb goes, When the lake is full there are also frogs in plenty, but when it runs dry not a single croak is heard."

Friendship ought to be a spiritual bond, a heart to heart kinship based on full understanding of and pure dedication of one to another. Students should be vigilant against false and fleeting friendships and not be simply led away by hellos and handshakes. Do not cultivate close friendship with anybody unless you know that the motives on the other side are pure, unselfish and spiritual.

Unique friendship between Krishna & Arjuna

Genuine friendship can only be possible between one *aathman* and another, that is to say, between two persons who have each realized *that Aathman* is the core of their being. Nowhere on the mundane plane can you get the genuine *sneha* which is declared as the penultimate stage to *sharanaagathi* or *aathmanivedhana* (total surrender and dedication to God), among the trivial, transitory friendships of worldlings.

Arjuna and Krishna had this genuine *sneha* between them. Arjuna saw Krishna as his *sakha* (friend), and therefore had the temerity to use words of jesting irreverence during 'play, or while in repose, or when seated by him, or at meals' (*vihaara shayyaasana bhojaneshu*). The two often ate meals from the same plate, and were ready to help each other under all circumstances. Do not be under the impression that Arjuna was insidiously overpowered by Krishna. He was mature in character, well-versed in the *Vedhic* lore and a redoubtable warrior and bowman full of courage and heroism. Krishna was the *Purushoththama* (Supreme Being), Arjuna the *naroththoma* (best human). It was a friendship between the Embodiment of the Highest and the embodiment of the best. Krishna was the *Avathaaric* (incarnated) Person; Arjuna was the *aanandhic* (blissful) person; it was a coming together of the *Avathaara muurthi* and the *aanandha muurthi*. Arjuna was often addressed by Krishna as *Kuru nandhana*. This name has a deep significance. *Kuru* means 'act, activity, *karma*.' *Nandhana* means 'happy, delighted.' *Kuru nandhana*, therefore, means he who is delighted while engaged in activity. Throughout the eighteen chapters of the Geetha, Arjuna is alert and active, participating vigilantly in every turn of argument.

Krishna's assurance to all who offer their self

Raamakrishna Paramahansa was fascinated by the *sneha* that was exemplified by the Krishna-Arjuna relationship. He learned from the Bhaagavatha and the Bhagavathgeetha how the *saadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) can go through all the nine stages of *bhakti* (devotion). He was also determined to emulate the *gopees* (cowherd girls) and earn for himself the *viraha* (passionate) type of *bhakti*, *madhura bhakti* (sweet devotion), that the *gopees* had. When he read the Raamaayana, he decided to emulate Hanumaan and practise his *dhaasa bhakti*

(devotion of servitude). Of all the *slokas* (verses) in the Bhagavathgeetha, Raamakrishna was especially impressed by the one that emphasised the attitude of *aathma nivedhana* or *sharanaagathi*.

Manmanaa bhava madhbhaktho

madhyaaji maam namaskuru

Maamevaishyasi yukthvaivam

aathmaanam mathparaayanah.

("Become one with Me; be devoted to Me; sacrifice unto Me; bow down to Me. Thus having made thy heart steadfast in Me, taking Me as the Supreme Goal, thou shalt surely come to Me.")

One day, while Raamakrishna was going to Kamarpukur, night overtook him and he was caught in heavy rain right in the centre of a burial ground. Of course he was in such an ecstatic mood that the time, place or weather mattered little to him. When he awoke, Raamakrishna called upon God by various names---Raama, Shiva, Krishna, Kaali, Hanumaan. Then he suddenly realised that the names all referred to the One, and he repeated within himself the verse from the Geetha that reminded him of *sharanaagathi* (absolute surrender) to the One.

Surrender absolutely to God to get peace

Many interesting incidents took place at Dakshineswar. When Raamakrishna was once asked to go to the temple office to receive his monthly salary, he was very much upset, for he never wanted any wages for being given the chance of worshipping His Mother. At another time, thieves broke into the Krishna temple. When Raamakrishna and Mathuranaath came by there and discovered that Krishna's idol was absolutely bare and that every jewel had been stolen, *Mathuranaath* fell into a rage and began blaming Krishna Himself. "You are adored as the Guardian of the 'fourteen worlds,' but you cannot guard even the jewels on your own body," he said. Raamakrishna reprimanded him soundly for this sacrilege, saying, "Krishna has Lakshmi as His Consort, and for Him your gold and gems are as cheap as dust. As a matter of fact, what is gold but dust in another form?" He made Mathuranaath repent for his silly outburst, making him aware of the true nature of God-head.

If only you surrender your wish and will, your fancies and fantasies to God, He will lead you aright and give you peace and joy. You must not run after diverse ends and flitting pleasures. Leave everything to God; accept whatever happens, as His Will. Ambareesha was a King who stuck to all the *Vedhic* injunctions and observed all the rites and rituals laid down in these texts. He was noble, sincere and very devoted to Vishnu, the Form that embodies the fostering and sustaining aspect of God.

True devotion of King Ambareesha

Fasting on *Ekaadhasi* day and breaking the fast as-soon as *Dhwaadhashi* came in, was one of the important rites that Ambareesha observed meticulously every fortnight. *Ekaadhashi* is the eleventh day of the Moon and *Dhwaadhashi*, the twelfth day. The fast has to be broken with prayers to Vishnu and the partaking of the offering made to Him as soon as, according to the lunar calendar, the twelfth lunar day has started. On one occasion, a few hours before the approach of *Dhwaadhashi*, the great sage Dhurvaasa, reputed for his frequent fits of fury and burst of uncontrollable temper, arrived at the palace of Ambareesha. He was heartily welcomed

by the King. Ambareesha pleaded with him to proceed to the Ganges, finish his ablutions and return in time for the breaking of the *Ekaadhashi* fast. But the sage took his own time and was nowhere evident when the crucial moment arrived.

Ambareesha was in a fix. He consulted his preceptor who advised him to sip a few drops of sanctified water, since that could be considered breaking of the fast. On *Ekaadhashi* day, even water is taboo during the period of fasting. He said that Dhurvaasa had no reason to get angry, since the drops of water were taken by him only as a token to keep the vow. But when the sage came and learnt about it all, he became so wild that he cursed Ambareesha for having broken the fast in his absence and started the meal. As the curse took form, the *Chakra* (discus) of Vishnu appeared on the scene and confronted Dhurvaasa.

A devotee takes the curse as a gift from God

Ambareesha took the curse as a gift from God; he submitted himself to it in the spirit of a *sharanaagathi*, for he had no will of his own. Thus God came to his rescue. Ambareesha did not call upon Vishnu and pray that he may be saved from the anger of Dhurvaasa. He accepted that too as the Will of Vishnu. The *Chakra* pursued the terrified sage over all the three worlds, and when Dhurvaasa fell at the feet of Vishnu, He directed him to approach Ambareesha himself to pardon. The attitude of surrender or *aathma nivedhana* (offering the self to God) makes a person dedicate his entire personality at the Feet of the Lord.

In the Raamaayana, too, we have an episode that illustrates this. Raama and Lakshmana were combing the forests to discover where Seetha was. They were tired and thirsty. Suddenly, they came upon a clear pool and, while placing their bows on the ground, dropped their arrows which partially sank into the wet bank. After slaking their thirst they put the bows on their shoulders and pulled the arrows out from the bank. Raama noticed a stain of blood at the tip of his arrow and was curious to find out how it came there. Lakshmana discovered a little frog that had been hit by Raama's arrow when he dropped it on the ground.

Raama told the wounded frog, "Poor thing! Why did you not cry out when you were hit?" The frog replied, "Whenever in trouble, I cry out to you Raama. But, when Raama Himself inflicts pain, whom am I to cry out to? I accepted it as His Grace." Bheeshma adored Krishna even when He was rushing towards him with His *Chakra* to take his life. His sense of *sharanaagathi* (total surrender to Divinity) did not desert him at the point of death at the hands of the very Person whom he revered as God: "Kill me or save me, I shall not falter in my loyalty," he said.

See God in every being, *sneha* will blossom

Raamakrishna had the same sense of total dedication. He was in great pain as the result of a cancer, and his disciples asked him to pray to the Mother for alleviation of the pain. Vivekaanandha was desperate when his master refused to ask this little favour from the Mother with whom he was literally on speaking terms. But Raamakrishna replied that if it was the Mother's Will that he must suffer, he was not going to pray for palliatives. But his disciples were adamant. They bothered Raamakrishna so much that one day he prayed to the Mother that he may be helped to take a little food in spite of the cancer in his throat. Raamakrishna told his disciples that at that time he heard the Mother admonishing him for his ignorance: "Are you not eating through all these billion throats? Why regret that one throat is incapable of taking down food?" (*Vaasudhevassarvaamidham*). This truth was brought home to the disciples by this revelation.

The *sneha* (friendship) stage of Arjuna is the stage when all distinctions between the devotee and God disappear and the two friends are One. When this stage of utter trust, unshakeable faith, and complete absence of doubt, fear and anxiety is reached, the next stage of *aathmanivedhan* is natural and easy to cover. This is real friendship to which the youth must aspire. See God in every being and then true *sneha* will blossom, This type of true *sneha* can come only when you follow the advice of Krishna.

Adhveshta sarva bhuuthaanaam maithrah karuna eva cha

Nirmamo nirahamkaarah sama dhukha sukha kshami.

("He who has no trace of hatred towards any creature, who is friendly and compassionate towards all, who is free from the bondage of 'I' and 'mine,' who takes pain and pleasure as equally welcome and who is forbearing in spite of provocation...")

Develop these qualities in you, for they are the signs of true *sneha*, for it is only when you are proceeding on the Godward journey along the nine stages of *bhakthi* (devotion) that you can attain this Divine ideal of true friendship.

College Hostel, 20-8-1978

You should not plunge into action spurred by momentary impulse; ponder deeply over the pros and cons; weigh the expected benefits against the likely harm; then act so that you escape pain and you do not inflict pain. This is true in worldly matters as well as it, the spiritual field.

Sri Sathya Sai

11. Learning and liberation

MEN crave for a prosperous future, for positions of authority and power and happy, care-free lives; they never desire to possess pure, clear, loving intellects and a humble disposition. Therefore the youth today, in India as well as in other lands, are afflicted with deep discontent which manifests itself in revolt against rules, regulations, curricula and social norms, and an agitational approach to every little problem that affects them. What is the basic cause of this phenomenon?

The reason lies in the fact that they have started to neglect the ancient culture of India and its ideals. They are imitating undesirable and fanatic norms of behaviour and are addicted to a code of disbelief, having no roots anywhere.

The most fundamental teaching of the ancient culture of India is Love. For generations, the youth of this land have been exhorted, encouraged and taught, by precept and example, to love the poor, the helpless, the handicapped, the illiterate and the disabled, for the same spark of Divinity that is in us is also equally evident and active in them. Education must endow man with this compassion and this spirit of service---intelligent, timely and full. That is to say, education must not only *inform*, it must also transform.

True education is that which liberates man

Unless knowledge is transformed into wisdom, and wisdom is expressed in character, education is a wasteful process. If education confers this gift of transformation, then surely life will become peaceful, happy, and full of mutual help and co-operation. But the aim of education today has degenerated into the acquisition of certain skills and intellectual tricks. It provides the educated with food, clothing and shelter and considers that its task is over with that achievement.

The sages who laid down the goals of education have declared, "*Saa vidhyaa yaa vimukthaye.*" (That is true education which helps to liberate man)---liberate him from greed, hatred, unrest, narrow loyalties and ego impulses. Education today, adds to the unrest already in the heart of man; it does not liberate him from the prison house of desire into which he has strayed. Man builds rest-houses where he can cool his tired brain and revive his exhausted nerves, but he has yet to build *shaanthy mandhirs* (temples of peace) where he can unconcernedly learn to witness the happenings of the world, aware of the level of the world, aware of the level of their relative importance. That will give him equanimity. Faith in an All-knowing, All-operating God will render him free to watch with interest the ups and downs of history.

Education has to clarify the goal of life

Just as the body needs rest, the mind too needs quiet. Faith in God is the best guarantee of mental quiet. Man must follow the path of virtue, practise spiritual disciplines and take an enthusiastic part in social service. These three have to be accepted, adored and assimilated into daily life. Education has to clarify the goal of life to the rising generation and indicate the ways and means of accomplishing it.

Women are taking to modern education in larger and larger numbers nowadays. They are serving in offices, schools and factories. They are also rising to positions of authority in other fields. But most of them are prompted by urges of personal aggrandizement rather than ideals of service. When women run after jobs, who is to run the family? If both father and mother move into

offices to earn money, what becomes of the children? Pouring over books, how can the kitchen work? More money may be earned, but it leads only to more anxiety, more unrest and more loss.

The women who take up jobs are finding that they have no happiness worth the name. The educated woman must utilise her knowledge and skill to bring up her children into healthy, virtuous and disciplined youths who may be of use to their country, their culture and their community. Earning money is not the end-all of education. It is the greed to earn money by any means, as fast as possible, that has led to the evils that we see in society today. Money breeds pride, pride fosters hatred.

Cultivate the habit of self-examination

No one has the golden quality of contentment. The discontented man is as bad as lost. There is no limit to man's desires. Every person wielding power over others yearns to rise higher and higher and exercise more and more influence, but no one attempts a rigorous examination of himself to find out whether he has merit enough to be conferred with the position he craves for. Those who contentedly carry out the duties commensurate to the positions they hold, are very few. Every one, fit or unfit, throws stones, on the off-chance of getting a fruit from the laden tree. Students must cultivate humility and the habit of self-examination.

Another reason for the prevalent overwhelming dissatisfaction of the youth, is the chronic hypocrisy of elders. The very people who proclaim the efficacy of *sathya* (truth) from platforms, the very preachers who dilate on *dharma* (righteousness) and *shaanthy* (peace), live without any regard to *sathya*, *dharma* or *shaanthy*. The determination that one must act according to one's profession has disappeared. We can establish peace and prosperity, morality and uprightness in the land, only when those who preach and those who teach high ideals, act up to their own exhortations.

Sheer ignorance is the root cause for the disrespect that is being shown to Indian culture and the fascination exercised by the culture of the West. Do these people at least grasp the values of Western culture fully? No. Only the fringe and the foppery are adopted. How can a person who is unable to understand his own culture and heritage understand the meaning and significance of an alien culture?

The true sign of education is humility; for there is much more to be investigated and learnt. There are always many more who are far more learned. They carry their scholarship more lightly. Discipline is important in order to progress in learning, and even more so in dealing with others. An undisciplined person is a danger to society; any moment he may run amuck. Man must recognise what limits, regulations and do's and don'ts are laid down by the sages of the past in order to ensure social security and individual advancement.

Be conversant with some spiritual discipline

The code of conduct laid down for the students of this college helps you to develop qualities that will stand you in good stead later in life. The eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue---the four senses of sight, hearing, smell and taste---are all located in the head. Of course, the eye and the tongue have been provided with doors, so that the doors can keep out what is not desirable and welcome what is. Desire only the sight of beneficial things, only to speak out what will be conducive to peace and harmony. Do not indulge in talkativeness. If you get a reputation for talkativeness, you will suffer from weak memory, social odium, and nervous debility.

You have the great responsibility of motherhood and the duty of educating your children into strong and good citizens of this country. Along with the University degree, you must also acquire some general knowledge which is essential for householders and others. Otherwise, though the husband and the wife may both be degree-holders, they would be helpless and desperate even if the baby caught a slight cold.

You must also be conversant with some spiritual discipline like *naamasmarana* (remembering God's name), *dhyaana* (meditation) and *yoga* (divine communion), so that you may not be carried away by every changing breeze.

Practise the constant presence of God

It is best that you imprint on your hearts the dual nature of the world that is a mixture of pleasure and pain, joy and grief, victory and defeat. Practise the constant presence of God and learn to offer all your activities at the feet of the Lord as an act of worship. Then they will be free from fault. Krishna advised Arjuna to enter 'the fight,' and at the same time told him not to have hatred towards the 'enemies.' These may appear to be two irreconcilable attitudes, for war is *raaga* (passion, attachment) and renunciation of hatred is *vairaagya* (absence of *raaga*).

Arjuna asked Krishna how he was to reconcile these two attitudes. Krishna said, "*Maamanusmara, yudhyacha*" (Keep Me ever in thy mind, and fight). "Do not cultivate the egoistic feeling that it is you who is fighting. I am-using you as My. Instrument," He said. Even the food you take should be to propitiate Him, who is resident in your bodies as the *Vaishwaanara*, eager to digest the food we place in it. It is the Lord who receives the food, digests it and supplies strength thereby to the various limbs of the body.

This college was established ten years ago. Hence it is now a sprightly girl of ten summers. A baby girl of two or three will not dare venture outside the home alone. A girl of twenty can well look after herself wherever she is. But a girl of ten can neither be kept at home, nor does she know how to look after herself outside. Therefore we have all to guard her and guide her with great care and diligence. We must see that the ideals and aims of this college are maintained and fostered. On your discipline, devotion and duty are based the success and reputation of this college. Now, and later, you must lead lives of exemplary virtue and bring honour to parents and your *alma mater*.

Do not hanker too much after irresponsible liberty. Women suffer most when they are moved by this desire. You must be the torch-bearers of the educational ideals of this college. When one teacher neglects her duty or lowers her standard of conduct, hundreds of students are affected thereby. The moral strength and virtues of the teachers will be reflected in the students under their care. You have to treat them as your own children, children who need and deserve your love. Be like mothers to these children and let this college ring with Love given and Love received.

Women's College, Ananthapur, 30-8-1978

*The Aathma (divinity) is the Sun in the firmament of the Heart.
Now, the light of the Sun is obstructed by the thick clouds of
vishaya-vaasana (desire or sense objects and objective pleasure);
let the strong wind of paschaath-thaapa (repentance and*

*resolution) scatter the clouds, so that the aathma may shine forth
brilliantly.*

Sri Sathya Sai

12. Enemy number one

THE world today is rolling in a sick-bed, afflicted with fear, anxiety and all types of phobia. It is not as if there is no remedy to cure it and make it whole and healthy again. What is the treatment that can set the world right? Man must realise his high destiny, his precious heritage and his innate strength and virtues. That will remove the hatred, greed and suspicion that have caused this morbid situation. Developing the bond of brotherhood is the remedy suggested by various practitioners. But that is not enough. Peace and harmony cannot be ensured when people tell themselves that they are brothers. We find that brothers and sisters born of the same mother fight against each other, seldom placing full trust in each other: They pollute their minds with anger and envy and render their lives miserable. Filial reverence and fraternal co-operation are mostly absent today among mankind. They fight for shares in property and spend most of their time and money in courts, trying to wreak vengeance against one another.

As a consequence of pride in one's own strength and power a person might injure thousands, but the pride will injure that person most, being like a devil (difficult to exorcise) that possesses man. Man cannot claim to be man until this ego, that prompts him to ruin others and ride over others, is destroyed by *saadhana* (spiritual discipline). The Geetha directs man to be "*nir-mamo, nir-ahamkaarah*" (without 'mine' and 'I'). The Divine in him can manifest only when the dark forces of 'mine' and 'I' are rendered ineffective. To overpower the ego is a well-nigh impossible task.

We have heard of the six internal foes that haunt man every moment of his life. But the sense of 'I' and 'mine' are far more deep-rooted. People have conquered the six foes---lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and hatred. Indeed there are many who have achieved this victory. But rare indeed is the hero who has demolished his ego and escaped from its nefarious urges.

Egotism makes enemies of fast friends

Egotism is a thorny bush which, when planted and fostered in one's heart, one has to pay the penalty. Egotism makes enemies of fast friends and ruins many good causes and projects, for it does not allow two good men to work together. Grief follows it like a shadow. Where there is no ego, joy, peace, courage, co-operation and love flourish. When man is aware that the same Divine Consciousness that motivates him is equally motivating all others, then love ousts the ego into the background and takes charge of man's activities, words and thoughts.

When ego is awake, no wisdom can appeal

Consider this incident: A man suddenly loses his son and is in great grief. So a neighbour goes to him and tries to console and comfort him by various arguments and anecdotes. "My dear friend! Why is a man born? Why does he die? The reason why he was born also explains why he died. Birth means death. Fate plays strange games with us. We are but puppets in the show. What is the good of grieving over the dead?" He pours into the ears of the bereaved person all the *Vedhaantha* (philosophy of detachment) he knows. But the grief continues as before until the man becomes aware of the truth himself, unaided.

A few months later, the neighbour loses his son. Now the man who received all the *Vedhaantha* a few months ago comes to him and repeats the same questions seriatim, He says that one lives only so long as one's *karma* (destined activity) lasts, and that one's life is cut short when one has no more *karma* to atone for. It is all a question of paying off old debts. But these statements do

not console the aggrieved neighbour, for the loss is entirely his. When ego is awake, no wisdom can appeal. The feeling, 'my son,' is the root cause of one's grief and another's calm.

We build a house for ourselves and are happy it is 'ours.' When some one pastes a cinema poster on the wall, we feel 'our house' is tarnished and we even go to court to punish the offender. When the election time comes around the walls are disfigured by loud and loathesome slogans, and we quarrel with all and sundry for defacing 'our' walls. Some time later we sell 'our house' to someone and move off. After that, even if the house is bombed, we are not in the least worried.

It was the ego that caused all the worry so long. How does this egotism get into our system? Is it a weed that grows in us and is cultivated by us until it destroys us root and branch? Where was this ego in the beginning? Where were we before we were born? Where will we be after we die?

All our ideas and inferences are but products of the period between birth and death. When the girl you married was seriously ill as a child, you did not worry for she had not become 'yours.' We ourselves develop this attachment, as a cohesive and stabilising factor in life. But we then allow it to grow into huge dimensions, till it hinders our spiritual progress. Cultivate love, not delusion. Love your wife and children and do your duty towards them as a husband and a father. But always hold on to the true values. Do not lose your sense of proportion.

All kinship is basically only physical

Take this illustration: There is an areca-nut palm, swaying, tall and slim, in the wind, It has a long shadow, also swaying, on the sandy ground below. God is the truth and the world is His shadow. You desire to pluck a few nuts, but mistaking the shadow for the tree, walk along the thin dark line and clutch the shadow nuts. This is your delusion. But climb the tree, the truth. You get the fruits, while your shadow also appears hopping along the thin dark line plucking nuts. So proceed on the path of love, the path of God, and you can get both the worlds. Love will expand your heart so much that you cannot escape from your duties to your kith and kin. Remember always that wife, son, mother---all kinship is basically only physical, body-bound, time-limited.

The ego brings wave after wave of wants and wishes before your attention, and tempts you to attempt to gain them. It is a never ending circle. So try to reduce your wants and expand the range of your love in order to be free from the coils of your ego. Living involves many confrontations, companionships, separations, conflicts and neglects. We have to give up both the types of contacts---*viyoga* (the repugnant separation) and *samyoga* (the pleasant union). Attach yourself to God, and the delusion of the world will automatically fall off. Take the case of Hiranyaaksha, Hiranyakashipu, Kamsa, Raavana and the rest. They had all the wealth and power to be happy and peaceful. But they were ruled over by their ego, which finally led them to ruin.

Monks should be free from egotistic pride

The ego attacks the sage, the scholar, the teacher and the devout spiritual aspirant, even more than ordinary men. Their ego makes them proclaim that they, can defeat all others in controversy, that they are the most learned and that they are the ones nearest God. When egotism enters man, envy follows fast and occupies the heart.

Some *Gurus* who have religious institutions under them, laugh at you when you tell them that you are proceeding to Puttaparthi for this year's Dhashara. "So you have also become a victim of this Sai Baba madness?" they tease you. Instead they should be pleased and say, "Good! You

should gladly go to any place where you can get peace of mind, where you can acquire *aanandha* (divine bliss) and become aware of Divinity. I am glad you have secured such a place. God is One and is Omnipresent."

Monks wearing ochre, robes should be free from egotistic pride and envy. I always tell you that God is present everywhere, in everyone; that all names and forms are His. I direct you to go to any place where you can carry on *saadhana* quietly, where you sense the atmosphere of Divinity and where you receive love and can cultivate love through service.

When Arjuna reduced to ashes the huge Khandava Forest, his ego did not raise its head. But when he stood before the Kaurava army, the ego told him to flee. He had made enormous preparations for the fray; he had amassed specially destructive weapons after years of austerity and adventure.

When Krishna offered to mediate with the Kauravas and gain some token of their having yielded to the entreaties of the Paandavas so that war could be averted. Arjuna argued with Him and told Him that His mission was bound to fail: "Can jasmine flowers yield fragrance when thrown into fire? Why waste Your sweet words of persuasion on their deaf ears? Can life-sustaining nectar be got from life-killing poison? You may please yourself by going amidst them. For myself, I am all for battle, this very moment."

Arjuna who was so bold and bellicose, was suddenly attacked by the delusion of egotism. He said, "I have no desire to rule over a burial-ground, I would rather beg and eke out my livelihood than kill these kinsmen of mine." Then Krishna told him in the Geetha, '*nir-mamo nirahankarah prashaanthim adhigachchathi*' ---"He who is devoid of the 'I' and 'mine' tendencies, these are not mine,' 'this is I' and 'this is not I,' he alone can attain *Prashaanthi* (the Higher Peace)."

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 11-10-1978

13. He too is He

SOME people hope to accumulate merit by charity; others feel that asceticism is superior; still others adhere strictly to what they believe *Sanaathana Dharma* (Eternal Religion) to be, considering it a better way to secure Divine Grace. But these, and even the highly praised path of *sathya* (truth) and *dharma* (righteousness), are not as fruitful as the path of *seva* (service). This sacred land of Bhaarith has earned great renown in the world for its consistent practice of this ideal of service through sacrifice.

Embodiments of the Divine *Aathman* (Self)! Shiva is Omnipresent; He is the Inner Motivator of all beings. He is ever present, everywhere, in our realm as well as in the realms around us. This fundamental truth has to be firmly believed in by every Seva Dhal (Voluntary Service Corps) member, and, realising this, he has to be humble and full of reverence towards all. You have to encounter various contrary gusts of passion, emotion, impulse, and intellectual doubt. Nevertheless, bear them bravely and overcome them through prayer and meditation.

The Lord, too, will provide many tests to ensure that your faith is firm, that your spirit of *seva* is full and universal. The weaker practitioners of this *seva saadhana* (service-centred spiritual effort) will soon be shaken by these tests, and stray away from the right path. The six enemies---lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride and hatred---that lie in wait to foil their *saadhana* (spiritual effort), overpower the inner urge and make them slaves of the merely physical and material.

Keep "Heads in the forest, Hands in society"

The Seva Dhal member who shines in the splendour of the faith that "God is in himself and equally so in all," can transform the members of his family, his neighbours, the society in which he lives and the country to which he belongs, for the better. His love and light will bring him, unasked, a great deal of respectful attention.

As a preliminary to *seva* you have to win purity of heart. You must examine your motives and skills, your intentions and qualifications, and discover for yourself what you hope to achieve through the *seva*. You should ferret out any trace of egotism, and also the desire for fame or even of being near Swaami. If you have an irrepressible urge to possess things that contribute to your comfort or sense of superiority over others who are your friends or kith and kin, then the sooner you leave the Dhal the better.

You have heard some basic directions that I have been continuously giving. I have been telling you to deal with them as directions for life. "Duty is God; Work is Worship," and another dictum, "Heads in the forest, Hands in society." Do deeds that are holy and beneficial, untarnished by ego and the greed to benefit. Start on the sacred pilgrimage to the Divine Goal and make every minute of your life holy and purposeful. Then, surely, this earth, your *karmakshethra* (field of work), will be transformed into a *dharmakshethra* (field of righteousness).

While judging the *seva* done by a member of the Dhal, it is not the quantity or number of individual instances that matter; they do not count at all. Judge rather the motive that led him to serve, the genuineness of the love and compassion with which the *seva* was saturated. You may explain that it was your duty and so you had to do it; you may say that it was a responsibility which was imposed on you by the scarf and badge. But the explanation that appeals to Swaami is

that you did the *seva* with no taint of ego, and that you derived unsurpassed *aanandha* (bliss) as a result.

Do not hesitate to practise humility

Preliminary to any *seva*, you have to *uproot* all egotistic tendencies, get rid of all sense of mine and thine and burn to ashes the pride that comes of the feeling that you are offering service to someone poorer and less fortunate. I find that the members of the Seva Dhal seldom aim to attain this stage. They are still growing the thorny bush of ego in their hearts. And the thorns are bound to hurt them more than they do others. The feelings of 'I' and 'mine' are at the root of all the misery in the world.

Do not hesitate to practise humility and obedience, discipline and compassion. Give up pride at your status, wealth, scholarship or official position. "Can I, a big officer, a rich merchant, a great scholar, a man highly respected in society, descend to this level of chumming with this sorrowing man?" Do not ask such silly questions. Every one of these qualifications of which you boast will disappear with death, or sometimes, sooner. The *aanandha* that you give, the love that you share, these alone will be your lasting possessions.

Watch for the Divinity latent in every man

Others not motivated by the spiritual urge might ridicule you, caricature your activities and even put obstacles in your path. But do not lose grip over your courage or hate such persons. Do not yield to anger. Watch for the Divinity that is latent in every man. That will give you peace and fortitude. Pay attention to the One that is the Truth of the many. You have met statewise, in groups, and arrived at certain conclusions about the types of *seva*. These have been presented now.

Rajesh Khanna from Delhi showed you the mini first-aid box that each Seva Dhal member can carry in his pocket so that he may be ready at any moment for any eventuality. It is indeed a good idea which can be taken up by other states. Health is the primary requisite for all activities--physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual. Any injury or illness that affects it adversely has to be attended to with loving care.

But more essential than these aids is another type of *seva*. Carry in the inner pocket, the heart, a box with a few tablets of discrimination, an ounce or two of sense-control and a few packets of powder prepared as the mixture of love and forbearance. Use this box to infuse courage and compassion in others and in yourself.

Sense-control will guard against all evils

Sense-control will guard you against a host of evils. Do not believe that because you are equipped with the senses nothing harmful can happen through their free exercise. You may have your car registered in your own name and be driving it yourself, but if you do not apply the brakes timely, accidents are bound to be your lot. Your body can be compared to a car. Your eyes are like the lights; your stomach, the petrol tank; your mouth, the horn; your mind, the steering wheel; *dharma* (right action), *artha* (wealth), *kaama* (desire) and *moksha* (liberation), the wheels; the air within the tyres is faith and intelligence, *buddhi* (intellect), the switch.

The worship of *jeeva* (individual being), which is the other name for *seva* can be worthwhile only when the heart is pure. All the various types of service that one may write and talk about are

mere empty, boasts if the mind of the *sevak* (volunteer) is not pure. A heart bubbling with *aanandha* and a mind saturated with love may do any tiny bit of *seva*, yet that will win much more Grace than huge projects undertaken in pride and pomp.

Nowadays, faith in God and goodness has declined. The means have become subordinate to the end. Success is sought by fair means or foul, foul means being the first resort. Misuse of official position, terrorising ignorant and innocent people to get one's way, creating situations of fear and despair, to undermine the moral strength of people---these have become accepted tactics. Victory won through questionable means is as shameful as defeat; defeat, while pursuing honest and compassionate means, is to be welcomed as victory. When you do not stray from the straight path, when you hold fast to truth and when you do not lose courage, your failure is as creditable as success.

Seva Dhal members should not become machine-minded and mechanical. They must have faith not in *yanthra* (machine), but in *manthra* (sacred formulas). They must consider each living being to be a part of the One God. You select a bamboo which is straight and long. But when selecting a cane, you look to the sugar content. Similarly, do not select Seva Dhal members for any qualification other than the *saadhana* by which they are aware of the Divinity in each individual.

Sai is the Inner inspiration for each worker

I advise through another slogan also: "Even if you cannot oblige, you can at least speak obligingly." This means that you have to cleanse your speech of cynicism and satire and be ever sincere and sweet. You may differ from co-workers on methods and programmes, but this should not leave a scar on your heart. Office-bearers in this Organisation are leaders who bear the brunt themselves, guides who walk along the path they wish others to take. They shall not command or punish, they can only persuade and advise.

The name of Sathya Sai is attached to each wing of this organisation. It is Sai that inspires each activity of each wing. This fact has not been taken to heart by many of you. Sai is the Inner inspiration and light for each worker. The different wings should not feel free to act according to the whims and fancies of the members or office-bearers. Each is dependent on the other. When a thorn pricks the foot, the eye sheds tears. There is a Divinity that moves and motivates the entire system of physical, mental and intellectual activity in the body: *Anthar bahischa thath sarvam, vyaapya Naaraayana sthithah* (Inside and outside, all that is, is saturated with God). When one organ is happy, all are happy. When one limb is ill, all are in misery.

Feeling of hatred is a serious sin

The name, *Dhal*, that you bear, has another great significance. *Dhal* means the petal of a flower. The lotus has as many as a thousand petals. They all emanate from the central *karnika* (pericarp). Each petal draws its strength, sustenance, colour, fragrance, and charm from the *karnika*. Detached from the *karnika* the petal cannot survive. That attachment and that affection can be secured when the petal clings to the ideals of 'Sai and the lessons of Sai. In My Message to you, there is no scope for your seeing differences or distinctions among those you serve. *Lokaassamasthah sukhino bhavanthu* (May every being in all the worlds be happy). That Is My wish and blessing.

Cultivating prema (divine love) is the one and only *saadhana* that can endow you with this outlook and faith. If there arises in the Samithi or Seva Dhal or Mahila Vibhaag, any feeling of hatred between members, clash of opinions or envy against some other member, treat it as a serious sin. It is a sacrilege, an act of treason against the organisation itself. Let the past be past, for that we cannot recover. Let us not brood over what has already happened. But from this moment, give up envy, pride and hatred in your hearts and plant therein, love and mutual help. Give up the pernicious habit of seeking faults in others; seek first the faults in yourself. You discover faults only because you have those faults. Faultless people can never find fault in others.

Inner cleanliness is important for *sevaks*

We have here ten thousand Seva Dhal members, trained and dedicated for *seva*. However I doubt that you are being sincere in your duty to yourself and to others. As part of rural service you go into the villages adopted by the *samithis* and repair roads, clear drains, give some medicines, conduct *bhajan*, (devotional songs sung in groups) and deliver lectures. Is this the work that the Sathya Sai Seva Dhal has to do? Suppose you have a glass which you use to drink water from. Is it enough if the glass is cleaned on the outside? Inner cleanliness, inner health, inner illumination---these are far more important and the Sathya Sai Seva Dhal has to take them up in a big way.

Find out how many families are in misery and poverty on account of the evil habits of their bread-winners. Drinking, gambling and other vices have to be tackled with humility and love, through persuasion and even personal submission. Even the government builds hospitals, provides roads, arranges for water supply and caters to their other material needs. But only a spiritual, band of *saadhakas* (spiritual aspirants) like you can succeed in reforming their habits and bringing them on the path of peace, prosperity and harmony.

Every effort to give the villager a few more coins through employment will only make things worse if his moral fibre is not made strong enough to overcome the temptations of drink and gambling. Lead him slowly and surely along the path of God and these habits will drop off one by one.

"Fight to the end" and "Finish the game"

Do not hope to gain Grace by looking down upon mankind and looking up' at Sai. Remember, also, that your dress, behaviour and appearance, will reveal your character and attitude towards others." Always have sweet, soft words on your tongue; cast your eyes only on holy sights. Wear' clean, simple clothes and do not imitate those who are fascinated by latest fashions in dress and style. How can you do *seva* when you move so far away from the common man? I advise you to 'Follow the Master.' By 'Master' I mean the Conscience within you, the 'Voice' of God. Only then can you 'Face the devil' and escape from his temptations unharmed. And you must be ever vigilant that old habits and past attitudes do not come home again. Thus following the third rule of 'Fight to the end,' you finally gain the victory in the fourth round: 'Finish the game.'

From the moment of birth, your breath has been proclaiming your Reality, for it repeats incessantly the *manthra* (sacred formulae), '*Soham*' (I am He, I am *Shivam*). Be conscious of this and you can never be wrong. You can never injure or insult anyone, for he too is He. Once that repetition of *Soham* stops, man is reduced to *shavam* (a corpse). Therefore cultivate the Divine qualities of love, compassion, humility and reverence for all living beings, reverence towards the

earth and all the other elements. You can thus draw upon yourself the Grace of God and render you life beneficial and fruitful.

IV All India Seva Dhal Conference, 22-11-1978

14. Happy Birthday

THE same Divine Compassion that blessed Dhruva, saved Gajendhra, restored Kuchela and stood by Prahlaadha, has come to the earth as the refuge of the refugeless, as the Lord of peace, harmony and righteousness, as the Lord of all the worlds, as the *Sath-Chith-Aanandha muurthi*, as the *Puttaparthi Sathya Sai Sath-chakravarthi--the King of Kings*.

How fascinating is the face of the baby, resting in the lap of the mother! It has no fear in its eyes; it has joy on its lips. It is full of peace. It is unaffected by those evil forces---envy, greed, anger and hatred---that rob man of his peace and joy. It has no egoistic desire, no anxiety to impress others or to show off. It has no plans for the future, no regrets for the past. Its faith in the love and strength of the mother is so unshakable, that even if the sky were to collapse and fall, its calmness would not be disturbed. Why is it that when the baby grows into adolescence and manhood, this calmness and this joy disappear, giving place to fear, anxiety and hatred? The reason is to be found in the overpowering effect of the senses and their clamour for being catered to. Again, man today tends to see only the 'many;' he casts aside the Vision of the One and encounters, as a result, competition and conflict, disappointment and despair.

Devotees seek the path that is popular

As the child gathers more information and experience and becomes more comprehending, it sees the world as a battlefield of opposing forces and armies, where it needs to struggle for victory by devious means. Each head has its own thoughts, says the *shruthi*, "*Munde munde, mathih bhinnah*" (No two agree; differences breed disputes), and finally, life becomes an arena where ego fights ego. The situation is as bad as in the medical field, where specialists who can diagnose and deal only with the illness of the eye, the nose, the throat, the stomach, the liver, the heart, the skin, etc., forget that these are all unified by the organism called body, and that it is not advisable to study them separately as many distinct; parts. The universe, the individual, the *Paramaathman---all* are inseparably unified. Scientists parade the little peeps they have of the universe as big victories. Even the technology that science has encouraged so far is fraught with danger to mankind. It cuts up the cosmos and the force behind it; and specialises it in minute parts, thus presenting false pictures of reality.

Devotees are also caught in this game of seeing many where there is only One. They seek the path that is popular, that will bring them fame, rather than the path that can ensure liberation and illumination. They place their own idea of God in the forefront and fight for precedence and support. The *Vedhic Suuthra (Vedhic dictum)---Ekoham bahushyaam* (I am One, I shall be many)---is ignored. It is the One that pretends to be many. So one has to feel the impact of the One rather than of the many, while moving in the world.

Faith is very essential for the pilgrim on the *aadhyaathmik* (spiritual) path. Man is now caught up in temporary and trivial pre-occupations in the too short interval between birth and death, and he deceives himself by placing faith in these rather than on truer and more lasting realities and experiences. He does not hold on to discrimination and deeper realities, and is carried away by every gust of doubt or disappointment.

Man has lost the capacity of faith

The baby is calm and unaffected on the lap of the mother since it has faith in the mother. The mother points out to someone as its father, to another as its grandpa, to another as its sister or

brother, and the child accepts these statements without question. The mother creates the faith in the father for the child. So, too, Mother Nature proclaims that there is a Father who has designed and who is energising and motivating these worlds, but man does not accept this, for he has lost the capacity of faith.

Faith is the basis of every act. You do not run away from the barber because he is armed with a sharp razor. You place faith in him and allow him to cut your hair, quietly submitting to his idiosyncrasies. You give away costly clothes to the *dhobi* (laundry man) since you have the faith that he will return them washed and ironed. You have faith in the driver of your car, in the engineer who built your house. So too, believe in the Inner Motivator, the *Aathman* within, the Voice of God.

Believe in the experience of ancient sages

People are going about now advising that one should believe only things that one has 'seen' and 'experienced.' Something happens somewhere and the news is published in the papers. It is believed without question. So, too, believe in, the experience of seers and sages who had no other purpose than discovering the Truth and sharing It with others who were unaware of It. In India we have had millions who believed in God and in the seekers after God, and who have themselves realised the truth of God. This has made their lives happy and contented.

Of course the seeker has to encounter many obstacles both inner and outer. But each one of them is a challenge which must bring out his latent faith. Where there is no darkness, there can be no appreciation for light, Without the pangs of hunger no one will seek food. It is the possibility of death that makes the mother most carefully nurse her sick child.

That is the reason why one saint advised his followers, "Do not ask God for anything. Let Him deal with you as He Wills." Did Jataayu ask that Raama should come to him and perform the last rites. Did Shabari plead with Raama? Earn the qualifications---holiness, purity, faith, universal love; then He will approach you on foot to console, comfort and save! Purity of heart and mastery over the senses---if you have these two credentials, Grace is your right.

Imagining that Bliss is available in the outer world, men stray away from the inner path and are caught up in misery. They seek it in the family---the wife and children---and to keep up a standard of living for them, take to evil ways. The fundamental flaw is their belief that the body is the be all and the end all of existence. They ignore the Indweller, who has to be recognised, revered and responded to.

Become aware of the Unity of mankind

The *Avathaar* (Divine Incarnation) is the *Aath mashakthi* (power of the Supreme Soul) that has put on the raiment of *kriya shakthi* and *yoga shakthi* (power of action and power of divine communion). Generally, *Avathaarana* (the process of incarnation), is described as a 'coming down' from a higher status to a lower one. But, no! When the baby in the cradle weeps, wails and 'clamours for help, the mother stoops and takes it up in her arms. Her stoop is not to be described as a 'coming down.' If you earn the necessary credentials, the Incarnation will come and save you. If, on the other hand, you multiply your demerits and descend lower and lower, how can you be saved? 'Have love and *aanandha* (divine bliss) in your heart. *Aanandha* comes from pure sight, pure hearing, pure speech and pure actions.

The day you establish yourselves in this aanandha, that day will be My Birthday for you. I must tell you another fact. Swaami's Birthday is being celebrated at Puttaparthi because so many thousands come here from far-off places, in spite of the expense and great difficulty during the journey. Do not be under the impression that because it is Swaami's Birthday, therefore you must come.

I have no desire to have My Birthday celebrated; such trivial thoughts can never enter Me. My only desire is to share My *aanandha* with you, to encourage you to lead lives full of *aanandha*. My Birthday is when you get *aanandha*. My Mission is *Lokaah samasthah sukhino bhavanthu---* "May all the worlds be happy and prosperous." Become aware of the Unity of mankind; promote by love and service the joy and contentment of every one on earth and fill your hearts with that yearning. Then it becomes, verily, the *Sai Mandhir* (temple). From that moment I am where you are.

Since this morning many people have greeted Me 'Happy Birthday!' No one need wish for happiness for Me, since I am always happy, everywhere. For *Aanandha swaruupa* (Embodiment of Divine bliss), why talk of happy birthday? You, too, must ever be happy and not wait for the birthday to recur every year to accumulate *aanandha*.

Prashanthi Nilayam, 2:3-11-1978

Know that Sai Love is the Love of a thousand mothers. Naturally you will find it impossible to gauge the intensity of My Love. And understand this. If you place yourselves outside that Love, you place yourselves outside the love of all mankind. Mine is Love that is pure, free, selfless and unconditional. It is a great good fortune to receive such love.

Sri Sathya Sai

15. The four blemishes

EDUCATION must provide illumination; the darkness of ignorance and the dusk of doubt have to flee before that splendour. Then it is easy to cultivate good thoughts, feelings and impulses in the brightness of heart. Or, as some perverted persons do, bad thoughts, bad feelings and bad impulses can be bred in the original darkness itself. The first is the Raama path, the second, the Raavana path.

Education does not end with the accumulation of information; it must result in transformation of the habits, character and aspirations of the individual. Knowledge has to be tested in daily action. Now, man has no information on the most precious heritage that he has within him. He is interested in everyone except his own self. If only he becomes aware of his self, he can have vast strength, deep peace and great joy added unto himself. Now, he is like a man standing under a blazing sun wailing, "O! I am in the darkness, I am caught up in the night." He is like the man standing on the bank of the Ganga, and crying that he is having unbearable thirst. He has in him the very embodiment of Peace, Bliss and Love. But, he has no knowledge of this. He lives out his days in fear, hatred and sorrow.

Science has provided man with the radio, the television set and the film. They are each useful and productive of good, if each one is manipulated by persons with a pure social consciousness and with love in their hearts. But, they are now in the hands of people with no high moral standards, who find in them tools for amassing money and so, they have become enemies of human progress. The tender minds of growing children are polluted by these media of communication.

Person endowed with shraddha gains wisdom

Man has to cleanse his mind of four blemishes before he can overcome the disaster that is fast overtaking him. They are *Ashraddha*, *Krodha*, *Avishwaasam* and *Chintha*---(want of steady application in work, anger, faltering faith in oneself and a perpetual sense of worry).

First' *Shraddha* (steady interest) and application in the discharge of one's duty. It is said that the person endowed with *shraddha* gains *jnaana* (wisdom). How can *jnaana* be won by half-hearted dedication? Youth today is very flighty; they are carried away by fantasies, whims and fancies. They are reluctant to dive deep into the truth of themselves or the outer world, They run after the sheets of water they perceive in mirages; can glow-worms light, a lamp? Frivolities and fancies cannot grant peace and happiness; what is really worth while has to be discovered first; then, steady effort must follow to gain them.

Anger is injurious to the progress of youth

Krodha (anger) is deadly poison. It affects others by its fumes, manifested through the eye, the tongue and the hands. The seed of a poison tree sprouts into a poisonous plant and when it becomes a big tree, its leaves, flowers and fruits will be certainly poisonous. So too, the person addicted to anger can only emanate poison, through thought, word and deed. An angry thought is like a pebble thrown into the calm waters of the *Maanasa-sarovar* (Mind-lake), inside man. It creates a circular effect which spreads through the entire lake. Anger is very injurious to the progress of youth. Strive by all means to prevent the poison entering your mental make-up. Cultivate love, kindness, the spirit of *seva*, and encourage all thoughts of co-operation with others See the Divinity in each one, as you must see it in your own selves.

The third handicap is *Avishwasam* (weak faith in oneself). Now, you have faith in the body and its appurtenances and not in the inner motivator, the charioteer. That is why, faith falters when some minor calamity happens. Contemplate on the impermanence of wealth, fame, worldly friendship, etc. Youth today have faith in unreal, transient, momentary pleasures and pastimes. They have no knowledge of the-eternal, the changeless, the ever-blissful. Precious years of life are thus wasted in worthless pursuits. Cultivate faith in the value of *seva*; believe that love can overcome hatred. Have faith in righteousness and the moral life. This is called *dharma* (righteousness) since, *dhara* means that which is worn, that which envelops, that which proteus, etc. Do not stray into wrong paths, enticed by sensual desires and plans for self-aggrandizement.

The next attitude to overcome is '*chinta*' (the habit of sliding into worry and despot). Once this weed takes root in the mind of man, it assumes many forms to assert its hold. Every stage of life is fraught with anxiety; every step in the progress of man is a cause for worry. In fact, birth, death, old age, illness, every one of these multiply worries of their own. How to get sleep is a cause for worry; how to get up from the bed is another worry! Today admission to Colleges causes worry; admission to the hostel is another worry; the examination causes worry. But these are matters that are not essential. They need not cause so much heart-burning as the problem of removing the fundamental error in the thought process---the ignoring of the Divine that inspires and guides you always and for ever.

Science can give only incomplete information

Jnana (Knowledge) is usually associated with two ways of acquisition---the worldly or the material and the Spiritual or *Brahman* path. The worldly path is like a pair of scissors. It cuts knowledge into pieces. The *Brahman* path is like a needle---it makes the separate parts into One and indivisible. The *saadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) must be aware of both. When you declare a person to be a *jnaani* (liberated person, he has passed through these two stages.

Science or the study of observable sensory matter, of measurable and calculable items, can give only incomplete information. The sea has pearls in its depths; but, you have to dive into it to secure them. The waves throw out only shells. You are celebrating Swaami's Birthday today in this College. It is only when brotherliness, devotion, dedication and discipline are cultivated that Swaami can be installed in your hearts. Do everything to develop love and to share that love with all, especially with the villages from which you come and take up projects of bettering their moral and economic condition.

7-12-1978

When you cultivate the attitude that you are the body, the body will demand from you more food, more variety in food, more attention to appearance and physical comfort.

A large portion of the food now consumed is superfluous; man can live healthily on much less. A good deal of effort and expenditure now spent to cater to taste and to social pomp can be given up, and health too will improve thereby.

Mitha thindi, athi haayi---"*Moderate food gives excellent health.*"
Gourmets only reveal their Thamoguna (quality of inertia and indolence). Eat to live; do not believe that you live in order to eat.

Sri Sathya Sai

16. Isa

THE followers of every religion, in their own way and style, call upon the One God who is Omnipresent. It is the same God who confers upon all mankind, health, prosperity, peace and happiness. No religion has a separate God showering Grace upon those who profess to abide by that faith alone! It is the destiny of man to journey from humanity to Divinity. In this pilgrimage he is bound to encounter various obstacles and trials. In order to illumine the path and help him overcome these troubles, sages, seers, realised souls, Divine personalities and Incarnations of God take birth in human form. They move among the afflicted and the seekers who have lost their way or strayed into the desert, and lead them into confidence and courage. Certain personalities are born and live out their days for this very purpose. They can be called *kaarana-janmas* (born for a purpose), for they take on *the janma* (birth) for a *kaarana* (cause, purpose). Such guides, exemplars and leaders, appear among all peoples and in all lands. They inspire faith in higher ideals, and teach in the Voice of God, counselling from the heart.

Of course there are many aspirants who by their devotion, dedication and disciplined lives, attain the vision of the Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient One. They are content with the Bliss they have won for themselves. There are others who go out to share this bliss with those beyond the pale; they guide and lead and are blessed thereby. They teach that multiplicity is a delusion and that Unity is the Reality.

The three stages of Jesus' life

Jesus was *kaarana-janma*, a Master born with a purpose, the mission of restoring love, charity and compassion in the heart of man. He had no attachment to the self, nor paid any heed to joy or sorrow, loss or gain. He had a heart that responded to the call of anguish, and he went about the land preaching the lesson of love. His life was a libation for the upliftment of humanity.

Like most seekers, he first searched for the Divine · in the objective world. But he soon realised that the world is a kaleidoscopic picture created by one's own imagination, and sought to find God within himself. His stay in the Himaalayan monasteries in Kashmir and in other centres of eastern asceticism and philosophical inquiry, gave him greater awareness. From the attitude of being a Messenger of God, he could now call himself the Son of Clod. The bond of relationship increased: the 'I' was no more some distant light or entity; the light became a part of the "I." With the body-consciousness predominant, he was a messenger. With the heart-consciousness in the ascendant, he-felt a greater nearness and dearness, and so the son-father bond seems natural at this stage.

Later as the *Aathman-consciousness* was established, Jesus could declare, "I and 'My Father are One." The three stages may be described as: "I was in the Light," "the Light was in me," and "I am the light," and may be compared to the *Dhwaitha* (dualism), *Visishtaadhwaitha'* (qualified non-dualism) and *Adhwaitha* (non-dualism) stages as described in *Vedhic* philosophy. The final stage is the one when all duality has been shed. This is the essence of all religious disciplines and teachings.

Jesus' original name was Isa

Jesus was honoured by the populace as Christ, for they found in his thoughts, words and deeds, no trace of ego. He had no envy or hatred, and was full of love and charity, humility and sympathy. Jesus' original name was Isa which, when repeated, is Sai. *Isa* and *Sai*, both mean

Ishwara (God), the Eternal Absolute, the *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being-Awareness-Bliss). In the Tibetan manuscript, at the monastery where Isa spent some years, his name is written as Isha, which means the Lord of all living beings.

When Jesus proclaimed that he was the Messenger of God, he wanted to emphasise that every one is a messenger of God and has to speak, act and think like one. This is the true *Karma-Kaanda* (branch dealing with action and its reaction) of the *Vedhas*: *saadhana* (discipline) of *karma* (work), *japa* (prayer), *seva* (service) and *dhyaana* (meditation). When progress is furthered, Jesus asserted, each one can recognise all as Sons of God, Children of God, brothers and sisters of oneself, and so, deserving of worship. The *Upaasana Kaanda* (branch of *Vedhas* dealing with contemplation) is the scripture in *Sanaathana Dharma* (Eternal Universal Religion) for this stage. Finally, knowledge ripens into wisdom and the goal of *Jnaana Kaanda* (branch of *Vedhas* dealing with spiritual wisdom) is reached, when each one realises, "I and my Father are One."

Do not confine Jesus to one community

The Birthday of Jesus must be celebrated by all mankind, for such *kaarana-janmas* belong to the whole human race. They should not be confined to a single country or community. Jesus found that scholars and ritualists had befogged the true religion, He engaged himself in teaching both spirituality and morality, for education is the very light of life. Jesus found that people were running after glass beads, imagining them to be diamonds and attaching great value to them. He went round the holy shrines and discovered that they had become bazaars where Grace was being bargained and commercialised. He condemned the priesthood which tolerated and encouraged these practises. So he drew upon himself the anger of the heads of temples and monasteries. They tempted one of his disciples with 30 silver pieces, to betray him into their hands.

The Roman rulers were told that Jesus was attempting to assert himself as King and so could be punished for treason. Their insistence made the Governor order his crucifixion. When the nails were being driven into him to fix him on the Cross, Jesus heard the Voice of the Father saying, "All life is one, My dear Son. Be alike to every one," and he pleaded that those who were crucifying him may be pardoned for they knew not what they did. Jesus sacrificed himself for the sake of mankind.

Carols and candles, readings from the Bible and acting out the incidents that surrounded His Birth, are not enough to celebrate the Birth of Jesus. Jesus said that the bread taken in the 'last supper' was His Flesh, and the wine, His Blood. He meant that all beings alive with flesh and blood are to be treated as He Himself and that no distinction should be made. of friend or foe, we or they. Every body is His Body, sustained by the bread; every drop of blood flowing in the veins of every living being is His, animated by the activity that the wine imparted to it. That is to say, every man is Divine and has to be revered as such.

Man forgets or ignores the goal of life

You work as a messenger or servant; later, you worship, as a son does his father, and finally, you achieve the wisdom that You and He are One. That is the spiritual journey of which Jesus has shown the way in clear terms. He announced very early in life that he had come to illumine the spiritual path. Even as a bud, he emitted fragrance. He had the light in him, or else how can the tiny glow-worm light a lamp?

To elevate man, to raise the level of his consciousness, He has to incarnate as man. He has to speak to them in their own style and language, He has to teach them the methods that they can adopt and practise. Birds and beasts need no Divine Incarnation to guide them, for they have no inclination to stray away from their *dharma*. Man alone forgets or ignores the goal of life.

Christmas day, Prashanthi Nilayam, 25-12-1978

17. Why this ashaanthi?

LIFE as a human being is granted to living beings as the crown of their achievement during many lives. But that life is very unsteady; Death is always stalking a living being and nobody knows when it will snatch a man away. Therefore there should be no delay in fixing upon the goal of life and deciding on the best means of reaching it. One has to turn from the outer environment and its attractions to the inner levels of consciousness. This journey will be rewarded very well because there are precious treasures of ecstasy available. The sea shatters on the shore only shells and foam. But if one dares to dive into the depths he will be rewarded by coral and pearls. This is the real mission of man. If he misses it he is born and dies as an animal which has no knowledge of its inner springs of joy. He who has discovered this inner spring will be *Aathmaa Raama*, happy and content, peaceful and loving.

All the fear, anxiety, cruelty and injustice that is injuring the world today is caused by the wrong type of material education which lays emphasis more on the many than on the One. Even those who promise to cure the disease of the body treat it as if its different parts are fit subjects for a separate study and treatment. All nature is the body of God and must be looked upon as One. Spiritual education draws attention to the One behind all these apparent multiplicity.

***Uttharaayana* teaches us great lessons**

Today is the Pongal festival in Tamil Nadu. It is the day of *Uttharaayana* when the Sun turns daily more and more towards the north for a six-month period which is considered holier than the other six months. Pongal means bolling over, spilling over of milk, that is to say, the heart must spill over with delight at the great lessons that the *Uttharaayana* teaches us. The Sun is the presiding deity of the eye as well as the intellect and when the Sun turns north we must also decide to turn towards the holy path of God realisation. When Arjuna and Dhuryodhana were together with Sri Krishna to seek his help during the Kurukshethra war Arjuna chose the path of God while Dhuryodhana preferred the path of material power. If one has God on one side what can he not achieve.

The more riches you accumulate the more bound you become, the more worry, anxiety and fear you get into. There can be no peace of mind for a person burdened by riches. People seek this *Ashaanthi* (restlessness) since they do not know where *Shaanthi* (peace) can be acquired. An educated man must have as his first qualification the virtue, of *Shaanthi*, that is to say, not being affected by praise or blame, failure or success. It is the ego that makes one feel glad or sad. Therefore control the ego by extending love to every living being. Self or ego is lovelessness. No person who is afflicted with ego can feel happy when others are happy and feel miserable when others are miserable or can take positive step to share the happiness and misery of others. Without this deep love, a person however highly educated, is only a danger to the community.

Today you have dusted and cleaned your houses and their surroundings, painted and whitewashed the walls; you have drawn auspicious designs on the floor; you have tied up festoons and floral wreaths over your doors. All this is simply outer decoration. Decide to remove the evils of egotism, greed, hatred and jealousy and become aware in the new light that will dawn in the *Aathma* (Supreme soul) in all its glory.

Madras, 15-1-1979

Silence has to be started with oneself; that is to say, one must talk less, and think more deliberately, more discriminatingly. One must try to empty the mind of impulses, prejudices and preferences. Thus, man must strive to reach down to his real nature or dharma, which is Divine, Dharma swaruupa (righteousness personified).

Sri Sathya Sai

18. Work for peace

CITIES have today become like turbulent seas, whose residents move in tossing boats surrounded by darkness. For these desperate people the spiritual ideal, shining bright, is the only guide to safety. The countryside is fast getting tinted by the culture of the cities and the distress is spreading everywhere. This is the spirit of the times. Entangled in this spirit, man accumulates all types of desires in his mind which, when not fulfilled, he becomes desperate and ends his life in unspeakable distress. Man forgets that his innermost desire, which he should cherish, is the desire for good and for God. All other desires are mean and meaningless. Man has been endowed with the power of discrimination between the essentially good and the superficially pleasant, but he does not cultivate that faculty and benefit from it.

The Paandava brothers were highly fortunate. The eldest, Dharmaraaja, rose to be the Emperor. The second was the indomitable Bheema, armed with the terrible mace. The third was Arjuna, son of the Lord of the Gods, Indhra. The Lord poured His Grace on Arjuna and deigned to serve him in battle as his charioteer! In spite of all these advantages, they were subjected to the severest tragedies in life. What is the lesson that their lives teach? No one can predict what calamity will overtake one and at what time. Everything depends on the Will of Providence; it all happens according to the Divine Plan.

Renunciation alone can grant immortality

Where exactly does God reside? He is everywhere, in all beings. He is termed Omniscient and Omnipresent. Really speaking, He is love, and love pervades everywhere. That is all we need to know. There is no being without a trace of love. Love leads to *aanandha* (Supreme bliss), pure and lasting. Many seek this *aanandha* through their relationships with other individuals, others try to attain it by amassing fame, power and riches and a few attempt to gain it by renunciation of material possessions and the desire for worldly pleasures. Detachment alone can confer *Aanandha*. The *Upanishaths* proclaim that *thyaaga* (sacrifice) alone can grant *Atarithathwa* (Bliss of Immortality). One has to ignore all bonds of kinship and comradeship, give up all attachment and affection and, in the heart thus liberated, install God in all His Glow. This is the only means to earn everlasting, undiminished *aanandha*.

The Yaadhavas of Dhwaaraka were attached to Krishna by bonds of kinship and they were happy and proud of this relationship. But how did they fare in the end? They fought among themselves and were destroyed. The *gopees* (cowherd girls), however, installed Krishna in their hearts. They overcame their little selves and identified themselves with the Lord. So they realised the Goal. Surrender is the secret of spiritual triumph.

Share your joy with others less fortunate

People praise the late Naaraayana Bhat, the founder of the Lok Seva Vrindha complex of educational institutions, later taken over by the Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust. But praise is no substitute for love. Love must prompt enthusiastic fulfillment of the work to which Naaraayana Bhat dedicated his life.

Bhakthi (devotion) is usually taken to mean repetition of the Name, the recitation of psalms and hymns and rituals to propitiate God and win His Mercy. Even meditation on God and His compassion cannot be termed genuine *bhakthi*. All these spiritual *saadhanas* (spiritual practices) have a shade of selfishness darkening them. Vyaasa has declared that service to man is the

highest form of worship. Do not offend or harm anyone, that is true adoration of God; for, in truth, the other is you yourself. Awareness of this Truth is *moksha* (liberation). Share your joy, your wealth and your knowledge, with others less fortunate; that is the surest means of earning Divine Grace.

Perform all acts with as much love as you would offer God. In truth, you eat for the satisfaction of the 'I' in you and dress up to please the self-same 'I.' The husband loves his wife for the sake of the 'I' and the wife adores her husband for pleasing her 'I.' And who is this 'I' that is persistently inherent in everyone? It is God Himself "*Ishwarah Sarva Bhuuthaanaam*" (the Lord resides in the heart of every being), says the Geetha. He is the *aathman* (divinity) in every being. He is the *Aathman* in everyone, the *Paramaathman* (Supreme Soul). You, in your ignorance, have hidden It under the twin sheaths of mind and body, and you believe that the mind and body are the real 'you.' But there are three 'yous'---the one you think you are, the one others think you are and the one you really are. You think you are the body, others think you are the mind, while you really are the *Aathman*.

As all are *Aathman*, sparks of the One *Paramaathman*, do not think evil of anyone for that would mean inflicting evil upon yourself. You heard the statement, '*Sarva dheva namaskaarah Keshavam prathigachchathi*' (Homage paid to any God reaches Keshava). I state now, '*Sarva jeeva thiraskaarah Keshavam prathigachchathi*' (The insult you pay to any living being reaches Keshava), for Keshava is the Inner Reality of all. If you cannot serve others, leave them alone; do not deal dis-service.

Feeding the hungry is the urgent *seva*

Now the cry for peace rings from every heart. From the prime minister down to the beggar, all ask for peace and aspire for peace. But peace cannot be purchased from the bazaar, nor can it be manufactured by industrial undertakings. It can be secured by acts and activities charged with love. Holding a cup of salt water in the hand you cannot, by mere slogans, make it potable and sweet.

This is a holy place because you pay sincere attention to the proper development of the children under your care and devote your efforts to transmute them into sublime individuals and worthy sons and daughters of this sacred land. This is the only means by which we can ensure the welfare and prosperity of this country. Politics is powerless; it cannot save us. Machines and machinations cannot rescue us. Only by installing in our hearts the sacred ideals of Indian culture and marching forward towards those goals, can peace be attained.

Naaraayana seva, which is feeding the hungry with reverence and humility, is the *seva* that is urgent today. The cry for food is being heard everywhere, though if each one worked hard, the problem would not arise at all. We talk of stomachs to be filled, but each stomach arrives in the world with two hands. Those hands, if they are kept idle or unskilled, cannot fulfil their assignment of finding the food for the stomach. Work hard---that is the message. And share the gain with others. The harder you work, the greater your gain, the more you can share. Work hard and, more important still, work together with others in loving kinship.

Alike, South Kaanara District, Karnaataka, 25-1-1979

Let God work through you, and there will be no more duty. Let God shine forth. Let God show Himself. Live God, Eat God, Drink God, Breathe God. Realise the Truth, and the other things will take care of themselves.

Sri Sathya Sai

19. Colour on canvas

THERE is only one God and He is Omnipresent. True, But to concentrate on the Omnipresent, some fixed point or preliminary form is needed. And to conceive of the Divine as present everywhere at all times, the mind of man is to be clarified and purified by means of certain psychological processes called *saadhanas* (spiritual efforts). This is the reason why not only among the followers of Hindhuism but also among Christians and Buddhists, regular rituals are prescribed for the worship of idols of God. Cynics question the validity of this type of adoration and say that will only confirm faith in a superstition. "Can God be a stone or a piece of paper?" they ask. This attitude is not correct. By adhering to the traditionally laid down ritual worship, many aspirants have attained the vision of the Omnipresent and stayed in that Incommunicable Bliss.

In fact, *puuja* (formal worship, at regular hours, with the recitation of hymns and songs) is the very first step in the spiritual pilgrimage. Many seekers have undoubtedly achieved an awareness of God by years of asceticism among jungle caves. But, starting early with *puuja* and continuing with scrupulous care, the rites of *archana*, *bhajana* and *aaradhana* (offering of flowers with repetition of God's Name, singing His glory and adoring Him as a living presence) are more fruitful and satisfying.

We realise that God is in the icon also

Meerabai, Sakkubai,-Suurdhaas, Kabeerdhaas, Shankaraachaarya and many other saints and realised souls have proved in their lives that the time, attention and energy spent, in these religious practices is well spent. By *aaradhana* only were they able to visualise the Divine in the specific form which they used as the instrument.

The entire English literature is made up of permutations and combinations of the 26 letters of the alphabet. *Puuja* (ritual worship), *japa* (recitation of holy Names), *archana* (offering of flowers with God's Names) and *aaradhana* (Divine service) are the letters of the spiritual alphabet. The collection of the various items necessary for worship (lamps, camphor, flowers, plates, cups, a bell and the book) needs hours-long concentration on the Divine. *The puuja* itself may take another hour or two of concentrated and purificatory attention, and the performer rises up after the recitation and-meditation, a stronger and steadier pilgrim on the path.

The Omnipresent is not absent in the icon or the picture. We do not reduce God and shut Him up in a stone image; we affirm and realise that He is in the icon also. We raise the image to the dimensions of the absolute; we expand the picture far beyond its frame and through the processes of *saadhana* we become aware that the picture, too, can be made a tool for the mind to escape from its limitations.

Offer Puuja with a purified heart

When the Mahaaraaja of Alwar (in Rajasthan) argued before Swaami Vivekaanandha that God can never be perceived in a picture drawn by an artist, Vivekaanandha called upon the prime minister who was standing reverently by, to get the Mahaaraaja's portrait down from the wall and asked him to spit on it! He said, "You need not hesitate. The Mahaaraaja says that it is just a blotch of colours on a bit of canvas and that it should not be confused with His Majesty."

The sixteen modes of worship laid down in the *Shaastras* (sciences of spirituality) to make the aspirant aware that he is in the very presence and that every gesture and movement of his has to be motivated by devotion and dedication, ensure the purification of the mind of man from ego and all its brood of blemishes. This is *chiththa suddhi*---the cleansing of all levels of one's consciousness.

The basic *chiththa* (inner consciousness) has to be freed from down-pulling impulses. Of what good is it to cook a rare and costly dish in a vessel contaminated by dirt? Of what good is it to plant a precious seed in rocky soil? *Puuja* or *archana* offered without a purified heart is sheer waste of time. But even a short sincere session of *puuja* spent in Divine Awareness yields much fruit. Thiruththondar, a Tamil saint, confessed that he had engaged himself in worship of the Lord's idol in order to cleanse his mind.

The material and the Form are inseparable, but the seeker must dwell on the Form which he desires to be manifested in all Its Glory, rather than on the material. He must dwell long and deep over the thought that Go is found through every particle in the universe, free from any limitations of space and time.

Great devotees have no identity of their own

Ceaseless effort is necessary to gain and possess *chiththa suddhi*, One has to be ever in *sathsang* (holy company) and in activities devoted to the service of God in all human forms. In the Geetha one can notice Krishna addressing Arjuna as '*Kurunandhana*.' The usual meaning given by scholars to this appellation is, "the scion of the *Kuru* clan," though it has a much more profound lesson to teach mankind. *Kuru*, in Samskrith, means '*do*,' and *nandhana* means, 'he who takes delight in.' Hence Krishna, by addressing Arjuna as *Kuru nandhana*, was appreciating the retrans-formation in him from inaction to action, for Arjuna was one who took delight in being active. For most of you Sunday is a holiday, a day in which you delight. But for Arjuna, the day which He could devote to God's work was indeed a 'Holy Day.'

You must have heard the common people in India believe that when the thunder is threatening overhead, the simultaneous recitation of Arjuna's nine names keep a bolt from falling on them. This is proof of the power that not only the Names of God but also those of His devoted adherents---ever pure and ever in contact with the Absolute---have over the elements. That is the reason why *aaraadhana* (worship of the Presence) is offered even to great devotees like Thyaagaraaja and Kabeer. They have no identity of their own, having become one with the limitless through the worship of the limited.

Brindhaavan, 6-2-1979

It is running after vishaya vaasana---attachment to sense objects---that produces all this discontent. That vaasana, that type of desire, has no end.

Once you become a slave to the senses, they will not leave hold of you until your death. It is an unquenchable thirst. But I call you to Me and even grant worldly boons, so that you may turn Godward.

No Avathaara has done like this before, going among the people, the masses, the millions, and counselling them, guiding them,

consoling them, uplifting them, directing them along the path of Sathya, Dharma, Shaanthy and Prema (truth, Virtue, Peace and Love).

Sri Sathya Sai

20. The New Year pledge

TODAY is the holy Ugaadhi (Telugu New Year) day. We bid farewell to the year gone by and welcome the new year. We hope that during this year called Siddhaarthi our time and activity will be meaningful. We pray that the new spring should confer on all beings longevity, health and goodness. Pleasant experiences and unpleasant memories of the previous year that linger in the mind contain many good lessons. When one reviews the past year within oneself, one can realise how much time was spent selfishly and how much in service.

Man has achieved some progress physically and scientifically but morally he has fallen. He is sliding down due to his egotism. What is the cause of this fall? Selfishness, ignorance and *avidhya* (absence of wisdom) are the only causes. It is selfishness that is now operating behind every thought, word and deed. Those who seek the joy of liberation should burn this selfishness in the fire of *jnaana* (spiritual wisdom). Otherwise there is no future.

Do not misuse time which is precious. Time fleets fast. The span of life is like a porous pot. Not to realise this is the basic ignorance. Make good use of time by recognising what is permanent and true in human life.

Cultivate the spiritual feeling of oneness

There are 5,64,000 small villages in our country. Their condition is sad and pitiable. People like you living in the towns must involve themselves in social services programmes and help these fellowmen. It is because of your selfishness that you become useless to others. When can you recognise the good in others? You entertain all kinds of hopes and finally get deceived. People preach a million things but do not practise even one.

We say from platforms "Brothers and Sisters." We feel that we are all brothers. But, even real brothers wrangle over properties and go upto the Supreme Court in litigation. So, instead of thinking that we are brothers merely in words we should cultivate the higher spiritual feeling of 'Oneness.' The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man become meaningful only then.

Today is the holy Ugaadhi day. It is not enough if we wear new clothes and partake in feasts. Launch a new movement to mark the new year. People in the villages have no medical and educational facilities. They have no drinking water, no sanitary arrangements. They have no food to eat. Provide these facilities for them and thereby realise Divinity. The need of the hour is the man of action, not the one who only talks. Our *Bhaarthabhumi* (land of Bharath, India) is *Karmabhumi* (land of sacred action). *Karma* is exertion, effort. *Bhaarthabhumi* is also the land which is known for its love of God.

Put the money to use of people in distress

Today our lives are tainted by a desire for wealth. Wealth makes a man intoxicated and mad. Money is necessary but it must have a limit. Excessive money can be harmful to the 'mind. It is more difficult to spend money than to earn it. It is even more difficult to take care of money. This difficulty has an advantage---put the money to good use by spending it for the rural folk and people in distress. It is not '*Dhanamoolam idham jagath*' (money is the basis of this mundane world) but '*Dharmamoolam idham jagath*' (righteousness is the basis of this world). If money grows, unrest also grows. Money brings sorrow with it. A rich man is harassed from three sides--the Government, his relations and thieves. God alone knows the agony suffered by a rich man.

Those who amass wealth for the sake of their sons, themselves suffer privations, and ruin the very sons. So, give away your money in charity and make it purposeful. Members of Sathya Sai Organisations must tour every village and improve the lot of the rural folk. This is a new challenge for the members of the organisation.

I shall visit every village along with you, serve them without any discrimination of caste, creed, race and class. I wish that the Sathya Sai Organisations should, from this day onwards, undertake programmes of rural uplift, go to each village and provide educational and medical facilities. Meditation and penance are useful to one's own self only but the good of the world at large is achieved through sacrifice. The *Upanishaths* refer to "sacrifice as the only means of *salvation*"--- *Thyaagenaikena Amrithathwamaanasuh*. So, I wish that from today onwards members of Sathya Sai Organisations should develop the spirit of sacrifice and provide the basic necessities of life for the rural masses. It is in the villages that a certain amount of morality and honesty is still left. I hope that all rich people will strive to improve the condition of the villages.

Does a festival mean only wearing new clothes and eating sweets? Get rid of old ideas and plant new ones. The bitter-sweet mix served on the *Ugaadhi* day symbolizes that one should treat pleasure and pain equally.

Children and students must be trained to serve in rural areas. There are 2,55,00,000 children in our country today. Forty percent among them go about begging. It is not good to keep quiet when there are such hardship in the society around. We should give up *japa* and *saadhana* and uplift such people through service and sacrifice. We should feel that *Jane Seva* is *Janaardhana Seva* and *Maanava Seva* is *Maadhava Seva* (service to people is service to God).

All of you should take the pledge on this New Year Day that you will serve the rural people to the best of your ability. You must do this as a sacred duty which goes beyond differences of politics, caste and creed. Such a feeling is strengthened by self-confidence and equanimity in joy and sorrow. We say we are all children of Bhaarath but in what way are we sustaining the culture of Bhaarath? Our culture cannot be sustained without proper faith on our part. Faith and self-confidence are essential for spiritual progress.

With the hope that you will regard service to villages as service to God, I offer my blessings to you.

Shivam, Hydherabad, 28-3-1979

21. Security for society

TODAY man can, thanks to the advancement in science and technology, move about in space and underwater, land on the moon and listen to the stars, but the pity of it is, he has lost the secret of living on earth with peace in his heart and in harmony with his fellowmen. He can beat the bird in the sky and the fishes in the sea, but he is helpless as a man. The innate purpose for which he has earned this human birth is being neglected in frantic pursuit of the petty pleasures derivable from the outer world. Thus he is only laying waste the years given to him. There is a divinity, higher than humanity, that is behind and beneath all man's activities. But, man is not aware of it and he fails to benefit by that awareness. His first task is to cognise this source of joy and peace. That divinity is like the thread in which the flowers are strung; we see only the garland; we do not cognise that string that holds the flowers together and makes a garland out of a heap of blossoms.

Mankind is strung together by this inherent divinity. I see in this campus people from all the States and all the linguistic areas of our country. I look upon this gathering as a garden shining with multicoloured blossoms. But, in spite of these differences and as a result of the underlying unity, you have met here in this Academy with the same ideal, undergoing the same training and welcoming the same series of experiences.

Three Guidelines to be followed in life

I wish to emphasise three guidelines or *Suuthras* which have to be followed to ensure success in your endeavours. Your responsibilities and your duties require that you should pay attention to these three. They are: Duty, Discipline and Devotion.

For the Police, especially, discipline is essential. Your job involves many trying moments, many worries and much exertion. Really, you are the custodians of peace and guards of security. Therefore, a disciplined mind that ever remains in equanimity is very necessary for you to lead peaceful happy lives. Equanimity can arise only from the spring of devotion in the heart.

These days, even those who are educated and those who benefit by training courses such as yours, are anxious about the future and full of fear lest the standard of life to which they are accustomed may fall. How and by what means can I increase comforts in my life?---that is the concern of everybody. No one worries about the happiness that he can contribute, the joy he can give, the duty he can discharge. Every one is calculating the happiness others can give him, the joy he can extract from society and the duty that society owes to him. The number of those who concentrate on their responsibilities rather than their wants is very small. How can I as an individual get the maximum benefit out of society?---that is the urge. But, people forget that it is their primary duty to safeguard the security and prosperity of the society of which they are the limbs.

Renounce selfish desires and have peace

It is only when the individual is prepared to sacrifice his selfish desires and toil for the welfare of society---that the nation will prosper. Then only will the world have peace. That is why the *Vedhas* proclaim that man can have peace only when he renounces selfish desires. The *Vedhas* condemn persons who accumulate wealth and who are ever immersed in activities that can add to their physical comfort. The man who gives, receives even while he gives, more than what he

gives. Do not strive for your own happiness but strive for the happiness of all; then you can derive greater happiness, with additional joy of having added to the happiness to others.

When you joined this Department of Public Service, you dedicated yourself to the service of society and you decided to welcome all the incidental troubles and worries. You renounced an easy-going life in favour of the higher ideal of ensuring peace, safety and security in society. Faith in an Omnipresent God will sustain you when you are overwhelmed by the 'ups and downs of life. Cultivate devotion and dedication and you can be ever at peace with yourself and the world. For, then, you can fulfil your duties with joy and with all your strength.

Promote devotion through duty & discipline

Nowadays, every person in authority talks of discipline and exhorts others to be disciplined, but we do not find in those persons even a trace of what they want others to have! You have come here, many of you, far from your own states, for the purpose of equipping yourselves better for the jobs you have entered into. Feel it as your duty to benefit to the utmost from the course of training given here. Otherwise, you will be doing great injury to your own careers, and, more serious than this, causing injury to your motherland.

Children of Bhaarath must live, not for the salary they get but for the chance of service they have secured. I advise you to develop faith in God and promote that devotion through duty and discipline. Earn fame as sincere servants of society and vigilant guardians of its safety.

Without an ever present faith in an all-knowing God, life is dry and drab, shadowed by despair and doom. Love for God and fear of sin, are the two primary needs for a happy life. Without these two, man becomes a monster. Man must be ever ready to sacrifice his selfish needs for the sake of the larger community. There is nothing so glorious as renunciation. Be honest, be proficient in detachment and with God installed in your hearts march forward to offer your talents and skills for the duties you have undertaken.

National Police Academy, Hydherabadh, 29-3-1979

22. Transplantation of the heart

A TEMPLE is a reminder to the people around of the goal of life; it is a guide to greater spiritual endeavour; it is a step towards the Almighty; it is a warning against the vain pursuit after sensual pleasures. They reveal the path by which man can fulfil his destiny, realise the purpose for which he has been endowed with the human body with all its unique treasures of discrimination, imagination, intuition and capacity to keep aloof from material attractions. So, you must be appreciated for your efforts to have a temple in your village and inaugurate it today.

Embodiments of Love! Man is a bundle of bones clothed in muscle and fitted with communication nerves. As a base of this gross body, he has a subtle body too. It has its own hunger and thirst and life cannot be happy unless these too are fulfilled---the hunger to return to the Source, a thirst for the nectar that confers immortality. In the search for something to allay this hunger and this thirst, man meets with countless obstacles, for, he does not know the road and is easily misled by his own senses which profess to show him the road. It is only when some disaster or distress overpowers him that he becomes aware of the true path. The true path is the path that reveals the *Aathma* within.

Trust in God strengthens faith in fellowmen

Just as a branch is part of the tree and is able to exist as the part, so each one of you is a part of *Brahman* (Supreme Being), the *Paramaathma* (Universal Self). Each one is part of the One and shines because of the same Divine current that flows in and through. Villagers are leading lives and spending their days without the awareness of this unity of one with all. So, there are factions and groups in every village, which prevent welfare and prosperity, peace and harmony. Villagers must recapture and develop mutual cooperation; they must preserve unity and cultivate love and joy. Spend some time each day together in *bhajan* (devotional songs sung in groups) and *sathsang* (good company) in this temple. Then, the day will be brighter, the conversation will be sweeter and life will be more full of harmony and happiness. Trusting in God strengthens your faith in your fellow men. You will love them more, suffer their faults and failings with greater sympathy and you will share in activities that serve the poor and the disabled. You will come to know-that God loves those who love His children and He will shower grace on those who serve the weak, the meek and the ignorant.

Not only is this building in which the image of God has been installed, but the body of living being is a temple, for, God has installed Himself therein and is waiting for recognition and reverential worship. That recognition will confer on us unbounded Bliss---far more than any worldly possession can give, far purer than any victory can confer. To recognise it, your minds have to be cleansed through good words, good thoughts and good deeds. Where can a fish find the greatest happiness---in water, in a full flooded river or the sea? Place it in a gem,set golden plate; can it derive any joy from that good fortune? No. So too, man can be happy only when he is merged in thoughts of the God from whom he has come, by whom he lives and into whom he merges.

A temple is essential for a living village

From dawn to dusk you toil for eking out a livelihood; I am asking you to devote at least ten minutes a day to join in *Sathsang*, to meditate on the glory of God who watches over us and to decide, in consultation with our brothers, the best way to promote prosperity and unity.

This day, you have achieved a task; you have completed the construction of a temple. But, why should this achievement be appreciated? For, just as a heart is essential for a living body, a temple is essential for a living village. The heart purifies the blood and pumps strength to all parts of the body. The temple calls all to the Feet of God, corrects their faults, and purifies the minds, of every one who worships the God installed therein. I advise you to gather here in the evening, after the day's toil, sing some *bhajan* songs and enjoy yourselves in *Naamasmarana*. That is the best and easiest *saadhana* in this age of anxiety and fear, this *Kali Yuga* (Iron Age) of wickedness and vice.

Ignore and destroy divisive tendencies

Do not run to the officers of Government for every little petty problem. Try to be as self-reliant as possible; endeavour to stand on your own feet. Be industrious. Be efficient and enthusiastic in the work that has come to you as your share in life. God has provided two hands for every stomach. If those hands work assiduously and intelligently, they can, without doubt, fill that little stomach. The trouble is: we are loath to work. We welcome every chance to talk and teach. But, speech cannot fill the hungry stomach. Work, work, dedicated work, intelligent work---that is what is needed. Work unitedly. Our villagers are broken into factions and parties. They are not aware of the vast possibilities of unity. If you meditate every day on God as the inner core, the real flame of love, power and wisdom, in each inhabitant of the village---man, woman and child, high and low, rich and poor, learned and illiterate---then you will not emphasise the differences and quarrel. Then anger, envy and hatred cannot enter your broad heart. Love will be the only quality welcomed therein and emanating therefrom.

I advise you therefore to ignore and destroy any such divisive tendencies in your heart. The Name of God is the overhanging branch which a mankind falling down a precipice can hold on to in order to be saved. So, in each part of the village, have these *Sathsangs* and carry on *Bhajan* in this temple every day in the evening hours. This day should mark a new era in this village. Welcome all improvements and facilities that may accrue to your village but more than all, develop mutual trust, mutual cooperation and joint effort based on love and reverence to all. Be assured that the more you cultivate these qualities, the greater the shower of grace that the Omnipresent God will bless you with.

Nagar-Kurnool, 30- 3-1979

If mathi (intellect) is reformed, that is to say, if one's impulses are transmuted, then one's matha (religion) is praise worthy. Otherwise, if one obeys the whims of an untutored mind, its religion is bound to be a source of evil.

We have to pay attention to the plans that intelligence dictates, not the external signs of orthodoxy. A person may appear strictly orthodox, but his heart may be filled with the poison of hatred and envy. Has he realised that God is the God of all, that He is present in every being?

God is the unseen, everpresent, immanent energy in all things; this has to be realised by every aspirant, or else, his aspiration can

never be fulfilled. Reasoning by itself will lead one to this conclusion of the unity of all matter and of all energy.

Sri Sathya Sai

23. What is Vidhya?

STUDENTS ! Remember that it is only with the result of the merit which was accumulated by you during many lives that you have been able to join these Sathya Sai Loka Seva Educational Institutions. What does the word student mean? It means a person dedicated to study. He is called *Vidhyarthi* because he seeks *Vidhya* (knowledge). What does *vidhya* mean? *Vid* means Light and *ya* means that which gives light. Of course our eyes give us light because they are blessed by the Sun. They make things in nature clearer and clearer. Thus we have five senses which collect information about nature and place them at the disposal of the mind. The mind has got a master namely the intellect which discriminates between the good and the evil and encourages you to accept the good and reject the evil. But as the basis of the *buddhi* (intellect) there is the *Aathma* (soul) which gives you the experience of the *Aanandha* (Total Bliss), whenever you are aware of truth, goodness or beauty.

Beauty is not to be mistaken for physical charm which is temporary. *Vidhya* means proceeding from darkness to light, that is to say, from ignorance of the *Aathma* (Divine Self) to the awareness of the *Aathma*. People do not seek the *jyothi* (light) that can lead them from *thamas* (inertia) into wisdom. The reason is they have no steadiness in their *saadhana* (spiritual effort). They pay more attention to material pleasure and the earning of money by any means to have what they hope will give happiness in the future. Steady effort in these directions is simply running after a mirage. All efforts must be directed towards the realisation of the truth, goodness and beauty which are latent in us as the *Aathma*.

Anger is the worst exhibition of the ego.

Now you are not able to understand the *Aathma* because your effort is not sincere and steady. You feel that there are more valuable things which can be got from the outside world by fair means or foul. But pure and lasting bliss which will not cause harm to anyone can be got only from the inner search.

When you run after temporary pleasure any disappointment or obstacle will produce anger and hatred. The angry man is blind and temporarily mad. The saint Dhurvaasa who is the personification of anger is called so because he was full of *dhur* (bad) *vaasanas* (tendencies). Anger is the worst exhibition of the ego.

In order to realize the *Aathma* you must have faith in your success and in the fact that the *aathma* exists and that it can be brought into consciousness all the time. Faith is essential for success in any undertaking. However little, you can progress in education only if you have faith in your abilities. Of course, the material education you are trying to get is necessary for material ends but it cannot give *Shaanthi* and *Aanandha*. When success comes your way, you become proud and uncontrollable; when defeat encounters you, you become dejected and desperate. It is only spiritual education that can tell you that both success and defeat are inevitable in life and both must be faced with an equal mind.

Spiritual education leads to detachment

Material education leads to desires and attachments. Spiritual education leads to peace and detachment. Material education develops the ego. Spiritual education surrenders the ego at the feet of the Lord. The Yaadhavas had an egoistic attachment to Krishna. They thought of him as a kinsman belonging to them specially; as a result they had to end their days before the passing

away of Krishna fighting among themselves. But the *gopees* (cowherd girls) had surrendered their ego and merged their individuality. So their *Aanandha* was not disturbed. Here in the Lokaseva schools you are introduced to this essential spiritual education as tender plants. You help to cultivate duty, discipline and devotion and grow into straight and steady promoters of the spiritual culture of India.

The new born child asks the question "*Koham*" (Who am I?) That is the meaning of its first cry. Of what avail is human life if the answer to this question is not discovered by man? Of what avail is an electric bulb which has no current to illuminate? Man should not live like dogs and jackals. He must realise he has God in him in the form of *prema* (love) which draws him to every living thing. Then he will get the answer to the question with which he was born: "I am love, I am God." You must all be disciplined and devoted. Duty is God. So attend your classes and learn your lessons and be true *Vidhyarthi*s, seeking *vidhya* (light). Have prayers to the Lord morning and evening. You have all taken great trouble to clean with extra love every square inch of this huge campus. I know how much time and energy you spent for this and I am sorry I cannot now stay longer with you. I wish I could come once again very soon and spend more time with you.

Bhagavaan's Discourse to students at Alike, April 1979

During the saguna (quality-oriented) worship, the basic nirguna (quality-less) aspect of God has to be sustaining the mind; no description can exhaust the Glory, no word can approximate the Majesty. During the nirguna meditation, the faith that God does not diminish His Glory of Majesty by being with Form, Attributes and Name must be the sustaining force. The final step, however, must be the right foot, considered auspicious, the nirguna step.

Sri Sathya Sai

24. Partial education

TERMITES appear insignificant and innocent in the beginning; they are named 'white ants,' as if they deserve admiration and attention, rather than extermination. For, they multiply fast and destroy in silence the entire structures of the houses of man.

Bad habits, imitative tendencies like drink and drugs, gambling and gangsterism---they secure entry into individual and social behaviour noiselessly, in various disguises and then destroy the career of even the toughest and the most upright. The youth of India are succumbing to the siren calls of foreign cultural traits. They are discarding their own precious heritage of reverence towards elders, service of parents, compassion for all beings in distress, humility, simplicity, adherence to truth and attachment to self-respect. Science and technology have encouraged the material out-look, concentrated all effort towards comforts and exaggerated the ego. The same sad decline is happening, more or less, in every country today.

Man is behaving mostly as animal, partly as man

The prime cause for this tragedy is the neglect of the spiritual and moral aspects of the human personality. Man feels no obligation towards family, society, nation or mankind. He worships his ego, more than any thing else. He is proud of his technological advance---the travel in space, the computers, the unravelling of the atom. But, look at the confusion and the conflicts in the political, economic spheres of life! Man has not been able to overcome greed, pride and hatred in the national and religious aspects. His narrow loyalties towards his caste, colour and creed persist to the detriment of higher ideals. Confusion in the sphere of education has grown into enormous proportions. He has not yet been successful in sublimating his animal impulses into human attitudes. He is therefore behaving in a ridiculous manner, mostly animal and partly man.

Today, man is madly engaged in accumulating money for the sake of the comforts it can bring. He is wading in sorrow and joy from moment to moment, in the pursuit of sensual pleasure. Just as death follows life, anxiety follows wealth. The rich man is persecuted by troubles just as a crow with a piece of meat is pursued by dozens of hungry birds who follow the crow. Man's ambitions are increasing every day everywhere. Contemporary civilisation is piling fear upon fear on all parts of the world.

Instead of high thinking and simple living which was the ideal of ancient times, modern India is adopting the ideal of 'low thinking and high living. The system of education is to blame largely for this downfall. Mahaathma Gandhi realised the eternal values enshrined in Bhaaratheeya Culture. He attempted to promote these values through the primary schools he sponsored. When he was in prison, a British officer who visited him often asked him, "I find you sad and worried today. Tell me why?" and Gandhi replied, "I find that the educated person has a hardened heart, more hardened than the heart of an uneducated person. This is something that should not happen. The system is fraught with danger." This made Gandhi try his experiments in imparting Indian ideals to the tender minds in primary schools. The same officer approached Baa! Gangadhar Thilak later and told him how Gandhi had accused Western education of hardening the heart. He asked Thilak, "But, I find you have not been spoiled at all by the Western system of education." Thilak replied, "I asserted that I am what I am, inspite of the system of education through which I had to pass."

The Right and the Duty are both fundamental

Men repeat the word 'duty' day after day and during all hours of the day, without any clear conception of what that word means. Duty arises when there are two people, you and another. Education has lost its meaning when it does not instruct what an individual should render to society, how he has to control his ego for ensuring the common good. One individual has the right to exercise freedom, only so long as he does not obstruct the freedom which is equally the right of another. Honouring the right of the other man to freedom is your duty. The right and the duty are both fundamental. Nevertheless, we find everyone fostering and insisting on his own rights and paying no consideration to the rights of others. We find in society, around us, millions of brothers and sisters subjected to harm by this callousness.

There are 500,000 villages in India where people live in poverty, ignorance and disease. Rulers forming the Government have drawn up various plans to raise their standard of living, but it is wrong to leave it all to them. It cannot be done by the efforts of government alone. The hearty co-operation, help and good-will of the villagers themselves are essential. A single flower cannot make a garland; a single individual cannot set right the wrong of ages.

Children have to learn the lesson of self-reliance

Crores of children live as beggars in the streets. It is the responsibility of the grownups to wean them away and enable them to become self-reliant, self-respecting citizens. Older people are like old trees; they cannot be bent in the direction which is good for them. But, these tender saplings can be trained to grow straight and strong. So, I wish to declare that the first duty of every adult, son and daughter of this country is to pay loving attention to the children.

I call-upon you to resolve to establish a primary school and arrange for medical care for every village. Wealth is intended not for adding luxury to life, for revelling in sensual joy. Through good sanitation and good education you can improve the condition of the children. If it is your intention to raise India, once again, into an example and ideal for the rest of the world, it can be achieved only by hard physical work and by systematic reduction of desires.

In the sacred land of Bhaarath where Annapoorna, the Goddess designated as food, is worshipped, there need be no shortage of food for the people. Controlling population is not the right remedy. For, consider this: Every child is born not only with a stomach that has to be catered to, it is also endowed with two hands which can work and produce the food for the stomach. The hands have to be given the strength and skill; they have to learn the lesson of self-reliance. They should never be lazy or slothful. Then, there can be no deficiency in food and no problem of underfeeding.

Today a Degree is only a begging bowl

We have to inspire and instruct the children to become *Karma Veers* (heroes of action), whose lives are dedicated to work as worship of the one God who resides in all. They must be trained to take part gladly and intelligently in "activity programmes" filled with the spirit of service.

In order to make the primary schools succeed in this endeavour, see that you run them with patience and love. Now after spending thousands of rupees and mortgaging or selling their lands and houses, the parents are happy that their sons and daughters have got a degree. But, they suffer great sorrow when the degree is discovered to be only a begging bowl with which their children go round from office to office. Instead of education for doing the work of society, we

are having education for jobs which society has to create to give them work. The head is loaded with trivial information and the heart is hardened.

Degrees are conferred even if the candidate secures 30 marks out of 100. This means that a person is certified useful, even if he commits 70 mistakes in every hundred items of work assigned to him by the authorities. The parents and the teachers must be examples of lives led in the light of *aathmic* consciousness. Then we can have a balanced education. Then we can have a generation of students wedded to the service of society, for each student will see in every other person a replica of the Divine Itself.

University Convocation Hall, Bombay, 13-5-1979

There are many who have stacked libraries in their brains; who have visited and venerated all the holy places between the Himaalayas and the Cape; who have sat at the feet of every one of the contemporary sages and saints; who have performed all the rites prescribed in the sacred texts, but, who do not know the answer to the simple question: "How to bring about the union between jeeva and Brahman, the individual and the Universal?"

Or rather, they do not set about the practice of what they have heard or learnt.

The erection of temples, the installation of images or idols, the pomp and show, fireworks and fanfare, processions and pedantries---these are helpless in the realm of jnaana.

Sri Sathya Sai

25. Four in One

THE *Vedhas* speak of the four *varnas* (social groups), as directives for the exercise of the rights and responsibilities of individuals. They declare that the *Braahmin* group, the 'intellectuals and the spiritual seekers must serve as the face of society---the face that hears, sees, tastes and 'smells' the changing moods of the community. This group has the duty to warn the community of impending calamity, of oncoming distress and latent drawbacks. They have to guide, lead, counsel and comfort the rest of the people aright. They form the brain trust, on which the country relies for advice---timely, impartial and most conducive to the common good. They represent the Head of the Cosmic Person.

The *Kshathriya* group is the "arm" of the Cosmic Person. The group consists of the *Raajasik* individuals who equip themselves for guarding the country against internal and external danger. They dedicate their all for the safety and security of the country.

The *Vaisya* group is the "thigh" of the Cosmic Person---the support and sustenance of the arms and the head. They gather and preserve the where-withal on which the community lives and prospers. They adhere to the limitations imposed on profit and exploitation.

One Divine Impulse activates all the limbs

The *Shuudhra* group is "the feet" of the Cosmic Person, bearing the burden of feeding and fostering the community.

The four *varnas* form one organic whole one indivisible unity. No one can do without the other. On the harmonious cooperation of all the four depends the peace and prosperity of the community. The head is immediately aware of what happens to the feet; the slightest pain anywhere is cognised by the entire body. When a thorn pricks the sole, the eye reprimands itself for not noticing the thorn and warning the foot in time. It sheds tears of repentance. The eye has the responsibility of warning, leading,, guiding and saving the foot:. Every caste has to ensure the prosperity and strength of all the rest.

When you invite a person into your home, you cannot request him to bring in only his head. The feet too have to be welcomed with equal solicitude. The feet are important. In fact, homage is offered' at the feet of the Lord. The feet of the Lord are the objects of adoration and worship.

The limbs may be different, with distinct names, forms and functions. But, they function only because of the unceasing grace of one Heart which supplies each with a single stream of blood. The qualities of each limb and its special activity may be different but the same Divine Impulse activates each one. There can be no question of inferior or superior, when all are cooperating in one common endeavour. They are all moved by the single urge of love towards the individual they constitute.

30-5-1979

For Naamasmarana (repeated remembrance of the Lord's Name), no expense is involved; no materials are needed; there is no special place or time to be provided. No qualification of scholarship or caste or sex has to be proved.

When a bit of iron is rubbed to and fro on a slab of stone, heat is generated; only, the rubbing has to be vigorous and continuous.

When you do so at intervals and with poor pressure, the iron will not get hot.

So, too, in order to get sufficient heat to melt the soft heart of the Lord, rub the name Raam Raam Raam Raam vigorously and unintermittently. Then, the Lord will shower His Grace.

If you devote but two minutes and a half in the morning and another two minutes and a half in the evening, the little heat will cool off twice a day and His heart will not melt.

Sri Sathya Sai

26. Out of the workshop

THE Universe is the best University for man; Nature is his best teacher. With an observant mind he can learn many lessons from rivers and hills, from birds and beasts, from stars and flowers and from trees. The trees offer cool shade to all who seek it; they do not deny it to anyone on the basis of caste, creed or colour. They offer their fruits to all, irrespective of their social or economic status. Of course, every state is now engaged in planning for prosperity. Prosperity is to be welcomed but that alone is not enough. Prosperity without the will to share it will only breed fear and anxiety.

Human nature is an amalgam of animal, human and divine characteristics. Love, compassion, humility, charity---these are all divine. One has to cultivate these, in order to be at peace, with oneself and others. These spiritual qualities are the real life-savers for man. It is for this reason that *Bhaaratheeya* culture places much emphasis on them. They elevate humans into the status of the Divine.

Scholarship does not confer "real education"

These qualities are not the products of scholarship. Mastery of various fields of knowledge about the objective world leads only to the greed for wealth, for luxury, for fame and for the accumulation of authority over others. It urges man to lead a life of uncontrolled licence. Scholarship does not Confer "real education." Virtue and character---these alone reveal the educated person, eager to engage himself in self-less service. Morality has to be practised and not simply be talked about.

The *Gurus* (preceptors) of old taught only from experience; they loved their pupils and sought to correct their faults and failings, in order to make them happy and useful. When the pupils finally left his home the *Guru* exhorted them to follow two *Suuthras* (guidelines) which were as essential for life as the two *nethras* (eyes)---*Sathyam radha, Dharmam chara* (Speak the truth; Walk on the path of righteousness). The *Guru* had the faith that the *shishya* (pupil) would take the advice to heart, for, he himself was the living proof of their value and validity. The *Guru* usually takes great care to remove from the heart of the pupil the weeds of evil habits and tendencies, to implant therein the seeds of love, to insist on *saadhana* (spiritual discipline) for purifying his mind and to render him strong enough to overcome temptations of all kinds.

Sathya (truth) sustains the Cosmos, *dharma* (virtue) protects and promotes the peace of mankind. All activities have to be infused with the ideals of *sathya* and *dharma*. *Dharma* never suffers decline; only the practice of *dharma* declines. So, Divine Incarnation takes place to restore faith in *dharma*, to revitalise the practice of *dharma*, and to demonstrate that the practice of *dharma* confers peace, joy and prosperity. If *dharma* is ignored, it amounts to sacrilege, for *dharma* is God and God is *dharma*.

People see God in a picture, an icon, or a plaster of Paris figurine but God is most manifest in *dharma*. Only those who believe in *dharma* can be called 'the faithful;' those who do not are the genuine atheists, though they indulge in profuse use of the word 'God.' They may spend enormous sums for pilgrimages and for rituals and ceremonies but that will not take them any nearer God. What profit can they earn in the spiritual field, if they adore God and at the same time, insult and injure their fellowmen?

Virtue is the wealth to be won

One has to visualise God in every living being and worship Him through love. Therein lies the supremacy of man. Ownership of enormous wealth is a dangerous burden; authority over many men is a dubious asset. Love is the most precious treasure to be sought after. Virtue is the wealth to be won. Raavana won the Grace of God but as boons from Him, he prayed for paltry, personal, fleeting pleasures, which ultimately led to his ruin and the destruction of the entire Raakshasa (demonic) clan which followed his footsteps. The Kauravas shaped themselves into embodiments of aggressive greed and so were exterminated on the field of battle by their cousins - the Paandavas who were the embodiments of justice and humility.

Faith in the ideal develops, love; love develops peace-and serenity; they lead to God; God confers unshakeable *aanandha* (Supreme bliss). Man seeks, but his efforts reward him with pain, for they are directed towards the accumulation of riches, or of power or fame of any kind. Man must possess a source of detachment which will prevent him from getting entangled beyond escape in the coils of greed, envy and hatred.

Each one of you must be a hero in action

Once you are reinforced by love and compassion and charged with this sense of detachment, from the consequences of duties well done, you can plunge into activity that can defeat the forces of injustice, cruelty and untruth. You must, each one, be a *Karma Veera* (a hero in action). Stand on your own feet; do not imitate others. Do not be a slave to the fickle mind, pursuing the senses. Follow the dictates of your intellect.

You have been in this workshop for one full month. Return to your homes now, full of reverence, humility and the eagerness to serve those who serve others but with no one to do them loving service.

You must have noticed three hands in the wall-clock. When the second hand which is the most active moves 60 paces, the minute hand performs a little jump and advances one bit. When the minute hand moves 60 paces, the hour hand has advanced a twelfth of the circumference. All the activity of the two other hands is to serve the hour hand which progresses silently and steadily. The second hand represents the body which has to be active and alert. Its round of activity is for the purpose of serving the minute hand, the heart. When the heart fulfils its duty of purification and clarification, the hour hand reveals the time. That is to say, the *Aathmic* (divine) principle manifests itself.

Whatever you have imbibed here from the lectures of scholars and devotees, from contact with fellow-students of other States, and from these evening discourses, try to put them into practice. I direct you to practise at least one or two of the lessons instilled into you. (1) Do not keep in your memory the good you have done to others and the evil others have done unto you. (2) Revere your mother and father; do not cause them grief; pay them grateful, homage. (3) Develop your contacts with the villagers and be engaged in improving their living conditions and in strengthening their faith in God. This is the reason why "Village Service" was a part of your daily programme in the Camp. (4) Join the Sathya Sai Seva Dhal Organisation nearest your home and try to learn from it the best way of channelising your skill and enthusiasm.

Always meditate on the Oneness that interpenetrates this apparent Diversity. "Brothers and Sisters" you repeat before every gathering. But, the brotherhood that existed between Raama and Lakshmana is absent now. That was the Supreme Stage. Now, brothers named Raama and

Lakshmana fight for property and spend it all in litigation leading up to the Supreme Court The real ideal should be the higher one---the ideal of Oneness, the other being only you in another Form, with another Name.

Valedictory Discourse, Summer Camp, 21-6-1979

27. The Sadhguru speaks

THE Macrocosmos and the microcosmos---the *Brahmaanda* and the *pindanda*---the Universal and the individual---all arise from the One Truth. They are manifestations and emergents of that Truth, which is not affected by either. That Truth is known as *Brahman*. When this unmodifiable, transcendent and immanent *Brahman*, instead of just 'being,' decides on 'becoming,' It is best designated as 'God,' '*Ishwara*' (Almighty). The Divine ground of everything is the spiritual Absolute, called *Paramaathman* (Supreme Absolute Self). It is also the ground, the base, the core, the reality of man.

But in spite of 'becoming,' which is only an illusion imposing multiplicity on the One Being, It remains One. So long as inquiry is postponed, only the multiplicity is cognised. The multiplicity is neither real nor unreal. It is relatively real, temporarily real, pragmatically real, *mithya*---not *sathya*---but an amalgam of *sathya* (truth) and *asathya* (untruth), apparently real but fundamentally unreal, real for most practical purposes (*vyavahaara*) but unreal when the basic nature is unravelled. *Mithya* is the mixture of *sathya* and *asathya*, the knowledge of the serpent which is negated when the knowledge of the rope is won.

***Maaya* makes us believe the world is real**

The clouds appear to be stuck to the sky; so, too, *maaya* (the tendency to conclude that what the senses tell us is true or to project our preferences and prejudices on to the world around us) gives us an untrue picture of *Brahman*. It makes us believe that the world is real. Its impact warps our reasoning process, our sensory impressions and our views on God, on creation and on man. It spreads before us a diversity which tantalises and deceives.

The basic Truth upon which *maaya* (divine illusion) projects its kaleidoscope is described by seers as *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being-Awareness-Bliss Absolute). This does not mean that *Brahman* has three attributes, namely: It exists beyond time and space; It knows and can be known; It is the source and acme of Bliss. They are not three distinct characteristics; they indicate the One, of which the three can be grasped by experience---not by words, for words can only recoil before that Godhead. We cannot assert that *Brahman* (Supreme Being) belongs to a class or genes, nor can it be defined by the three basic qualities. It cannot be described as performing any specific activity, for It is ever motionless. Nor can It be explained in terms of relationship with other entities for It is One, without a second.

Maaya is only the Divine Will that inaugurated the manifestation of the cosmos (*Ekoham, Bahushyaam*---I am one; I will be many). *Maaya* (apparent deluding reality) inheres in every being and every activity of that being; it has three aspects of achievement through the three modes and moods of that Will---the *saathwik*, the *raajasik* and the *thaamasik* (the calm, contented, equanimous mood; the potent, passionate mood; the inert, slothful, sluggish mood).

***Maaya* is the Will that causes the variety**

When *maaya* prompts us into the *saathwik* mood of that Will, we become progressive seekers of *jnaana* (spiritual wisdom) that reveals the Unity. When we are overwhelmed by the *raajasik* quality of that Will, we are deluded into the pursuit of worldly victories and ephemeral wealth and renown. The *thaamasik* nature of that Will seeks the quickest and easiest ways of happy living. These are the reflections in our minds of the basic modes of the Will that *Brahman*

assumes when It is moved by the primal urge to express Itself. The facets of that Will are called *Jnaana shakthi*, *iccha shakthi* and *Kriyaa shakthi*.

The three modes affect beings and things in various proportions and permutations, and so we have all the variety and diversity of the objective world. *Aathman* (whether individualised or universalised), is One only. The *jeevaathman* (individual soul) and the *Paramaathman* (Supreme Soul) are one and indivisible.

The philosophers of all lands and all times have sought to discover the truth about God, the objective world and man, as well as their mutual relationship. *Maaya* is the Will that causes all three. It is a clear flawless mirror. When the *saathwik* nature is reflected in that mirror, God results; when the *raajasik* nature is reflected, *the jeeva* (individualised Self) results. It is ever-anxious to grow, to grab, to survive and to be secure. When *thaamasik* nature is reflected, matter (the objective world) is the result. All three are *Paramaathman*, but they derive their reality as Its reflections. When undergoing reflections, they attain different forms and combinations of characteristics. The One becomes many; every one of the many is Real only because of the One in it. *Maaya* too is a component of the One; by the emphasis on that component, the One transformed Itself into the many.

The One comprehends all the images

We now know that *maaya* is like a mirror. The mirror reflects within itself all that is before it. The convexity or concavity of the mirror, or the covering of dust that might have settled on it, will certainly blur the reflected image, but it cannot distort the objects themselves. *Ishwara*, *prakrithi* and *jeeva* (the Almighty God, objective world and individualised self), all three are images of *Paramaathman* (Supreme soul) reflected in the mirror of *maaya* and warped by the *gunas* (qualities) that tarnish the surface of the mirror. It is the mirror that pictures the One as many. But the One is ever One.

The One is comprehensive of all this. So It has no wants, no desires and no activity to realise anything. Shri Krishna tells Arjuna, "*Na me Partha! asthi karthavyam, thrishu lokeshu kinchana*" (There is nothing I have to do in any of the three worlds), He has willed the world as His Sport. He has laid down that every deed must have its consequence. He is the dispenser of the consequences, but He is not involved in the deeds.

None can discover the beginning of *maaya*

Therefore it becomes plain that neither the personalised God, nor the individualised self, nor even the objective world can ever succeed in discovering the beginning of the *maaya* which brought them into existence and started the chain of 'act-consequence-act.' Nevertheless, one can succeed in knowing when *maaya* will end! When will it end? When the objective world is ignored, set aside, denied or discovered to be immanent in the Divine, the *jeeva* (individualized being) is no more. When the *jeeva* is no more, the *Ishwara* (Cosmic Being or personalized God) is also superfluous and disappears. And when the *Ishwara* has faded out, the *Brahman* (Absolute Reality) alone Is. Where there is no child, how can a mother exist? It is a word with no significance. When a personalised God, a personality separate from the rest, called *jeeva*, and the mental creation of *that jeeva*, called *prakrithi* (the objective world), are non-existent in the developed consciousness of man, *maaya*, the progenitor of all three, cannot persist.

When space is enclosed in a pot, it appears limited and small. But once released from the *upaadhi* (container), it again merges in the infinite sky. The sky is not reduced or transformed in shape or quality by being held in the *upaadhi*. So, too, the One *Aathman* that is pervading the bodies and lives of billions of beings does not get affected by the *upaadhis* (living beings) to which it adheres for some time.

Many are affected by the problem of what caused the Cosmos. How did it come into being? They advance various theories and lay down many opposing hypotheses. But there is no need for seekers to beat about the bush so much. Just as a dream results when one is cut off from reality in a state of sleep, the Cosmos is a result of being cut off from reality by *maaya* in a state of ignorance. The Cosmos is as ephemeral and as vagarious as a dream. It is difficult to discover laws that explain or govern its infinite mysteries. More profitable than inquiring into the mysteries is the inquiry into possible ways of benefitting by them and learning from them. It is mostly a waste of time to probe into the origin of the Cosmos or to determine how it will end. You are a part of creation, so try to understand yourself and keep your goal in view.

The individual has three qualities in him

The *jeeva* (individual) has the emotional, passionate and active qualities in his composition. The quality that is inferior is the *thaamasik* and that which is superior is the *saathwik*. *Ishwara* is the *saathwik* reflection of *Brahman*. Therefore man must strive to rise higher into the *saathwik* realm. He must be ever vigilant not to slide down into the lower realm---the *thaamasik* realm of matter and material pursuits. The *Guru* has to hold this ideal before the pupil and guide him towards it. He must encourage him to become aware of the God within man.

The word *aadhyaathmik* (spiritual) is used often by aspirants and preceptors. What exactly is implied by *aadhyaathmik*? Is *bhajana* (congregational prayer) *aadhyaathmik*? Or does it involve *japa* or *dhyaana*? Or does it denote religious rituals and ceremonies? Or does it extend to pilgrimages to holy places? No. These are only beneficial acts. *Aadhyaathmik*, in its real sense, relates to two progressive achievements or at least sincere attempts towards those two achievements: elimination of the animal traits still clinging to man and unification with the Divine.

Three different types of *Gurus* in the world

Consider how far man has succeeded in overcoming the animal inheritance of lust, greed and hate, when he spends time, money and energy for these so called *aadhyaathmik* exercises. What progress does he make by listening to exponents of texts? Has man become any less bestial? This is the inquiry, this is the assessment for man to be engaged in, though this is the very task ignored by him at present.

The *saadhanas* (spiritual practices) now adopted promote only pride and pompous display, envy and egotism. They do not uproot them in the least. People proceed to the House of God as pilgrims, but pray to Him for more money, fame and power, for their thoughts, words and deeds centre only around these transitory and trivial tokens of worldly success. The world and all its trappings bespeak the *thaamasik guna* (quality of inertia). They can never raise man to the higher *saathwik* (pure level).

The *Guru* must exhort the individual self to realise the Universal Self. On this *Guru Poornima*, we must revere with grateful hearts such *Gurus* who have consummated liberation for many.

They are the highest *Gurus*. There are in the world many other types also. There is the *Guru* who gives you a *manthra* (sacred formula), tells you its potentialities and directs you to repeat it sincerely and steadily. He is the *dheeksha guru*; the initiation into the *manthra* is called *dheeksha* in ritualistic parlance. He assumes that his duty ends with the gift of the *manthra* and the command to use it with conviction and care. He does not direct the pupil to master his senses or guide him to march forward and attain that victory. For the pupil the *manthra* is a formula to be repeated in a parrot-like way. He might not even know that it is a precious gift, but without the *saadhana* (spiritual discipline) of self-improvement, the gift has no value at all.

The *maaya* too is an aspect of *Brahman*

A second type of *Guru* recommends the worship of one or another of the forms of God. Another set of *gurus* teach lessons destined to change your consciousness. These are the *teacher-gurus*. But all these types ignore the One and divert attention, adoration and devotion to the many, which are only relatively real. They do not lay down methods by which purity and clarity can be won. They are afraid to antagonise the animal urges in their pupils. Their teachings fill the head but do not thrill the heart. All types of *gurus* assert that God, Nature and man are distinct, whereas they are all really based on the play of *maaya* on *Brahman*. They deal with subsidiary not the Primary, the diversity not the Unity, the trivial not the true. The primary is *Brahman* which, when reflected in *maaya*, seems to be broken into God, Nature and man. These three are only the unreal images of the One. And the *maaya*, too, is an aspect of *Brahman* "*Mama-maaya*" (My *maaya*), says Krishna in the Geetha. Hence when we merge in *Brahman* or win the Grace of the Lord, His *maaya* cannot exist for us.

One can also be rid of *maaya* if one can discard the three *gunas* from one's make up. The *Sathwa guna*, too, has to be transcended. Why? The Geetha directs that even the eagerness to be liberated is a bond. One is fundamentally free; bondage is only an illusion. So the desire to unloosen the bond is the result of ignorance. Krishna says, "Arjuna! Become free from the three *gunas*." In truth, the word '*guna*' means 'rope,' for all three *gunas* bind the *jeeva* with the rope of desire. Liberation means liberation from delusive *moha* (attachment). '*Mohakshaya*' is decline in the desire caused by attachment to sensory pleasure.

The greatest of *Gurus* was Sage Vyaasa

The Yadhavas were attached to Krishna through a sense of worldly belonging. He was their kinsmen, they felt, and this feeling did not save them from total destruction. The *gopees* felt they were His, not that He was theirs. So they were recipients of His Grace. When the ideas of 'I' and 'mine' disappear, man's only thoughts are of 'Thee' and 'Thine.' He then finds only 'Thee' everywhere and thus achieves the Vision of Unity.

This day thousands of you have gathered here because it is *Guru Poornima*, the 'full Moon of the *Guru*.' The fully worth-while *Guru* must facilitate that Vision of Unity without the discords and divisions that 'mine' and 'thine' engender in the mind of man. Such a *Guru* was the sage Vyaasa. This day is also called *Vyaasa Poornima*, a day when mankind offers him the gratitude he deserves. '*Vyaaso Naaraayano Harih*': Vyaasa is the Lord Naaraayana, Hari. Naaraayana, the Lord Himself, came as a man called Vyaasa, to collate the Vedhas and teach man the path towards God. He has made the path plain and easy to climb.

But the tragedy is that man has misinterpreted or missed the path. He has stuck to his out-moded beliefs in the efficacy of worldly, material and transitory rituals and rites, which weaken his

mind through fear or pride. The true *Guru* should keep away from such weakening tactics and should impart the strengthening awareness of the *Aathman*. Only then can he be revered as a *Guru*. When there is the clear call from the higher regions of the *saathwik*, why should the *Guru* remain deaf to that call and grovel in the regions of *thamas* and *rajas*? Why must he be content to keep his pupils in those lower levels?

Goodness is natural to man, not evil

However, the trend among the guides and seekers in the spiritual field is to avoid the heights and wander in the valleys. Consider for a moment how long worldly triumphs last. They are but the play of scintillating name and form on the Divine, which is the core of every being and thing. Earn the vision that sees the Divine inherent in all. We are not troubled when something is good, but only when it is bad. This is because goodness is natural and evil is an aberration. We are worried and alarmed when someone slides into wrong or is in pain or in sorrow. This is because nature plans us to be right, to be happy and ever in joy. It is a pity that man has lost his understanding of this truth.

Embodiments of the Divine *Aathman*! In truth, man is the encased *Aathman*. He is the repository of the infinite, ever-full, One, Indivisible *Aathman*. Man, at best, remains man, satisfied with the *rajoguna* dominant in him. Many are content with their dealings with the objective, *thaamasik* world. Their ideal is only to amass material wealth and satisfy material needs. Examine yourselves and discover at what level you are by analysing your desires and activities. In this way you can yourselves sublimate your thoughts and urges.

Your revised urges must have a beneficial impact on your activities, for it is through activity that *gunas* are given up or gained. Activity causes birth and death and fills up the years of one's life. It supports good and evil, joy and grief.

However, man is willfully unaware of the activities that will lighten the burden of his life and also illumine the *Aathman*. It is the *Aathman* that illumines all, but man is in the dark about its existence. Just as everything sweet is sweet on account of the sugar it contains, all things and objects are cognized because the *Aathman* is behind the cognition. It is the Universal Witness. It is the Sun that activates all but never gets activated itself. You, too, must establish yourself in the position of a witness.

Methods to attain the status of a witness

The sages have laid down methods by which man can attain the status of a witness. *Dhyaana* (meditation) is the most important of these. It is the penultimate of eight steps, the last one being *Samaadhi* (super conscious state of communion), and grants the wisdom to be completely unaffected. The sixth stage is *dharana* (concentration). *Dharana* is the stage when *japa*, *puuja* and other practices are engaged in, in order to prepare the concentration of mind for *dhyaana*.

Dhyaana is not mere sitting erect and silent. Nor is it the absence of any movement. It is the merging of all your thoughts and feelings in God. Without the mind becoming dissolved in God, *dhyaana* cannot succeed. The Geetha describes genuine *dhyaana* as '*Ananyaaschinthanyatho maam ye janaah paryupaasathe*' (Those persons who adore Me, without any other thought or feeling). Krishna has assured such persons that He would Himself carry their burden and be by their side, guiding and guarding. Persons adept in this *dhyaana* are very rare; most people go through the external exercises only. So they are unable to win Grace.

Bodies are expressions of the *Aathman*

Dhyaana is interrupted in most cases by worry and anxiety regarding one's kith and kin, and one's earning of riches. But since all are manifestations of the *maaya* which is natural to *Brahman* or *Paramaathman*, the *Paramaathman* (Supreme Self) in which you take refuge will certainly free you from fear. Why? You are, each one, the *Aathman* and nothing else. This is the reason why I began this discourse, addressing you as *Dhivyaathma swaruupas!* Your bodies, too, are expressions of the *Aathman* (divine self). Your personality, individuality, mind, intellect---all are manifestations of the *Aathman* which is the prime mover of your life.

This teaching is being propagated since ages by the sages of this land. The seers who saw the validity of this vision encouraged inquiry and experiment into the process of *dhyaana* and *saadhana*.

Sage Vyaasa sympathised with man who was caught in the coils of do's and don'ts, of success and failure, of desire and despair. He demarcated many a path which leads man along to fulfilment. The fulfilment consists in uprooting the animal that lurks in man and reaching out to the Divinity that is his essence.

We find individuals and groups trudging to Badhrinaath, Kedhaarnaath and Haridhwaar in search of peace and prosperity. They also go to Thirupathi and Kaashi. Have they jettisoned even a few of their animal propensities. That is the test; that is the justification for the money and time they have spent and the troubles they have undergone.

When the animal is conquered and God head is felt within reach, man can assert that all these pilgrimages are within him. He has no need to travel from temple to temple. And without achieving this victory you have no right to claim that you are a devotee of Raama or Krishna, or of any other Incarnation of the Lord.

This is real *aadhyaathmikatha* (spiritual progress). I bless you all that you may earn it.

Guru Poornima, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 9-7-1979

Man must demonstrate his superiority over the animal, by conquest over the senses. He must wriggle out of his animal shackles and assert his "humanity," which is essentially "divinity".

When Emperor Bharthruhari gave up his throne and went into a hermitage in the forest, the subordinate rulers who were his tributaries laughed at the stupid step and asked him how he got the idea and what he gained.

Bharthruhari replied, "I have now gained a vaster empire, a richer and more peaceful empire; I gave in exchange a poor barren torn empire; see what profit I have made."

Sri Sathya Sai

28. Why this College?

SATHYAM (Truth) is to be adored and adhered to. It is the highest goal to be won by *saadhana*. So too is *Shaantham* (peace and equanimity). Truth, the Principle of Truth, is immanent in every being; knowing this, the seeker or the student has to be loving and friendly with every living being. This is the message of the scriptures of all lands.

When we examine the life and behaviour of animals, labelled as 'lower,' we can learn many lessons for our own betterment. The elephant, the cow and the deer do not harm or wound or eat other animals. They live on leaves or grass or grain. They lead *Saathwik* (pure) lives. Therefore, they receive reverence and worshipful homage of man. On the other hand, the tiger, the leopard and the wolf have cruel natures; they hurt other animals; they eat up the animals they kill. As a consequence, man is ever trying to keep these *Raajasik* animals at a distance.

Man prides himself as the crown of creation. It is a rare piece of good fortune to be born as a human animal. We all agree with this statement. His is really a holy, sublime, and beneficent role; how then can cruelty, hatred and violence pollute his heart which is the centre of compassion, love justice and equanimity? How has he fallen from the *Saathwik* heights of Divinity to the depths of *Raajasik* qualities like ungratefulness, vengefulness and vandalism?

Students are embodiments of unpolluted love.

Imagine the terror caused among the cattle when a tiger or leopard or wolf enters their shed! They struggle in panic and undergo fearsome panic, until they are felled and eaten. So too, *Raajasik* traits of character relish destroying the *Saathwik* virtues in man.

Students! You are embodiments of unpolluted love. The heart of man has to be saturated with pure feelings, clean impulses, and selfless urges towards service of living beings. Do not, at this stage of your lives, soak it in hate, cruelty and other evil qualities. At present, boys and girls of your age live without awareness of the suffering of others. You are, it can be said, blind and deaf. When a man in agony stands before a blind man and beats his breast, he remains unmoved, since he cannot grasp the tragedy. When some one in distress recites his story and appeals for help, the deaf man is not affected at all. When you see the sufferings of others or listen to their wailings and yet remain unsympathetic and unresponsive, you can be justifiably called blind and deaf.

Often, you yourselves cause injury or mental agony to others. You exult in the humiliation or exploitation you cause. You revel in mean tactics to insult others. Since your hearts are full of low desires they do not react when the hearts of others call out for comradeship. To set right this sorry state of affairs, you have to cleanse and polish the heart into a clear mirror. A mirror reflects all that is before it--the misery, the poverty, the helplessness. But if the mirror is overlaid thick with the dust of ego, it cannot reflect the sadness, yearning for relief. When the heart is clean and clear, it will receive correct impressions of the struggles of your parents, the problems of society and anxieties that pester the country.

Students are multiplying their problems

But, consider what students are contributing today. Instead of resolving problems they are multiplying them. Far from alleviating suffering, they are worsening it. They have themselves become sources of anxiety. They are becoming blind to the sacrifice their parents make to educate them and to the hopes they arouse in them as well as in Society and in the hearts of those

who plan for the country's progress and *prosperity*. Many who have come to this College are blind to the purpose for which this College has been established, viz., to shape generations of students with holy ideals and pure hearts, filled with love.

In the name of education, you spend your time reading trivialities, writing trash and accepting experiences second hand. You do not seek to have elevating first hand experiences yourselves. The physics, chemistry or mathematics that you learnt at college have no practical validity, so far as your daily activities are concerned. In the laboratory you learn that oxygen and hydrogen constitute water. But, when you are thirsty during lunch at home, you cannot put the two together and drink the result. You have to drink water, as prepared by natural forces. For living out your years in peace and harmony, you have to develop common sense and master general knowledge. Poring over books or cramming formulae will not help.

Education must teach what is life's goal

It is foolish to believe that you have to be 'educated,' since it leads to jobs. At present education is oriented to jobs, to secure a living, not to lead a life. Education must teach a person what life is, and what its goal. It must purify the heart and clarify the vision. It must prevent pollution of the hand, heart and head by habits injurious to the individual, society and the nation. It must promote virtues and raise the moral and spiritual standards of the educated.

In times gone by, universities were referred to as "homes of humility" since humility was the characteristic of an educated person. Pride is the root of aggressiveness; it is the nature of wild animals. But the mark of man is humility in the presence of elders, teachers and parents. There is an ancient axiom which says, "Education imparts humility; humility ensures credibility; credibility brings wealth; wealth induces charity; charity confers peace and joy, here and hereafter." Nowadays, all educational institutions emphasise the need for riches. "Become wealthy through the easiest and quickest methods;" that is the slogan. No effort is spent to inculcate humility and reverence, for they are won through discipline alone. Without discipline and self-control man reduces himself to the level of the beast. The stomach is not the central core of man.

Youth do not want jobs requiring hardwork

Youth today longs for a type of work which involves no labour. They want jobs which they can do, sitting comfortably in an airconditioned, room signing files at the places indicated. They revel in sensual pleasures and selfish display, in starched shirts and soft assignments. They shy away from jobs that require physical exertion. Only idlers will prefer such jobs; others will relish and derive delight from hard jobs that try their physical, mental and intellectual powers. The *Gurukulas* (hermitages) of old gave such educational opportunities in plenty to the pupils.

Man does not live for food alone. To concentrate on eating and drinking is foolish. Consider how many millions are struggling on a standard of living much more pathetic than yours. Accept them and involve yourselves in their uplift. Acquaint yourselves with the scriptures of the major faiths, so that you can transmit the lessons of peace, harmony and joy they contain to others who need them more urgently.

Students today have neglected the purpose of education. They feel that the passing of examinations is the be all and end all of the four or five years of College life. How to gain marks by foul means, if fair is beyond reach---that is the primary concern---copying from books or slips

or entering the examination hall with mnemonic writings on the palms---these malpractices have become rampant. Even at this tender age, they follow crooked ways and pride themselves on their degradation.

You must recognise the distinctiveness of this college which distinguishes it from many others. We had no desire to add one more to the list of colleges that are degrading youth. Here, the curricula laid down by the University are taught and you are trained to appear for and pass the examinations conducted by the University, entitling you to the degrees they confer. But, that is not considered the primary purpose of the college.

Sai college equips youth to be future leaders

The real aim of the college is to equip you for the role of future leaders of India, as embodiments of Truth, Justice, Peace and Love; you ought to blossom as true representatives of Indian culture, spreading tolerance, charity and brotherhood throughout the World. Since you are encouraged and enabled to acquire the degrees, your parents send you here; but, we try to instil into you qualities that most other colleges ignore, namely, reverence for elders and parents, humility; we discourage the desire to display and hurt others, to humiliate others and to cater to low sensual pleasures.

You must have read in the Bhaagavatha that Yashodha was approached by the *gopees* (cowherd girls) with complaints involving Krishna; she planned to punish him; she offered Him butter with one hand, to persuade Him to go near her but she had also a rod held in the other hand hiding behind her back. Krishna goes near attracted by the butter but gets corrected by the threat of the rod. You have come attracted by the chance to earn a degree but you are exposed to disciplined life in the hostel. You are taught the scriptures of all faiths; you are persuaded to follow certain uplifting spiritual ideals.

When the patient is reluctant to take the medicine, the physician cannot leave him alone. The patient might even avoid the physician but since he is the well-wisher, the doctor has to be welcomed and the medicine taken. It is not merely for the good of the person who is ill; if he is cured, his parents and kith and kin will benefit; society will benefit; the nation will secure a disciplined, dutiful, devoted, dedicated subject. When other colleges deem their existence fulfilled when the curriculum is taught, this college considers the development of self-reliance, self-confidence, self-sacrifice and self-knowledge as the basic curriculum.

Medium language of Sai college is discipline

There is much controversy 'going on about first language, second language and the third language and the medium language. In this college the medium is discipline. The first, second and third languages are love, service and *saadhana* (spiritual discipline). There is also much talk of progress---helping progress, measuring progress, achieving progress, etc. Do we really progress in securing peace of mind, in harmoniously living together, and in removing ignorance of higher values? No. We are only progressively declining from the human to the bestial level.

We value many-storeyed building as a sign of progress. Persons who spend their time in air-conditioned rooms breathe their own breath over and over and are polluted thereby. Their feet never touch the ground. Sunlight seldom warms their skin. Boots for the feet, pants for the legs, coat for the chest and back, hat for the head and a tight tie round the neck! This is the pitiable plight.

The British rulers needed clerks and managers who can be trained to be docile and devoted. They devised a system of education which could produce people to do such jobs for them. Even today that job-oriented system holds sway, and therefore, we have in India 'educated' persons in thousands desperately in need of "jobs."

Students should stand on their own feet

Students of our college must not seek cushy job; they must not parade their degrees which are really "begging bowls" before office after office and pray for jobs. They should stand on their own feet, exert independently, produce through their own effort enough and to spare for themselves and their parents and be useful to the poor, the illiterate, the diseased and the distressed. Only those who practise this ideal sincerely and to the best of their abilities can claim to honour the maxims: "Duty is God" or "Work is Worship." On the other hand, if, like highway men, you live on the earning of others or on salaries for which you do not offer adequate work in return, your education is a waste and your life itself is a sorry burden.

As soon as you finish your course here and pass the final examination, I would exhort you to go back home and offer grateful homage to your parents. Resolve to fulfil their hopes about you; give them joy. Revere them and pay due honour. Then, learn about the problems that trouble the village or the society and plan out the lines of your service. Engage yourselves in realising those plans. "The people around you must be glad enough to say 'Ah! How good, how useful, how intelligent, this young man has become after being in the Sathya Sai College.' How exemplary is his speech, manners and conduct!" That is the return I expect from you all that we do for you in this college; nothing else.

Do not wander about like ownerless street dogs, enjoying endless wrangles and quarrels. If you fall into that company, you commit the sin of sacrilege. I am confident you will all avoid that fatal path. You must equip yourself to be the guides, teachers and leaders of India and even of the world.

Do not waste time in idle talk and scandal

During your years in this college, I desire two or three modes of behaviour which will help you to mould yourselves into these. Do not waste time in idle talk and empty scandal. Continuous conversation saps one's energy. Talk only on problems concerning subjects of study or projects of service. Youth starts conversation on subjects and end up with talk on 'objects,' they start talking sense and end up with 'senses.' I like silence and I would advise you to talk only when you must and only to the person with whom you have to talk.

Communicate with the minimum words and make them as sweet and pleasant as you can. Second, when you move from the hostel to the college or from one place to another, go in line. Don't form groups; be always open to constructive friendship. Let yours not be an exclusive association. Only cats roam from house to house; only dogs run through highroads and byelanes. Do not reduce yourselves to those levels. Be human, try to raise yourselves up to Divinity. That is my message to you. I bless you that you succeed in this noble endeavour.

Sathya Sai College, Brindhaavan, 19- 7-1979

29. Krishna as Love

Repeat the name, Krishna, in your mind, every moment of your life. You will find It sweeter than sugar or honey: indeed, It will taste more delicious than ambrosia. MEN whose intellect is narrow and unable to reach out to the vastness beyond, men who do not dive deep into the mysteries of existence, cannot achieve success in the task of promoting world peace and prosperity. These depend on establishment of peace and prosperity in society and since society consists of individuals, the individual has to attain peace and prosperity in order that the world may shine in their glory. And, for the individual to discharge this obligation, he has to derive the faith and fervour from the Divine that is his Reality.

Unless man marches on in the spiritual path, he cannot be at peace with himself and his fellowmen. That march will confer peace, and with peace, welfare. Today, wherever we turn, people talk of peace but their actions belie their profession. They only increase the feelings of anxiety and fear. Each individual desires to outstrip the other in this game. As a consequence, the spirit is neglected and the mind is polluted. There is no genuine understanding and sincere goodwill among men. Life is a meaningless passage of time.

Ten highly intellectual pupils of a sage named Paramaanandha waded across a flooded river and reached the other bank safe. They wanted to be assured that all the ten had survived the feat. So, they stood in a line, to be counted. Since the one who counted did not include himself as the tenth, every one of them who did the counting by turns, found one man missing. They started bewailing for the tenth man "who was carried away by the raging waters!"

Man is in bondage, though unaware of it

Similarly, men who are proud of their attainments and achievements on earth and in space, bewail their lot because Peace has escaped their grasp. Man can now count the stars and walk on the Moon. But, he has no knowledge of his own self. How then can he experience the delight of kinship with others? When can he claim to have reached the goal of fulfilment? The bliss of fulfilment is not available in the objective world. It must be won through turning the vision inwards. Man is now in bondage, though he is unaware of it. But he is so deeply sunk in this ignorance that he makes no effort to liberate himself.

Wife and children, kith and kin, house and land, properties and possessions are declared by some people as bonds. One can discard these and free oneself from them. It is a comparatively easy process, for these are not the things that bind you most. The tightest bondage is the "ignorance of one's own reality." Not to know who one is---this is the biggest handicap. Until this is overcome, grief is inevitable. For, man is involved by this ignorance with *thamas*, with the unreal and with death.

Urge to expand is the Principle of *Aathma*

Without self-knowledge, man is led into the belief that the objective world is true and lasting, and into the neglect of the really true and the really eternal. What is the self? Here too, man mistakenly entertains false beliefs. He holds on to the belief that the self is the body and revels in describing its components and characteristics. He ignores the *Aathma*, sublime, serene and ever-fresh, Divine Principle that he is. It is the ever-present urge to expand and to illumine. The urge to contract and limit is the feature of the animal. Denying the *Aathma*, disregarding its mandate, ignoring its existence---these are the roots of grief.

Now, about death. The *Aathma* has no birth, and so, no death. It is ever-existing never disappearing. It has no beginning and no finish. It does not die; nor does it kill, nor can it be pronounced inert. It is the witness in each and all. The moment one becomes aware of the *Aathma*, one is freed from the bondage to grief. Forget that the objective world is valid; it is at best a mental image that serves as a test. This is the reason why the prayer of the sages was: *Asatho maa Sath gamaya* (Lead me from unreal to the Real); *Thamaso maa jyothir gamaya* (Lead me from darkness to Light); *Mrithyor Maa Amritham gamaya* (Lead me from death to Immortality).

The true goal of human life is to visualise *Brahman* and merge in It. The ancients declared that there are three stages in the path towards the goal: *Karma jijnaasa*, *Dharma jijnaasa* and *Brahma jijnaasa* (seeking spiritual knowledge through activity, virtue and Divinity). These three steps have been demarcated, described, and analysed by scholars for centuries. Through *karma* (activity) one becomes a moral individual (*dharma*) and one starts seeking the basis of morality (*Brahman*). One discovers that virtue and morality add to one's *Aanandha* and that all *Aanandha* everywhere flows from *Brahman* Itself. One realises that activity devoid of this awareness is barren and binding.

Man is proving worse than animals

The *Upanishathic* declaration, "*Kaarunyam paramam thapah*" is based on this awareness. It means "Compassion towards all beings is real spiritual discipline." Man is the crown of creation; he is the highest among living beings. Therefore, he bears great responsibility. He has to love other living beings, serve them and save them, for they are his kith and kin and they too have the Divine Principle as their core. But, man is proving himself worse than animals through the cultivation and practice of self-centredness, conceit, envy and anger. Though man is endowed with pity, charity, sympathy, fortitude and joy, he has given up these virtues and become in-human in conduct and behaviour. Imagine a tiger gaining entry into the cattle shed! Vicious tendencies are like tigers; they destroy the *Saathwik* (pure) virtues. Once you recognise the extent of this calamity, you have to resolve to destroy these wild intruders.

Lord Krishna's life was His message

Now, man can be saved only through *bhakthi* and *prapatthi* (devotion and dedication). *Bhakthi* (devotion) does not end with *japa*, *bhajan* and *dhyaana*. It consists of devotion to the ideal, the ideal of getting rid of the beast and rising up to the Divine; give up the *pashu* (animal) and gain *pashupathi* (God)---that is the call only those who give ear to that call deserve to be labelled Men. In order to hold forth before man this Supreme destiny, this divine destination, God himself (though free from birth) takes on the human form, for He is *Gopaala*. 'Go' denotes not only the cow, it denotes the *jeevi* (humans and other living beings). This day, Krishnaashtami, is the Day on which the *Avathaarik* (incarnational) career of Krishna began. Krishna gave man the call to rise from the beast to *Brahman*. By devotion and dedication to Him, man must earn the awareness that he is unrelated to all things that 'bind' him---body, riches, kith and kin, attributes and feelings.

For Krishna, the *Avathaarhood* was a *leela* (divine sport). His life was His Message. He was the embodiment of the noblest and the most fruitful *Karmayoga* (divine communion through selfless dedicated action). His actions had no trace of selfishness or pride or envy.

He took upon Himself the assignment of driving the war chariot of Arjuna. After the day's battle, He washed the horses; He fed and tended them, applying balm on the wounds. However insignificant the task, He executed it with as much care and enthusiasm as must be given to the most important task.

Man has been equipped with *iccha shakthi* (Will Power) for this very purpose---to will the good, the ennobling and the elevating. The two other *shakthis* gifted to him are *jnaana shakthi* (the power to know) and *kriyaa shakthi* (the power to act). To make the interdependence of these three *shakthis*, here is an example: "Your wish to drink a cup of coffee is so insistent that you will to have it fulfilled. But, mere *iccha* (will) cannot produce coffee. Next, you use your *jnaana* (wisdom) and provide yourselves with a stove, a quantity of water, sugar, milk and coffee powder. But still, your original *iccha* is unrealised. Next, you use *kriyaa* (action) and prepare the coffee you wanted and knew how to make."

Various saadhanas prescribed to attain God

Well. The *iccha shakthi* wills to attain God, let us say. Mere wish is too weak to gain the goal. *Jnaana shakthi* advises you not to despair. There are ways by which you can win. It lays before you various *saadhanas*. *Kriyaa shakthi* takes these up and inspires you to act, to persevere in practice, until you attain the objective. Unfortunately, 99 men out of 100 use only the *iccha shakthi*; they stop with the wish; they do not pursue and attain the bliss that waits. Their faith falters; they do not march on boldly. The *iccha* prompts you to earn a first class in the examination but the *jnaana* is ignored and the *kriya* is left undone. If a thousandth of that eagerness is shown in *kriya*, in the test, the first class can be secured easily.

Krishna has elaborated, in the Bhagavathgeetha, the methods in which these three powers can be cultivated and utilised by man. Above all, the evil desire to harm, injure and insult others must be uprooted from the mind. The saplings of devotion and dedication can grow only on minds that are soaked in *karuna* (compassion). How can even the best of seeds sprout on salty soil? Compassion means reflecting in our minds the joys and sorrows of others, and responding with exhilaration and sympathy. For this to happen, the mind has to be cleansed and transformed into a fine mirror.

Practise equality to win Krishna's Grace

God will respond to your prayers for relief only when you respond sympathetically to the needs of others. Life should not be wasted in the selfish activities, blind to others' distress and deaf to others' groans. Suffer equally, rejoice equally---this according to Krishna is *Samathwam* (equanimity). Practise this equality and succeed in it---this according to Him is the way to win His Grace. You may not be rewarded materially by compassionate acts but the highest reward is the joy that you derive and the joy that you confer. The body with all the precious and unique qualities which are its equipment has been given to you in order that you may 'will' so, 'know' how and 'act' thus. A block of 'time' has been allotted to you so that you may benefit by using it profitably for these holy sanctifying purposes.

But, every one is overcome by egoism. He wants others to respect him but he is not willing to respect others. He strives to be happy but he is unwilling to make others happy. Most people are content if they are happy; many are content when they as well as others and around them are happy; a few do happily undergo misery themselves, so long as they render others happy. The first group can be compared to the bulb that sheds light only on the little room where it is lit; the

second is like the Moon, whose light, though widespread, is not bright enough to give clear knowledge of things; the third is the Sun, shining on all things and revealing their nature and characteristics.

Avoiding Krishna's teaching is a sacrilege

Among devotional disciplines, installing a picture or idol of the Lord in the home and adoring it, is the least valuable. The celebration of Krishna Janmaashtami should not be confined to special *puuja* and extra dishes for lunch. This narrow schedule arises from the desire to attract the Grace of Krishna. But that Grace can be won only by the observance of the teachings of Krishna. They will not be conferred on pride and pompous display. Adoring Krishna and avoiding His teaching is a sacrilege. You can give up the adoration; nevertheless, you can earn Grace if you sincerely attempt to proceed on the path He has marked out.

Krishna was the embodiment of Love. Hence, Love is the virtue He appreciates most. Love has to turn into concrete acts of compassion. Cultivate compassion and develop sympathetic understanding, until you reach the goal, of merging in the embodiment of love, Krishna.

There are many among you who are engaged in *saadhana*. What is the basic purpose of *Saadhana*? Each exercise of the *saadhak* (spiritual aspirant) is a stream that moves on to the sea of Grace. Believe that the love that prompts you to serve and sympathise is a spark of the love of God.

Krishna Janmaashtami, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 14-8-1979

30. The Kerala Onam

It is the bounden duty of *bhakthas* (devotees) to preserve and protect the rich culture and heritage of this country which has been the birth place of many great spiritual leaders, and whose past is resplendent with the glory of prowess in music, arts and science.

Alas, this glorious land of *Bhaarath* (Mother India) is now bedevilled with problems which are mostly the result of ego, jealousy, hatred and selfishness. Only by removing such traits can the glorious past of this great land again be brought back to life.

The story of the festival Onam, is that of Bali Chakravarthi, who was an embodiment of *thyaaga* (sacrifice), but who suffered from traces of *ahamkaara* (egoism). However due to the predominance of other virtues, Bali was even able to overcome the ill-effects of *ahamkaara* and bury it deep in hell through the grace of Lord Vishnu, who appeared before him in the form of a *vatu* (Brahmin ascetic) named Vaamana.

Bali proved himself far superior to Indhra

Bali was dedicated to rule his subjects by the observance of and strict adherence to the principles of *dharma*. He was the son of Virochana and the grandson of Prahladha. So it is not surprising that Bali possessed rich traditional qualities of *bhakthi*. Once after obtaining the permission of his *Guru* Shukraachaarya, Bali wanted to perform a great *yaaga* (sacrifice) called *Vishwajith*. *Vishwam* means the totality of *pancha bhoothas* (five elements), *pancha indhriyas* (five senses) and *pancha koshas* (five regions or sheaths) of the human body). It is the victory over such a *vishwam* which the word *Vishwajith* symbolizes.

Indhra is so called because he is ruler of the *indhriyaas* (senses), and the ruler of the *indhriyaas* in man is the *manas* (mind). The nature of the interplay of *indhriyaas* is such that it is possible to gain as well as to lose through it. Indhra wanted to rule Heaven, but Bali wanted nothing of the sort. Indhra used to propitiate and beg Vishnu in order to achieve what he desired, but Vishnu Himself descended in the form of Vaamana to beg from Bali. Thus Bali proved himself to be far superior to Indhra.

Vaamana belonged to the famous Sidhaashram which was founded by *Kashyapa* (representing *purusha* or man) and *Adhithi* (representing the feminine *Prakrithi* or Nature). It is through the union of this *Purusha* and *Prakrithi* that the progeny known as *Siddhi* (in the form of *Vatu*), the embodiment of *Vishnu thathwa*, was born. The Sidhaashram was located on the banks of a sacred river called Pavithra, which represents life. *Siddhi* will always be found on the banks of flowing life whenever the *bhaava shuddhi* (purity of mind) and *chiththa shuddhi* (purity of heart) predominate in man. It is due to the fact that all *sankalpas* (resolutions) could be realised at this sacred *aashram* that it has come to be known as Sidhaashram. Vishwaamithra, after the successful completion of his *yaaga* with the help of Raama and Lakshmana, brought them to reside at this *aashram* for some time. It was at this *aashram*, too, that Bali attained *moksha* (liberation).

The spreading of *Vishnu thathwam* (nature of Vishnu) is known as *Thrivikrama thathwam* (nature of Vishnu expanding to the three worlds). The aspect of *Trivikrama thathwam* is represented by the *Gaayathri manthra*: '*Bhur Bhuvaha.*' The *Bhuuloka* *Bhuvarloka* and *Suvarloka* constitute the *Thrivikrama thathwam*. It is wrong to conceive of these three *lokas* (worlds) as existing one on top of the other and thus capable of being reached by climbing a

ladder, as it were. In fact the three *lokas* are intertwined with each other and one exists within the other.

Real meaning of the 'three worlds'

The real meaning of this kind of geometrical configuration of the three *lokas* is that the *pancha indhriya*, *pancha bhuuthas* and *pancha koshas* (five senses, elements and sheaths) aspects of man's *dheha* (body), is *Bhuuloka*; the aspect of *praana shakthi* or *manas thathwam* is *Bhuvarloka*; and the microscopic state of *Aanandham* (bliss) represents *Suvarloka*. So it can be said that the three worlds, *Bhuuloka*, *Bhuvarloka* and *Suvarloka*, are nothing but the *dheha thathwa*, *manas thathwa* and *Aanandha thathwa* (essential nature of body, mind and bliss) respectively and the totality of these three represents the *Thrivikrama thathwa*.

Again, these three aspects of *Thrivikrama thathwa* can be understood in terms of the three states of an individual, viz., the one you think you are, the one others think you are and the one you really are. Hence only by proper *saadhana* can one transcend from *Bhuuloka* through *Bhuvarloka* to *Suvarloka*. The attainment of *Suvarloka* is known as *moksha* (liberation), and it represents the stage of complete mergence with the Lord. Since it is a state where the aspect of *moha* (attachment) is made to disintegrate, it is known as *moksha* (*moha+kshyaam*, *mokshyam*).

Remember Bali by practising his ideals

Bali was an embodiment of *thyaaga* (renunciation) and he personified the aspects of *dhathru thathwam* (principle of charity) and *dharma thathwam* (righteousness). Since Onam is a festival day to be celebrated in memory of the re-appearance of Bali in his *suukshma ruupa* (microscopic subtle form), it is imperative for everyone to remember and practise the ideals for which he stood when he was alive. It should be remembered that Bali, as portrayed above, should be visiting us every day and not just once a year. But we forget this because in our daily life we leave ample room for the cultivation of undesirable traits such as greediness, selfishness and egoism, which in present-day man are reaching gigantic proportions. It is precisely due to this kind of a situation that the world periodically gets plunged into wars. Bali's life-message is that the above mentioned traits in man should be eliminated at all costs, thus rendering the heart pure for the Lord to reside in it.

Another important aspect of Bali's life is his demonstration of the fact that the quality of *thyaaga* (selfless sacrifice) should be an integral part of one's *karma* (actions). All beings perform actions, but only man, if he so desires, can act, making sacrifice an integral component of his actions. Again, the existence of this trait in man is possible because of his ability to think and reflect. Unfortunately man uses these God-given faculties to enunciate theories and to preach, but never to practise what is preached.

Sacrifice everything and attain liberation

Thousands of Onams have come and gone and people have been preaching for years as to what Onam signifies. Yet the heart of man remains impure. Bali practised what he preached, whereas his revered *Guru*, Shukraachaarya, did not, as was evident when he intervened to stop Bali from giving away everything that he possessed to Vaamana. Preaching and practising are like the two eyes. Since Shukraachaarya only preached and did not practise, his one eye was symbolically made ineffective. A man with a dual mind is half blind. In our lives we must be Balls and not

Shukraachaaryas. We should realise that in order to get one thing, something else must be sacrificed.

Bali demonstrated through his *thyaaga swabhaava* (sacrificing nature) that if one sacrifices everything, one will attain *moksha* (liberation). The real sacrifice involves two things: First, to realise the cause of our bondage in this life, and second, to sever this bondage. Man mistakenly thinks that wealth, a family etc., are his bondages, and that by severing connections with them he will be able to sacrifice everything and become eligible to attain *Moksha*. But these are not the real bondage of man. His real bondage is his ignorance in identifying himself with his body. He who cuts off this bondage as Bali did, will attain *moksha*. For cutting off this bondage a purification of the heart is very necessary. Purification of the body with soap and water and by applying perfume does not result in the purification of the mind.

In this *Kaliyuga*, *naamasmarana* (constant remembrance of God) is the easiest way to purify one's mind; and surrendering to God with a pure mind is the surest way to attain *moksha*. Bali offered two of his three aspects, namely, *aadhi bhowthikam* (his body) and *aadhi dhaivikam* (his life), for two feet of space demanded by Vaamana. As for the third foot of space required by Vaamana, Bali offered his *aadhyaathmika* (soul) aspect to the Lord, thus surrendering to Him completely. That is why the Lord placed His third step on the heart of Bali and pushed him into Hell, thus completely pushing all trace of Bali's ego into the bottom-most layers of the Universe. Bali was thus delivered from the bondage of birth and death.

The essence of the message of Onam

The word *Bali* has another meaning, which is, charge for service rendered, or tax. We pay money to the department which supplies water, knowing fully well that it is not responsible for the creation of the water. But what charges are we paying to the Creator of water? Nothing. Yet we wish to get His Grace. How is it possible to get His Grace without giving *bali* or *sulkam* (tax)? The tax which the Lord expects is devotion and purity of heart. This is the essence of the message of Onam. Onam is not to be treated as a festival which comes once a year, but as an event, the message of which should become a way of life for everyone. The three events which Onam symbolizes should always be kept clear in one's mind: (i) The Incarnation of Lord Vishnu as the *Vatu* (ii) The attainment of *moksha* by Bali and, (iii) The *Anthardhanam* (mergence) of Bali with the Lord.

Brindhaavan, 4-9-1979

Every man is engaged in searching for something lost. Life is the chance afforded to him to recover the peace and the joy that he had lost, when last he was here. If he recovers them now, he need not come again. But, he loses them through ignorance of their value and of the means of retaining them.

If only he would stay in the consciousness of Shivoham--- "I am Shiva; I am immortal, I am the source and spring of Bliss"---he would be supremely content; but, instead of this correct evaluation of himself, this recognition of his innate reality, man goes about weeping at his helplessness, his inadequacy, his poverty, his evanescence.

This is the tragic fate from which man has to be rescued.

Sri Sathya Sai

31. Food and health

EVERY activity of man is dependent on the energy he derives from the intake of food. The spiritual *saadhanas* he ventures upon depend for their success on the quantity and quality of the food taken by the *saadhak* (spiritual aspirant), even during the preliminary preparations recommended by Pathanjali. The most external of the five sheaths that enclose the *Aathmic* core, namely the *Annamaya kosha* (physical sheath), has impact on all the remaining four---the *Praanamaya*, the *Manomaya*, the *Vijnaanamaya* and the *Aanandhamaya* (the vital, mental, wisdom and bliss sheaths or coverings). The *Annamaya Kosha* is the sheath, consisting of the material, flesh and bone, built by the food that is consumed by the individual.

Food is generally looked down upon by ascetically minded *saadhaks* and seekers and treated as .some thing which does not deserve attention. But, since the body and the mind are mightily interdependent, no one can afford to neglect it. As the food, so the mind, as the mind so the thought; as the thought, so the act. Food is an important factor which determines the alertness and sloth, the worry and calm, the brightness and dullness. The scriptures classify food as *Saathwik*, *Raajasik* and *Thaamasik* and relate these types to the three mental modes (*gunas*) of the same names.

Avoid *Raajasik* and *Thaamasik* food

Man is the only living being which dislikes raw food found in the natural state. All other animals eat things as they are---grain, grass, leaves, shoots, fruits. Man boils, fries, melts, mixes and adopts various methods of cooking in order to satisfy the cravings of the tongue, the eye and the nose. As a consequence, the food value of these articles are either reduced or destroyed. When the seeds are fried, they do not sprout; that is clear proof that the 'life-force' is eliminated. Therefore, uncooked raw pulses just sprouting, are to be preferred. Also nuts and fruits. The coconut, offered to the Gods, is a good *Saathwik* (pure) food, having good percentage of protein besides fat, starch and minerals. Food having too much salt or pepper is *Raajasik* (passion-rousing) and should be avoided; so also too much fat and starch, which are *Thaamasik* (disposed to inactivity) in their effects on the body, should be avoided.

An intake of too much food is also harmful. Simply because tasty food is available and is being offered, one is tempted to overeat. We have air all around us but we do not breathe in more than we need. The lake is full but we drink only as much as the thirst craves for. But overeating has become a social evil, fashionable habit. The stomach cries out, 'Enough,' but the tongue insists on more, and man becomes the helpless target of disease. He suffers from corpulence, high blood pressure and diabetes. Moderate food is the best medicine to avoid bodily life. Do not rush to the hospital for every little upset. Too much drugging is also bad. Allow nature full scope to fight the disease and set you right. Adopt more and more the principles of naturopathy, and give up running around for doctors.

The type of food that you consume decides the degree of concentration you can command; its quality and quantity decide how much your self-control is lessened or heightened. Polluted air and water are full of maleficent viruses and germs and have to be avoided at all costs. There are four pollutions against which man has to be vigilant---of the body (removable by water); of the mind (removable by truthfulness), of reason (removable by correct knowledge) and of the self (removable by yearning for God). "*Vaidhyo Naaraayano Harih*", the *Shruthis* declare. God is the Doctor. Seek Him, rely on Him, you will be free from Disease.

Hospital day, Dhashara, 21-9-1979

Some say that since this is Kali Yuga, falsehood alone can succeed. But, in spite of all appearances, honesty is still the best policy. One lie has to be buttressed by a hundred others; whereas truth is the easiest, simplest and safest line of behaviour. Be what you profess to be; speak what you intend to do; utter what you have experienced; no more, no less.

Sri Sathya Sai

32. The inner yajna

HINDHUISM, as a religious philosophy, has existed since the days of the *Vedhas*, but it has had to encounter and overcome many obstacles, periods of ups and downs and even a few inroads of distinct cultures. It has survived all these and is still unharmed and unwavering. Those who are experts in this field acclaim the excellence of the Hindhu religion, because it encourages the co-existence of many cultural traits and moulds them into one distinct way of life.

The word 'Hindhu' has been interpreted by scholars in various ways, but the real meaning is, *him* (*himsa* or violence) *dhu* (*dhuur*, far from): thus, a people who keep away from violence. The Hindhus have been praying since ages for the "peace and prosperity of all the worlds": *Lokaas Samasthaas Sukhino bhavanthu*. Their conception of the Immanence of God is strong and unshakeable. The rituals, ceremonies, vows and rites prescribed in, Hindhuism, are all directed to the promotion and well-being of "all the worlds." This is the reason why Hindhuism is still alive and active.

Beneficiaries of yajnas are all living beings

Since several centuries and millennia, *yajnas* (*Vedhic* rite or sacrifice) like the *Vedhapurusha sapthaaha jnaana yajna* (Seven-day *Vedhic* Wisdom-sacrifice) which is being inaugurated here now, have been observed in India for the welfare of the world. These *yajnas* are not performed to benefit an individual, a family, a sect, a caste or those who follow a particular faith. The aim is universal and the beneficiaries are all living beings, for such *yajnas* calm the elements and propitiate the deities presiding over the earth, water, fire, wind and sky. The sages of old chose some place away from the habitations" of man, either on the bank of a river or in the recesses of a forest, for the celebration of *yajnas*. No one or no group of persons can claim any special attention being given to them.

The *yajna* is everybody's privilege; it becomes a success through everyone's effort. No one person can pride himself that he is indispensable. Handfuls of grain brought by those who had sincere desire to participate were heaped together and handfuls of ritual fuel sticks brought by the priests were stacked together. This was done as a symbol of the union of minds and hearts and as an assurance that each one can share in the blessings of the Gods invoked by the *manthras* (sacred formulae). When the ego of a few is given free play and fame is offered to one or many, as often happens in *yajnas* today, they are rendered unholy and infructuous. This is the reason why *yajnas* have become occasions for ridicule and adverse criticism.

Among *yajnas*, there are two types---the outer and the inner, the outer being a reflection of the inner. The inner *yajna* is the bird in the hand; the outer, the bird in the bush. But since the sanctified vision and urge are absent today, what is happening is the release of the bird in the hand with the attempt to catch the bird in the bush. The value and significance of the inner *yajna* have to be understood first. It involves awareness of the Divinity that is dormant but decisive in the very centre of our Reality. Worship It, propitiate It, please It, become It.

All animal traces of man must be sacrificed

The mind is the altar. Place the animal which is to be offered as oblation (the evil aspects of your character, behaviour, attitude etc.) and sacrifice it to the deity invoked. Though born as a human, man is burdened by animal instincts and impulses that have attached themselves to him during his previous lives as an animal. He has passed through many an animal existence and each has

left its mark on his mental make-up, like a scar on the skin when a wound has healed. For example, man is afflicted with the disease of aggressive conceit, what is called *madha* in Samskrith. This is not a natural trait of man, but a relic of a former elephantine life.

Man is sometimes pitiable a *moorkha* (foolish), which is a relic of his past existence as a sheep. Some have an inborn tendency to steal, which may be reminiscent of their past of creatures such as a cat, which is also a sly poacher. Some are endowed with profuse unsteadiness and waywardness, an inheritance of their monkey existence. Man is known in Samskrith as *nara* and the monkey as *vaanara*. When *vaa* (*vaalam*, tail) is subtracted, *vaanara* is reduced to *nara*. Man has lost the tail but he has still all the waywardness and unsteadiness of that animal. All such animal traces must be sacrificed on the altar of the mind as part of the inner *yajna*. The outer visible *yajna* is a means to convey this inner purpose and message.

When children are taught to read, the objects which they can see and identify are placed beside the written words which bespeak them. Under the picture of a chair, the word chair is printed and the child is taught to discover that c-h-a-i-r reads "chair." Later, the picture is discarded as superfluous. So, too, until the lesson is learnt, the external ritual of fuel sticks being offered to the sacrificial fire has to continue. The ritual is the casket, and the destruction of the animal impulses, the gem that it is designed to keep safe.

Significance of the activities at the *yajna*

Here we see *rithviks* (priests performing the rites) who are specialists in the different stages of *Vedhic* sacrifice. We hear the recitation of *Vedhic* hymns; we have *Pandiths* reading the Raamaayana (History of Raama), the *Bhaagavatha* (Legends of divine Advents) and the *Dhevibhaagavatha* (Exploits of Divine Universal Mother) from the original texts; we have the ceremonial worship of *Dhevi* on the lines of *Shaasthric* (ethical) injunctions; a *Pandith* is engaged in prayer of the thousand *lingas* (Symbolic Form of Divinity), while another priest propitiates the Sun God by means of ritual prostration to the accompaniment of *manthras*, praising His Glory. Godhead, in all Its Manifestations of elements and forces, is thus being adored for seven days as part of the *Vedhapurusha yajna*. The five senses and their impact, the five sheaths that enclose the *Aathman*, are all symbolised in these activities.

The outermost *kosha* (sheath) is the *annamaya kosha*, composed of the material body made of *anna* (food). *Anna*, the body built by *anna*, and the man, all are products of the self-same substance, *bhuumi* (soil, earth). To fill the material body with *aanandha* (felicity), the vital, mental and intellectual sheaths need to be sublimated. All the *koshas* have to be finally merged in the Illumination of *Jnaana* (Beautiful Wisdom). The *homa* (the oblation in the sanctified flame) is a symbol of this consummation.

The *Vedhas* are the embodiments of Truth

The fire you see is fed by fuel sticks and ghee, so that the flames of wisdom may burn out the last traces of ego, ignorance and desire. And what exactly is ghee, which feeds the flames? It is clarified butter---butter that is churned from curd which is in fact curdled milk. Milk is drawn from the four-legged cow which symbolises the four *Vedhas*. So symbolically, the *Vedhas* themselves help the Light of Wisdom to shine. The *Vedhas* are Embodiments of Truth. Recitation of the *Vedhas* purifies the environment and strengthens the will to become Truth. This is symbolically conveyed by the various ceremonial rites which are part of this *yajna* (sacrifice).

Many who are unaware of this significance find fault with those who partake in such *yajna*; they criticise the loss of grain and ghee and bemoan the waste of precious materials resulting from the irrational behaviour of the priests. But the seers who declared the *manthras* and the *Vedhas* which prescribe the rituals, and those who faithfully celebrate the *yajna*, are not foolish at all. Ignorant people lament the loss when the farmer scatters bags of grain on a ploughed field, for they do not know that when the harvest comes around, the farmer can collect from the field ten times more grain than was scattered by him.

A single tin of ghee offered with appropriate *manthras* in the holy fire will result in a million tins of ghee for mankind. The vibrations of the *manthras* and the effect of the oblations will ensure prosperity and welfare the world over. The sages and the seers of yore prescribed these *yajnas*, prompted by universal compassion, in order that they may result in the welfare of mankind. Thus all beings benefit from the persistence of the Hindus in observing the teachings of the *rishis*.

The Mahaabhaaratha declares that 'what is not in *Bhaarath* does not deserve reverential consideration;' and in *Bhaarath* the message has always been: tolerance, respect for all faiths and the practice of the essential teachings of love and service with the giving up of hatred, envy and pride. This *yajna* will help you to understand this message and live in accordance with it.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 25-9-1979

Naamsmarana is the most effective saadhana. Remember with each Name the glory behind the Name. Escape from the clutches of anger, jealousy, hatred, malice and greed. Do not seek to discover others defects; do not gloat over them; when others point out your defects, be thankful; or keep quiet as Buddha did.

Sri Sathya Sai

33. The next step

WHATEVER originates does degenerate. All things seen as objects lose their identity in the bottomless pool of time. Man, however, wanders about in the objective world presented before him as form and name, seeking to extract therefrom permanent peace and unalloyed bliss. He is engaged in fallow pursuits and nefarious tactics, which fail to provide him the key to the Absolute and the Eternal. Does the key exist in the outer world or in the inner? So long as man embroils himself in the 'Seen,' he cannot see the 'See-er.' So long as your attention is caught by the flowers in this garland, you cannot cognise the string that holds them together. Inquiry is essential to discover the base which upholds the garland. So too, inquiry alone can bring into human experience the *Aathmic* (divine) base which upholds the objective sensory world.

The world can confer, at best, only momentary joy. Happiness, prosperity and power are but flashes amidst the dark clouds of misery, poverty and defeat. Kith and kin of whom we are proud and in whom we lay our trust succumb to death and depart without a word of farewell. But, we do not learn the lesson; we cling to the belief that the outer world is the treasure-chest of peace and joy.

There are only two roads before man

In all temples where idols of Shiva are installed, we find *Nandhi* and in temples of Vishnu we find *Garuda* idols; they too appear intent on adoration only and awaiting, with unwinking eyes the orders of their Masters. Their vision is one-pointed; their goal is eternal bliss; their strength is also revered; the journey to Mammon is worthy of only rebuke.

There are only two roads before man: the road to God and the road to Mammon. Few are those who choose the first and reach the Goal that lies within, where the *Aathma* shines in supreme glow. The multitudes trudge along the wilderness to which it leads. There, the beast in man asserts itself and suppresses the excellences with which he is endowed.

Almost always, man is anxious to ignore the faults and failings of the objects that draw his attention. If he only recognises these, he is certain to evaluate them correctly and behave more intelligently. When man becomes aware that the cobra is a poisonous snake and that the leopard is a cruel beast, he avoids them with constant vigilance. Similarly, when we become aware of the transitoriness and triviality of worldly triumphs and possessions, we can easily detach ourselves from them and concentrate on inner wealth and inner vision. All things in the outer world of objects are subject to change. Impermanent objects can confer only impermanent joy. How can it ever be otherwise? Only the spring of bliss can confer bliss. A fitful spring, a drying, decaying spring, can give happiness only in fits and even that will, before long, decay and dry.

The Aathmic energy motivates every Being

Aathma alone is the ever-full and ever-fresh spring of bliss. The *Aathma* is the motivator of the physical machine known as the Body. It can be inferred only through the performance of the machine. The *Aathmic* energy motivates every Being in the Universe---man, animal, bird, worm, tree and grass. Once man contacts It, he is blessed with Universal vision, absolute delight and eternal wisdom. Every one has the thirst to realise It and be with It; but, only very few take steps to reach It. Thousands proclaim the glory of the *Aathma* but only a handful strive to attain it.

Sage Shukraachaarya who was the preceptor of Emperor Bali is described in the Bhaagavatha as a great exponent of the doctrine of charity. He could expatiate on the merit that can be acquired by gifts offered to pious persons and to the needy. But when Bali was offering a gift to God Himself (in the role of Vaamana, a young Braahmin student) he advised the Emperor to desist. His action belied his words. Profession is one eye and practice, the second. Therefore, according to the story, when Shukra attempted to prevent the gift, he became blind in one eye.

Those who hold forth ideals in profuse eloquence must demonstrate the value of those ideals in their daily lives. Otherwise, they become Shukras who can only speak; they have no honest faith in their own words. Since devotees stop halfway and start extolling the *Guru* and his teachings rather than experiencing their value and validity, the *Aathma* and the Infinite bliss It can confer, remain undiscovered by aspirants.

The *Aathma* cannot be grasped through metaphors and examples. No form can contain It; no name can denote It. How can the limited comprehend the Unlimited, the now measure the Ever, the wayward understand the Stable? The Kathopanishath described how God Yama parried the steady stream of questions, which the boy Nachiketas asked him in right earnest, about the *Aathma*. Yama tried His best to cool his ardour by promising to confer on him boons regarding wealth, power and long life. But Nachiketas spurned these trinkets. He replied, "All-powerful Yama! I know that the senses, which are eager to earn these gifts you offer, are polluted by them and are destroyed pretty soon by their contact. I am not seeking from you these evanescent joys. Tell me of the Eternal and the *True---the Aathma!*" On hearing this, Yama said, "Son! you yearn for Wisdom; you are not attached to Wealth. Well. I shall fulfil your request."

Learn to visualise the Motivator, the *Aathma*

Emperor Janaka, too, on one occasion told himself, "My great-grandfathers, grandfathers and father commanded vast wealth and spent their lives in unstinted luxury. But they have all become the dust out of which they had emerged. Man cannot escape this fate. Then why should he hanker after these petty pleasures? Let me use this life, this physical machine, for realising the ultimate goal, the basic Truth, the fundamental *Aathma*." Consequent on this firm resolution, Janaka was able to succeed in the arena of spiritual endeavour. The poet sings, "Janaka had God ever in his thoughts, even while engaged in discharging his daily duties as an Emperor. And, by this *Raaja Yoga* (Royal path of divine communion), he attained the supreme stage, liberation, from bondage to the individual self." The body is but an instrument to discover the indweller. Withdraw from the outer to the inner and learn to visualise the Motivator, the *Aathma*, *that* is the lesson which the seers and scriptures teach. To engage ourselves in the purificatory exercises, to pursue the inquiry into the reality of God, Nature and Man, and to experience the ecstatic delight of that discovery, the body is very necessary. It has got to be kept healthy and alert, free from passion and sloth, balanced and expectant of victory.

Each cell in the body is motivated by *Aathma*

Of course, the *Aathma* is everywhere, at all times. It is like milk and its colour. It is white, everywhere, at all times, under all conditions, as milk or as butter, cream or ghee. So too, the *Aathma*, persists unchanged, however many changes the thing motivated by It might undergo. The *Aathma* contacts the senses of perception and affects the mind; it awakens the intellect to discriminate and decide upon the lines of action.

The *Aathma* activates the instruments of thought, speech and action, of expression and communication. The eyes see; but, which is the force that prompts them? You may have ears but who endows them with the power of hearing? Words emanate from the mouth; but which is it that urges us and frames the manner and content of the speech? That force acts like the cells in a torch which provide the bulb with the current to illuminate it.

Doctors know that the body consists of cells, billions of them, alive and alert, busy and active. Each cell is motivated by the *Aathma*; it is immanent, all over. The *Aathma* is in each of them, as well as in every spot of space. When we realise it as such, it is experienced as effulgent, total splendrous light; endless, incomparable, unique light.

Do not degrade your lives in low pursuits

The ancient seers ignored the world as irrelevant; and immersed themselves in inner inquiry until they contacted the Universal *Aathma* and filled themselves with *Aanandha*. They had to limit desires, control their cravings and live in the conviction that the destiny of Man is to divest himself of the animal heritage and to sublimate his innate humanity into Divinity.

Consider for a while the fate of the rulers of all realms, the leaders of armies and nations, the Presidents and Prime Ministers, emerging-from oblivion and merging in the same---did any one of these carry with them when they passed away any portion of their wealth or possession. When one dies, another takes his place; when he dies, still another is ready to assume the role. And all are equally forgotten---except those who have heroically realised the *Aathma* and raised themselves to the Divine State. So, believe that the struggle for status, for power, of fame and for wealth is not commendable at all.

Having been blessed by this chance to live as human beings, have as the ideal, the Realisation of Reality. The *Upanishaths* exhort you to march on to this goal. They address you as "*Amrthasya Puthraah!*" ("Children of Immortality.") Try to deserve that honour, to achieve that height. Learn to use all your skills, all your intelligence, all your time for attaining that victory. You are Gods in human form, for only Gods can be immortal. You are embodiments of the Divine *Aathma*. Do not degrade your lives in low pursuits. Spend it in sacred thoughts, loving service, self-less acts and sweet words of solace.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 25-9-1979

A thing must have form and substance, both, in order to be genuine; an apple made out of plastic, however realistic and enticing by its correctness of form, cannot be valued as genuine, for it has no substance.

The swaruupa (form) must be saturated with the swabhaava (its own quality) too. Fire is no genuine fire, if it does not burn; nor can water be called so, if it does not wet.

It is a misnomer to name a person as man, if he does not evince the qualities of humanity. Such persons are cheats, for, by their

appearance they induce others to believe that they are good, kind, honest and harmless; they draw others into their company and inflict untold injury, by their very nature.

Sri Sathya Sai

34. Discrimination and detachment

DISCRIMINATION and detachment are the first and the second steps that man has to take in order to reach the eternal *Aathmic* (spiritual) truth. The mind can be steadied only by the mastery of desire, the quality of unwavering detachment. Once the mind is still, peace reigns and bliss prevails. Detachment or the giving up of the tendency to pursue whatever attracts the mind, is often misconstrued as asceticism which renounces social and family life and escapes into the loneliness of the forest. But, it involves, more than anything else, awareness of the basic blemish in all material things. Without this inquiry and this discovery all claims for detachment or renunciation are slippery. No one can have real detachment in their absence. The sense of dislike that results from 'the recognition of the temporariness and triviality of pleasure is best called 'practical detachment.'

Detachment from the objective world that springs from the realisation of the Divine that is one's core can alone be the unshakable victory. Imagine the senses running after joy derivable from the outer world and the person giving up a few gains. This cannot be recognised as *vairaagya* (detachment). The longing for the experience of sound, touch, sight, taste and smell for which the senses strive has to be turned inwards. Along with this, the innate fault inherent in every object has to be recognised and remembered.

Pleasures that entice man are momentary

The giving up of external struggle is not enough, nor is it a great achievement. The real struggle is internal---the withdrawal of the extrovert senses into the mind and making them ineffective through the exercise of the intellect or discrimination. Investigate each material object that entices the senses by beauty, fragrance, sweetness and softness. Realise that these are all momentary, depending on your mental condition, physical health and emotional balance. Man is enamoured of flitting phenomena; he accepts them as valid and valuable. He is entangled in these unrealities and he strays far away from the path of liberation. Really this is not man's goal.

When we are drawn towards some source of pleasure, we have to examine it carefully and analyse the pleasure that it promises to give. Imagine that you have longed to eat a particular sweet dish. You have cooked and served on your plate. You are anticipating all the while the relish it can confer. But while about to place it on the tongue, the cook rushes in and informs you that a lizard had fallen into the vessel in which it was cooked, and so, your favourite dish was fouled and poisoned. This creates disgust and your attachment disappears.

Every source of pleasure has its limitations

So too, when you examine the quality of the pleasure you hope to derive or the fame you toil to earn, you will certainly blame-yourselves for being so serious about them. It may be asked: We build a house for us to live in; is that not a source of joy? We listen to fine music; is that not a source of joy? Does it not fill the heart with tenderness? In the same manner, are not these worldly pleasures real? Consider for a moment, whether even fine music will give uniform joy, if listened to, continuously, for hours! Even the heavenly musicians, Naaradha and Thumburu, will tire a listener if they hold forth for too long, however mellifluent their voice. Sweetness too is bound to be disgusting after some mouthfuls. After the limit is reached, every additional mouthful gives less and less pleasure, until disgust intervenes.

The classical poet-philosopher Bharthrihari asks, "How can medicine, resorted to for the sake of curing an illness, be deemed a luxury, a desirable pleasure?" Hunger is a disease. Food is the medicine that cures the disease. That is the plain fact but no one recognises it and behaves accordingly! They have made it a costly ritual, 'a futile feast, a fertile source of further diseases! For, they cater to the whims and fancies of the tongue and behave like slaves of the senses.

The king was hunting in the depths of a forest from dawn until early afternoon. He was afflicted by intense thirst. At last, he found a hermitage where he took refuge. The inmates gave him cool clear water to drink. That was the medicine which he needed most. It made him fresh and fine. If the drink intoxicates him, robs him of reason and degrades his personality it causes many other diseases. Discrimination will reveal the dangers lurking in becoming a bond-slave of the senses.

Born as humans, men grow as beasts

Born as humans, bred among humans and by humans, men grow as wild beasts. Talking of peace among men and nations, they prepare for war and revel in battles. Though human in outer form, they relish demonic hatred in their hearts. Such hypocrites do not deserve your trust. Their speech is sweet, but their hearts are bitter. They declare something as their goal, but they persist in proceeding in the opposite direction.

God has endowed man with intelligence and the faculty of discrimination, so that he can save himself from this falsehood, and visualise the Divine. But instead of *dheva* (God) being the target of activity, *dheha* (the body) has monopolised the attention of man. Instead of understanding oneself through the proper use of this endowment, each one is engrossed in misunderstanding others through the perverted use of intelligence and discriminative skills.

The mirror gifted to you with the injunction, 'Son! Use this to see thyself' is being held only before others. *Buddhi* (intellect) is best used as an instrument for self-realisation. It is nearest to the *Aathma* in man, but when it is ever busy seeking faults in others, it gets polluted in the process and loses the power of reflecting the majesty, the splendour and the glory of the *Aathman* which can illumine it. Now, the advantage of the adjacency is lost and *Buddhi* strays far into the world in search of objective pleasure, and sensory satisfactions.

If the *summum bonum* of living is the satisfaction of the senses, the birds and beasts with far less intelligence and much poorer discrimination are equally successful as man, if not more. No! Human intelligence has a nobler and higher purpose---the realisation of the eternal truth, behind all these apparent formations and transformations. The saintly guides of mankind have stressed the special excellence of man's *buddhi*. They have said that along with humans, all other living beings have the need for food, the yearning for sleep, the protective impulse of fear and the instinctive urge of sex. But, they point out to the unique gift that man treasures, *Jnaana* (integral wisdom). They declare that the person who does not *seek jnaana* but live as the senses direct, is, in truth a veritable beast.

Avoiding duty to *Aathma* is sheer cowardice

When man is entangled until the moment of death in stilling the clamour of the senses and catering to the needs of this illusory world, how can he thrill with ecstasy of the awareness of his own *Aathmic* core? From the monarch in the palace to the beggar in the streets, all are caught up in the game of extracting pleasure from the outer world. The illiterate man and the scholar are equally busy in the pursuit of this mirage. So, what are we to say of the superior capacities of

scholarship? Earning money, guarding the earned money, increasing it by the surest and the safest methods--thus the struggle goes on---plus, plus, plus! The bondage to worldly things tightens faster and faster. No one pauses to enquire how deep and how real is the joy that these earnings can give. And what of the 'fashions' that he enslaves himself to? They justify these aberrations as 'social obligation' and 'duty.'

But, have people no duty towards the *Aathma*? Have they no obligation to recognise the *Aathma*? Should they not bind themselves fast to the *Aathma* which is the Reality? It is sheer cowardice to avoid this duty, to ignore this obligation, and to escape from this bondage. Of course, you have to live on the earth and understand it. You have to study the Universe and derive joy therefrom. But, to believe that it is the be-all and end-all of life is a sign of insanity.

Avoid evil thoughts and evil habits

You have been attending such discourses since years and undergoing these journeys to Swaami's Presence often and often. And you have listened to the lessons I am giving. Let Me ask you--- what is the gain you have garnered? How near are you to the goal? Which obstacle have you overcome? If you have not reached the higher stage, what have you profited from the *saadhana*? How can you justify the label, 'devotee' which you have adopted for yourselves?

No. You must progress towards the goal step by step; you have to uproot evil thoughts, evil habits and evil designs from within you. Repeating 'God!' 'God' 'God,' you are now only straying away into ungodly realms.

Analyse every object and discover the cheapness and hollowness of each. Then, genuine *vairaagya* (detachment) will be planted in your heart. So, utilise the priceless weapon, the perfect mirror, that God has given you---the *buddhi* (intellect), for the journey to God. An old adage announces that "*Buddhi* is shaped by one's actions"---*Buddhih karma anusaarinee*. But this is not quite correct. The mind prompts the sense for action. It has the *buddhi* on one side and the senses on the other and is drawn by both into action. When the *manas* (mind) leans towards the senses, and activates them, bondage results; if it leans towards the intelligence (which is illumined by the *Aathma*), liberation results. Sometimes, the *buddhi* is enticed by the fake delight that the mind revels in, through the senses. *Saadhana* has to be used at this moment to turn it away from serfdom to the mind. It must be restored to its status of regulator and controller of the vagaries of the mind.

Man is riding two horses, World and God

This flower is beautiful; it gives exciting, enchanting fragrance, declare the eye and the nose. The wise man will not be content with the sense-impression. He resorts to *buddhi* and wants it discover---how long? how much? The answer is---until nightfall, till the new day dawns. Therefore he concludes true beauty, true fragrance can be derived only from God, not from created things and components, not from the moving and changing, the emerging and merging, the appearing, attracting and disappearing entities of the world.

What, then, is Truth---the witness of all these processes and changes, the See-er of all that is seen, the ONE that has no second, unaffected by time and space. Man is now riding two horses--the world and God, the Universal and the Particular, the Absolute and the Relative, the Eternal and the Time-bound, the Reality and the Appearance. He is therefore riding for a fall.

Saadhana alone can help man to choose the right path and pursue it relentlessly. Every religion in every era and clime emphasises the ONE and marks out the path to reach it. They warn us against too much attachment to the world, which is basically poisonous.

You may drink it with delight but that will not mitigate its evil effects. You may drink the *Aathmic* Ambrosia weeping and wailing but it will confer immortality nevertheless! So keep away from worldly enticements and turn your eye inwards to visualise the *Aathma*.

Detachment alone can make the path clean

The *Anthah-karana* (inner consciousness) has four instruments that prompt man. Of these, *buddhi* is two-faced; it draws light from the *Aathma* to which it is closest; it illumines with that light, the mind and the senses. It regulates the passions and emotions, the impulses and instinctive reactions. Some perverse minds confront with questions, like, "Is it not ensuring the safety and happiness of our wives and children our duty? How can you declare that it is not desirable? Yes. But remember the prime purpose of the education, you earn in this life, is to concentrate on your *Aathmic* Truth. Do not be diverted from this fundamental duty. Other activities must smoothen and straighten this path. They must be contributory *saadhanas* (spiritual disciplines) for this basic purpose of man.

Saadhakas (Spiritual aspirants)! Embodiments of Love! Yearn always to be as close to your Divine Core as possible. You need not desert your family and run away into loneliness. You have only to keep in mind the comparative triviality of the world. Death stalks every living being; disintegration waits on all created things. From a world so transient, so uncertain and unstable, one has to win the goal of eternal peace and eternal bliss. The eternal *Aathma* is associated with the ephemeral body! Discrimination alone can make this plain. Detachment alone can make the road clear.

Dhashara Discourse, 26-9-1979

Dharma guards those that guard dharma. Dharma means certain obligations and duties and regulations over actions, words and behaviour."

Elders have certain obligations towards younger people as young men have towards elders; neighbours have mutual duties and rights. Even war has to be carried on, under some rules of decency and humanity.

The mighty should not grab the possessions of the weak; the pledged word has to be honoured. If India sticks to these principles of dharma, that dharma alone will serve as effective armour against all the foes.

Sri Sathya Sai

35. Mine and thine

MAN has demarcated two distinct goals before himself---material and spiritual. But such distinction is wrong and ruinous. It may be congenial and convenient on the surface; but if it is acted upon great harm will be caused to the blossoming of the soul. For they are both the same, one continuous pilgrimage towards the Divinisation of man. One of the incorrect assertions propounded today is "The physical frame is composed of the five elements. Its components finally merge with those five. Casting away this frame, the soul puts on another frame composed of the same five and, undergoing some more terms of schooling, slides out of that venture also. The soul is ever in search of new experiences; It is a highly peripatetic entity."

The body is the instrument needed to realise the *Aathman*. The *Aathman* resides in the body and has to be discovered in and through it Here is a silver cup; can we separate the silver from the cup or the cup from the silver? The silver is the basic truth; the cup is the form which has been given to it. We can make out of this silver a plate, an urn or a box. Through all these transformations, the silver will persist as silver. Similarly the Divinity, the *Aathman*, persists, though the five elements form themselves into body after body.

The ego free mind is the altar in the *yajna*

Is the *Aathman* with or without form? Has It certain attributes, or is It attributeless? Is It unfeeling or feeling bound? These doubts are certain to trouble the thinker. The forms are merely artificial and temporary, not inherent. The formless *Aathman* is Immanent in the body-form. How, then, can man separate them and deal with them differently? It can only lead to disaster. You are performing a *yajna* (sacrifice) here for seven days. It does not consist of the erected altar, the sacrificial pit or any other material means. These are but external symbols of the inner purpose. The ego-free mind is the altar; offer your activities (with all trace of desire removed) to the fire of renunciation. To celebrate this genuine *yajna* one need not collect money, gather provisions or assemble priests.

Acts done between dawn and dusk are offerings into the sacred fire of wisdom. Of such acts those that are prompted by instinct and impulse are material; they do not arise from a mind moulded by the intellect. When the mind is crossed and the outer shore reached, all acts become pure and holy. When deep sleep overpowers the senses, the mind, the intellect and even the sense of ego disappear. The entire Cosmos disappears from awareness. That is the time when the *Aathman* is alone with Itself, and bondage is naught.

Man flounders in hatred and greed

The *Aathman* keeps warning each individual of its existence with its 'I.' The same 'I' insists on being recognised in our childhood, youth, middle age and old age. Through all these changes of the *panchabhootha-constituted* body, the 'I' remains as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, as the unaffected Witness. Ignoring this reminder of the Unity of all life, man flounders in hatred and greed. When there is only the One *Aathman* in all, how can hatred arise? Who is to hide from whom? *Ekam sath: All that exists is One.*

Man, in his ignorance, finds contentment in separating himself from the rest for the search of his own happiness, forgetting that he cannot be happy unless all are happy. He pollutes himself through the cultivation of pride. He uses time for degrading himself to the bestial level. Time is an invaluable gift which has to be reverentially treated. People usually measure time as from

sunrise to sunset and sunset to sunrise. But that is only similar to the illusion which makes us infer that the moon is moving when we see passing clouds.

God or the Supreme Self or *Paramaathman*, is praised by man when his desires are fulfilled. When they are not realised, God is blamed. But God has no prejudice or partiality. If He has Love, He must also have anger. Any manifestation of these feelings is only superficial, and does not rise from the core. God is a witness of the act-consequence chain. You can avoid the consequence by dedicating the act to God and abstaining from attachment. Only you have to be sincere in your surrender and in your detachment. For this you have to cleanse your heart and feelings through *japa*, *smarana* and *dhyaana* (recitation of God's Names, remembering God, and meditation on God). Without a pure heart and virtuous life, even though you may recite the *Vedhas* during the *yajna* you will benefit little from that.

One's actions decide one's destiny

The *Rishis* (sages) were sincerely selfless and earnest and so the *yajnas* purified the atmosphere, pleased the elements and propitiated God. One's actions, therefore, decide one's destiny. There is no use blaming others for our misfortune and misery. Nor is it right to blame God as being partial or cruelly unconcerned. When you plant a bitter seed, how can the fruit be sweet? It has become the fashion to claim all good as being one's own achievement and to ascribe all the despair and disappointment to an irresponsive attitude of Divinity.

Some professors of Benaras University once ridiculed another of the same seat of learning for wasting ten minutes in the morning and ten in the evening in meditating on a non-existent God. He replied "Brothers, if God is, as you say, non-existent, I agree I am wasting twenty minutes every day. But if God exists, as many believe, I am sorry you are wasting your entire lives!"

As a matter of fact, God alone Is; the changing world is what we have superimposed on the Divine Entity. Turn your vision away from the superimposition onto the base upon which it has happened through your ignorance. *Pashu* is the Samskrith word for *beast*, and has *pashyathi* as its root. *Pashyathi* means, "that which sees only the outer world." When man is content to use his senses merely to enjoy the outer world, to what little extent he can, he is not living up to his real destiny. Even spiritual efforts, *saadhanas* have been reduced to external rituals by man in all lands. Morning and evening, and on days set aside as holy, they do *puuja* (ritualistic worship) with special pomp, heaps of flowers, rows of lamps and strings of loud *sthothras* (hymns). The impact of these rites is mostly thin and superficial.

Rituals are needed only in the early stages

There are many who spend all their time in preparation for the ritualistic acts or in their actual practice. But what do they gain? They are still afflicted by envy, pride and greed and have no loyalty to truth. They have succeeded only in polluting their years and casting away the ideals laid down in the *Vedhas*. Most people who proclaim themselves as *saadhakas* (spiritual aspirants) do not dare turn their attention inwards to the *Aathmic* Reality.

Of course rituals and prayer are necessary in the early stages. They are the kindergarten of spiritual education. One has to march on from this childhood into the adult journey towards the *Aathman*. This *yajna* and these rules and regulations regarding rites, have to be transcended and sublimated into thought, word and deed which promote universal reverence, egolessness and equanimity.

I am telling you in every discourse that. Divinity resides in every being. But you must have noticed that I am inflicting rather hard punishment on those who have done some wrong or strayed into wrong paths. The Divinity has to shine in every activity and we should see that it is not befogged by human failing or 'animalities.' For this purpose, such correctives and remedial measures are imperative. Copper, as an alloy, lessens the value of gold, so it has to be removed by melting the alloy in a crucible. So, too, when the pure, holy and progressive human being is associated with certain impure, unholy and degrading tendencies, Swaami has to intervene to correct them and restore their value of original gold. Or else why should I indulge in correction and punishment? Understanding My actions in their true light is the surest means of earning My Grace.

Practise the *saadhana* of Unity

The world today is suffering as a result of the reign of 'I'-ness and 'my'-ness in the human heart. Fear, anxiety, sorrow, pride, greed---each of these is fed in dangerous proportions by such 'I' and 'my' feelings. When calamity affects someone within the circle of 'my', undue grief overwhelms you; when it happens to someone outside the circle, you are untouched and dismiss it with gross indifference. So long as these antics of the ego are considered valid and proper, man cannot grasp the Universal *Aathman* that is in him as the core of his personality. In order to recognise the *Aathman* and earn strength therefrom, man must practise the *saadhana* (spiritual discipline) of Unity. He must give up the distinction of those within and without the 'circle.'

There is no difference between 'my' and 'thy.' When others are punished for their wrongs, you rejoice; when you are punished for the same fault, you protest and bewail your lot. Through *saadhana*, *samachiththa* (mental equanimity) has to be attained---that is to say, egoless, equal mindedness which ensures a pure mind.

The criterion of purity is love. The tree may fill your heart today with joy by its grandeur and beauty. It may have a lovely crown of green and attractive gifts of sweetness, fragrance and colour. But the very next day it might shed everything, become dry and die! What is the reason? The roots are damaged by pests which were working underground. They ruin the tree and cause it to fall.

You can observe the pitiful fate of many devoted and dedicated persons nowadays, who are besieged by various types of calamities. For what reason? People ask cynically why such good persons should suffer so much. The reason is that they have not attained purity of heart, not realised the Unity of the *Aathman* and are still possessed by feelings of 'I' and 'my.' The *saadhaka* must take the calamity as a warning and tell himself, "I am beaten by this incident. It grieves me and deprives me of balance because I still have some defects in me."

When *saambaar* (lentil soup) is cooked in a copper vessel, however fresh and fine the ingredients, the result is a highly poisonous stuff. Similarly, though *saadhana* may be done with the most meticulous attention and care, if the intentions and attitudes are impure, no progress can be achieved. I wish to emphasise that purity of the heart, the mind and the consciousness is more important for progress than even meditation and prayer. Purity alone can convince you of the Divine within you, of the *Kshethrajna* (indweller) immanent in this *kshethra* (body). Love all, adore all, serve all. That is the *saadhana* of worship to win purity and earn Grace.

Dhashara, 27-9-1979

36. The three Aakaashas

Is the Universe real? Is it relatively unreal? This problem has been agitating man since ages in all lands. The realists and the idealists have argued on their explanations for centuries. The scientists or realists believe that the Universe is a conglomeration of atoms in varying patterns which have assumed manifold forms and names. But this is only partially true. The *vijnaana vaadhins* (the spiritually oriented) point out to the *bhowthik vaadhins* (the materially oriented), that a firm base is essential for all these transformations to happen. The Universe must have a basic force or energy or phenomenon; as basic as clay is to the pot. That fundamental principle is, according to them, the *Aathman* (divine spirit).

However, the attempt in which man is engaged today is to deny the clay and build faith in the pot! This process is doomed to fail. The cognisable universe which is dismissed as untrue, must have truth as its base, as the 'rope' on which the 'snake' is superimposed. That Basic Truth is the *Aathman* (soul).

Of course the Universe in which we exist is cognised by our senses and we take it as true and real. But it cannot be accepted as Truth, for anything that changes does not deserve to be so called. Also, it appears differently to different living beings at different levels of consciousness. Animals, birds and insects are aware of it in different ways and forms. It is shaped and moulded according to the desires and perceptions of each. How are these created?

The *Aathman* awakens man's thoughts

The *Aathman* enters the body as the Inner Motivator and awakens the thoughts and feelings. In the absence of the *Aathman*, the body is inert; in the absence of the body, thoughts do not arise and in the absence of thought, the universe is not apparent; it is non-existent to the individual. The three are inextricably interdependent---the body (with all the powers of consciousness enclosed in it), the universe and the *Aathman*, either individualised or universally immanent.

Both materialism and spiritualism seek the fundamental Universal base; one discovers it in matter, the other in the Spirit. The *Aathman* (Spirit) takes on a form and body to experience and cognise the *Jagath* (Universe), just as cotton takes on the form of yarn to be cognised and experienced as cloth. The cloth is both, the yarn and the cotton. Cotton is the fundamental base, the *Aathman*. It assumes name and form and becomes yarn (the body), and is finally known as cloth, (the *Jagath*), the product of the thoughts emanating from the body.

Five characteristics of the Universe

There is another way of understanding and interpreting this process. In the *Upanishaths* and the *Vedhaantha* (Vedhic philosophy), five characteristics of the Universe are mentioned---*Asthi* (Being), *bhaathi* (awareness), *priyam* (bliss), *naama* (name) and *ruupa* (form). Of these, the last two are temporary, and therefore, trivial. The first three are the three facets of the everlasting truth, the *Aathman*. The categories of *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* are also co-related in *Vedhaantha* with *bhootha aakaasha*, *chiththa aakaasha* and *chith* aakaasha respectively. *Aakaasha* is the name for sphere of consciousness. *Bhootha aakaasha* is outer Cosmic consciousness; *chiththa aakaasha* is the inner consciousness of the *chiththa* (seat of intellect), the centre of discrimination in living beings, while *chith aakaasha* is the pure, unalloyed consciousness that flows from the *Aathman*. The *bhootha aakaasha* is the vast limitless space in which the Sun and planets are but tiny knots of energy. It is so extensive that the light from some of its stars,

millions of light years away, has not yet reached the earth. Light travels, they say, at 1,86,000 miles per second (in fact the speed is 1,88,000 miles per second). So you can imagine the enormous size of the *bhootha aakaasha* which includes all these stars and much more.

The *chiththa aakaasha* subsumes such an immeasurable *bhootha aakaasha*, for the consciousness illumines and becomes aware of all that exists. The *chiththa aakaasha* is prompted into activity by the *chith aakaasha*, the *chith of Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (different from the inner instrument of discrimination named *chiththa*). An infinitesimal fraction of the *Aathman* is enough to activate the *chiththa* so that it can draw into Itself the cosmos, the entire objective Universe.

Therefore, every one must be firm in the belief that he is the *Aathman* and not the body with its senses of perception and action, its inner equipment of mind, intellect, reasoning faculty and the ego. He must know that he undergoes no change, that he cannot die or be destroyed. Being immersed in *bhootha aakaasha*, man feels it wrong to understand himself as the perishable body with its appurtenances. He often brings up to his memory this truth. That is to say, he is aware of the *Sath*, his existence that is Eternal.

Soil-food-man completes the cycle

While the *chiththa aakaasha* is contemplated, he is aware that he is the vehicle of consciousness, the *Chith*. While he is saturated with the awareness of the *chith aakaasha*---the effulgence of the *Aathman*---he is the embodiment of *Aanandha*, the third facet of the *Aathman*. When the consciousness is turned inwards, the ultimate state of *Aathma aanandha* (Soulful Bliss) is attained.

The human body is composed of cells which draw strength and life from food; food draws its value from the soil. Soil- food- man---when that cycle is completed, man returns to the soil. The soil is *bhootha aakaasha*---the food grown out of the soil becomes consciousness, the *chiththa aakaasha*---and the *chiththa* merges into the *Aathman* consciousness or *chith aakaasha*. A seed germinates within the soil and rises above ground as a sapling. It then puts forth leaves and branches and blossoms. The flowers give place to fruits which ripen and contain seeds which can repeat the process of germination and growth.

The soil is the basis of all transformations and developments; if you keep the seeds on your palm and water them, they will not grow. Soil and seed bring about the third entity, the plant. The cells in both have an affinity that is strange. The cells in the soil are its *Aathman*; the cells in the seeds are its *Aathman*. Soil is the substance of the food out of which man is born, through which man is sustained and nourished. But the body is the temple of the *Aathman* (divinity). Therefore one should not desecrate the body with any evil thought, word or deed.

The splendour of the *Aathman* reveals all things, illumines all things. The *Aathman*, however, is Self-Revealing, Self-illuminating. It shines everywhere, in all things. In spite of any number of changes, the individual persists. Within the child, which unfolds into the boy, the youth and the middle-aged man, old age is ever dormant. So, too, it is the *chith aakaasha* which unfolds into the *chiththa aakaasha* and finally into *bhootha aakaasha* (the objective Universe).

For example, when some one photographs Me, I appear as a very small Sai Baba in the negative. But we can enlarge it to the size we desire to have. The Sai Baba in the big photo and the Sai Baba in the small one are the same. Can you assert that this five-foot three inches body, alone, is

Sai Baba and that the figure in that tiny picture is not? The *anu* (lightest) and *ghana* (heaviest) are both true. They are the same, but looked at from different angles.

Therefore, O Embodiments of *Prema*, turn your vision from the outer universe into the Inner Glow, the *Aathmic* Splendour, which you really are.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 28-9-1979

37. My joy, My sustenance

THAT which is the central subject of the *Vedhas*, that which confers *aanandha* (divine bliss) on all life, that which is the object of unceasing search in the world in various ways and along various disciplines---That is *Brahman*. It is everywhere; it is the basis of creation. It is indivisible, indestructible, changeless and absolute. The *bhootha-akaasha* (the Cosmos), which includes the stars, the Sun and the earth, is but a flake of froth on the surface of the Aathman. The *chiththa-akaasha* (consciousness that cognizes), is only a wave on that sea. The sea itself is the *Chith- aakaasha* (*Aathman*-consciousness). The *Aathman* alone is real; the rest is all appearance. The play of name and form, both are temporary and transient.

Since the *Aathman* (the Reality), is befogged by name and form, we are led to believe that man suffers from the three types of sorrow---the *aadhibhowthika* (external objects), the *aadhidhaivika* (supernatural) and the *aadhyaathmika* (individual self). *Aadhibhow-thika* is the result of attachment to kith and kin, treated as separate but still one's own. It is the egoist bond that pains man the most, often also leading him into evil ways. Its companion, anger, lays hold of us like a ghost and persuades us to join the devil dance with its gang, of which envy and greed are the chiefs. *Aadhidhaivika* is the sorrow caused by what are called Acts of God (natural calamities and the like). By earning a balanced mind, unaffected by the whims of fortune, this sorrow can be conquered. Then one achieves a state of *samaadhi* (super conscious state of Bliss) which is cognisable by a sense of equal mindedness, equanimity and equipoise. This adventure and attainment belong to the realm of *chiththa-aakaasha*. *Aadhyaathmika* sorrow is caused by physical and mental illness or disease. *Yoga* (Divine Communion) can overcome this sorrow easily, for it controls and sublimates the agitations of the mind and thereby ensures calmness and peace.

Reasons for man not getting contentment

To be rid of sin, one must direct all activity towards good thoughts, good words and good deeds. So, too, to earn the *Aathman* or *chith-aakaasha*, one must realise how the *bhootha-aakaasha* is cognized by the *chiththa* (inner consciousness) and how both are expressions of that *chiththa*. When one knows the *Aathman*, the Eternal Witness, one attains the *nirvikalpa* (undifferentiated consciousness) stage---free from do's and don'ts, ups and downs, joys and sorrows. Conquer *thamas* (inertia) through *rajas* (activism) and *rajas* through *sathwa* (goodness), and finally free yourself even from the *sathwa-guna*. Only then can you reach *nirvikalpa*. *Guna* means a rope, so *sathwa-guna*, too, binds. *Nirvikalpa* is the stage when man is fully free, fully awake, fully wise.

Raamakrishna once brought a house-holder devotee and Vivekaanandha, the ascetic devotee, together. He asked Vivekaanandha, "Son, What exactly is your goal of securing *jnaana* (wisdom)?" In-reply Vivekaanandha elaborated on Kapila's *saankhya* system of philosophy. He said that everything, big or small, every cell and star, undergoes change every instant. Food consumed becomes fertiliser to feed plants which provide further food.

There is nothing which is stable or true

The air which one man exhales is inhaled by another and the minute particles of one's system enter the system of the other person. Sea water becomes the moisture in the air and gathered together as rain-clouds which feed the fields and gardens, is transformed into edible sweetness. Matter is but the perpetual communion and separation of particles. The human body has all its component cells replaced by 'new' ones during every seven-year period of time. Therefore, how

can we pronounce anything as stable, as permanent, as true? This is the reason man does not get contentment or peace. This is the reason man does not get joy, however wealthy or famous he may become. So long as he revels in the trivial and the temporary, he cannot be happy. It is only when he has discovered the *Aathman* and is always deep in the ecstasy of that discovery that he can be in unblemished happiness. In that stage he is aware that he is eternal and all knowing, absolute and omniscient.

Whatever Swaami does or gets done, whatever He says or directs others to say, remember, it is to emphasise or make clear or exemplify this message of the *Aathmic* Reality of man. I am prompting these students to speak or recite, sing or act, so that this message may be installed in their hearts. They are the media through whom I am reviving the ancient culture of this land. I am encouraging them to be examples of the strength and equanimity that can be gained by the practice of that message.

Students are Swaami's source of delight

In a few moments the students will be enacting a play on Raamakrishna Paramahansa in which the secret of his Supreme Spiritual achievement is laid bare, and he himself is held forth as the ideal for man in spiritual *saadhana* and fearless enquiry into spiritual problems. You will see a boy named Mehtha, a student of our Bangalore Sathya Sai College, dance as a *gopee* and in other female roles. The whole Cosmos and the gyrations it performs to the music of the spheres, is a huge dance-drama. This is the symbolic representation of that Truth.

There is no *vidhya* (subject of study) which our students are not proficient in. They develop all the virtues and they saturate every act of theirs, including their skills and studies, with those high and pure qualities. To demonstrate that this process will yield joy, peace and prosperity, I have these students as My instruments. They mould themselves as ideals. They are the source of My delight and they sustain My hopes. (They are My *aashaya*, My *aanandha* and My *aahaara*). These students, and those of the same stamp, are the pioneers in My task of mending the present world and ushering in a new world. I am determined to transform the students of all colleges into such instruments for the rebuilding of the world on the foundation of *dharma* (Right action). Before long, all students in this land of *Bhaarath* will follow the ancient ideals laid down by our culture, and earn happiness for themselves and others. This is My hope. I bless them so that they may strive towards this goal and succeed.

Dhashara, 29-9-1979

Bhakthi (devotion) to God is not to be judged or measured by rosaries or candles, daubings on the forehead or matted hair or jingles on the ankles.

Purity of motives and intentions is essential, so that prema (love) which is the one component of bhakthi does not leak out of the heart.

The genuine outer signs of bhakthi are three: faith, humility and apprehension.

Faith in the ultimate victory of truth and love; humility before elders and the wise;

apprehension in the presence of evil, fear to mix with bad company, to enter into evil designs, to act counter to the whisperings of conscience.

Sri Sathya Sai

38. Devalued Man

To whom does the body belong? To the mother who brought it forth, or the father who promoted its growth? Or, does it belong to the grandmother who delivered the mother? No. It belongs to none of these. It is a mere material container. You are not the body; you are the resident of the body; the *Kshethrajna* in the *Kshethra*---the Knower of the Field presiding over the Field of action. Ignoring this, man is misusing the holy container for unholy purposes and complaining when the effort brings only suffering. The car is not intended to be as such; it has to serve as a vehicle for the one who owns it. The body too is just a vehicle, to be used by the *Aathma*, for promoting the welfare of the world, for proving the validity of *Dharma*, for probing into Truth and for experiencing the omnipresence of the Divine Principle. This is the pre-eminent purpose of the incarnation of the individual and of his sojourn in this body.

Every activity performed with this end in view is thereby sublimated into a Yajna (holy sacrificial ceremony), for it is devoid of egoistic desire. Just now, *Vedhapurusha Sapthaaha Jnaana Yajna* (the Seven-day *Vedhic* Wisdom related sacrifice) is coming to a close; today's ritual is the Valedictory Oblation. It marks the '*Samaapthi*' (the end). *Samaapthi* means, the attainment of *Brahman* (the Universal Absolute). That is the final goal of all ceremonies and activities, all rites and rituals.

Indhra overlords the senses and the mind

You might have noticed that the *Vedhic* deity, Indhra, was invoked every morning and evening during the week and offered sacramental food. Along with Indhra, many other gods too were welcomed and propitiated. Indhra is not conceived as a distinct person residing in Heaven. He is the monarch of the senses of man; He is the God in charge of the mind which operates the senses, and can also control the senses. Indhra's controller aspect is known as *Rudhra*. Indhra is delineated as armed with a wheel, with ten spokes---the ten being the five senses of perception and the five of action. The *Rudhras* are eleven, for in their case, the mind is added as the eleventh. Indhra is known in the *Vedhas* as *Puruhotha*, an appellation that means, "He who is called upon, often." We have to call upon this Indhra often to control the senses and keep the mind on an even keel.

We must be always aware of the Divine Principle, Indhra, that overlords the senses and the mind. Indhra holds the mind back from the senses which pursue every whim and fancy that they encounter. The reins of *Indhriyas* (senses) are in the hands of Indhra. The mind is also subject to gusts of hatred, anger and greed. These have to be sacrificed on the altar of the mind in the name of the presiding Deity. This is the real *yajna* on which man has to spend his skills and energy. This Valedictory oblation will ensure the destruction of the beast in man and enable him to shine in his own glow as man. The seed attains its full glory when it sprouts, breaking through the soil, grows into a tree clothed in green and decked with loveliness. Man too has to break through his earthy, earth-bound crust and become a full free fruitful human, filled with humanity. Every attempt in this direction is a *saadhana* (discipline) worth practising.

Do not endeavour to be exhibitionists

Therefore, strengthen the inner vision and seek to establish your self in perfect equanimity, unaffected by the clamour raised by the senses. In Prashaanthi Nilayam, steps are being taken stage by stage to help *saadhakas* to succeed in gaining the inner vision. *Puuja, bhajan, japa* and

thapas (worship, congregational devotional singing, recitation of holy words and austerity) must not be allowed to draw your awareness away from the high level of consciousness you have reached or are striving to reach. You must diminish more and more the outer rituals; you must withdraw your attention more and more from external activity. You should endeavour to be exemplars, not exhibitionists.

Singing aloud *bhajans* or blatant *dhyaana* sessions or attention-drawing rotation of rosaries---these are helpful for the time, only to avoid gossip or scandal-mongering or argumentative conversation. They cannot take you forward or inward; they may even drag you backward! Pompous and extravagant ceremonies that are designed to attract the attention of others have ruined the fair name of Indian spirituality. Even the recitation of *Vedhic* hymns have suffered from exhibitionist inclinations of *Pandiths*. Words are cut into absurd syllables in order to yield gymnastic pronunciations which jar the ear but impress the unlearned. The meaning of the text is ignored whenever such effects are sought to be produced and great harm is done to the *Vedhas* we adore.

Guard your health by disobeying your tongue

That sense of adoration must be fostered by thought, word and deed. No injury should be caused, no pain inflicted, through the words one utters or the deeds one is engaged in. Nor should even a harmful thought pollute the purity of the mind. Resolve to reform thought, word and deed on these lines and be assured that you have entered upon a more sacred *yajna* (sacrificial ceremony) than this one.

Be specially warned of the vagaries of the tongue. Guard your health by disobeying it wisely; guard your reputation by enforcing silence on it. The tongue revels in five ungodly games: uttering falsehood, indulging in slander, maligning others, gossiping endlessly, and justifying one's faults. These *Yajnas* teach us to hold the senses in check. The tongue is verily a dangerous instrument; it has to be used with caution.

Succeed in the struggle against the persuasive pulls of the senses; then, you deserve to be called the *Yajamaanaa* (the Master who has victoriously accomplished a Divine Task). Yearn to be the Master, not the servant who is denied access to the treasure-chest in the house. Do not be satisfied with the role of *pashu* (the bound animal). Strive to be a man and become God, the *Pashu-pathi* (the Lord of all Life). The *Vedhas* exhort man to speak the Truth and to march along the path of Justice. But, he has become deaf to this call. No wonder, man has become despicably devalued today, that he is cheated at every turn and decimated on the roads. Earth, sea, water, air---mind, senses, reason, body all are polluted and poisoned.

Mankind is adrift with no apparent goal

To save man from degradation and destruction, the system of values has to be overhauled. Character, straight-forwardness, humility, detachment, simplicity---these must be restored to the position of man's highest ideal. Even the bodies in which we dwell have to be given up one day; they decay and disintegrate. Wealth, fame, authority---all these are but temporary tinsel. How long can a person stick to the chair from which he wields power over others? It is the ego that prompts him and deludes him into the belief that it will last. Mankind is adrift, with no apparent goal. The holy task of fulfilment is forgotten. The sacredness of life is ignored. Unless these are rediscovered, goodness and godliness cannot thrive in this country and elsewhere.

Embodiments of Love! The demonic forces of egoism, envy and greed have to be exorcised soon. Then alone can man blossom into this truth, goodness and beauty. Then alone can the tongue utter sweet words of self-less love; then alone can the heart urge the hands to engage in loving service; then alone can man justify himself before mankind and attain the Divine.

Divine Discourse, Vijayadhashami, 1-10-1979

39. Serve the child

MEN are proficient in various skills. They manufacture and operate diverse machines and master many fields of knowledge. However they have not acquired the peace that is their due. They are carried along by the torrential flood of worldly life. Though endowed with human capabilities exercisable through a human body, men do not choose the straight path of Truth. They wander about in false and fleeting pleasures and fritter their years, forgetting their innate, Divine Reality. This is far from the fulfilment they should aspire for. Mere skill, mere designing and manipulation of machines, hollow pomp, boast and assertions about being a *jnaani* (liberated person)---these do not reveal the secret of human nature. Has man solved this mystery which includes all mysteries? Has he found the answer which is the key to all problems? Has he earned the knowledge which can make him know all that he has to know?

The solution, the answer, the knowledge is one, and only one. Why pluck the leaves, break the branches and hew the trunk in order to destroy the tree? Cut the root and it is done! The *Vedhic* seers and the sages who followed, concentrated on the discovery of this key knowledge, the *Aathma vidhya* (the science of spirituality). Seekers from overseas also became aware of this *vidhya* and the modes of *saadhana* (spiritual discipline) it lays down, and have acclaimed it enthusiastically the world over.

Our forefathers revered the sacred texts

But though this *vidhya* permeated its native home and illumined it for ages, Indians were huddled within the dark circle of the lamp's shadow. This has been their miserable fate. Our great-grandfathers and even fathers, perused the pages of books depicting the sacred culture of our land, assimilated their message, practised the *saadhanas* and taught and remembered their teachings with gratitude. And, as a result, they enjoyed unruffled peace. They studied the great classics---the Mahaabhaaratha, the Raamaayana, the Bhagavathgeetha---and their hearts had the moral maxims propounded therein, imprinted indelibly on them. They were guided throughout their lives by these sacred texts which they placed in their shrines, offering them reverential adoration. Their hearts were purified and sanctified by these acts of worship and work, and they were prompted to render service to society as a consequence.

By some stroke of evil fortune, times changed. The 'modern age' dawned and our people bowed slavishly before it. These holy books were neglected and even cast aside as containing 'primitive' ideals. Western scholars and seekers, on the other hand, retrieved them, studied them scrupulously, analysed their propoundings on subjects as diverse as medicine, armaments, mathematics and astronomy, and spoke of them to the very people who had pioneered in those fields! We welcome them with glee, as a man prefers stale food in another's house to fresh dishes in his own!

Cultivate virtue in the hearts of pupils

In blind admiration of Western ways of life, students in India belittle virtue and extol dry scholarship. They forget they are human beings engaged in the pilgrimage to God. Instead they engross themselves in attempts to squeeze joy out of the material world. Therefore the first task of teachers is the cultivation of virtue in the hearts of the pupils. This is much more vital than the promotion of learning. The education system today does not recognise or encourage moral or spiritual values. Therefore the student community has degenerated into a socially dangerous

element. The students do not pay the least attention to promotion of the welfare of society, nor do they have any understanding of their social obligations. Unless the desire to do service is earnest and the skill to do service is cultivated, students will remain a burden on the community, behaving as parasites and exploiters.

A generous heart helps spread peace and joy. Little knowledge narrows the mind and limits one's concern for others. It bloats the ego and feeds selfishness. It makes man forget the delight derivable from virtue. Such students are unable to develop the prosperity of the nation or the progress of society. The thick veil of egoism blinds their sight and renders them callous to their own dignity and destiny. Students should try their best to realise their heritage. A mind free from either extreme attachment or detachment, a speech uncontaminated by falsehood and a body unpolluted by sin---these are what every student must strive to possess. Teachers must be vigilant to help and encourage them, and to avoid any trace of dishonesty in their actions and statements.

***Gurus* must practise what they preach**

Selfishness, envy and egoistic pride are the three tendencies and attitudes that should not take root in tender hearts. Therefore prompt the children in your care to engage themselves in acts of service to others. What a shame it is for man to behave selfishly, while his life itself depends on the unselfish behaviour of the rest of creation. Whatever information, instruction or inspiration man has gained, or whatever wealth, riches or material possessions he has earned, he should share them with others in an unselfish manner. This is his primary duty. Teachers must be on the watch for chances to instil this ideal in the hearts of their pupils.

India has no shortage of rich persons, nor a shortage of great philosophers, academicians and scholars. In spite of this the land has no peace and the people are afflicted by anxiety and fear. What is the reason? The chief reason is the greed for self-aggrandisement and the absence of virtues like service and renunciation. The rich, the great, the learned and even the monastic heads of religious sects are caught in the coils of selfishness, and are unable to manifest the Divine virtues latent in them. The hearts of the young pupils have to be filled by you with noble yearning, so that they may be shaped into strong and sturdy instruments for raising the India of the future to the glory which is her right.

Gurus (teachers/preceptors) have to be examples which can inspire the pupils. They must practise what they preach. As the teacher, so the pupil. When the tap is turned, water flows down from the overhead tank. The quality of the tap water is the same as that of the water in the tank. When the heart of the *Guru* is full of goodness, selflessness, and love, the pupils will express these virtues in every act of theirs.

Teachers should not form rival groups

There are, it is said, more than 5000 Bala Vikas *Gurus* in the land. If each one corrects and improves a hundred children, the nation would indeed be transformed. You must examine what exactly has been attained during the four years that have elapsed since the Bala Vikas came into being. This analytical study has to be made constantly. When the *Guru* cultivates a *saathwic* (pure) nature, students too will grow into embodiments of that nature. The *Guru* should be alert so that the weeds of hatred, envy and similar vices do not take root in her own heart. These weeds are rampant in the political field and they creep into other fields too. Teachers should not form rival groups---some proud of their achievements, some envious of the praise others earn---

which engage themselves in recrimination. See others as your own brothers and sisters, for all are One when viewed as *Aathman*.

Somehow, somewhere, at intervals, you may be confronted by wrong traits. But remember that you have entered the circle of Sathya Sai Bala Vikaas gurus. It may not be serious if these traits enslave teachers in others circles, but your mission is much more fundamental and the hope that you arouse, much more heartening. These traits will hamper and pollute your efforts.

Be conscious of the sacred significance of the name, *Guru*, by which you are known. '*Gu*' means 'darkness,' '*ru*' means 'removal.' So the *Guru* has to illumine the intelligence of the child and remove the ignorance that is obstructing its full development. Diving deeper, we find that *Guru* also has another meaning. '*Gu*' means, 'not limited by attributes' and '*ru*' means, 'not affected by appearances.' That is to say, the *Guru* must be free from prejudice and must treat all pupils with equal love.

Remove the primeval ignorance

Pour out all your love on the children around you and instruct them gladly and sincerely. This attitude alone can justify association with the Sathya Sai Bala Vikas. Of course Sai is not unaware that the Bala Vikas *Gurus* are now heartily engaged in their sacred task and are contributing their best to the progress of the movement. But just as a battery has to be charged occasionally, I am now pointing out certain defects and dangers that might tarnish. It is imperative that you should discover the right path and pursue it steadily with faith. Take, for example, the petromax lamp. It requires some quantity of kerosene and also a pumping now and then. A pin has to be used sometimes to clear obstructions. The kerosene is faith, the pin, love that urges you to do your duty, and pumping, the will that sustains you in your task. Besides these, the lamp needs a wick. The name of the Lord which is your constant inspiration, is the wick. Endeavour, in the light of the *Aathmic* Unity of all, to remove the primeval ignorance from yourselves and from your pupils.

A bad teacher can ruin thousands of lives

Discuss and discover during this conference how far you have succeeded in this holy mission, and as a result of that discovery, lay down before yourselves the ways and means by which greater success can be achieved. Communicate your experience to others, and also your ideas on improving the curriculum, the method of teaching and the means of assessing the progress made. I would advise you to pay special attention to the activities and methods by which you can contribute, through the Bala Vikas, to the blossoming of talents latent in the children, the expansion of prosperity of the nation and the security and welfare of society. A bad pupil causes harm only to himself, but a bad teacher can ruin thousands of lives. Be steady and stable in your efforts. A guide-post which changes direction with every gust of wind only adds confusion for the confounded traveller. You have also to cultivate *prema* and expand your desire to do *seva*.

More than all, fill your mind with God and transmit God to the children. Look forward to no remuneration or reward, except the joy on the faces of the children. Nowadays teachers are more attached to their salaries than to their duties. They are centred more on their own lives than on their sacred task. Give up the mad rush in pursuit of degrees. Pursue, rather, chances to serve others and to promote the prosperity of the nation. Indian culture has declined so far and so much because teachers, who are its guardians and promoters, are content merely to feed themselves and their families and to cultivate their own fame and fortune. The *Vedhas* tell us: *Na karmanaa*,

(not by acts), *na prajayaa* (not by progeny), *na dhanena* (nor by riches), *thyaagena ekena* (only by renunciation) *amrithathwam anasuh* (can Immortal bliss be achieved). So renounce, renounce! Serve and give your knowledge, your delight and your love gladly to the children. Serve thus the society and the people.

The Sathya Sai Bala Vikas *Gurus* are doing this service whole-heartedly. I believe they will continue their efforts even more sincerely and gladly. The resolutions you will arrive at in this Conference should not be inscribed on paper only, but must be followed and practised in actual day-to-day teaching in the classes. I am sure each one of you is determined to do your best in the service of the children, the society and the precious heritage of Indian Culture.

Fourth All India Conference of Bala Vikas Gurus, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 20-11-1979

Devotion and faith ensure the gift of knowledge of the Spirit---the great prize for the great adventure of birth, life and death. When the mind weds pravriti (worldly activity), the progeny is bondage; when it weds nivriti (spiritual renunciation), the progeny is freedom.

Sri Sathya Sai

40. The holiest task

WHETHER one is a renowned scholar with expert knowledge of the deeper levels of religious lore, or a monarch revelling in the brilliance of palatial luxury, or a hero of many battles, or a miserable victim of poverty---if one has no devotion to the Lord one does not deserve homage, honour or attention.

The physical body, the senses, the mind, the intellect---these are all to be considered as the clothes we wear. We are advised to control our senses but this can be done only when their true nature is analysed and known. When that is not known, various obstacles present themselves.

The body is known as *dheha*, which means 'that which is consumed by fire.' It is burnt on the pyre when life departs and consumed by the flames of desire when life persists. It burns on 'the pyre of anxiety and fear, even when alive! There is another word, *shareera*, meaning 'that which wastes away,' which also means body. While living, it is afflicted by wants and wishes which rob it of peace. When dead, it becomes dust. Starting its career as a ball of flesh, it soon appears as a tender charming baby and an active child; it transforms itself into a straight, strong, attractive youth and is reduced later to the pathetic shape of old age. Hence it is named *shareera*; and person, who lives in it, is known as *shareeri*.

It is our duty to keep the body in good trim

The body is a house taken on rent by man. We know how the owner of the house persecutes the tenant in order to compel him to vacate it when the rent is not paid, or when payment is delayed, or when the tenant does not maintain the house with care and when he damages it through negligence or sheer wantonness. Therefore it is our duty to keep the body in good trim and avoid the wrath of the owner. The owner will certainly appreciate a considerate, courteous and cooperative tenant. The tenant can win the owner's love and respect by means of his own goodness. This will help your faith and earnestness. Then do not get up suddenly and start moving about, resuming your avocations. Loosen the limbs, slowly, deliberately and gradually, before you enter upon your usual duties.

Do not get discouraged that you are not able to concentrate long from the very beginning. When you learn to ride a bicycle, you do not learn the art of balancing immediately. You push the cycle along to an open field and hop and skip, leaning now to one side and now to the other, and even fall with the cycle upon you on many an attempt before you are able to ride with skill and to never more worry about the balance. Then automatically you are able to make the necessary adjustments to correct the balance. After getting thus skilled you can ride through the narrow streets and lanes and do not need an open field. You can negotiate your vehicle through the most crowded thoroughfares. So, too, practice will equip you with a concentration that will sustain you in the densest of surroundings and the most difficult situations.

The most effective form of meditation

As regards the technique of *dhyaana* (meditation), different teachers and trainers give different forms of advice. But I shall give you now the most universal and the most effective form. This is the very first step in spiritual discipline. Set aside for this at first a few minutes everyday and later go on extending the time as and when you feel the bliss that you shall get. Let it be in the hours before dawn. This is preferable, because the body is refreshed after sleep and the peregrinations of daytime will not yet have impinged on you.

Have a lamp or a candle with an open flame, steady and straight, before you. Sit in the *padhmaasana* (lotus posture) or any other comfortable posture in front of the candle. Look on the flame steadily for some time and, closing your eyes, try to feel the flame inside you, between your eyebrows. Let it slide down into the lotus of your heart, illumining the path. When it enters the heart, imagine that the petals of the lotus open out one by one, bathing every thought, feeling and emotion in the Light, and so removing darkness from them. There is no space for darkness to hide. The light of the flame becomes wider and brighter. Let it pervade your limbs. Now those limbs can never more deal in dark, suspicious and wicked activities; they have become instruments of light and love. As the light reaches up to the tongue, falsehood vanishes from it. Let it rise up to the eyes and the ears and destroy all the dark desires that infest them, leading you to perverse sights and puerile conversation.

Visualise God in the all-pervasive Light

Let your head be surcharged with light and all wicked thoughts flee therefrom. Imagine that the light is in you more and more intensely. Let it shine all around you and let it spread from you, in ever widening circles, taking in your loved ones, your kith and kin, your friends and companions, your enemies and rivals, strangers, all living beings, the entire world.

Since the light illumines all the senses everyday, so deeply and so systematically, a time will soon come when you can no more relish dark and evil sights, yearn for dark and sinister tales, crave for base, harmful, deadening toxic food and drink, handle dirty demeaning things, approach places of ill-fame and injury, or frame evil designs against anyone at any time. Stay on in that thrill of witnessing the light everywhere. If you are adoring God in any form now, try to visualise that form in the all-pervasive Light. For *Light is God; God is Light*.

Practise this meditation as I have advised regularly, everyday. At other times repeat the Name of God (any Name fragrant with any of His many Majesties), always taking care to be conscious of His Might, Mercy and Munificence.

Advanced Meditation on *Soham*

Resolve on this holy Shivaraathri to visualise the Shiva who is the Inner Power of all. With each breath you are averring, '*Soham*,' (I am He). Not only you, every being avers it. It is a fact which you have ignored so long. Believe it now. When you watch your breath and meditate on that Grand Truth, slowly the 'I' and the 'He' will merge, *Soham* will become transformed into *Om*, the Primal Sound (*Pranava*) which the *Vedhas* proclaim as the symbol of the *Niraakaara Parabrahman* (Formless Supreme Reality). That *Om* is the *Swaswaruupa* (own natural state)---the Reality behind all this 'relative un-reality.'

This is the genuine *saadhana*, the final lap in the progress of the seeker. But there are many preliminary laps, each one of which requires much stamina and steadfastness. For example, I would advise you to dwell always on one Name of God, one personification of one of His innumerable Attributes of. Glory. 'Then there is the expansion of your love, the removal of hate and envy from your mental composition, seeing the God whom you adore in every other person as. intently as you see Him in yourself. Then you become the embodiment of love, peace and joy.

All India Bala Vikas Gurus Conference, 21-11-1979

When you say, Thath thwam asi (Thou art That), you must have the traits of That which you claim to be. You say, "that and this" are the same; then, reviling 'that' or revering 'that' is the same as reviling 'this' or revering 'this'.

Sri Sathya Sai

41. Meditation

To get at the core of God at His greatest, one must first get into the core of himself at his least, for no one can know God who has not known himself.

After seating oneself in a comfortable and stable posture, steadying the breath, *prathyaahaara* (withdrawing of the senses from the sense objects) and *anga nyasa* (purification of all the organs of the body) is to be done. Light is the greatest purifier, for it dispels all darkness. Light is made to traverse throughout the body, purifying all the limbs and senses, and is installed in the lotus of the heart in which is to be enshrined the *bhaavachithra* (mental thought picture) of the Form of the Lord for the purpose of *dharana* (concentration) which would lead to *dhyaana* (meditation) and ultimately to *Samaadhi* (the state of super conscious bliss).

First, when you sit for meditation, recite a few *shlokas* on the Glory of God so that the agitated mind may be calmed. Then gradually, while doing *japam*, draw before the mind's eye the Form which that Name represents. When your mind wanders away from the recital of the Name, lead it onto the picture of the Form. When it wanders from the form, lead it onto the Name. Let it dwell either on that sweetness or this. Treated thus it can be easily tamed. The imaginary picture you have drawn will get transmuted into the *bhaava chithra* (thought visualisation), dear to the heart and fixed in the memory. Gradually it will become the *saakshaathkaara chithra* (Vision of the actual Form) when the Lord assumes that Form in order to fulfil your desire. This *saadhana* is called *japa sahitha dhyaana* (meditation-cum-recitation of Name), and I advise you all to take it up, for it is best form of *dhyaana* for beginners.

Body is a temple where God is installed

Within a few days you will fall in line and you will taste the joy of concentration. After about ten or fifteen minutes of this *dhyaana* in the initial stages, and longer after some time, have some *manana* (contemplation) on the *shaanthy* (peace) and the *sowkhyam* (happiness) you had during the *dhyaana* (meditation).

The human body has been secured as a reward for many lives of meritorious activity. Being valued as a boat which can help us cross the ocean of *samsara* (constant change), it has to be tended with grateful reverence. The Bhagavathgeetha calls the body '*kshethra*,' which means, a field. One can sow holiness or sin, and gather a harvest commensurate with the particular quality. Choose the crop you need before you sow the seed. *Kshethra* also means 'the entire earth.' Another significant meaning of the word is 'a holy place.' We say, "*Kaashi-kshethra*," "*Prayaga-kshethra*," etc., to indicate that those places are sacred. The body is also a *kshethra* since it is a temple wherein God is installed and worshipped through thoughts, words and deeds. The temple has to be cleansed and kept healthy and pure.

Use every sense organ within its limits

Purity is to be preserved and promoted not by multiple baths or by avoiding contact with others condemned as 'untouchables.' You cannot be pure by the observance of the superficial taboo, 'Don't touch.' The body can be clean if washed with water; speech can be cleansed if it is saturated in truth; life can be purified if it is sanctified by *thapas* (religious austerity), and the intellect can be cleared of blemish through *jnaana* (spiritual wisdom). Above all, the conviction that you are not the body but only a resident of the body, has to grow in you. If you identify

yourselves with the body you carry about with you, you are inviting sorrow and suffering to overwhelm you, instead of the joy and peace which are awaiting to bless you.

Now about the *indhriyaas* (senses). They are known as *maathras*, which means 'measures,' for each sense has the capacity to cognise a certain measure of experience, A dish of *dhal* (lentils) must have some salt to make it tasty. The tongue tastes it and pronounces judgment whether the quantity of salt is more or less or just right. "This face is pretty but the nose is a little awry," pronounces the eye. "This song is sweet, but that one was atrocious," declares the ear. *Maathra* also means 'limit.'

Every sense organ has to be used with the consciousness of the limit inherent in it. Beyond the limit it becomes misuse, sacrilege of a God given instrument. For example, the nose is to be used legitimately to help in breathing and for the selective enjoyment of fragrance, but many stuff it with snuff and degrade its real purpose. The tongue is polluted by using it to eat *raajasik* and *thaamasik* (passion-rousing and inactivity-inducing) food and to swallow intoxicants which demean man. All sense organs are thus spoiled by man through improper, unauthorised or illegitimate use. The consequences for man are mental distress and physical disease.

The body is an inert composite of matter. But it grows, it gets weak and it declines, all on account of a consciousness that operates from within. Otherwise an inert heap of matter can undergo changes only by addition or subtraction through external agencies.

Gurus must meditate at least once a day

Next, the mind. *Mananam manah---*"The mind is that which remembers, recollects and ruminates." This mental activity results in the formulation of resolutions or in their *dissolution---* *sankalpa* or *vikalpa*. The mind has, as warp and woof, assertion and negation, do's and don'ts, *sankalpa* and *vikalpa*. It has no existence apart from these. It is ever engaged in them until sleep stops its activity. Sometimes when the resolution or the determination behind the resolution becomes too strong, the mind overleaps its limits and man is rendered insane.

In order to calm the mind and keep it on an even keel, *dhyaana* is prescribed as a *saadhana*. *Dhyaana* is the process by which the positive and negative aspects of the mind are regulated out of existence. Man enjoys unlimited bliss when the stage of *nirvikalpa samaadhi* (highest stage of superconscious state of bliss) is reached. A taste of this is offered to man during his deep, dreamless sleep, when no wish or want, no desire or denial can disturb him. How much more satisfying should be the Bliss when we attain the *nirvikalpa* stage through *dhyaana*! The *Aanandha* (bliss) that fills us then is characterised as *bhaavaatheetham, thriguna rahitham---* "beyond the range of imagination, without any trace of the three types of attributes."

You, who have dedicated yourselves as *Gurus* to lead the children into light, must practise the discipline of *dhyaana* at least one session a day in order to earn this bliss and equanimity. Those who have earned the gift of *aanandha* alone, can confer *aanandha* on others. How can a mendicant support another mendicant? No beggar can make another beggar rich. A person rich in *aanandha* can share *aanandha* with those around him. Therefore your duty as *Gurus* is firstly to *earn* and secondly to *offer aanandha*. A life of *saadhana* is a must to every *Guru*.

The role of Guru is a blessing of God

There are three groups of *saadhanas* which you have to take up---personal, social and universal (*vyakthi, samaaja* and *vishwa*). A single flower cannot constitute a garland, nor a single tree a

forest, nor a single individual a society. The individual's spiritual success, his beneficent nature and his virtues, when pooled with those of many others, become the wealth of society, the common property of all. Each one has to revere and serve all. The Divine in each is pooled into the concept of the Infinite Divine.

The *Guru* should not give room to conceit in his heart. As the indispensable teacher of innocent, illiterate and half-blind children, the *Guru* should not occupy a chair of authority. Egoism is the throne which is proudly appropriated by authority. Be humble before the children and renounce the tone of power. This is the *saadhana* for you. Revere the role of a *Guru* as a blessing of God. This attitude alone can ensure the success of the journey for the individual, the society and the world.

Calamities happen when *buddhi* is not alert

Be aware of the transitoriness and the inter-relationship of the body, the senses and the mind. What of the *buddhi* (intellect)? It is the source of man's decision-making capacity, and is known as the *anthah-karana* (inner consciousness). It reduces confusion, calms conflict and determines doubt. When we say, my inner voice has resolved thus, it is *buddhi* that is referred to. *Buddhi* is also referred to as the *antharaathman* (inner self). On the lowest plane of existence is the body, the physical sheath. On a higher plane is the sense complex---the five senses of perception and the five of action. The mind is on a still higher plane and the *buddhi* on an even higher one so that it is nearest to the core, the *Aathman*.

When a chauffeur is sought for, the owner of the car will select a person who is an expert in the art of driving, a man of character and a person who will be obedient to his employer. In all respects he must be a good and useful employee. When the chauffeur of the material car is expected to be so skilled and virtuous, how much more so must the *buddhi*, the chauffeur of the *Aathman*, be! *Buddhi* has no right to give a ride to anyone without the knowledge and permission of the *Aathman*.

Buddhi should subject to scrutiny all the wishes of the mind. It is only when *buddhi* is lit by the splendour of the *Aathman* that it can recommend the course of action to the senses, through the mind. Calamities happen only when the *buddhi* is not alert or is circumvented by the mind. Let *buddhi* take all the time it needs to sort out the pros and cons. Haste makes waste; waste results in worry; so do not be in a hurry.

Haste leads to confusions and blunders which cause disappointment and anger. Anger has to be overcome by guiding the mind on to peace and equanimity, "*Shaanthih! Shaanthih! Shaanthih!*"--that *manthra* (sacred peace chant) will quieten the waves of anger.

Not doing one's best is treason to oneself

Man can have no fear when he negates his objective composition, declaring, "I am not the body, the sense, the mind or the intellect." There is no benefit if a man flees to the forest to escape attachment to the non-real. Renunciation can be cultivated without such an extreme measure. Doubts, too, will haunt a person until he cognises the Truth. When doubt enters through the front door, faith departs through the back one! Doubt comes upon people like a heart attack; it overwhelms a man all of a sudden. The Geetha says, "*Samshayaathmaa Vinashyathi*" (the doubter is destroyed). So *Gurus* must enter upon their task with full faith.

The ideals of the Bala Vikas (child development) movement are the highest. The task of fulfilling them is the holiest of tasks. Knowing this and yet not doing one's best, is indeed treason to oneself. Mere talk cannot go far. Man is concerned with the Moon that is hundreds of thousands of miles away, but he is not concerned with his nearest neighbour. Do not instruct or instil in children magnificent ideas and colossal thoughts. Teach them small, practical ideas and simple modes of behaviour through your own example and loving exposition.

Only the teacher of teachers can direct the Bala Vikas *Gurus*. That is to say, only he who has mastered the process and problems, the significance and secrets of education, can so direct. He must be able to correct the *Gurus* and convince them. It might happen that State Presidents may not all have these abilities, though their abilities might well be great in other aspects of organisation. They might have specialised in other fields of service. So my suggestion is that the State President should not be related in any way with the Bala Vikas. He has to organise, supervise and give guidance to the *Bhajana Mandali*, the *Seva Samithi*, the *Seva Dhal* and other service units. The Bala Vikas *Gurus* will benefit more through the very apex of the organisation.

***Gurus* should not indulge in jealousy**

Women in charge of the Bala Vikas are easily moved by excitement or dejection, so it is better they do not immediately carry their problems to the State President; by the time they communicate with the central authority, the emotion would have cooled down. They can be directed more firmly by the centre and they will follow the directions more willingly, if they emanate from the centre. So they have, hereafter, to write to "The Convenor, Bala Vikas *Gurus*, Prashanthi Nilayam," for advice, direction and redress, and send a copy of the letter to Indulal Shah, Secretary, World Council. I shall look into all these letters myself.

Of course our Bala Vikas *Gurus* should not indulge in jealousy or fault-finding. They can undertake the task of teaching only after they rid themselves of such traits. If *Gurus* talk ill of other *Gurus* and promote misunderstanding and factionalism, the children can never improve. So resolve now to adhere to the right path. If two *Gurus* quarrel or become unfriendly, both will be removed. No inquiry is necessary; we condemn both for having been involved. One poisonous insect can destroy an entire crop. Since we have not been very strict all these years, we find the number of Bala Vikas pupils is very low even with such a large number of *Gurus*.

Teach children equal validity of all Faiths

Each *Guru* must serve at least a hundred pupils in one year, only then can we have at least a hundred thousand or more getting the benefit. There are nine crores and twenty-six thousand children in our country, boys and girls, aged below ten. Those below sixteen are twenty-two crores and six hundred thousand in number. At the rate at which we are training the children, when can we teach the crores? The present tortoise speed will not help.

The aspirations and ambitions of youth are being inflamed at great speed, and you have to canalise them at equal speed. Only then can a balance be secured. The rains fall profusely; the water seeps in and is stored underground. But man pumps the underground water faster and in greater quantity than it is collected below the soil, and so drought intervenes. Therefore go fast, but be steady and sure about your work.

Another point: You have to teach the equal validity of all faiths. Teach them through quotations from the Bible, the ideals of Christianity. So, too, use the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism,

Buddhism, Islam, etc., to acquaint them with the ideals held aloft by those faiths. Also tell them the stories contained in the scriptures of all religions. Do not belittle any one religion or give predominance to another. There was a suggestion that children must be taught the entire Geetha. That is a mistaken view. Of course if they desire to do so through their own ardour and enthusiasm, do not stand in their way. But what we have to do is to place before them in sweet, simple style, the teachings of all faiths. The Sai religion is the harmonious blending, through love, of all religions. Though some followers of other faiths feel that the Sai religion is contrary to theirs, we should not entertain similar feelings. Ours is the totality, the Sun. So we should not limit or restrict our vision.

Lead the children along the joyous path of truth. Let your faces ever shower smiles, springing from the bliss you earn from seeing the happy faces of children. Do not fall into the traps of anger, jealousy and pride. You can avoid this through steady and sincere attention to the task you have undertaken. May the children you serve become heroes in the revival of the ancient glory of their motherland.

All India Bala Vikaas Gurus Conference, 21-11-1979

All good things have to be done the hard way. Ease and elevation cannot go together.

Sri Sathya Sai

42. The Kingdom

STUDENTS, Embodiments of the Divine *Aathman* and supporters and promoters of education! This *Kaliyuga* offers more facilities for liberation than any previous one, for education is much more widespread now. There are educational institutions in the farthest corners of every land, but it is a pity that peace of mind has become very rare. Why has peace remained out of reach in spite of the plethora of gadgets and contrivances that offer man comfort and pleasure?

The fault lies in human conduct, which runs along evil lines. When man thinks, speaks and acts along virtuous lines, his conscience will be clean and he will have inner peace. Knowledge is power, it is said; but virtue is peace. The world reveres, even today, great men and women who have lived exemplary lives of virtue. Jesus, Muhammad, Zoroaster, Buddha, Shankaraachaarya, Madhavaachaarya, Raamanujaa-chaarya and others were able to command the loyalty and adoration of people solely on account of the purity of their conduct and actions. They have become immortal residents in the heart of mankind. Scholarship cannot confer this high historic ascendancy. Mastery of books may help you to expound or exhibit dialectical skill, but what really is the width and depth of your experience? And just examine how conceited you have become! Man must saturate his daily life in truthful speech, virtuous acts and holy thoughts.

Never pollute your speech with falsehood

Education must equip you with a discrimination sharp enough to discover these virtues. You must know what truth is and develop love and loyalty to it. And remember, acts of virtue grow out of overcoming of selfish desire or *thyaaga* (selfless sacrifice). You must keep high ideals before you and be prepared to sacrifice even your lives to achieve them. Never pollute your speech with falsehood; never poison your thoughts with hatred and greed; never degrade your body with violence in any form.

It is tragic that not even a small fraction of the student community values these ideals and endeavours to realise them. We have in this country plenty of scientists, scholars, spiritual teachers and seasoned politicians. But of what avail? They work at cross-purposes, each one unconcerned with the rest. One scientist is the rival of another; one scholar is at logger-heads with another expert in the same field. And of politicians, the less said the better. When this vice of disunity rules, peace and prosperity can never be established in the country in spite of all the progress in technology, scholarship and spiritual exposition. They can be developed only when mutual cooperation, friendly feelings, love and compassion grow in man's heart. The world can shine fresh and fair, green and grand with festoons and flags on every doorstep, only when these qualities are fostered by man.

Mainspring of all faults of man is egoism

Today there is a great need for every one to dwell upon the axioms that Dharmaraaja, the eldest of the Paandava brothers, kept before himself. When Krishna asked him one day where his brothers were, he replied, "Some of them are in Hasthinaapura city and the others in the forest." Krishna was visibly surprised, He said, "Dharmaraaja! What has happened to your brains? All of you, the five brothers, are here in the forest as you know. None is in the city of Hasthinaapura!" Dharmaraaja replied, "Pardon me, Lord! We are 105 brothers in all." Krishna pretended that the statement was wrong. He recounted the names of the five and queried the reason why he added a hundred more. "My father's sons are five; his brother, the blind Dhritharaashtra has a hundred

sons. When we fight with them, we are five and they hundred. But when we don't, we are a hundred and five."

Thus when hatred and greed end in fighting, brotherhood is broken and hearts drift apart. Today this fractionalisation is evident in every field, including even our *samithis* (organisational units)! As a natural result, anger, envy, faction and friction are fast increasing.

This is the reason why students have to uproot these evil tendencies from their minds. The mainspring of all these faults is egoism, the belief that the little self has to be satisfied at all costs. I derive much *aanandha* watching wild animals in their own habitat. Their movements, their relations with others of their kind and their free uninhibited lives are very attractive to behold. They do not bewail at the health and happiness of other animals. They do not grieve, lamenting their misfortune, comparing their fate with that of other denizens of the forest. They do not clamour for fame. They do not plan and prepare to earn positions of power and authority over other animals. They are not eager to accumulate possessions that are superfluous. When we consider these traits, we are led to conclude that they are leading lives of a higher grade than man.

Greed is the seed-bed of grief

Man has the extra qualifications of education, moral sense, and the capacity to judge and discriminate. But he is still caught in the coils of greed, and greed is the seed-bed of grief. Education today promotes greed instead of paralysing it. The aim is to earn more monetary income. So the struggle is directed to the acquisition of degrees which bring higher salaries. The learned man is anxious to exploit society, to pilfer from society by means fair or foul. He is not eager to give to society, to benefit society. He is concerned with what he can get from society, not with what he can give to it.

Boys from the villages are ungrateful to their parents who have bartered their own wealth and comfort to give them an education. As soon as they secure a degree (which is at best a convenient beggar's bowl), they flee to the cities and accept a job there for a pittance. They settle in the cities, neglecting their parents and treating their hereditary professions with contempt. But their lives in cities are not any smoother; they are led into wasteful and damaging habits until they pine for peace and joy. Instead they should remain in the villages where they first saw the light of day and dedicate the skills they have acquired to the service of its inhabitants. This is their real task.

They are weaklings who revel in imitation

I know that is very difficult for students to overcome the banal influence of society and of the elders; they do not come across inspiring examples to follow. But old students of the Sathya Sai Colleges must enter the world fully equipped with courage, compassion and inner peace and render selfless service to the people. Be vigilant always that you do not deviate from the ideals marked out by Me. Participate in all activities, armed with humility, a sense of honour and the skills needed to triumph. Distinguish yourselves in the moral, ethical, spiritual and material fields. Do not extinguish yourselves as soon as you proceed out of the Brindhaavan campus. So long as you are within the area, your style of dress and your manners, your character and conduct are different from what they become when you pass out. This relapse into the old baser levels, reveals a fundamental flaw in character. Such persons can be written off, for they are of no help

to anyone. Instead they are a burden on society. They are weaklings who revel in imitation. Heroes are those who rely on their eyes and ears and value their own national heritage.

You have resided in Brindhaavan for five, seven or nine years, and experienced maternal love more intense than what a thousand mothers can offer you. If you go out of Brindhaavan and adopt the behaviour patterns and life-styles considered fashionable by the outside world, how can you be considered an 'old student' of this college? "He who chops the nose of his mother, can pluck the nose of his aunt as a flower from its stalk," says the proverb. When you commit treason against God so freely, how can you be expected to honour human rules of conduct? I desire that, at least from now, you steadily develop noble thoughts, holy feelings and selfless actions, and maintain the fair name of your college.

Whoever hurts the society is a traitor

Students occupy the role of the heart in the physiology of the social organisation. Whoever hurts the society in which he dwells or brings disrepute to it, is a traitor. Whichever position you occupy and wherever you reside, you must draw on yourself the admiration of others by your humility, discipline and manners, and by the simplicity of your dress and sweet speech. If you parade your transformation by the style of your tie and pants, by your long hair and moustache, how can you claim to be an old student of a Sathya Sai College? Your dress itself will proclaim that you are not. Prove that you are true heroes, true servants of the poor and the distressed and recipients of true education.

Of course I am warning you against falling into wrong ways of living. One day Pandith Madhan Mohan Maalaviya shaved off his thick overhanging moustache and, with a clean face, went to an old friend and shocked him into the question, "Sir, why this transformation today?" The reply was, "I cultivated the impressive moustache out of pride that I was a man, but I realised that I could not relieve the misery of a single fellow-being. So I felt I could not justify the moustache any longer." The manifestation of manliness comes about by involving ourselves in social service and reducing the pain and poverty of human beings like ourselves. Allow yourselves to be judged not by your dress or the growth of beard, but by your motives and actions and your progress along the path of practising the ideals implanted in you by Sai.

Be vigilant that you do not slide into wrong

Do not seek to secure jobs in order to earn a high income. Wherever you are, be vigilant that you do not slide into wrong. Money comes and goes; morality comes and grows! Amassing money is easy; no one is to be appreciated for that. It can be accumulated through cruel or unjust means, through falsehood and blackmail. Only beggars are prompted by the urge, to gather riches. Study and earn knowledge in order to rescue the world from decadence, to develop peace and joy throughout all levels of society and to add your mite to the prosperity of the state. The members of the kingdom of Sathya Sai must follow those ideals and spread them throughout the world So, as you claim to belong to the Kingdom of Sathya Sai, you have the special task of propagating the ideals of Sai by your precept and example. Direct your lives as citizens of the Kingdom of Sathya Sai Let the Name be your guide and your goal.

Thyaagaraaja lived up to his name. When the ruler offered him gifts of precious gemstones, houses and land, he spurned them, declaring, "My heart is laid at the Feet of Raama. You cannot secure it in exchange for this trash." *Raamaraajya* has become a word charged with sanctity

because Raama's Kingdom was the home of righteousness, justice and peace. You have a great responsibility because you have named your association the 'Kingdom of Sathya Sai.'

Some old students of the college are worried because when they come to Brindhaavan later I do not speak to them or cast even a glance at them. The reason is they are not even identifiable as students who were in this college for five or seven years. Good thoughts, words and deeds have not taken root in them. Your action produces the reaction. Sai only reflects your mind. He has no prejudice or preference. He is a mirror wherein you can see yourselves as you really are. In order to correct their mistakes and remove your faults, I have sometimes to use harsh words; but you may rest assured that My sole aim is to turn you to better ways. I have no anger in Me. It is the inner compassion which takes the outer form of anger. I have caused these colleges and hostels to be constructed and lakhs of rupees to be spent every year in the hope that at least a few among the students who join them will follow the ideals I set before them. Listen to that call and let it reverberate in your hearts every moment of your lives.

Annual Day of Kingdom of Sathya Sai, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 22-11-1979

Nivrithi (detachment) confers fearlessness, even while you accept a little of it. It gives strength and courage, for, it is desire that weakens man and makes him cringe before those in authority and with influence. Detachment endows you with self-respect, and the capacity to stand up to slander and calumny.

Sri Sathya Sai

43. The task will triumph

*When the Dharma of the Age is laid aside,
To establish it anew through loving means;
When the world is polluted by conflict and confusion,
To restore the path of virtue and peace;
When good men caught in cruel coils wail,
To save them from pain and shame;
When sacred texts are not grasped aright,
To proclaim the message they teach mankind;
To relieve the earth of the burden of vice,
To fulfil the promise made in Thretha Age,
Achyutha has incarnated on this earth,
Vaasudheva, Shrihari, has come into the world.
Baba*

IN every human heart there resides a gnawing desire to achieve unwavering and lasting *aanandha*. Day and night, throughout his life, man is endeavouring without a moment's rest to attain this stage. And yet he finds it beyond his reach.

What is the reason? The root cause of his failure is his identification of himself with his body and senses, and his belief that physical and sensual pleasure can give him the *aanandha* which will appease his hunger. Man is not aware that he is the *aanandha* he seeks. The *Upanishaths* clear all doubts on this point. They assert: "Flour is rendered sweet by jaggery." Flour, be it of rice or wheat or gram, is not inherently sweet, but when jaggery or sugar is mixed in it, the sweetness permeates all of it. The lesson the *Upanishaths* convey is: The created Cosmos is the flour and the Divine Principle is the sugar. As a consequence, nature charms us and is attractive. Wherever we hear melody, or see harmony, or experience the sublime, it is Divinity that impinges on us and not nature.

Authentic means of acquiring knowledge

God is described as *Aprameya* (not measurable). It means that God cannot be measured like any limited phenomenon. Only the *Vedhas* can give a satisfying glimpse of the Glory. To indicate this, God is designated as *Vedhavith* (known through the *Vedhas*). There are three authentic means of acquiring knowledge as mentioned in the sacred texts. They are (i) *Prathyaksha* (direct perception) (ii) *Anumaana* (inference), and (iii) *Shabdha* (authoritative voice). When milk becomes curd after being treated with yeast, one can see it happening. The phenomenon is therefore accepted as true, as proved by *prathyaksha*. When clouds of smoke rise from mountain range, one infers that the forest is on fire. When someone who has been at Prashanthi Nilayam describes the place to one who has not, the latter, too, is able to picture for himself the Nilayam and its environs. This is an example of 'authoritative voice' being a means of knowledge.

Shabdha becomes authoritative and acceptable when it emanates from experience and from honest communication of that experience.

Fixed and fundamental attributes of, God

Among the many thousands sitting in this auditorium, there is one who has come from America, a member of Sathya Sai Council for America. His name is Dick Bock. No one, let us say, has seen him so far. Even if he is described as tall or short, old or young, or as having specific physical characteristics people will find it difficult to identify him and spot him. But when I pronounce the sound, "Dick Bock," he will stand up for all to see. God, too, does not easily respond with His Presence when you describe Him and glorify Him. You had no name when you were born, but have since been responding whenever you are called by a 'given' name. Similarly, God is Nameless, but He responds when His Name, any one of the many, is pronounced by the seeker. The *shabdha* (verbal testimony), as a means of proof, has two aspects---the *thatastha* (apparent features) and the *swaruupa* (fundamental nature)---to the permanent unchanging features.

To identify a house which a visitor is searching for we tell him, "That one on which the crow is sitting," and he understands. This is a temporary feature of the house. God, the Eternal Absolute, is pictured, praised and adored as temporarily apparent and is adored in limited regions as Raama, Krishna, Vishnu, Ishwara, etc. These are not basic, fundamental expressions of His Nature. These are only Forms assumed for certain vital purposes like conferring peace on earth, reestablishing the norms of justice and strengthening the ideal of faith in the Supreme.

The fixed and fundamental Attributes are *Sathyam*, *Jnaanam*, *Anantham* (Truth, Knowledge, infinite) This is the *Swaruupa* (Natural state) of *Brahman*. These attributes do not change with time, space and the nature of the observer. They penetrate time, space and matter and we perceive them in five aspects; *asthi*, *bhaathi*, *priyam*, *naama* and *ruupa*. Three of these---*asthi* (existence), *bhaathi* (consciousness) and *priyam* (bliss) are basic, while the other two---*naama* (name) and *ruupa* (form), are transitional and superficial. It is indisputable that all these features need a Creator who is Immanent, who is their Author and Contributor.

Nature moves but the Divine does not

The Sun, the Stars, the Moon, the oceans, the earth---all these point to the maker whom we have to accept. There are two causes which together produce any thing: the shaper and the substance. This silver cup must have had a smith who shaped it and silver which he shaped. When you go deep into this process of creation, you will realise that both causes merge into One, the Embodiment of Being, Awareness and Bliss. Since that One is all this, recognising It in all this confers full Bliss.

Every man yearns for only two boons escape from sorrow and attainment of joy. When both are achieved, man is truly free; he has gained *mukthi* (liberation). Not knowing the genuine implications of the stage of *mukthi*, persons who pride themselves as atheists or rationalists declare that they are not interested in it. *Mukthi* is the fulfilment of these two universal cravings of man. Texts and arguments have led man astray and blinded him to Reality. Do we reach *mukthi* along the path of activity, or of inquiry, or of worship? The arguments shall only fog the issue. These paths merely cleanse the mind, clarify the intellect and purify the emotions.

If the *Aathmic* (divine) core of all things and beings is recognised, *Aanandha* will be ever-present and full. The Divine Principle is the reality, the base, the essence, the ocean on which the waves rise and fall. Discard the name and form (which rise and fall) and contemplate on the *asthi-bhaathi-priya* content in each cell and particle. Then you can immerse yourselves in *Nithyaanandha* (*Eternal bliss*). *Aanandha* is Omnipresent. One has only to realise its Universality.

***Aathman* is the bestower of highest bliss**

Embodiments of *Prema* (Love)! Things that move must need have a stationary base. Nature moves but the Divine does not. Buses and cars speed along the road while the road itself lies still without movement. Pictures flit and fly along the screen in a cinema, but the screen does not flit or fly. The body grows or declines, the senses seek one pleasure after another and the mind skips from this thought to that only because the *Aathman* is Immovable and unmoved.

Now, by what trait can we recognise the *Aathman*? By bliss, which is Its very nature. This is the reason why It is described as *Nithyaanandham* (Eternal Bliss Absolute) *Parama-sukhadham* (bestower of highest bliss), *kevalam* (*alone*) *jnaanamoorthim* (embodiment of pure wisdom), *dhwandhwaa-theetham* (beyond all dualities), *gaganasadhrisham* (vast as sky), *thathwa-masyaadhilakshyam* (denoted by *Vedhic* axioms such as Thou are That), *ekam* (the One), *nithyam* (the eternal), *vimalam* (blemishless), *achalam* (unaffected), *sarvadheeh* (all-conscious), *saakshi-bhootham* (all seeing witness), *bhaavatheetham* (un-reachable even by the imagination), *thrigunarahitham* (attributeless), etc.

Generally speaking, the materials in the world will be sought by some, neglected by others and disliked by still others. The reason lies in the mind, not in the matter. One's own likes and dislikes are moulded by one's own activities, thoughts and feelings. If your reaction is good, you will pronounce Me good. If your feelings are bad, I may appear bad. The transformation from one attitude to the other happens in you, not in Me. I am ever the same. Since a form has been assumed, wavering reactions are inevitable. They are human; they do not affect the Divine.

Envious mind will be ever engaged in wrong

Changes in the nature of the reactions and the lines of approach are brought about by the whims of the moment, the turns and twists of desire and the pressure exercised by the environment, the region and the times. Last night you witnessed a play about Jesus enacted by the students. The disciple who was most loved, Judas by name, decided to work against the Master, yielding to the low temptation of a few pieces of silver. Greed for money is a demon that gets hold of the weak. When one is overcome by it, one loses all trace of discrimination and accepts with ease, wrongful ways of satisfying it.

Since the uniquely powerful impact of Sathya Sai has become world-wide, many ignorant persons afflicted with envy and monetary greed are attempting to spin malicious tales to belittle and defame the culture of *Bhaarath*. The envious mind will be ever engaged in wrong. This has been so in every age when the Divine has come among mankind. But despite such tactics, the task will not falter, the Triumph will not be delayed.

All the acts of Jesus were pure and holy

You have to pay special attention to this truth; there exists no such person who can point out any kind of blemish in Sai. Individuals who can probe into the significance of the principle of *prema*

(pure love) of which Sathya Sai is the embodiment, are, of course, very few. This principle is fully selfless, fully pure and fully holy. This principle, with Sathya Sai as its embodiment and exponent, is spreading from continent to continent. Envious persons watch the march of this transforming love and try to obstruct it with falsehood. Since the attention of seekers and aspirants is now being increasingly devoted to the heritage and culture of *Bhaarath*, attempts are made by many narrow and crooked minds to cast aspersions on them.

The success of the task for which I have come will very soon reverberate throughout the world. The truth that all faiths are facets of the One and that all roads lead to the same Goal, is provoking to some persons. You witnessed in the play on Jesus how his emphasis on the basic truths of good and godly life was misinterpreted by even the leaders of religion, who sought to hide their own failings by slander and falsehood. They even plotted to inflict torture on Jesus. All the acts of Jesus were pure and holy, and filled with selfless love. One can have adoration for one's religion, but it should not be defiled by hatred towards other religions. Be engaged, rather, in tasting the sanctifying, sustaining stream of Divine love. That will confer lasting *Aanandha*.

SAI is the ever-effulgent *Aathman*

In truth, this *Kali* era is the most beneficent of the four, for you have now amidst you the Eternal Embodiment of *Aanandha* in a form which you can approach, adore and learn from. You are singing with Me, conversing with Me and filling your eyes, ears and hearts with My utterances and activities. This is not a mere physical body composed of the five elements, nor this day My Birthday, though you may call it thus. This body might have a birthday, but I have no birth. You say I am fifty-four years old, but I have no age which can be counted.

The Eternal, with neither entrance nor exit;

The One who neither Was nor Is nor Will be;

The Immortal Person free from birth and death

That Ever-effulgent Aathman is Sai for ever.

Adoration is rising on one side of Me like the Himaalayas; denigration is accumulating on the other side as another Himaalayan range. I am, however, unaffected by both. As Gokak said a few minutes ago, upon both these peaks I place My hands, showering My Blessings equally on the opposing responses. Where there is day there must also be night; but it is the same Sun that causes them both. Be equanimous yourselves. Endeavour to benefit most from the good fortune accessible to you.

Engage yourselves in the spiritual discipline of *seva*, which is the most productive of good. Of all the methods of *seva*(service), to the long-neglected rural population is the best. Dedicate your skill and energies to the betterment of your brothers and sisters dwelling in the villages. Service is God. Why has God endowed man with a body, a mind and an intellect? Feel with the mind, plan with the intelligence and use the body to serve those who are in need of service. Offer that act of service to God; worship Him with that flower. Put into daily practice the ideals that Sathya Sai has been propagating, and make them known all over the world by standing forth as living examples of their greatness.

Birthday Message, 23-11-1979

Modern Civilisation is based on competition in which the interests of the individual precede the interest of society. Therefore, fear haunts men wherever they turn---fear of poverty, fear of loss, fear of death and destruction of property.

The mind urges the senses to seek and secure softness, sweetness, fragrance, melody and beauty, not in God whose heart is soft as butter, whose story is sweet as nectar, whose renown is fragrant as the jasmine, whose praise is melodious to the ear, whose Form is the embodiment of perfect beauty, but, in the shoddy contraptions of material things.

So, the mind has to die, so that it may be recast as an instrument for Liberation, through Fulfilment.

Sri Sathya Sai

44. The Truth

THERE is God everywhere and there is no second entity anywhere. God is the truth, the only truth. In every article or thing, God is, as the basis, as understanding and understandability, as the source of Divine light, as' *Aathma*. Know that All exists, has awareness and bliss because of the *Aathma* which All is. Truth is a word that is frequently used on platforms but the concept is still very hazy and often mistakenly interpreted. In reality, man is afraid of probing into his own truth, lest his pet opinions and attitudes be proved hollow and dangerous. As a result, his actions and thoughts pursue disturbing and discordant paths.

What exactly is truth? Is it the description of a 'thing seen' as one has seen it, without exaggeration or under-statement? No. Or, the narration of an incident in the same word as one has heard it narrated? No. Truth elevates; it holds forth ideals; it inspires the individual and society. It is the Light that illumines Man's path to God. A life inspired by Truth will enable man to live as man---not degrade himself to the status of a lower species. From dawn to dusk, from the moment of wakefulness to the moment of sleep, if he devotes himself to his own deeds, is that a life inspired by the Truth? No. By his good thoughts translated into good words and manifested as good deeds, man must promote Truth in society and prove its usefulness. He is the image of God. He must be aware of the image of God that shines in society also.

People are fascinated by the false

The thought that arises in the mind, the word that sprouts from the tongue and the deed that engages the hand must all three be fully co-ordinated. Each one must be in conformity with the other two. They must be in unison with each other. If you have one plan in your mind and talk of a different one and execute something else, it is a false life, not a true one. The ancient texts condemn such a person as a *Dhuraathma* (evil person) and extol the person whose thought, Word and deed are all in line as a *Mahaathma* (greatest soul).

Nowadays, people are fascinated by the false and keep away from the true. They ignore the true and pursue the false. They are not eager to know the Truth, the eternal and the Absolute. Truth is the One Awareness, the One Divine Energy that activates every living being, nay, every particle of matter. The tiny seed of a banyan tree does not reveal to the human eye or to the microscope, the gigantic tree which it contains. The Divine Energy within it prompts it to expand and become the banyan. Every cell, every spot, every atom is Divine, full of vast destiny. The recognition of this Omnipresence of God is the mark of the theist. The atheist may proclaim that God is not, but, deep inside him one can find the awareness of the Omnipresence. That is his truth.

Now, about my Truth. It is impossible for anyone to discover and declare the truth that is Sathya Sai. To ensure peace and prosperity is the task on which Sathya Sai has come amidst you. "*Lokaah samasthaah sukhino bhavanthu*" (Let all the worlds be happy). All mankind have to be happy; all must rest; in peace; all must be gladly engaged in fulfilling their duties. I long to shower *aanandha* on all. It is not an easy achievement to recognise and identify Divinity.

Yet, when the time is ripe and the fortune is imminent, that is to say, pretty soon, even that can be won by you.

8-12-1979

Protect your mother-tongue and Motherland with all your energy. Make yourselves fit for this, by making the best use of the opportunities in the school. Progress as much as you can, without hesitation. Develop character as well as intelligence and health.

The most reliable source of strength is in you, not in money, or kinsmen, or physical acumen, but, in yourself, the Aathman (divinity). Know it; delve into it; draw sustenance from it; see it in all; serve it in all.

Sri Sathya Sai

45. The way of Jesus

THERE are four types of persons---those who see only right everywhere, those who are less spiritual in their vision and so see right as right and wrong as wrong, those who shut their eyes to right and see only wrong and lastly, the worst of all, those who judge even the right to be wrong. No one brings wealth when he is born or takes it with him when he dies. Whatever riches one has accumulated have to be freely shared with others. Flowers scatter fragrance; trees offer fruits in plenty. Instead of learning the lessons they teach, man pursues his own sense-cravings, and his urge for fame and authority over others. Contentment is the most precious wealth; greed brings misery in its train. Contentment alone can lead man to the goal of life viz., the attainment of Divinity.

A tender heart is more valuable than all material possessions. When moral and spiritual excellence is gained, the divinity in man becomes patent. Vishwaamithra was a powerful king, proud of his might and the vastness of his kingdom. He wished to defeat the Sage Vasishta but could not succeed. Thus he learnt the lesson that material, physical or mental powers are too weak to win over Divine Power. So, he entered upon spiritual *saadhana* (effort) to rid his mind of anger, greed and envy. As a result, he himself became a sage.

The Kaurava brothers, a hundred of them, were intoxicated by greed for more, though they had riches in plenty and kingdoms vast in area; so, they contended with their cousins, the God-fearing and God-led Paandava brothers, who were only five in number. In the end, the Kauravas destroyed themselves to the last man and the Paandavas were blessed with victory.

Every man in the world is a messenger of God

The brothers, Hiranyaaksha and Hiranyakashipu, succeeded in securing as boons from God mastery over the elements but they misused this power and spread havoc over all the worlds. Man has to acquire mastery over the foul urges in his own mind---lust, anger, hatred, jealousy. Then only can he enjoy the Divine Peace that is his birth-right.

Every living being is on a pilgrimage---whether it is aware of it or not. The *Bhaagavatha Puraana* (Story of Glory of Divinity), says that the destiny of all beings is to return to their origin. Lord Krishna has declared in the Geetha that all beings have emerged from Him and have to merge in Him. The Sun causes clouds in the sky raising water from the sea as vapour; the waters of the sea fall as rain, the rain water accumulates and flows as streams and rivers, until it merges with the source, the sea. It is faithful to its destiny; it confronts bravely all the hurdles and obstacles on the pilgrim path. Every man has come into this world as a Messenger of God.

Jesus announced himself as a Messenger of God. He spent many years in austerities so that he could shower compassion and love on all humanity. Later, he asked himself, "Am I just a messenger, or am I more closely related to God, a part of God with the Divine as my essence?" Jesus spent twelve long years, wandering alone in deserts engaged in this inquiry. At the end of this period, he returned to the society of men and announced "I am the Son of God."

In Kali Age Judases have multiplied

At that time, the priests of the holy temples of Jerusalem had become corrupt and commercialised. They had deteriorated into proud and selfish men. Jesus condemned them and tried to root out the evil practises. For, all forms were in the eyes of Jesus, Divine Forms and he

could not tolerate any action which belied this status. So, when asked by people who he was, he could reply, "I and my Father are One." Jesus tried to teach everyone the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

Tradition-minded and egoistic men considered Jesus a false prophet and they tried by every means to thwart his mission. Jesus, however, did not waver. Faced with opposition, he continued to be an example of living Truth, and to purify society. Many disciples, followed Jesus but throughout history, it has been the experience of Raama, Krishna, Jesus and Muhammad that disciples however close are seldom fully dedicated. Most are only part-time devotees. Jesus had 12 disciples, most of whom had faith in him and lived his teachings. But, Judas yielded to greed. He betrayed his Master for a mere 30 coins. He could not find joy in life after this treachery. His mind gave him no peace. He had to seek refuge in suicide.

Betrayal by people who pretend to adore is happening since ages. Corrupt, greedy and selfish people spread falsehoods about their own Masters. We hear of a Judas, 2000 years ago. But in the *Kali Age*, people are obsessed with money and Judases have multiplied. They seek to amass paltry riches whereas good character, good conduct and knowledge of God are the three real treasures to be gathered. Land and buildings, silver and gold, dollars and other currencies are temporary and trivial. They are possessions only until life lasts. But those three treasures will stay on, sustain and strengthen you until you attain union with the Infinite.

The three real treasures to be gathered

Man has mastered astronomy; he knows all about the earth. He is conversant with all that is happening in America, Russia and England. But he does not know who he is, and so, all other knowledge does not make him wise. He is eager to collect information about everything else but he never asks the question "Who am I?" though he uses the expression 'I' and 'my' freely almost always. You are the farmer; the body is the field. Sow the seeds of goodness, you can get the harvest of happiness; sow the seeds of evil, you reap the harvest of grief. You are the cause of either of these. Do not blame others or impute partiality to God. Above all, do not rely on this impermanent objective world; it is full of sorrow and change; cultivate detachment, equanimity and self-control and love.

This life is a temporary rest place

Develop knowledge about the higher levels of consciousness and the higher planes of existence. Knowledge leads to skill. From skill in using such knowledge, one acquires balance. You must recognise that this life is a stage in the long pilgrimage and that we are now at a hotel, a temporary resting place which has also a watchman. The mind is the watchman. So, do not feel permanently attached to the mind or the body. This 'negative' body has the 'positive' Divinity within it. When you become all-embracing infinite Love, the Divine will manifest in and through you. Try to be like Jesus.

Jesus was a person whose only joy was in spreading Divine Love, offering Divine Love, receiving Divine Love and living on Divine Love.

There are various theories about the birth date of Jesus based on the 'bright star that appeared at his birth.' It is visible once in 800 years, it is said. Some say he was born on the fifteenth day of September. But, he was born at 3-15 a.m. (early morning) on December 28, 1980 years ago. It was Sunday. The Star that appeared that day appears only once in 800 years. Its appearance had

nothing to do with the birth of Jesus. There is no rule that, when Divine Energy or Divine Incarnation descends on Earth, a star has to appear. That is the opinion of devotees only. But, Jesus was himself a 'Star' of infinite value, spreading brilliance of infinite dimension. Why posit another less brilliant glow?

Today is the Birth Day of Jesus, celebrated amidst December snow-falls with lights and Christmas Trees, and prayers. But it is useless to pray just one day and forget God, the rest of the year. That is an empty show; it does not emanate from the heart. We are true Christians only when we live according to the teachings of Christ and practise them in daily life. Even if we follow two teachings of his, that would be enough. Christ said, "All life is one, my dear Son! Be alike to every one."

Be engaged in doing God's work

If we truly follow this, it would be enough to fulfil our destiny. When he was on the Cross and overcome with agony, an unseen Voice said from Heaven, "Death is the Dress of Life." The body is the dress which the Divine Spirit puts on. Therefore, we should not weep when the body is worn out or falls or is injured. Death is an event, that is the very nature of the body. Men seek the cause for death but no one seeks the Divine Source of Life. Be engaged during the brief span of life in glorifying God and in doing God's Work.

God has incarnated in human form, in order to inspire man to follow higher ideals not only in India but foreign countries also. Men may have different languages and life styles but God is One and He is present everywhere. All religions speak of Him as Love and as attainable through love. Forms of Worshipping God differ, for they are shaped by time and place but love is the basic content of all the forms. The language of love is understood and spoken by all hearts. There is only one race really, and that is the race of mankind. We now consider petty distinctions of nationality, race, religion and language as vital and hold back love which must flow to every one from the heart. That was the life and message of Jesus. Nurture it in your hearts. Experience Jesus as your Messenger sent from God.

Become what you truly are

Love alone can reveal the Divinity latent in all. Love is God. Live in Love. Love lives by giving and forgiving; Self lives by getting and forgetting. Love is self-lessness; Selfishness is Love-lessness. *Do* not waste your life pursuing the narrow interests of the self. Love! Love! Become what you truly are---the embodiments of love. No matter how others treat you or what they think of you, do not worry. Follow Jesus Christ. Love for your own evolution and not for what others say. Do not imitate others. Cultivate your own life. You have your own heart, your own opinion, your ideas, your own will. Why then imitate? Imitation is human, they say; but creation is Divine. Follow your chosen path. Let your own experience of God be your guide and master. Do not go into the grave, weakly copying others. You won't find God if you search in the outside world. Your own heart shining with Love is God's Love. Follow the Master. Face the Devil. Fight to the end and finish the game. You are God. The true you is God.

You are not one person but three---the one, you think you are, the one others think you are and the one you really are. You think of yourself as your body and its sense cravings, others think of you as a personality. You are truly infinite spirit Divine. You should constantly remind yourself, "I am God" "I am God." "I am God." The day you see yourself as God, you become God.

If you think I am only human, you will be led astray. Do not allow your body and the sense to dictate your moves. Develop the inner vision. The body is the cart, the Spirit is the horse. Do not put the cart before the horse. Spiritual practice is the only means of acquiring mental peace. If all the cars in America are placed end to end, they would reach the moon; but there is no true happiness there, no peace of mind. Cultivate not riches, not comfort and luxuries, but Divine virtues. Then you become fit to receive God's Grace. Why trade permanent peace of mind for impermanent physical luxuries?

Speak sweetly; shed comfort with every glance of yours. Do not be slaves to your sensual desires. Prahladha told his father who had conquered the three worlds that he had failed to conquer lust and desire. You should conquer lust and vanquish anger. Exile from your mind greed, hate and jealousy. Dedicate your hand to the service of mankind. Jesus teaches infinite love and compassion. To resurrect love and compassion, you must kill jealousy and selfishness, purify your hearts. Earn the true mercy of Jesus. Follow the path shown by him and reach the position he holds.

From Discourse on 25-12-1979

Rules of behaviour must be observed by politicians, rulers, subjects, monks, who are leaders of the community and heads of monasteries, scholars and others, for they are exemplars and guides and their responsibilities are greater than ordinary persons.

Sri Sathya Sai

46. Be human

*YOU can master all knowledge
and win loud applause;
You can be hailed as a king
and rule over the realm;
You can pile vast wealth,
donate gold and land;
You can count all the stars
that shine at night;
You can name without doubt
each living thing on earth;
You can teach the eight-fold skill
to all who aspire;
You can reach the distant moon
and proudly walk thereon.
But you cannot be the master
of the five senses in your body;
You cannot turn your face inward
and still your wayward mind.*

We consider a combination of body, mind, intellect and senses as a human. This is not correct.

Mind is something we possess; body is something which we carry about; the intellect, too, is ours and the senses are dealt with by us. We are not the body, mind, intellect or senses. They are ours; we possess them. They are manipulated by us, we are distinct from all these. The day we recognise this differentiation and live on that knowledge, that day from we become aware of our Reality and our Goal.

Education is the gaining of illumination

Is this body inert or conscious? Of course it grows, declines, acts and undergoes destruction, just as the sweepings of your home, if daily thrown into a heap at one spot, grow into a mound. So, too, when food is daily provided, the body grows, and when food is stopped, it declines. So the body is basically inert matter. The body is consumed by fire when life leaves it and it becomes a corpse. It is also consumed by the flames of worry, fear and anxiety every day of its existence, from the moment of awakening at dawn to the moment of sleep at night. The body is also called *shareera*, which means, that which undergoes destruction. It is also praised as a temple where God is installed. And the word *kshethra*, usually applied to holy spots, is also used to indicate the body. Therefore the body must be used to further Divine purposes and to demonstrate the Glow of the Divine that is installed therein.

The body is cleansed, by soap and water, but true cleanliness can be achieved only from within. The cleansing of the body may keep physical illness away, but the *a-shaanthi* (disease) of the mind requires inner cleanliness. A perfume applied to the body might please the company around, but good thoughts and sweet conversation will please them more and for a longer time. As soap is for the body, truth is for speech; both have a high cleansing effect. The mind has to be cleansed by proper education in the crucible of renunciation. The intellect has to be purified by Universal vision conferred by wisdom. Education does not merely mean the study of books, nor the capacity to write books.

Education is the gaining of illumination; it is the light that dispels ignorance and doubt. It scatters the fog of ego. It confers humility and discipline. The *manas* (mind) must also be subjected to the process of *thapas* (rigorous discipline). The highest discipline is to bring about a unity in one's thought, word and deed. *Thapas* does not mean escaping into the forest and meditating in the loneliness on God.

God is not an alien living in far-off lands

God is close to each, in the heart He shines;

Sin is not an act or fact in far-off lands

Sin is in your mind, polluting word and deed.

Each sense organ has a legitimate purpose

God and the devil, good and bad, are denizens of one's own heart. Where God is, there the devil cannot be. It is like a game of 'musical chairs,' and only one person can occupy the chair. Seat God for ever in the heart, after ridding it of other occupants. Let this inert body be activated by Divine consciousness. The secular curriculum that you master in this college is important so that you may be self-reliant. But this education cannot be the final goal; the Resident of the heart should be given due reverence and homage.

Next, the senses. They serve to provide awareness of sound, tactile feeling, form, taste and smell. They should not be allowed to contribute to ill-health of the body and mind. Each of them has a legitimate purpose, a limited area of operation which should be respected. The tongue knows the measure of salt that can make a dish tasty. In the *Upanishaths*, the senses are called *maathra* (measures). Each one is a measure that can operate only upto a limit. The tongue has to speak softly and sweetly; the eye has to seek and see symmetry, harmony and beauty, the glow of Divine Ecstasy and the splendour of Divine Charm. The uncontrolled tongue indulges in four sins- lying, scandalising, vain gossip and wanton fault-finding. God resides in every one. The Lord has declared, "*Maamaivaamsho jeevaloke jeevabhoothaah sanaathanah*" (all living beings are a part of Me). They are all a part of His *Sanaathana* (Eternal) Self. So every one is an embodiment of the Divine.

Be engaged in developing the good in you

When any person is ill-treated or harmed, it is God who is the target of that sacrilege. We declare that Truth is God and in the same breath, adore falsehood. Resorting to falsehood is a demon that possesses and over-powers the weak. Indulging in unnecessary talk, talk for its own sake, is a morbid habit. It is also a waste of energy. It disperses company, for no one likes to listen to a bore. If he is tolerated for a minute, he will stick to you for days. There are others who spread rumours and gossip and spoil your peace of mind by poisoning the springs of love. You must be

engaged in developing the good in you, weeding out the bad and heightening your purity and holiness.

How can knowledge of the good and bad in others help you in this task? Talkative persons easily slip into scandal-mongering. Too much talk and a tongue addicted to scandal are twins; they work together and in unison. A poet addressed his tongue thus, "O tongue, knower of taste, relisher of sweetness, always prefer the Truth and God." Even when speaking the truth, one should not inflame passion, diminish enthusiasm or inflict injury: "*Sathyam brooyaath, priyam brooyaath*" (Speak the truth, speak pleasantly). "*Na brooyath sathyam apriyam*" (If unpleasant, do not speak the Truth). "*Priyam cha na anritham brooyaath*" (though it may be pleasant, do not speak falsehood).

Practise speech that does not offend

The Lord has said in the Geetha: "*Anudhvega karam vaakyam sathyam priya hitham cha yath*" (Speech that does not offend, that is truthful, pleasant and beneficial, has to be practised). Such speech sanctifies the tongue. It knows and respects the limits. The ear cannot tolerate a false or discordant note. Every one of the senses responds within its own limits of tolerance and protests when that limit is exceeded or disregarded. You must be vigilant that they are put to use with proper attention to those limits. When they stray from the path or overlap their boundaries, reason hides its head and makes you inhuman.

You can master all knowledge and win loud applause

The crowds that gather may praise and proclaim, "Ah, what a wonderful lecture he gave!"

You can be hailed as a king and rule over the realm You can pile vast wealth and donate gold and land.

But what is the benefit gained?

Karna gave away the earrings he wore and even sliced off his Divine suit of armour and gave it away in charity. Wherein lies the key to greatness? Whereto does renunciation lead? The question is, does it purify the heart? Does it help the Divinity within to manifest Itself?

Three kinds of *thapas* man should practise

The *manas* (mind) is known as *anthah-karana* (inner sense organ). The *manas* is always engaged in *manana* (recapturing, remembering, recalling, reflecting). As a result it receives and rejects wishes. Even when you are alone and silent, the mind may be on a spree---wishing, desiring, planning to do or not to do. And it keeps the tongue busy until sleep silences it. There are no standards which are kept in mind while looking, talking or acting. Since these are done as soon as the thought arises or the Will commands, the power of discrimination becomes weak. One must try to stay a while in order to examine and judge. Develop the quality of fortitude, the strength not to yield to the opinions of others unless you find them to be right and the courage to bear criticism and face slander.

As regards *thapas* (penance), there are three kinds---the *thapas* of the mind, of the body and of the speech. Let me remind you that the *thapas* of the body involves a few disciplines, The first is the process by which you revere and adore elders, teachers and God, serve them and honour their commands, put those commands into practice and earn their Grace. The second discipline is

cleanliness, inner and outer. Outer cleanliness includes the cleanliness of the area surrounding you. The third is *Brahmaacharya*. This does not mean merely desisting from marriage. It means becoming soaked in Holy Love for the Divine, through transparent sincerity, unselfish Will, pure consciousness and holy thoughts.

The true meaning of *Brahmacharya*

You all know that Hanumaan is described as the Eternal *Brahmachari* (bachelor). He was married to Sri Vathsala, yet he earned that description. How? *Brahmaachari* means 'He who moves in *Brahman*.' Hanumaan had no other thought than Raama (who is *Brahman*) and so was ever moving in *Brahman*, living in *Brahman*. Your thoughts, feelings, desires and activities must all move in *Brahman* (the Universal Absolute). That is to say, whatever is spoken, whatever is seen, must be cognised as *Brahman*. That is the real *Brahmacharya* stage, not merely observing certain disciplines to control the senses and the mind.

The next discipline is *ahimsa* (absence of violence). It does not mean merely not injuring a living being. You should not cause hurt even by a word, a look or a gesture. Tolerance, fortitude, equanimity---these help you to be steady in *ahimsa*. They will remove all chance of your causing pain to others. This is called *sahana* (forbearance) or *kshama* (forgiving). Assess the worth of whatever others do to you or say about you, and cultivate fortitude and the understanding to appreciate their behaviour and pardon their faults. This capacity is as invaluable as truth, righteousness, wisdom, non-violence, renunciation, delight and compassion. It is all that one need possess for spiritual advancement.

Living becomes a glorious experience only when it is sweetened by tolerance and love. Willingness to compromise with others' ways of living and cooperation in common tasks, these make living happy and fruitful. Certain modes of behaviour have been laid down and proved beneficial by centuries of practice. These have to be observed with modifications to suit the conditions of today. We are developing in each department of life, but pity it is that we are not developing the unique qualities of human beings. Develop the *Aathmic* awareness, the consciousness of the Divine, the acquisition of Divine attributes. Expand love and understanding. When students consciously and steadily strive to develop these distinct human qualities, education will give them valuable experience, and they shall be equipped to transform society. The nation and all mankind will derive benefit therefrom.

Sri Sathya Sai College for Women, Ananthapur, 17-2-1980

Practising meditation in silence and solitude, one can in due course establish silence and solitude in the heart, even in the busiest thoroughfares.

Now, the puuja room or domestic shrines are invariably found next to the kitchen, there, the smells of cooking attack the nostrils, the sounds of frying and boiling attack the ear; the mind is distracted by voices and noises. How can concentration grow in such an atmosphere?

Sri Sathya Sai

47. Education in the Sai era

EDUCATION must enable a person to discriminate between light and darkness. It must foster and promote the precious wealth of moral strength and spiritual victory and purify the inner impulses of man. Mere mastery of books does not entitle a man to be called 'educated.' Without mastery over the inner instruments of emotions, no man can be deemed to be educated. The latent has to be cleansed so that the patent can flourish. Experience is essential for the confirmation and consolidation of what is learnt from books. We do not see any sign of this in the present educational system. There is no attempt to awaken the Divine in Man, no awareness of the possibility of rising to the psychic plane.

The ideal that is held before the student in our educational institutions is different. They are engaged in a mechanical process of turning out young men and women who detest work that soils the hand or disturbs the fold of their dresses. They instil the passion for profit in their hearts, and ignore the urge to sympathise and serve. Education must produce wisdom and moral character. It can be acquired only by hard living and spending days of toil, with no respite for even sleep. But present-day education makes those who undergo it, mere bonded-slaves to their senses. They do not know how to avoid this bondage, so they revel in envy, greed and egoism. What the country expects and demands from the educated person is, however, that he should set an example of honest labour, lighting the lamp of knowledge in every home.

***Atharva Vedha* embodies many secrets**

When you really analyse it, you will discover confusion, uncertainty and indecision in every section of the educational system. The remedy for this unhappy situation lies in the revival of ancient ideals and practices with slight adaptations to suit the changed times and circumstances. For these ideals and practices enshrine values that are eternal and essential.

For example, though the Russians and Americans boast that they have advanced far ahead in the fields of science and technology, one has to admit that this country had made vast progress in them even in the *Vedhic* age. The Atharva vedha embodies many technological secrets and scientific laws which were directly utilised by Westerners. Western scholars are investigating the possibilities of the exploratory laws mentioned in this *Vedhic* text. Mention is made of aerial vehicles, of gravitation and of various other scientific principles and appliances. They have inspired many inventors and technicians in other lands through the ages.

Indians have developed a fascination for foreign lands. They admire the achievements of other people but ignore those of their own. The faculty of initiation is subdued by this faculty of imitation. As the proverb says, "they prefer the stale, insipid dish available at the neighbour's home to the well-cooked, tasty dish available at their own." As a result they are unable to identify and promote the knowledge and skill that they have mastered in their own country.

Give up the mad pursuit after Diplomas

The Wright Brothers are declared to be the pioneers, the very first to fly a heavier-than-air plane in the sky. Their powered flight took place on December 17, 1903. But a German had actually forestalled them by his flight on September 13, 1896. We must note that even earlier than this German, on August 14, 1895, an Indian belonging to Bombay, Shivaraam Baapuji Kadalekar, had succeeded in a similar feat. His name failed to draw public admiration and his feat was not acclaimed because of the envy, selfishness and the quarrelsome nature of our people.

Unity of minds, mutual love and cooperation are the qualities we have to develop today. Education is not for securing university degrees. Give up this mad pursuit after diplomas which cater to the ego and increase the distance between you and others. Develop the desire to serve others and equip yourselves through education with the skill needed to serve others better. Education must enthuse youth to understand the precious heritage of Indian culture and spirituality, and to evoke the higher powers they possess. Though there are perennial sources and springs of strength within them, they behave like weaklings and ignoramuses. Patience, tolerance, tranquility and calmness have to be implanted in the heart.

Education is not mere book-knowledge

Education has to cultivate humility and discipline, but today it is yielding a harvest of pride and envy. *Vidhya* means-vidh (light) and *ya* (that which gives). So *vidhya* (education) has to shed light and illumine the darkness in the mind and intellect. It does not indicate mere book-knowledge. It has to clarify the kinship of man with man and his intimate relationship with nature. It must harmonise one's earlier experiences with one's present one, and guide one to profitable and beneficial experiences in the future. It must validate the knowledge gained from books by these experiences and, by that process, make man more and more human, until he becomes Divine.

Riches beyond reasonable limit will result only in disaster. So, too, mere scholarship beyond limit will only bring about pride and competitive struggle. Of course information of a certain quality is desirable in a certain quantity, but without a parallel and simultaneous cultivation of morals and self-awareness, scholarship will only be a burden and a danger. The cultivation of a social consciousness is also very important. One must not learn to live like a drop of oil on a pond spreading all over the surface and refusing to merge with the water. One must join others in common tasks and contribute one's strength and skill to the common pool. A single thin string cannot bend even an ant, but hundreds of them twisted into a rope can hold back an elephant. This is the effect of united effort. It is a desirable trait to work for a common cause with others in *cooperation*; but today people unfortunately only believe in *operation*.

Study the best means of bringing peace

What can gatherings, meeting and sessions of learned bodies achieve? The conclusions arrived at after extensive discussions are not put into practice at all. Large sums of money as well as countless reams of paper are wasted. The recommendations and resolutions must be tested on the touchstone of practice. The money can be better spent on raising the standard of life of the village folk. You have formed a study circle. Study the best means of bringing peace and apply those means in a few villages to prove their validity. They can then be taught to people in other lands also. Members of the circle can help students who are handicapped or defective and who have not been able to keep abreast of the rest, by giving them extra attention and special guidance.

The clouds gathered thick in the sky have, in their midst, streaks of lightning. So, too, there has to be wisdom illumining the clouds of knowledge. The learned man's life itself must shine as his message to mankind. Every particle of strength, every moment of life, every expression of virtue and every manifestation -of intelligence, must be directed to the fulfilment of this high purpose.

When the name of the drug is repeated, can the disease be cured? Can poverty be overcome by reciting the word, 'Dollar' or 'Rupee'? Can the reading of the menu-card remove the pang of

hunger? A pass in the examination does not make a person more useful or more wise. Lecturers and professors of the teaching faculty are like an 'overhead tank' and the students are the 'taps.' When the tank is filled with potable water, the taps too, will yield water with which people can slake their thirst.

The duty of teachers is to correct and counsel the students, charging them with enthusiasm and courage and removing their sloth and vacillation. This is the underlying object of all the curricula and classes---to eliminate narrowness of outlook and to promote wide, inclusive modes of thought, word and deed. Faith in the Oneness of all must be rooted and strong.

The *Upanishath* declares, "All this is enveloped by God," and the *Geetha* declares, "All this is the Lord," and "The Lord is in all beings." Consider every student who is eager to learn as your own child. Consider every subject you teach as a means for instilling faith in God. When you teach physics, also lead the students into the magnificent mystery of philosophy. While teaching botany, guide them into the sublime secrets of the tree, and of the Creator who has blessed them with it. Life is a tree. The mutual relationship we cultivate and cherish is symbolised by the branches, twigs and leaves; the thoughts arising in the mind are the flowers; *aanandha* (bliss) is the fruit, and *dharma* (virtue) is the sweet juice it contains. The tree is held firm by the very roots which feed it---roots that symbolise faith and self-confidence.

At present, discipline has almost disappeared from the educational field. Professing one thing and doing another has become a Universal vice. The nation can prosper and be happy only when education develops in an atmosphere of Truth, Love and Reverence.

Sathya Sai Study Circle, Bangalore, 18-2-1980

48. The vibhuuthi

ANORANIYAAN Mahatho Maheeyaan (More minute than the minutest and more vast than the vastest), is how the *Vedhaantha* refers to the Absolute, the *Brahman*. The *Vedhaantha* (*Vedhic* philosophy) tries by such descriptions to picture the Highest Overself, but no description can help in indentifying it or experiencing it. At best, the description can only be like what the five blind men inferred about the elephant when each laid hold of a particular limb of that animal. Even those who have experienced, cannot communicate the ecstasy, the peace, the light and the love fully to others. The prophets, sages and seers to whom the establishment of 'religions' is ascribed, have proclaimed their awareness of the *Brahman* principle. Though the Charvaka School of Philosophy denied God and the Jain and Buddhist Schools declined to posit

God, Shankara asserted that God is formless and attributeless and is best described as *Jyothi* (Supreme effulgence). He also said that the individual is not different from the Universal, that *jeeva* (individual being) is *Brahman* (Omni Self) itself, that the manifold nature is also *Brahman* seen through a strange veil as a mixture of truth and falsehood, a peculiar make believe called *maaya* (illusion) or *avidhya* (ignorance).

The four characteristics of the world

Brahman is the cause and *prakrithi* (Nature) the effect. Nature is the deluding manifestation of *Brahman*. It is what can be called *leela vibhuuthi* or expression of glow done as mere *leela* (sport). When the *leela* is perceived as apart from *Brahman*, it is a false and incomplete perception. 'The *leela* is manifold; *Brahman* is One. To discover the One in the many is the purpose of human existence. *Brahman* is eternal. It is the *nithya vibhuuthi* (everlasting splendour). It is named Kingdom of God. *Leela vibhuuthi* is *prakrithi* or *maaya* or *avidhya* (nature or illusory energy or ignorance), with the deluding, deceptive diversities.

The objective world (*leela vibhuuthi*) is the super-imposition on *Brahman* that deceives and distorts the Reality. Ignorant persons assume it to be real. Buddha described the world as having four characteristics: (i) *Sarvam dhukkham*: All is sorrow. It is called *mruthyaloka* (the world of death), afflicted by pain, hunger, disease and worry. (ii) *Sarvam kshanikam*: Everything is momentary, everything changes. The bud blooms and fades, lightning flashes and dies. Every individual, thing or quality grows and declines. (iii) *Sarvam svalakshanam*: Every person or thing is unique; even identical twins have both some special quality or attitude that differentiates them. No two leaves, even of the same tree, are the same in all respects. The many are divided into many more by these differences. Hence Buddha declared (iv) *Sarvam shoonyam*: All is invalid, worthless. Where are the fathers and grandfathers who have died? How many empires have been buried in the sands of time?

The Cosmos emanated through God's sport

The *Nithya vibhuuthi*, upon which the manifold structure exists, is described as having six characteristics: (i) *Nithya* (Eternal) (ii) *Avarnaneeya* (indescribable) (iii) *Nissankhya* (immeasurable) (iv) *Nirupaadhi* (uncontaminated by association or impact) (v) *Nirdhoshi* (unaffected by limitation or diminution) (vi) *Samaana-rahitha* (unapproached by anything other, incomparable, equal only to itself). This *Nithya vibhuuthi* (miraculous play) is the *Aathmic* principle that is the Reality of every being. It manifests as *Leela-vibhuuthi*, projecting Itself as the many individuals and particulars by the interplay of the three *gunas* (modes or qualities).

The *saathwik guna* (pure qualities) promotes peace, harmony and love. The *raajasik* (quality of passion) is related to desire: it prods man into constant activity. The *thaamasik* (quality of inaction) has the peculiar property of twisting Reality out of shape and of making, the truth appear as false, the false as truth. Thus the transient and the trivial appears as ever-lasting and desirable. The subject and the object are both unreal, only the *Aathman* or *Brahman*, the Truth of both, is real. That is why both are classed as *Leela vibhuuthi*, the magnificence of God's sport. Through that sport, this entire Cosmos has emanated.

This day is *Yugaadhi*, the New Year day, the day when we take leave of the year 'Siddhartha' and welcome the year 'Roudhra.' In the *leela*, such goings and comings, arrivals and departures are to be expected. The Moon (*Chandhra*) is declared to be the king, and Sun (*Suurya*), the Prime Minister during this year. Saturn (*Shani*) is the Commander-in-chief. Among the nine planets, four are in favourable positions of authority and five hold harmful positions. The year is named *Roudhra*, which means 'terrible.' This indicates that the year will witness some agitations and face a few anxieties. But the king and the minister are powerful; they will keep things in check. The favourable planets will ensure early and timely rains. So peace and security have a good chance of spreading if the mind (whose presiding deity is *Chandhra*) and the intellect (whose presiding deity is *Suurya*), work in unison.

Remember the Basic Unity of all mankind

People must take the warning and not allow themselves, to be 'horrible' to one another like hordes of drunken monkeys. They must remember the Basic Unity of all mankind :*Ekoham bahushyaam*. *Ekoham* is the *Nithya vibhuuthi* and *Bahushyaam*, the *Leela vibhuuthi*. Demonstrate that you are Divine to the very core. Your conduct and behaviour must declare your faith in your Divinity. The New Year day is celebrated in the home after sweeping and washing it clean and hanging green festoons over the doors. The people themselves take elaborate baths, wear new clothes and partake of feasts and share in merriment.

When so much care is taken to fulfil the needs of the body, imagine how much more care should be devoted to adore the Divine Resident in that body. Cultivate tolerance and compassion and engage yourselves in your work in a spirit of love and service, thus enabling yourselves to visualise the Divinity inherent in every living being.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 7-3-1980

*Service is best built on the strong foundation of Thath-thwam-asi--
-That and This are the same; That is This; This is That. There is no
Other; there is only One.*

*Kites fly high; but all are lifted and kept high by the same air, the
same wind. The kites have no separate wills.*

*The pots of water in which the Sun is reflected may be many, but
the Sun is One and unaffected, when the pots break or the water is
dried up.*

*All help you give is therefore help given to yourself; all service is
to the Self alone.*

When another is poor, you cannot be rich; when another is in distress, you cannot have joy. The same current runs through and activates all.

Sri Sathya Sai

49. The four brothers

RAAMA is a Name sweeter than all the sweet things in Nature, when imbibed alone or together. It can never cloy on the tongue or the mind. It has mysterious mystic potentialities to elevate man. So, one must endeavour, to keep the mind ever dwelling on it. The story of Raama---The .Raamaayana---is but another version of the *Vedhas* (ancient sacred revealed scriptures). In fact, it is said that the *Vedhas* incarnated as the Raamaayana, in order to help the destruction of evil and the revival of righteous living, tasks which the Lord took upon Himself during His career as Raama. Why! Raama and his three brothers are, from one point of view, the four *Vedhas* in human form. The Yajur Vedha lays down the rights and duties of man, the *Dharma* (righteousness) which ensures peace and prosperity for him, both here and hereafter. So, it is represented by Raama Himself. He put on the vesture of manhood in order to establish and exemplify *Dharma*. "*Raamah Vighrahavaan Dharmah*" is how the Raamaayana describes Him---Raama, the embodied *Dharma*.

Mankind should follow Raama's life

Rig Vedha enshrines *manthras* (potent sacred formulae). It elucidates them and elaborates their meanings, with the *manthra* "Raama" as their crown. Brother Lakshmana, who repeated it, recited it and relied on it, for everything in life and beyond, is indeed the embodiment of the *Rig Vedha*. He teaches mankind that the *Raama manthra* confers on man the Constant Presence of the Lord. The same *Vedha* contains songs in praise of Creation and the Creator and through adoration sublimated into song, the Lord yields Grace. Bharatha whose every thought, word and deed was an act of thanksgiving, a paen of praise dedicated to Raama, was the *Saama Vedha* itself.

Then, we have the *Atharvana Vedha* which is a collection of medical and ritual details, of charms and protective amulets to overcome internal and external foes. Shathrughna, whose very name means 'the destroyer of foes is therefore appropriately the *avathaar* (incarnation) of the *Atharvana Vedha*. This *Vedha* enables man to conquer evil habits, attitudes and tendencies, so that he can listen to the Voice of God and gladly translate the words into daily life. Shathrughna demonstrated by his humility, loyalty and devotion the victory he had won over his ego, greed and anger.

Very often the mistake is committed, of forgetting that Raama came, in order to lay down the norms of life and that His life has to be observed and followed by mankind. He is the ideal Man, with qualities and virtues which every man can earn to elevate himself. Mere worship, empty adoration is not what the *Avathaar* expects.

Raama underwent trouble, disappointment and distress like any man, in order to show that joy was but an interval between two griefs, that grief was but a challenge, a rest, a lesson. He held forth the ideal relationship between son and father, husband and wife, brother and brother, friend and friend, ally and enemy and even man and beast. The Raamaayana teaches also that, as a consequence of the individual's accumulated *karma-consequence*, children of the same mother may have opposite characters and careers. The waters of a pond breed leeches, as well as lotuses. Vaali and Sugreeva were brothers! So were Raavana and Vibheeshana!

Four brothers represent four Purusharthas

From another point of view, Raama and the brothers can be understood as models of the four primal goals of Man, the *Purusharthas*. Of these Raama was *Dharma* (Righteousness); Lakshmana was *Artha* (prosperity); Bharatha was *Kaama* (fulfilment of desires) and Shathrughna was *moksha* (liberation). These four are the progeny of every human being. Dhasharatha (Ten-chariot leader) is Man, having five sense organs of perception and five senses of action, ruling over *Ayodhya*, the city that is impregnable (the heart wherein God resides). These four goals have to be reduced to two pairs --- *dharma-artha* and *kaama-moksha*. Man must struggle to attain prosperity only through righteous ways. The prosperity should be used to achieve and *maintain dharma*. This is the reason why Lakshmana follows in the footsteps of Raama and when Kabandha held Lakshmana in his deadly clasp, Lakshmana offered to stay in those arms, advising Raama to escape and live. This is the reason why when Lakshmana fell unconscious on the battlefield and could not be revived. Raama lamented, "Perhaps I may get another Seetha, if this Seetha passes away; but O Lakshmana, nowhere can I get another brother like you.

Raama's expression of His fraternal love

Raama also shared with Bharatha the love that Lakshmana poured on him so profusely. He told Bharatha who prayed to him, with tears in his eyes, to return to Ayodhya as its ruler, "No, Father has ordered Me to rule over the forests, helping and saving/he anchorites and hermits from the inroads of demonic hordes. He has willed that you should rule over the Kingdom of Ayodhya. Let us both be loyal to him." That was the expression of His fraternal love.

The second pair of *Purusharthas* is *Kaama* and *Moksha*; the only desire worth entertaining and pursuing is the desire for liberation. Bharatha had it and Shathrughna shared it.

After the long pilgrimage to the shrines and holy spots of Bhaaratha, Raama had a few years, until he was aged fourteen, of apparent introspection and solitude. He disliked food and regal apparel. He was not interested in materials and men. He waved his fingers and palms for no clear reason; he wrote on the air only He knew what. He laughed without reason. In short, His actions and movements were exactly the same as when I was in my early teens. Vashishtha attempted to bring His mind back to normalcy, but that was only a stage which all *Avathaars* are in, before they enter upon the task for which they have come down. Those years, the *Avathaar* was designing His Master Plan. At the end of that period, the sage Vishwaamithra arrived at the palace, asking Dhasharatha to send Raama (and the inseparable Lakshmana) with him, to save the hermits from the demonic gang who desecrated *Vedhic* rites. The plan started unfolding.

From Discourse on Raamanavami day, Brindhaavan 25-3-1980

The Vedhas say, Maathru devo bhava. Revere your Mother as God. This applies to the country which gave birth to you, also. So, you must revere the country and follow its culture.

You must also revere your mother, who has brought you up with love, care and sacrifice. However famous a man may be, if he does not revere his mother, he does not deserve respect.

A person whose heart is so hard that it does not melt at the pleadings of the mother deserves nothing but ridicule.

Sri Sathya Sai

50. Teaching in ancient India

WHO is the genuine *Guru* (preceptor)? He who teaches by precept and example, good conduct, right thinking, loyalty to Truth, mental discipline and sense of duty. Who is the genuine student? He who learns these. These are the qualities that will guarantee happiness here and bliss hereafter. These virtues will effectively countermand the evils that degrade man into a monster.

The educational system that brings both teacher and student together, has two aspects' first, the provision of skills and information so that man can live in health and happiness and the second, the understanding of one's inner urges and their sublimation in order to attain lasting peace, equanimity and bliss. The two aspects are not opposed; they are bound irrevocably together. Both teachers and students have to recognise this truth.

Man is not a machine, contrived by a clever combination of legs and hands, head and heart, mind and matter. In these and over these, there is an immanent yet transcendent entity which is called the *Aathma* (the Overself or divine). The physical eye cannot see It; the other senses too cannot comprehend it; It is beyond the realm of the "Seen." All that is sensed, all that is comprehensible by the five senses, is "the Universe," the *Jagath* (evermoving, everchanging Cosmos). The 'seen' exists on the basis of the 'unseen;' 'the tree' is seen but the root that sustains it and bears it, is invisible. The bungalow is seen; the foundation structure on which it stands is beyond sight. The self and the Cosmos created by the Self are both having the *Aathma* as their sustenance and support. This was the great lesson that was imparted to every generation by the elders in this country since ages.

Valuable contribution of ancient Universities

Three or four centuries ago, before the West secured a foot-hold in India, there were only a few Universities; they had no huge campuses and buildings; the home of the learned scholar was itself the college. He had four or five pupils only. There was no time-table for the classes. It all depended on the compassion of the teacher and the yearning of the pupil. He might instruct him in the silent hours of the night or during the day, under a spreading tree or in the temple corridor. Men and women who came to the temple or who walked through the grove might listen awhile and learn a thing or two.

Besides giving instruction on basic subjects, each University attracted to itself and maintained a number of specialists in one special branch of study. The favourite subject, on which the University at Kaashi paid special attention to was Grammar; the University of Kashmir had specialists in Rhetoric and of Thakshashila (modern Taxila) in Medicine (*Aayur-Vedha*), the knowledge relating to healthy and happy living. The Navadweep University chose to pursue (Logic of truth) more than other subjects of study. Amaraavathi, the capital city, where Bharatha, the brother of Raama ruled long ago, had a University where also the system of Medicine propounded by Charaka and Sushrutha was taught for generations by expert teacher practitioners.

Rise to Divinity was the main aim of pupils

Of course, these Universities were not mere purveyors of learning. They inspired their *alumni* to lead simple spiritual lives, speak soft and sweet, and cultivate compassion, reverence and equanimity. The rise to Divinity was the only aim of the pupil; to elevate him to the level they themselves had reached was the only purpose the teachers had before them. Universities and other educational centres were in those days beyond the hold of the rulers. They honoured and

loved the ideals and aspirations of lovers of knowledge and persons who had dedicated themselves to the cause.

Among the primary and secondary schools, the colleges and centres of higher learning, most attention was paid by society and its leaders to primary education. Their endeavour was to plant pure, ennobling and strengthening thoughts and beliefs in the tender minds of children. The educationists of those days paid attention to problems, like who are the most equipped and the most efficient to teach; which are the subjects which must be taught and when and where are they to be taught and to whom. They tried to adjust the curricula and the syllabi in accordance with the needs, aspirations and attainments of the learners. For, there was no room then in the learning teaching process for compulsion or force.

Bhaarath welcomes and respects all faiths

Since the classes had only six, seven or ten pupils, the teacher could discover whether the pupil had assimilated the subject and clarify immediately any doubt that disturbed his understanding. The teachers had an overwhelming sense of duty; the pupil had an equally overwhelming yearning to learn. So, instruction on topics useful for happy living and for discovering the spring of wisdom, power and bliss, that lay in one's inner core, were both available to the pupil.

Most of the learning was by listening to the preceptor. Not only in the seats of higher learning, but even the smith, the artisan, the artist, the carpenter, the farmer, the potter, the writer, the musician, the sculptor---all learnt from the elders by the silent process of lovingly listening and reverentially watching; not through the process of poring over books.

Those days can be revived, if only you love and revere the heritage which is yours. Bhaarath is a garden of multicoloured flowers---the flowers of the spirit known as *Sanaathana Dharma* (Eternal Universal Religion), Bhuddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam. The truths they practise, the hymns they sing, the prayers they voice forth, are filling the atmosphere here with Divine fragrance. Bhaarath has, throughout the ages, welcomed and respected all faiths, with equal ardour.

In spite of this, the wrong impression that people here worship hundreds of gods in place of the One, is spread by ignorant persons. God is One; people call on Him in several languages---this discovery was made in India millennia ago. This was the first country in the world to proclaim it. Of course, the various qualities of this one God---His compassion, His wisdom, His inexhaustible riches, His inscrutability, His might---have been given names and forms, but each worshipper of these is aware that they are only phases of the One Indivisible Eternal Absolute. Each trade, each profession, has a guardian deity, a facet of the Guardian of the Cosmos.

Teachers were after spiritual treasures

People here are aware of God in everything---the truck driver folds his palms before the steering wheel and utters a prayer, the potter bows his head before the wheel, the poet worships the pen, the musician invokes the deity in the harmonium before he starts playing on it. No one enters upon a task without prayer and making a sign of submission. This means that the spiritual attitude precedes the secular attitude of self-praise.

The inner meaning of the Indian attitude is beyond the experience of people of other cultures. They ridicule Indians adoring trees and stones, birds and beasts, mountains and rivers, believing them to be gods. But, the Hindhu adores the God whom he believes is manifest in the stone and

not the stone itself as wholly and fully God. *Ishaavaasyam Idham Sarvam*, the *Upanishaths* declare to man. "All this is God"---even the bird, the beast, the snake, the eagle, the peepul trees, the *thulsi* (basic) plant. The Omnipresence of God implies the Oneness of God.

The ancient Universities emphasised this Immanence and Transcendence of God. Teachers did not calculate and clamour for wages. Their needs were fulfilled by society. They never worried about material comfort or discomfort. They were after spiritual treasures. Pupils too insisted that they should be shown the way to liberation from the shackles of material desires. Teachers were more affectionate towards their pupils than to their own children. They were renunciants, willing and eager to undergo trials and tribulations, ever contented, happy and joyful.

He who is content is the richest

The pupils too were not learning with cushy jobs in view. They sought each subject of study as a step towards self-realisation. They valued the instruction, for it purified the mind and clarified the intellect and sanctified the vision. They had before them the ideal of becoming useful for their parents, the society which fostered them, the country which hoped for the best out of them and mankind to which they belong. He who is the slave of desires is the poorest; he who is content, is the richest.

So cultivate the traits that students of past ages sought to cultivate. Become useful to your parents. Do not belittle them as illiterate or ignorant. They are far more knowledgeable than you. Do not cause tears to fill their eyes. Love them, revere them, serve them. Be humble and .loving, wherever you are, in whatever company. Remember the Names of the Lord, indicating His Glory, His Mercy, His Love. Then, all egoistic feelings will flee from you.

Life is a game of football. You are the ball, and you are bound to be thrown and kicked about, this side and that. How long have you to bear this treatment? Until the air is full in the ball; deflate it, no one will kick it again. The air that inflates it is the Ego! When the Ego is out, Bliss comes in. When you are students, study without participating in other adventures like politics. They will only increase tension and anxiety and harm your studies. Let discipline, devotion and duty be subjects in your compulsory curriculum. Master these and you will win glory.

Sri Sathya Sai College, Brindhaavan, 10- 7-1980

Man has to become Divine, the Divine from which he has come. So, he has to lessen his attachment to the world, not by' cutting himself off, but, by being in it as an instrument in His hands; by subduing all tendencies towards egoism that raise their heads in him; by single-minded attention to the dictates of God called Dharma (Righteousness).

Edison the scientist concentrated so much on the solution of the problems that worried him that he left untouched/or days together the food and drink that was pushed in through the doors of his laboratory. You must have the same concentration and shraddha (steady dedication) while engaged in saadhana (spiritual discipline).

Sri Sathya Sai

51. The three sorrows

MAN has to encounter sorrow from three sources while here on earth. The scriptures mention these and warn men against them. They refer to them as *Aadhyaathmic* (individual personal), *Aadhibhowthic* (external elements) and *Aadhidhaivic* (super natural). Here *Aathma* means the corporeal self and so, the first group of sorrows afflicts man through physical and mental illnesses. The second is derived from *bhuutha*, which means 'that which is created' and that group of sorrows is derived from living beings like snakes, wild animals, worms, insects, etc. The third word is *Aadhidhaivic*, where *dhaiva* means a deity presiding over a force or phenomenon in Nature. So the third group of sorrows trouble man through calamities like floods, drought and storm.

Aadhyaathmic sorrow is caused by the human body, the home of countless microbes, and other parasitic beings. No one can be free from these disease-inducing causes. But, one can easily overcome this sorrow by developing feelings of compassion towards all beings and thoughts which thrive on Love and spread love. Illness, both physical and mental, is a reaction on the body caused by poisons in the mind. An uncontaminated mind alone can ensure continuous health. Vice breeds disease. Bad thoughts and habits, bad company and bad food are fertile grounds where disease thrives. *Aarogya* (good health) and *Aanandha* (bliss) go hand in hand.

Virtue alone will bring the Grace of God

A sense of elation and exultation keeps the body free from ill-health. Evil habits in which men indulge are the chief cause of disease, physical as well as mental. Greed affects the mind; disappointment makes man depressed. Man can justify his existence as man only by the cultivation of virtues. Then, he becomes a worthy candidate for Godhood. It is progress in virtue that announces the progress of man towards Divinity. Virtue also confers freshness, skill, and long years of youthfulness. The years you spend in College are the crucial ones when you have to start cultivating the virtues which are divine. That is the reason why I am emphasising before you the relationship between virtue, health and happiness.

Once you slide into evil, there is no escape; you will be caught in the wheel of despair. Virtue alone will bring to you the Grace of God. Remember that nothing is so precious as Divine Grace. Thyaagaraaja dismissed the gifts of heaps of precious gems because he valued the Presence of God as more than all the wealth of the world. A healthy heart is the temple of God. Its health is proportionate to the purity of the food taken and the purity of one's thoughts, words and deeds. Moderate food and moderate speech are the twin boons one should win by one's own exertion.

Aadhibhowthic sorrow is caused by lower living beings, like flies, ants, mosquitoes, bugs, etc. It may be difficult to get rid of these, but one can practise mental restraint through *yoga* (divine communion). *Yoga* is explained as the prevention of the agitations of the mind. When the mind is withdrawn from contacting the outer world through the sense-media, no anxiety or agitation can affect the persons. The mind has to be withdrawn from both praise and blame, for they make you either proud or angry. Pride is deplorable and anger is disastrous. Be always the same and watch with a balanced mind the ups and downs of life.

Samaadhi is a characteristic of the mind

Think of the transience of life and the triviality of wealth, power and fame. The body is a compound of elements; they have to fall apart. I am now directing that you be taught some

Aasanas in *Yoga*. They will help you to maintain health of body and mind. You can acquire equanimity thereby, and earn genuine *Aanandha*.

Aadhidhaivic sorrow is the result of natural calamities. In order not to be affected by these, one must practise *Samaadhi*. *Dhee* means 'the intellect.' *Sama* means 'equal.' Attaining *Samaadhi* does not involve falling flat, shaking the limbs or losing consciousness. It is not a dramatic trance. It is a *characteristic* of the mind, an outlook one has developed, to observe all events and persons without any attachment or aversion. This stage of the consciousness of man is also called *Nirvikalpa*, that is to say, devoid of *vikalpa* (reaction, response). The person who has mastered *vikalpa* is free from wish, want and desire. So, he has consciously trained his mind not to respond to attraction and or react to repulsion. When the mind reacts, favourably or otherwise, to external or internal urges, it undergoes slight *vikaaraas* (distortions). Therefore, it cannot achieve transformation into divinity.

The unseen is the base of the seen

Aathma (divinity) is deep in the core of the consciousness of man. We do not keep gold, jewels and valuables in the verandahs and quadrangles of our homes. We keep only pots and baskets there. We keep the jewels in an iron safe in an inner room, away from public gaze. The body is liable to fall, rot and get burnt. When age increases, we say that he is declining year by year, and nearing his end faster and faster. In the box called the body is treasured the *Aathma*. The sea keeps its valuable pearls deep down, near the bed. It scatters cheap shells on the shore, where people can pick them. So, to perceive the *Aathma*, you have to turn your inquiry inwards.

Siddhaartha was a Prince, who commanded vast wealth. Bhagiratha too was a big Ruler. But they turned their vision into inner levels of consciousness. They gave up wealth, status and luxury and lived in seclusion to devote themselves to the search for Truth. Can you condemn them for this? No. They made their lives more precious by that step.

I do not discourage you from mastering the subjects relating to this world. They help you to understand the world and its ways. But the various faculties of study---Chemistry, Physics, Botany, Mathematics---are only branches, twigs, leaves, flowers and fruits of the tree. You are now engaged in watering the flowers and leaves; instead, you have to water the roots, which you do not see. The unseen is the base of the seen. Every one of these subjects of study is a tributary stream. They finally flow into the sea, the *Aathma Vidhya* (Science of the Self).

Gist of Convocation Address given by *Rishis*

Aathma Vidhya has to be studied by every one of you. Or else you cannot free yourselves from the three sorrows which torment you. *Sathyam Vadha*, *Dharmam Chara* (Speak the truth; observe righteousness); revere the mother, revere the father, revere the teacher, revere the guest--that was the gist of the *convocation* address given by the *rishis* on the conclusion of studies to the pupils in the hermitages. Now Convocations have become occasions for demonstration of indiscipline and irreverence. You have to restrain such tendencies and reform yourselves. Listen to the elders who have your good and the society's good at heart. Make *Shruthi* (sacred text) into *Smrithi* (*body of traditional law*)--that is to say, treasure in your memory the good advice you have listened to and try to practise the same, until it becomes part of your character.

Divine Discourse, College Hostel, 13- 7-1980

Character is the measure of man. Character insists on keeping vice and wickedness at a distance. Life not sanctified by character is a house without lamps, a coin that is counterfeit.

Sri Sathya Sai

52. The saadhaka and the scholar

EVERY animate being has to attain fulfilment; that is the destiny, however hard, however long, the journey. When and how are determined by the nature of the cumulative effects of many lives. The effects are shaped not only by the actions but even more by motives that induce them. The present condition of each is the consequence of past actions and motives. Present actions and motives mould the future. Each one builds his own fortune or misfortune.

But, can we assert that others are superfluous, that one need not and should not seek help from another? In order to attain fulfilment in the spiritual field, the help of those who have mastered the path is very necessary. The guidance can be transmitted only from one heart to another heart. It can be done only when intimate kinship is established between the seeker and the saint. Texts and commentaries, guide books and maps only breed doubts, discords, and discussions. Reasons can develop only skill and cleverness. Experience achieved through intuition alone is valid in the realm of the spirit. For intuition to be illumination, the layers of egoism and its evils have to be penetrated and destroyed.

A *Guru* will be of great help in this adventure. The power has to flow from the reservoir to the receptacle. He who has reached the goal can alone guide the pilgrim to it. Without him, the aspirant can only wander in the wilds. Some *Gurus* initiate the pupil into a *manthra* (mystic formula) and advise repetition of the same. But, they do not emphasise the innate Divine Reality of the pupil which they cannot ignore even for a moment, nor do they insist on the 'moral regeneration, so necessary for clarifying his inner faculties.

God is in the least as well as in the vast

The *manthra-granting Guru* is the *Dheeksha Guru* (initiating preceptor); the personality-recasting *guru* is the *Siksha Guru* (guiding preceptor). It is this latter *guru* that is reverentially praised in thousands of ways in the holy texts. He removes the faults in vision and destroys the darkness of ignorance. He reveals the *Aathma* to the individual and makes him free.

The *Guru Poornima* is dedicated to such *gurus*. *Poornima* (the Full Moon day) celebrates the fulfilment that is the goal of all life. We have the *Vedhic* axiom that "this is full, that is full; when fullness is taken from fullness, the remainder is fullness." This refers to the fullness of quality (*guna*) and not of quantity. A block of candy is as sweet as a tiny piece taken from it; a drop of sea water has the same taste as the entire sea. God is present in this fullness in the atom as well as in the Cosmos. He is *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being, Awareness Bliss) in the least as well as in the vast. Both are full of God. He cannot be partly in one and wholly in another. He is indivisible.

This day is dedicated for thanksgiving to the *guru*, for, the Moon (the presiding deity of the mind) today is full, clear, cool and bright! He has no blemish or dullness which diminishes His Glow. The *guru* too is pictured and praised today as unblemished, bright and affectionate. He is full of devotion and the sense of surrender to God. He is tolerant and truly peaceful. He is the living example and embodiment of the virtues he desires us to develop.

God within is the *Guru of Gurus*

The study of texts might remove some wrong notions and induce some right resolutions. But it cannot confer the Vision of Reality. Meditation is key to the *Aathmic* treasure that is the real

wealth of the individual. Meditation can progress and gain victory only when one wins the affection of great souls and obey their instructions.

In fact, God, the God within, is the *Guru* of *Gurus*. His Grace can make the blind see, the lame walk and the dumb speak. By a mere touch, He can demolish the sins of the past and erect the basis for peace and joy. God can be adored, worshipped and even-imagined or pictured by man only in human form, so long as the consciousness as man persists, so long as man cannot escape from this necessity. How can he travel beyond his limits? He can visualise God only as man, with super-human or supra-human power, wisdom, love, compassion. He can never describe or delineate the formless, the attributeless, the qualityless. It is only by means of form and attribute that one can pray, adore, worship or feel the presence. And the form has to be human. Little minds with no faith may argue that God cannot come as Man but in fact God can be recognised only as Man by human. This explains the statement, "*Dhaivam maanusha ruupena*"---"God through human form," found in the scriptures.

The sum total of spiritual experience is "Knowing oneself." This does not mean the knowledge of one's capabilities and skills, wants and wishes, strength and weakness. It means the knowledge of who one is, what one really is. Shankaraacharya has summarised this knowledge in three lines---*Brahma Sathyam* (God is Truth), *Jagath mithya* (Creation is an illusion), *Jeevah Brahmaiva naa para* (the *Jeeva*---the individual---is Brahma only, is God only, not else). Every 'become' has its source in 'being.' Being is God. God and the Individual are the undifferentiated One. So human-ness is holy; it is neither mean or low. It has the status of God, though clouded and contaminated.

Vyaasa helped mankind to earn peace

For this faith to strike deep roots in our minds and to keep us fixed in that belief, a *guru* is needed. Vyaasa is the first *Guru* who demarcated the path and the goal. So he is associated with the *Poornima* day. Vyaasa means the person who has elaborated and expanded knowledge of truth, that is to say, the universal eternal energy. Vyaasa composed the Mahaabhaaratha, the 18 *Puraanas* and the Bhaagavatha and helped mankind to earn peace and happiness, and to learn ways of fruitful adoration of God. Vyaasa has also narrated stories of the human incarnations of Godhead. The three *Gunas*---*sathwa*, *rajas* and *thamas* (purity, passionately active and ignorant)--have differentiated all beings into divine, human and demonic persons. Men are intelligent, curious and full of wonder, full of awe and the attitude of reverence. They are the only beings who have the longing to know themselves and to succeed in that effort.

There is a legend about the Truth. The Gods approached *Ishvara* and pleaded with Him to keep the knowledge of Truth away from men and demons, for it would make them irresistible. So, it was hidden in the unreachable heights of the *Aakaasha* (the sky). The demons lost interest in this kind of knowledge but men suffered agony in its absence. So, *Ishvara* hid it in the Ocean and finally, when human yearning became overwhelming, *Ishvara* planted it in the heart of every human being. But even there, it was not easily available for man. He had to penetrate through the evils of the five elements that comprise the gross body, the sheaths of the subtle body and the causal body, to have a vision of the indwelling *Aathma*.

The scholar is polluted by ego

To have the vision of God, one should become the master, for he alone can have access to the treasure-chest, the master of the senses and all other faculties. He should not be the servant of the

senses and of the whims and fancies of the emotions and passions. The servant has access only to the cheap and perishable junk of the house-hold. The treasure-chest cannot be viewed by eyes blinded or befogged by egoism, greed and envy.

Guru Poornima is the day when you decide to become masters of your senses and intellect, emotions and passions, thoughts and feelings, by *saadhana* (spiritual discipline). Even during *dhyaana* (meditation), the ego will obstruct you. Niveditha asked for advice from Vivekaanandha to gain one-pointedness during *dhyaana*. Vivekaanandha said, "Do not allow Margaret Noble to come between you and God," Margaret Noble was herself. "*Niveditha*" means "Offering." So Vivekaanandha explained, "offer yourself fully to God." This total dedication cannot emerge from scholarship. The scholar is polluted by ego; he delights in putting pros and cons against each other; he raises doubts and disturbs faith. They mix the secular and the worldly with the spiritual and the other-worldly. They worship God in order to extract worldly gain. But prayers to God have to be for spiritual progress.

Therefore, engage yourselves in *saadhana*, without delay or dilatoriness. Cultivate virtues; be free from evil habits, thoughts, words and deeds. Grow in love and greet Nature with love. This is the way to *Aanandha*. This is the message for *Guru Poornima*.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 27-7-1980.

A man is made or marred by the company he keeps. A bad fellow who falls into good company is able to shed his evil quickly and shine forth in virtue. A good man falling into evil company is overcome by the subtle influence and he slides down into evil. The lesser is overpowered by the greater.

Sri Sathya Sai

53. The doctor's profession

HEALTH and happiness go together. Happiness is a vain dream if health is absent. The *Shruthis* (holy scriptures) declare that health is very basic quality for man, since without it he cannot realise any of the four goals of life, right doing, right desiring, right earning and final release. A sound mind needs a sound body; the one reacts on the other. The world is supposed to be only the projection of the mind, when the mind is inoperative during deep sleep, the world too is inoperative and non-existent. The mind too has to be healthy. It should not be clogged by greed, envy, hate or pride. It should not be polluted and poisoned by antisocial inhuman plans and projects. It should be calm and clear, so that thought can see into its depths and get rid of the evil feelings and tendencies it evokes.

Virtue is the panacea for both body and mind. The virtuous person can be both healthy and happy. How is virtue to be cultivated? How can it express itself in daily practice? Through service to living beings, through *seva* (voluntary selfless service). Virtue must flow through the triple channel of love, mercy and detachment, in order to feed the roots of *seva*. In order to urge humans into the path of mutual sympathy, continuous compassion and concrete service, they have been endowed with the instinct of gregariousness. Man is a social animal. Humans find solitary living, unnatural and miserable. The *Ashraamas* (monasteries) of ancient times were academics where mutual cooperation and loving service were encouraged. The pupils worked as a group, tended cattle, served the household of the *Guru* and helped one another in all respects.

God works through a doctor full of love

Doctors are, really speaking, the most important class of *sevaks*, under present conditions. Theirs is indeed a noble calling. When *seva* is rendered with love, intelligence and earnestness, it leads persons nearer and nearer to Divinity, for it draws unto itself the Grace of God. This is the reason why the scriptures elevate the *vaidhya* (doctor) to the status of God. "*Vaidhyo Naaraayano Harih*"---"*The doctor is Naaraayana (God), He is Hari.*" He is *Hari*, the remover or destroyer, since he destroys hurdle on the path of man **to** *saadhana* (spiritual discipline). If the doctor is full of love and compassion, God works through him. The doctor is no longer he but it is *Naaraayana* who manipulates his fingers and dispenses through him.

Doctors, therefore, have to endeavour to become the receptacles of Divine Power during their healing process. How can they heal, when they are themselves ill, either in body or mind? When their minds are innocent and contented, a smile will spontaneously shine in their faces and their words will be soft, sweet and tender---softer than any pharmaceutical balm. The manner and mien of the physician are more effective in drawing out the latent sources of strength in the patient, than the most powerful drug. A prayerful atmosphere of humility and veneration will go a long way to help the cure. We may say that the behaviour, the voice, the mien of the doctor count for fifty per cent of the cure, the drugs and their efficacy manage the other half.

Doctors have to practise with devotion

Note that the science of medicine, practised by doctors in India is known by the sacred name of *Ayurvedha*---*the science of healthy longevity* Its source too is as divine as the source of the *Vedhas*! It has to be studied with as much awe and veneration as the *Vedhas* are learnt, at the feet of the *guru*. It has to be practised with as much devotion and dedication as *Vedhic* ceremonies

and recitations are fulfilled. The *Vedha* or knowledge that confers *Aayu* (longevity) is *Aayur-Vedha*. It can prolong life, preserve and protect life from hazards.

The Ayurvedha deals not only with the curing of illness but it also deals with the prevention of disease. Absence of mental ease and equanimity leads to what we correctly call disease. One sacred duty of the doctor is to advise persons on how to preserve health and prevent disease. He has to be vigilant in society to discover and suppress every tendency in *Aahaar* and *Vihaar* (food habits and recreational activities) by which diseases are developed. The dress worn by humans, the houses where they live and the areas where they are situated, have to be tidy and clean. The food that is taken has to supply all elements needed to keep the body strong enough to resist illness. Even if it falls short a little in this respect, health can be maintained if it is unpolluted, pure and holy. The atmosphere breathed in, the water taken in, the ground lived on, the animals and plants that surround--all have maleficent microbes that may cause illness, if the mind and body are not equipped with powerful resistance armour. Exercise, bathing, washing, cleaning, etc., are prescribed for this purpose. The body is the boat on which we voyage across the ocean of *samsaar* (worldly life) and it has to be kept trim and sea-worthy. The voyager too has to be strong, confident and courageous.

The current belief is that medicine is to be valued for its validity during illness. Its use ends with the cure. But this point of view has to change. Medicine is used to see that one does not fall ill, not so much as to raise him up when he falls, just as the purpose of truth is to so live that one is not subjected to birth again.

From Divine Discourse- Sept. 1980

Just as you prescribe minimum qualifications for every profession, the minimum qualification for Grace is surrender of egoism, control over senses and regulated aahaara and vihaara (food and recreation).

Sri Sathya Sai

54. The worthwhile life

WHEN clouds gather in the sky, lightning illuminates the clouds. Similarly, wisdom must illuminate education. This word of Sai is the path of Truth. Smaller than the smallest atom, bigger than the biggest thing, witness of everything, the *Aathma* (true Self) is *Brahman* (Supreme Self) and *Brahman* is *Aathma*.

Students! From sunrise to sunset your day lasts and it is rounded off with sleep. Thus the life of man on earth goes on and on. When sunrises in the East, we say the day dawns, and when the sunsets in the West, we say that night has set in. According to man is not the rise and setting of the Sun a baseless belief? Men point out four directions as East, West, North and South determining each other's position according to these imagined concepts. But do they, in fact, exist. When we recognise that the earth is spherical, such divisions are untrue.

Thus the daily experience of man differs from truth, but man depends on that experience. For example when we sit in a boat, car, train or plane and they move, we also move with them; but we think we are stationary. Thus it is a natural experience of man that while the earth moves round itself and round the Sun, we find it at rest. Though the earth is in fast motion we think it is stationary, and though we are stationary on earth, we are ever in motion. Even the greatest scientist acts according to this apparent experience and not according to the Truth. Though there is no sunrise and sunset, he believes them to be and though there cannot be any East, West, North, South he accepts them to be. The scientific standards are observations and experiments.

Real value of interest is to practise *thyaaga*

When the first spaceman Gagarin declared that he had not seen God anywhere in outer space, he depended upon a mechanical device to come to this conclusion. He never carried on any investigation in the mind. To arrive at the truth, one must go behind what we see, for what we see with the eyes is not true knowledge. True knowledge consists in cognising that, for all that you see, there is always a hidden cause. It cannot be known by *studying yantra* (machine) alone, but by studying the mind and taking to *mantra* (mental enquiry).

Bamboo is valued for its form and strength and beauty. Similarly the real worth of man lies in his intelligence. His intelligence has come to him over many lives and the real value of his *buddhi* (intellect) is to practise *thyaaga* (renunciation). But our *buddhi* is covered by illusion, which is only unreal reflection of the truth. When we throw away the water in the pot, we throw away the reflection of the sky in it as well. The reflection of truth in our minds is only the conglomeration of our desires.

Wisdom declines due to duality

We talk of *moksha* (liberation). What is it? It is only giving up the *Anaathma* (the unreal). Suppose you want a tumbler of fruit-juice. Unless you throw away the water already in the tumbler you cannot pour the juice in the tumbler. Similarly unless you give up materialism, *aathmabhaava* (spiritual attitude) cannot come to you. *Moksha* is not a distinct and different *saadhana* (spiritual discipline). It is only giving up unnecessary desires. Through anger wisdom is lost; disharmony is the cause of anger; of disharmony, jealousy and of jealousy, ignorance is the cause.

The *Upanishaths* say the whole *Vishwa* (Universe) is the form of Vishnu. So real *jnaana* (spiritual wisdom) is *Adhwaita dharshan* (seeing the One in diversity). Due to duality or difference, wisdom declines.

There are three types of knowledge. Knowledge of material energy, knowledge of mental energy and knowledge of cosmic energy. Cosmic energy works in every person, in the form of divine knowledge. Matter in all forms is only energy. Without atoms you cannot have any matter, and in the atom, energy has the form of electron, proton, neutron, etc. Energy springs from the structure of the atomic constituents. For example if you take water from the ocean in a vessel, it assumes its shape and when the breeze blows there are ripples on it, which manifests energy proportionate to the quantity of water in the vessel. But when the whirlwind rages over the ocean the big waves can sink ships and pulverise cliffs. Scientists only work on the external source of energy, they don't investigate the internal sources. You go millions of miles into space, but you don't go half-an-inch within, where lies your strength, the *Aathma shakthi* (Supreme power of the Self).

People think they live on food. Then how is it that while the wealthy who can afford all kinds of food succumb to untimely death, the poor still live? Man does not live by food alone, In fact he lives by the power of the *Aathma*. So you must use your strength of body and mind, wealth and education with intelligence, in order to realize the power of the soul. Without discrimination, what is the use of physical strength?

Peace comes only from God

Dhritharaashtra had a hundred sons and hundreds of thousands of soldiers on whom he could depend. But what happened to him? To presume that either from wealth or from kith and kin you can derive mental peace is a great error. Such peace comes only from God. In fact, there is no strength superior to Love; where Love is, there everything is. So you must live in God, and live in love; then everything shall be right. You must make others also live in love.

Alfred Nobel worked on and discovered dynamite, which caused great destruction. Alfred was very unhappy at this. He had a lot of money and fame, but he felt so miserable for the destruction he brought to humanity that he made a will and donated all his wealth for the good of humanity.

This college has been established to give you ethical, moral and spiritual strength. Just think how much your parents are sacrificing to give you proper education. So don't waste time; if you waste time you will be wasting your life. Make your body and mind pure. This place is like a workshop where broken down cars are repaired and made whole. Don't entertain bad thoughts and do bad deeds.

Life is holy, sacred. Go through it with joy and happiness. Do not carry gloomy, unhappy faces. Happiness is union with God. This period of your life is sacred. If you cannot derive happiness and live in bliss at this age, can you be blissful when you grow old? Now, you have only two legs to carry. You can jump about freely. But when you marry and rear up a family you will move like a caterpillar with many legs! People must be able to identify the students of Sri Sathya Sai College by looking upon their effulgent and joyous faces. Fill your hearts with love, and do all your work with love.

You do not sing *bhajan* (devotional songs sung in groups) aloud. When a man has fallen into a well and is unable to get out, he does not mutter to himself. He shouts loud to get men to save him. What do you do to drive away birds sitting on a branch, you clap your hands loudly.

Similarly sing the names Govindh, Gopaal, Naaraayan aloud, and clap hands with vigour so that the birds of evil passion, *kaama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed) infesting your mind shall fly away. Make your life worthwhile.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 21-9-1980

Life is a market. In life, giving and taking, bargaining and speculating, is a part of the game.

Sri Sathya Sai

55. Grow in love

TREAT mercifully those who struggle to survive; help them as much as you can: realise your responsibilities: move reverentially with others: win the blessings of Sai and earn good fame among fellow men: examine your daily activities on the touchstone of righteousness: may you become individuals shining in virtue.

Embodiments of Love! The reconstruction of man is indeed the reconstruction of the world. Only when man becomes better can the world be better. Only when the individual becomes good can society be happy. Progress in externals like political, economic, and social spheres, is not enough. The mind of man has to be reformed. This cannot be effected through food only. Materialists who argued that human problems can be solved by ensuring food, clothing and shelter, reached their doom when the atom bomb was exploded. Man can reach fullness only when the three lines of progress, material, intellectual, and spiritual, are all pursued with earnestness.

***Sanaathana Dharma* embraces all faiths**

Sanaathana Dharma (Eternal Universal Religion) enables one to attain this fullness. Really speaking, very few have grasped the uniqueness and the importance of this Religion. Nowadays, many elders and political leaders are afraid to utter even the word "Religion" before the gatherings they address. They shape their lives in accordance with a new order, which has no religious slant whatsoever. In fact, they have not understood what religion really means. They do not attempt to discover the significant role of religion.

Many talk from platforms on Hindhuism and *Sanaathana* faith but very few of them have understood the genuine core. *Sanaathana Dharma* is the very basis of living. It deals with the total personality. It embraces all faiths and has established worldwide influence. *Sanaathana* means Eternal. Only a *Dharma* (code of righteousness) which can win Universal acceptance can be named *Sanaathana*. The religions we know are all derived from a person or prophet who is adored as the ideal. Islam has Muhammad, Christianity has Jesus, Bhuddhism has the Buddha. But *Sanaathana Dharma* is not derived from or through a person. It is the primal essence of all faiths. It is the essence of all the messages the prophets proclaimed. It is welcomed by all mankind, for it welcomes all mankind. It is therefore to be deplored that some Indians boast selfishly, "*Sanaathana Dharma* is our religion."

Newton, discovered after a series of experiments, that the earth had the force of gravitation. But, we cannot conclude that the earth had no such force until Newton's discovery. So too, though the principles of *Sanaathana Dharma* are inherent in human consciousness, and have their impact all over the world, the people of Bhaarath have long practised and experienced them and discovered their value and validity. They have earned invaluable Bliss therefrom. Just as atomic science developed in one country and later spread to other countries, the *Sanaathana* faith, developed in India and spread to other countries. Even a material process like atomic science cannot be held down in one place; in the same manner, this spiritual science too has spread all over the wide world.

The Divine is manifest in every human being

Sanathana Dharma is bound to overcome today's rampant materialism, for it can harmonise the secular and the spiritual, into a single way of life. It can bring together into closer kinship both

man and God. It is based on the Divine which is the reality of the Self. So, it is not limited to one country, one individual, one period of time, or one sect. It has a variety of procedures, points of view, disciplines and guidelines, in accordance with the special features of the region, the age, and the environment. It is co-eval with man on earth. This faith, though first explicit in Bhaarath, between the Himaalayan range and the three seas, has become a world faith, through its innate strength.

The Divine is manifest in every human being. The religions professed may be different, the manifestations may differ; but the Self which *Sanaathana Dharma* posits is the same in all. "The thousand-headed, thousand eyed, thousand-footed person, posited therein is the Divine Self, approachable through many paths, expressed in many forms.

The units of the Sai Organisation have to exemplify and promote this Unity in Diversity taught by *Sanaathana Dharma*. The very purpose with which the Organisation was formed is to stress on this Unity. The essence of all religions, the goal of all paths, the destination of all spiritual effort, is this *Sanaathana' Dharma* (the Universal Eternal Faith). It is like the ocean: particular creeds are rivers that flow into it. It is the vital air on which humanity has to live.

Emphasis on the *Aathma* is a must

In our Organisation, there must be a constant attempt to cultivate love which transcends caste, creed, race and class distinctions. This sense of equality is its special feature. It is not enough if the units undertake material, moral, and spiritual teaching. Emphasis on the *Aathma* (Divine Self) and the awareness of the Oneness of the *Aathma* is a must.

This day, we are holding the Third World Conference of the Units of the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. There is no special teaching to be offered to the office-bearers of these Units during this session. The life of Sai, the Message of Sai, the ideals Sai holds forth, the lesson that Sai teaches the world, are all enshrined in one word, love. Many are perhaps hoping for a special message on the occasion of the Inauguration of the Conference. I do not attach any extra importance to a World Conference nor do I feel any other gathering as less. These Conferences are held to satisfy your desire, to express your love. The petromax lamp needs pumping, off and on; the pin has to remove its grit sometimes. So, too, gathering together like this, you can exchange thoughts and make a few additions, or changes, improvements or amendments, in your attitudes and thought-styles.

Do not allow ego to pollute your actions

You are trying through various means to live the ideals of Sai and to spread the love that Sai evokes in you. How far have these efforts succeeded? How have they helped this identification of the humanness of man? Along with the process of listening to the exposition of the ideals and of the message, they have to be practised in daily life. Only then can you declare that you have grasped the meaning and purpose of this conference.

Every one must become the embodiment of love. Love can be expressed only as love, through love. Lovelessness is at the root of the anarchy that stalks the world today. Unchecked self-interest, misdirected activity, the wild antics of the ego, pompous living and envious intolerance have caused this monstrous situation. Realising this, you have to be vigilant. Do not allow even a trace of ego, pomp, or cruelty to pollute your actions. Peace and prosperity can dawn on the world only when you move in society with love, that is free from the taint of selfishness.

The question may be raised whether our Organisations are free from this taint? They are not without it, for you are but humans. But, you should endeavour ceaselessly to get rid of it and its attendant evils. When these bad traits are evident in others, you feel disgusted; how then can you tolerate them when they fasten themselves on you? During the discussions you hold, consider how best you can keep afar from selfishness, pomp and cruelty, how best you can appreciate and emulate the equanimity and the love manifested by your fellowmen. Get rid of the desire to show off, and to gather praise. These are considered to be but evidence of childishness. But, those who have the *Aathma* as the basis should never slide into this weakness.

Religions arise from the minds of men

Bear burdens bravely, declaring, "I am a man." Try to raise yourselves into the Divine. Or, at least, try to live up to the standard expected of the human. The thought in the mind, the word on the tongue and the deed by the hand---try to make all three, one. Many people hope to lead good lives by doing good deeds. But I do not believe this is possible. You can never become good, by means of good deeds. You have to be good, in order that your deeds and words can be good. First, endeavour to be a good person. Thereafter, it becomes possible for you to do good. Be good; do good. It is not possible to predict when and where or for what reason a person's life blossoms or expands. You may pray underneath a tree which yields bitter fruit, it can't give you a sweet fruit. But, when a branch of the sweet fruit tree is grafted on that tree, it can yield sweet fruits, though originally it could not. This process of grafting is equivalent to *Sathsang* (good company) in human affairs---getting involved with the good and godly. So do service to your fellow-men with pure intentions and always seek good company. Then, you can transform yourselves.

The evil traits that have grown through many lives and generations cannot be wiped away in an instant. So, mix in godly groups, cultivate good habits and attitudes, and involve yourselves in good activities.

In this gathering, people from many countries, speaking many languages, belonging to many races, are present. They are all single-mindedly united in love for Sai and in love from Sai, in spite of differences in nationality, race, creed, colour and dress. This is my real task. This is the consummation of the yearnings of the ancient seers and sages of this land. Develop this Oneness, this Unity in love, hold it ever before you as the ideal. Religions arise from the minds of men; they are not external to man. When minds are polluted, religion too suffers pollution. Those who deny religion can be denoted as having distorted or polluted minds. Of course, religion is not related to practices and prohibitions like "Don't touch me! Don't touch this."

Make the world a happy Home of Love

Every religion teaches only good principles and disciplines. When the mind of man is steadfast in the good, how can religion be bad? Therefore, acquire the love that draws all into the One. By this means, you can put down the fears and anxieties, the greed and envy, the hatred and haughtiness that are today infecting the peoples of the world and establish an era of peace and joy. Let all the worlds be happy---this is the prayer that comes naturally from every human heart. This is the goal to which *Sanaathana Dharma* (Eternal Universal Religion) leads. Every one must sing of this goal, live in the melody of that song, and merge, through that melody, in the *Paramaathma* (Supreme Divine Self).

Embodiments of love! Do not seek to find differences between one person and another. Seek rather ways and means to strengthen the bonds of kinship, through love. Factions and fighting emerge among the followers of the same family because they have not learnt to love. From the self-same mind, many conflicting feelings emerge, Why? Love has not been nursed and grown therein.

You have to sow love and grow love and destroy the weeds of fear and hatred that have spread over the world. Make the world a happy Home of Love.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 19-11-1980

The search for truth must become your daily spiritual discipline; every moment must be used for this primary duty. Truth can reflect itself in your intelligence only when it is cleaned by thapas.

Thapas means all acts undertaken with higher motives; all acts indicating yearning for the spirit; repenting for past blunders; staunch determination to adhere to virtue, self-control; unyielding adherence to equanimity in the face of success or failure.

Thaapam means heat, burning, intensity, earnestness of endeavour. It is thapas (penance or religious austerity) that fosters renunciation and discipline.

Sri Sathya Sai

56. The message of brotherhood

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine! The Cosmos is permeated by God. What we call the *jagath* is the world in which we are born, grow and return to the place from where we came. The earth is the base for our world. On this earth ceaselessly, inside and outside, night and day, everywhere, we have the air blowing, but it is not visible to the eye. Man spends his time in various activities; eating and resting. When we look up, we see the boundless sky. During the day we see the Sun shining gloriously. At night, there is darkness. Wherever we turn, we see mountains, rivers, trees, houses and mansions. All these beautiful things are visible to the eye.

In the story of man, the first activity which he developed was agriculture. Every living thing feels hunger and searches for food. The first cry of a child is for milk and the moment it gets fed, it goes to sleep. Food is thus the first essential thing for every living thing. This food comes primarily from land. This is the reason why from the earliest times the people of Bhaarath worshipped the earth as the giver of food, as a *Bhuumaatha* (Mother Earth). It is by cultivating land that man has sustained himself all these centuries.

Along with this, other activities developed. As the population grew, villages grew into towns. With the growth of civilised communities, arguments arose between men as to the cause of their happiness and sorrow and how man could get over them. In these enquiries some enlightened persons, examining their own experiences, discovered some essential truths. Some others, who were wiser, realised that there were things beyond what has been known.

Conclusion of great enquiring minds

The questions that were asked were: "What is it that we should really learn?" "What are the things which are beyond our powers?" "It is clear that we cannot create the earth. We cannot create water. We cannot survive even for ten minutes if we do not have air to breathe. That is not all. In real life we find that we are unable to understand the secret of birth and death. Many who tried to discover the nature of death, to find out what happens after death and what is the mystery behind death could find no answer. Hence, those who were endowed with deep enquiring minds came to the conclusion that there is a power which underlies all living things and that power is derived from the Divine. They described that power as God. They concluded that there was divine power, which was beyond man's logic and which pervaded the Universe.

What is this power? How are we to recognise a thing which is not visible to the eye? Are we to believe in it? Some scientists consider that it is impossible to know this thing. But, the ancients regarded the Sun as a demonstrable evidence of the existence of divinity. They felt that without the Sun, the world will cease to exist. Nothing can grow without the Sun. No human activity would be possible. Man will not be able to survive endless darkness. Hence, they felt that this great source of light and energy was proof of the existence of a divine spiritual power.

Later, a controversy arose as to whether this Divine Principle is One or many. They came to the conclusion that God is only One, *Ekam Sath*, and could only be One. The *Vedhas* also declare, "*Ekoham Bahusyaam*" (I am One manifesting as many). Thereby, they proclaimed the unity of the Divine. Although the Divine is only one, it appears as many to different persons.

Pranava is the origin of all knowledge

It is in this spirit of profound enquiry that our sages and seers performed *thapas* (penance). By their penance and austerities, they discovered that the *Pranava* is the origin of all knowledge. If the *Pranava (Om)* did not exist, there would be no sound and no speech. Similarly the numeral "One" is the basis for all numbers. All numbers are obtained by adding more and more ones to the primary number One. Thus it was realised that this "One-ness" is the essential quality of the Divine and the diversity that is seen in the world is only a manifestation of the Divinity. The Divine was regarded as the primary seed of the diversified Universe. The seed requires husk for it to grow. The husk is the cover and inside is the seed. Similarly, for the seed, which is God, the husk is the Universe. Without the seed, the husk cannot exist.

It is in recognition of this fact that the *Maharishis* (great sages) declared; "*Ishaa Vaasyam Idham Sarvam.*" (This entire Universe is permeated by the Divine). Can this vast Universe, which is sustained by Divinity be regarded as different from the Divine? Whatever is associated with the Divine is a reflection of the Divine. When the *Purusha Sooktha* (hymn on the Supreme Divine Person) describes the Divine as having a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and thousand feet, it is proclaiming the Divinity that pervades the Universe in numerous forms. This also means that every object is a part of the Divine and the Cosmos, composed of these myriad forms, was described as the "*Vishwa Viraat*"---the Cosmic Being. The *Vishwa Viraat* is not a figure drawn by a painter like Ravi Varma or a person described by a poet. It is the form of the Cosmic Divine Person.

One must accept the authority of the *Vedhas*

We must look upon this multi-faceted Universe, with its myriad beings as the Cosmic expression of the One Divine Entity. The Divine principle (*Dhaivathwa*) is immanent in the smallest body and in the whole of creation. "*Yathaa Andaande, Thathaa Brahmaande.* (As in the small egg, so in the Cosmic Egg). The *Andaanda* represents the individual and the *Brahmaanda* represents the whole Cosmos. If we are able to understand the truth of the individual, then we shall know the truth about the Universe.

What is the evidence for determining the Divine nature of the Cosmos? Students, puffed up with a little knowledge, ask how any one can believe in the Divine nature of the Universe when it is not demonstrable. Such persons are forgetting their own inherent Divine nature. Does the misguided person base all his knowledge on the objective, physical form of what he calls the "mind"? If it has no physical shape, how does he "see" his mind? One says, "I am happy." What is the physical form of "happiness?" To seek direct physical evidence for everything is a sign of insolence.

Only *Jnaanis* (liberated persons), who have realised the Divine, can demonstrate the nature of the infinite Divinity, and not others. Let me give a small example. One individual asks another, "Who is your father?" You had no eyes to see your father before birth. Nor did you have the intelligence to find out who your father was?" The second man replies, "The proof for my statement is derived from my mother, who told me who my father was." This shows that on a matter so vital as to who his father was, he accepts the statement of his mother and believes it all his life. In the same manner you must accept the authority of the *Vedhas* (sacred scriptures of the Hindhus) regarding your Divine Father.

One cannot discover God without effort

Some time or other at some place or other, in some world or other, the inscrutable Divine incarnates for the purpose of upholding *Dharma* (righteousness). It takes a recognisable form which is related to the occasion, the time, the place and other circumstances determining Its advent. Do the idle gossip-mongers who indulge in atheistic propaganda make any earnest and sincere effort to find out the nature of the Divine? Without such effort how can the sacred character of the Divine be discovered? Special efforts are necessary even for discovering the fire that is in a piece of wood, the butter that is in milk, the oil that is hidden in the seed or the sugar that is in the cane. If one sets out with zealous seriousness and devotion to discover God, one will certainly find Him.

The whole Universe, in fact, is sustained by the Divine. It is not a human creation. Every person must cultivate belief in God and develop devotion. God exists in every person, permeating every cell of his body. But if you cut a person to pieces, you cannot find Him in the different parts. You will only find flesh, bones, blood, etc. Proper methods must be adopted by man to discover the Divinity within him. It is because people do not make efforts in the proper way that we have at present confusion, chaos and discontent everywhere.

Build a genuine sense of brotherhood

Today it is the duty of all those who are connected with the Sathya Sai Organisations to promote spiritual discipline and dedicate their lives to social service for leading a purposeful life. To promote the awareness of Divinity in human beings and build a genuine sense of brotherhood among people, should be their primary aim.

Embodiments of the Divine Spirit! Realise that you are not this body, this mind, this intellect or this intelligence. You are embodiments of the Divine. Concentrate all your efforts to realise that. There is nothing that cannot be achieved by yearning and continuous practice. The ancient *religion---Sanaathana Dharma* (Eternal Universal Religion) has indicated many paths through which the Divine can be realised.

Spiritual practice is essential for realisation of the Divine. Whatever books you may read, you cannot realise the Divine merely by intellectual effort. One must put into practice, what one has learnt from books or other sources. Without spiritual practice and discipline, it is futile to read books or listen to discourses or meet persons, however great.

Observing rules is part of spiritual discipline

Some changes have now been made in the Rules of the Sathya Sai Organisations. You may ask, "What is the need for rules and regulations for those engaged in spiritual quest?" The reason will be clear from a simple example. When you plant a sapling, you protect it in the early stages of its growth, erecting a fence around it so that animals may not harm it. After the plant has grown into a sturdy tree, there is no need for the fence. Similarly, even in the spiritual path, one has to observe some restrictions and restraints so that one's spiritual growth may not be affected by what is happening in the outside world.

In the Sathya Sai Organisations we call our members, 'brothers and sisters of the Sai Family.' Whether a member is from America or Japan or Germany or Russia---he is a brother. If all members are brothers, how can we have different rules for America, Japan or Germany? Some members from Western countries do not seem to favour the rule of the Sathya Sai Organisation,

which lays down that at *bhajans* (Group singing of devotional songs) and at other meetings, men devotees should sit apart from women devotees. The rule should be applicable to all members--- whether they are Indians or non-Indians, in India or elsewhere. It is a part of the spiritual discipline that is necessary for devotees. Even a great warrior like Arjuna confessed to Lord Krishna: "The mind is fickle and is very difficult to control." If even Arjuna found it difficult to control his senses, how much more necessary it is for us to have some regulations to control our own minds?

Try to function in coordination with others

There is a demand that different wings of the Sathya Sai Organisation such as the *Samithi*, the Study Circle and the Seva Dhal should be allowed to function independently. This is not a proper approach. All these different units should function in friendly co-operation with each other. Here are the five fingers of My hand; the Seva Samithi (Service Organization) is one finger; the Mahila Vibhaag (Women's Wing) is another; the Seva Dhal (Service Corps) is the third; the Bala Vikas (Children's Wing) is the fourth and the Bhajan Mandali (congregational Singing Group) is the fifth. If you keep each finger off from the other, what is it that they can handle? If, on the other hand, all the five function together, what is it that cannot be achieved? All our Sathya Sai Organisations should learn to function in coordination with each other. Like the rivers which have joined the ocean, they have become one, under the banner of the International Sai Movement.

In this connection, there seem to be some doubts amongst our members regarding the international aspect of the Sathya Sai Organisation. The role of members of the World Council is not properly understood. Some members in some countries wish to elect their representatives to the World Council. Should the representatives be 'elected' or 'appointed' and who is to appoint such representatives. Such questions are being raised by devotees in some countries. By such questioning there is a danger that politics may enter the Organisation. In the fight for office through elections, among the devotees love will be the victim. Self-love will be misused in the process. If we are to build the Sathya Sai Organisations on the basis of love and confidence, we must have selection and that selection should be made by the Central Council. If elections are allowed, groupism and all kinds of controversies and differences will emerge.

The basis for all service is Love

Embodiments of Love! The whole world knows what sacred ideals inspire the Sathya Sai Organisations. It is true that in a big bag of rice a few grains of sand may get in. Any human Organisation is bound to have a few black sheep. But, that will not affect the organisation, as long as it is true to its principles. The kind of service and sacrifice which the Sathya Sai Organisations are rendering is colossal. The basis for all that is love that prevails among the members. From ancient times, the *Upanishathic* prayer said: "*Sahanaa Vavathu; Sahanau Bhunakthu*" ("May He protect US all; may He nourish US all.") The spirit of oneness proclaimed in these *manthras* (sacred formulae) is operative today only in the Sathya Sai Organisation. That sense of oneness can only be promoted by the practice of love and not by any other means.

Look at what happened during this World Conference. Many wealthy persons, who had been used to a life of ease, many who had not done any arduous labour in their lives, had come here for the conference. Persons, who had been accustomed to living in commodious houses, had to stay here in small over-crowded apartments. They put up with many inconveniences and did not

ask for any facilities. Wherever they were accommodated, they accepted the place out of devotion to Swaami. This kind of accommodative spirit and readiness to bear discomfort and difficulty cannot be found in any other Organisation or in any other gathering. Moreover, there are organisations in which the young and the old render different types of social service. But, only in the Sathya Sai Organisations can you find all the people rendering service in a completely selfless spirit.

"Service to man is Service to God."

Sometime ago, in the East and West Godhaavari Districts and in the Krishna District lakhs of pilgrims gathered for the Pushkara festival. The magnitude of the devoted and dedicated service rendered by the Sathya Sai Organisation, by men and women at those festivals can only be realised by those who saw them there. Again, in anticipation of Swaami's Birthday celebrations, the members of many Sathya Sai Organisations organised hospitality camps for devotees and visitors going to or returning from Prashaanthi Nilayam at places like Dharmavaram, Gunthakal, Kurnool and Baagepalli. Politicians talk about "Service to man is Service to God." But only members of the Sathya Sai Organisation actually live up to this slogan.

The decisions taken at this World Conference should not remain resolutions on paper. They must be put into practice. Everyone of you must live up to the ideals of the Organisation. Some members transgress the Rules of the Organisation. Some others do not live the ideals or carry out the programmes of the Organisation. Some office-bearers do not take an active part in the programmes. Such persons discourage other members. We should not be interested in money, office or position. Our sole aim is to promote love and all activities should be carried on in a spirit of love of each other. There is no greater source of strength, wealth or position than love.

Envy destroys all human qualities

Embodiments of the Divine Spirit: All those who join the Sathya Sai Organisation should bear in mind that they should be free from egoism. They should not lose their heads over such positions as State or District *or Samithi* President. As long as egoism persists, one is not fit to hold any office. It is better to get rid of such office-bearers. You must prepare yourself to be an exemplary *Sevak* (volunteer) and not a Leader. Only a "*Kinkara*" (one who is prepared to do any work) can become "*Shankara* (divine person)." You must therefore try to gradually suppress the sense of ego. The other evil, which you have to get rid of, is envy. There are persons who cannot bear the sight of other persons achieving prominence or advancement. This envy is a ruinous disease. It destroys all human qualities. It converts a man into a demon. You must see that the demon of envy does not enter your minds.

A third evil against which you have to guard yourself is *aadambaram* (ostentation). If somebody offers sweet rice as *prasaadh* (offering) at *bhajan*, another wants to show off by offering *laddus* (a sweet made of chicle pea flour). There is competition in spending money on various functions. The Sathya Sai Units should see that no money is wasted on unnecessary ostentatious arrangements. Misuse of money is evil.

There is another practice which should be discouraged. Even for carrying out very 'small functions money is being collected by some units. Every Unit has some well-to-do persons and if one or two of them can join, many activities can be carried on without raising funds from all and sundry. Take for instance, this great World Conference at Prashaanthi Nilayam. Many who do not know the facts must be wondering how much money must have been spent to finance this

Conference. The truth is that not a single naya paise was collected as donation. This Conference, which is an expression of the Love of the members, has no need for money. Everyone of you here has taken care of his or here own needs and discharged your duties without worrying about difficulties or inconveniences. No money is needed for deriving this kind of happiness.

It is deplorable to hear that in some States, even for trivial activities, funds are being collected. Even if some office-bearers are inclined to adopt this method, I want members not to encourage them.

There is one last thing that I should like to impress on you at this Conference. There are in our country numerous poor, 'helpless and diseased persons who suffer from hunger and thirst. There are to-day lakhs of members of Sathya Sai Organisations and even a larger number of Sathya Sai devotees. Let each member while leaving this conference resolve to feed at least one poor person every day.

When anyone comes to your doorstep asking for food, try to feed him with compassion. You should relieve hunger without anybody knowing about it. If all our Sathya Sai Organisations engage themselves in service to the poor and the needy, without any fanfare or exhibitionism, they will be giving expression to their sense of divine brotherliness and putting into practice Sai's teachings. *Prashaanthi Nilayam, 22-11-1980*

57. Live up to Sai ideals

MAN has in him as the prime cause of both life and activity an entity, designated as the *Aathma* (Divine Self). The *Vedhas* (sacred scriptures of spiritual knowledge and practice) and the *Upanishaths* originated to satisfy the need of man to become aware of this mysterious entity. The *Brahma Suuthra* (aphorism on the Supreme Reality) which sets out to demarcate the lines of this inquiry has, as the very first aphorism, "*Athatho Brahma Jijnaasa.*" These four words---*Atha*, *Atho*, *Brahma* and *Jijnaasa*---deserve careful study, for they contain the very essence of the four *Vedhas* and their teachings, meant to help the *Jijnaasa* (study) of *Brahman*, the *Aathma* (Divine Self) principle in its Universal aspect.

The word *Atha* has many meanings: auspiciousness, afterwards, in the beginning, questioning, Universal, etc. But the meaning afterwards is most appropriate here. After what? "After acquiring the requisite qualifications" is the answer. They are (1) Discrimination between the temporary and the permanent; (2) Detachment: awareness that the objective world is of no lasting worth; (3) Self control: of both the outer senses and the inner urges; (4) Longing for liberation from delusion and the desires that delusion breeds. There are four more requirements. These are (5) Listening to good and virtuous matters (6) Using the senses for the bene-ficent purpose for which they are gifted by God; (7) Reflection: on what is heard, seen, tasted, etc; (8) Practising what is found beneficent. These steps reveal Truth and confer full Bliss.

From 1917, materialism and atheism were promoted in Russia, mainly by Stalin. But, he could not suppress the opposing forces completely. A powerful spiritual personality named Wolfe Messing arose, exhibiting a purified consciousness and an insight marked by Divine characteristics. Stalin planned to put him down and sent him into Hitler's presence. Messing prayed, "Lord! I seek only to spread Your Glory on earth; hence I am not frightened at the tactics of these evil men."

An incident revealed for the first time

On his way to Hitler, he encountered Einstein at Vienna and Freud, a scientist engaged in research on the human mind. Freud was surprised at Messing and his powers; he realised that his own researches were shallow and turned his attention to the search for the highest level of consciousness in man. Stalin was caught between Freud and Messing but he dare not give up the image he had once built up. He continued the easier path of establishing the materialistic and atheistic state and implanting irreligion in the hearts of youth.

The age of this body reaches 55 tomorrow. I have not until today revealed this incident anywhere to any one. It was 1937. This body was then 11 years of age. I was then moving the whole day with groups of boys who gathered around me. I was then at Kamalapur in Cuddappah District. I was one day near the station at Kamalapur with the boys. On seeing me, one person ran up to me, took me in his arms and kissed me, with tears pouring down his cheeks and uttering the words, "I am so happy. I am so happy." He was also madly dancing with joy repeating, "I love you. I love you." My companions who were watching all this wondered, "Who is this white man? He looks like a lunatic. Evidently, he is planning to kidnap him." As we moved off he was standing riveted to the spot, wistfully watching me until I disappeared from view. It was Messing.

Aura can be discerned around human body

Messing came to India in order to identify and realise the *Aathma* principle. He undertook a variety of spiritual exercises with this end in view. As a result, he acquired Divine Vision. He met Gandhi and many holy persons engaged in ascetic practices on the Himaalayas and returned to his country gratified that he had won what he was yearning for.

Only those who know and seek what has to be sought can gain the goal. Only those who know the *Brahman* (Supreme Truth) Principle can recognise It. Messing had the *Aathma* (divine self) ever in his mind and so he was able to announce that he had attained the awareness. He proclaimed that Stalin's state would collapse and just as he prophesied, Khrushchev transformed it soon after. Kiril, the photographer, also helped the transformation. He conducted many experiments in his laboratory on the Black Sea coast in South Russia. He demonstrated that a multicoloured *aura* can be discerned around the human body and can be photographed. Science had not known of its existence; it reached beyond the known limits of physics. It was caught by his camera around humans, plants, insects, and stones. He proved true the *Vedhic* dictum, "All this is enveloped by *Ishwara*" (*Ishaavaasyam idham sarvam*).

Atheists will be transformed into theists

Kiril once saw a 'flying saucer' while travelling by train. He declared that there are worlds beyond the understanding of man. He posited life on far distant spheres. He posited near the Milky Way another galaxy of stars wherein also life can be affirmed. All these developments indicate that while materialism gains popular acceptance, moralism, humanism and deeper faith in spiritualism are also winning the hearts of people. There is no doubt that within a few years, atheists will be transformed into theists.

Nowadays, students and those claiming to be scholars ridicule those who believe in God and draw consolation from God. But, consider, how can education for acquiring physical skills and worldly success equip one with the knowledge of the eternal Reality? Only genuine students can earn that equipment. Only those who are good, who do good and who wish good can be genuine seekers of knowledge. Be like the honey-bee which does not injure the flower from which it draws the nectar; it only helps pollination. And the nectar it gathers is relished as honey by others. Look at the fly; it seeks only unclean matter. And, later, resting on clean matter, it renders that too unclean.

Gather good and offer good

Students of the Sathya Sai Colleges should be like the bee and avoid the behaviour of the fly. Gather good and offer good. In army camps, whether a person is a *dhobi* (washerman), cook or sweeper, every one has to attend parades and learn the handling of weapons. So too, whatever the job the Old Boys of the College might do, belief in God is a must for them. What benefit can they derive from the "Kingdom of Sathya Sai" if they do not acquire spiritual consciousness? They should on no account deviate from duty bound, disciplined living. There are however, some---only some---who slide into wild cultures as soon as they leave the college---growing long hair, side-burns and moustaches. Courage, adventure, sacrifice, detachment, discipline, self-control, the divine urge towards truth and justice---these are qualities that mark men.

When students prepare themselves for the ideal life and present it to the world, the Sathya Sai Colleges and Sathya Sai Himself will be content. Do not cultivate bad desires, do not crave for

worldly pleasures, and reduce yourselves to the animal level. By developing spiritual qualities, you will be promoting the resuscitation of this country and its culture. Look at the warning that the sacred texts offer! Somaka, the Asura, stole the *Vedhas* : Raavana kidnapped Seetha; Dhuryodhana grasped an empire; Kamsa slaughtered children; but not one of them realised their heart's desire; their names are execrated by history. Sentence of death awaits everyone, which cuts off their pride and pomp.

Some young persons feel that the work they have on hand gives them great pleasure but they do not pay heed to its future consequence. When you seek beneficial result, you have to involve yourselves in beneficent activity. Every-conscious act of yours produces results in unseen fields. Hence, you have to be ever alert. Cultivate the habit of holy study, develop humility and reverence, adore and serve your parents and be examples and ideals for others. I bless that this goal may be realised by you.

Poorna Chandra Auditorium, 22-11-1980

In this iron age, when darkness is enveloping the mind of man, any little lamp that can light the steps is most welcome. That is why I advise you to resort to sath-karma, sad-aachaara and sath-pravarthana (good deeds, good conduct and good attitudes and outlook), so that you may be established in the constant presence of the Lord.

You must also strive to "hear" (shravana) elevating words, to ruminare (manana) on these promptings of the spirit and then, when the validity is recognised, to meditate (nididhyaasana) on it, in profound reverence. All other activity is secondary; this alone is edifying, this alone is beneficial.

Sri Sathya Sai

58. The gift I like most

EMBODIMENTS of Love! For the past five days various activities in Prashaanthi Nilayam have kept you busy. But, none of you noticed the passing of time. The reason is, that you become oblivious to time when your minds are concentrated on Timeless Divinity with all your actions and thoughts merged in the Divine. Just as rivers which join the ocean become one with the ocean, your minds when immersed in the Divine become one with the Divine.

The Universe is the manifestation of God. In every human being exists Divinity, subtle and invisible. Association with good people and saadhana (spiritual discipline) are essential for discovering the Divinity that is latent in the individual. The real purpose of human life will be achieved only when all our time and all our efforts are concentrated on realising the Divinity that is inherent in us. This realisation is possible for every human being.

But, today people are engaged in actions contrary to this objective. They are anxious to know all about what is happening in America or England. They wish to study Geography or Astronomy, but few are keen to find out their own true nature and their real essence. This is due to a defective education. In the present educational system, there is no place for ethical, *dharmic*, spiritual studies with the result that the students do not make any attempt to understand the purpose of human life. One seeks to learn all about the physical world. One learns all about America but does not know the route to Benares. One learns all about geometry, but knows little about the dimensions of his own house. One does all kinds of physical exercises but does not know how to sit in *Padhmaana* (Lotus posture). One studies Botany, but does not know the uses of the *Thulasi* (basic) plant.

God is the seed of all living things

This is the deplorable deficiency of the existing system of education. If students wish to realise their true divine nature, they have to turn their minds to spiritual studies. *Aathma vidhya* (Spiritual study) is not a separate branch of knowledge. As has been described in the Bhagavathgeetha, it means seeing the Divine in the entire Universe. The Lord says: "I am the seed of all living things in the *Universe---Beejam Maam Sarva Bhoothaanam.*" The Universe is a tree of which the seed is the Lord and the fruit is humanity (*Maanavathwam*). Without trying to discover the Divinity that is in the human form, people are wasting their lives. If you examine the great scriptures of the world, you will find that they all emphasize the supreme preciousness of being able to discover one's Divine nature, without which one cannot achieve real bliss. Man seeks worldly pleasures and prosperity but does not seek that inner Divinity which will give him permanent happiness.

Uphold the good name of your country

It is deplorable that people born in this *thyaaga-bhuumi* (sacred land of sacrifice) a *yogabhuumi* (land of spiritual practice, *saadhana*) have become slaves of western civilization and are acting contrary to the genius of their own motherland. To ignore one's mother and develop attachment to others is pitiable. For a child it is the mother who is endowed with a blissful face, however much she may be lacking in good features. That is the natural attitude of a child. But, what shall I say about students who for the sake of making a living, go to foreign countries after acquiring some kind of a degree? Instead of using your knowledge, your attainments, your abilities, your energies and your education in the service of your own motherland, if you go to foreign countries and serve them like beggars, is this not utterly deplorable?

In the *Thretha Yuga*, after the destruction of Raavana, Raama, Lakshmana and Seetha were getting ready to leave Lanka for Ayodhya. At that time, Lakshmana spoke to Raama, "If we return to Ayodhya, I doubt, we will get back our kingdom. Kaikeyi might have installed Bharatha on the throne. We left Ayodhya for the forest in response to the command of our father. Ayodhya may not be in a prosperous condition now. You know that Lanka is more prosperous than heaven itself. Would it not be better for you to be the ruler of Lanka and enjoy all that this country can offer?"

Raama replied: "Lakshmana, however ugly one's mother may be, I am not so insensible as to look upon some other beautiful woman and regard her as my mother. My motherland is the land of my birth. However attractive and prosperous Lanka may appear, with all the treasures of the earth, I have no use for its attractions and wealth." We, who are born in the sacred land of Bhaarath, should be prepared to face whatever difficulties and hardships there may be in our country and use all our talents, knowledge and abilities to serve our country to the utmost and thereby uphold the good name of our country.

Greed is the breeding ground of suffering

Our ancients have declared that greed is the breeding ground of suffering. What has happened to those who went to Iraq, Iran or Dubai? Many of them are coming back with barely the clothes with which they left. Wealth is evanescent, like a passing cloud. Money comes and goes. Morality comes and grows. It is unworthy of our people to give up their culture, their way of living, and their principles solely for making a living by selling their services to foreigners. This is totally un-Indian. Is it not possible to lead an honest life by working with your two hands and serving your motherland? Why do you entertain improper desires?

It is insatiable greed which is today responsible for destroying the human quality in man. As long as desire is uncontrolled, you cannot discover the *Aathma*. The *Purusha Sooktha* (hymns on the Supreme Person) has declared that "not by action, not by progeny, not by wealth but only by sacrifice can one realise Immortality (*Na Karmanaa, Na Prajayaa, dhanena; Thyaagenaekena Amruthathwam aanashuh*). Sacrifice, strength and wisdom are qualities of the Divine. Use all your talents for the service of your country first and then do whatever you can for other countries. How can you conquer the outside world without having established your control over your own house? If you cannot derive satisfaction by utilising your education, your abilities or skills and your intelligence for your country, how are you going to achieve it in foreign countries.

Desire is something alien to Sai

Dhivya Swaruupas (embodiments of divine nature) whether you believe it or not, I shall tell you one thing. There is not the slightest trace of self-interest in Me. Whatever I do, whatever paths I pursue, everything is intended for the happiness of all, for the good of all and for the improvement of all. Not a single action of Mine is undertaken for the satisfaction of My own personal desires. Desire is something alien to Me. All My wishes are only to promote the welfare of the World. "*Lokaasamasthaah Sukhino Bhavanthu*" (May all the worlds be happy) is the only objective of Sai.

It is not by plans of one kind or the other that the world can be bettered. It is only when a spiritual revolution takes place in man that the prosperity and welfare of the world can be

achieved. If the mind of man is not reformed and purified, all plans to reform the world will be futile.

As today's youth, are the future citizens of Bhaarath, they have to promote the welfare of the country. Sai's main purpose is to develop the minds and attitudes of these young men on right lines, so that they may work for the progress and welfare of Bhaarath. Students are the only wealth that I cherish. All My hopes are concentrated on them. To reform them and train them to serve as exemplars of righteousness is Sai's sole resolve.

Understand Sai's true nature of Love

It is not easy for people to understand the Universal *Prema Thaththwa* (true nature of Love) of Sai. I shall give a small example. We took the students to Jammu, Kashmir, Delhi and Prayaag. Wherever we went, we looked after the needs of the students and complied with their wishes. I should like to reveal to you how My Love manifests itself so that you may know My true nature. At a time when this great World Conference is being held, I was concerned after the welfare of the students from all the Sathya Sai educational institutions, who had come from Puttaparthi, Ananthapur, Bangalore, Jaipur and Bhopal.

All My thoughts have been concentrated on how to make them happy, how to see that they were comfortable and how to improve their discipline and character. It is not my desire merely to see them in bright uniforms and engage them in activities like drawing water or cleaning the streets. My idea is to develop real discipline and character and at the same time see that they are happy. For this purpose, I brought 50 tailors here to work night and day and for two months to stitch uniforms for the boys.

I did not get any new dress stitched for myself. I do not need new clothes for any occasion. Even the robe which I am now wearing was offered to me by the old students of the Kingdom of Sathya Sai as an expression of their love and so I agreed to wear it. Similarly I do not have any particular desire with regard to food or any other need. My *Aanandha* (divine bliss) is My food and to secure that food I promote happiness in others and derive delight from their joy. That is the significance of my statement, "MY LIFE IS MY MESSAGE." To feel blissful in the enjoyment of the happiness which others experience is a quality of the divine.

The Universe is permeated by the Divine

Let Me illustrate this with a small example. We plant a small seed, which grows into a big tree. The tree bears thousands of fruits in each of which there is the seed of tree. Even so, when the seed of divinity is planted in this vast Universe, the tree of humanity bears fruits in which the seed of divinity is to be found. Just as the fruit of a tree contains the seed from which it grew, this Universe carries the seed of its Creator. "*Ishaavaasyam idham Sarvam*," says the *Upanishath*---the Universe is permeated by the Divine. "*Ishwarah Sarvabhoothaanam*"---the Lord resides in every living thing. When man respects his human character and realises his obligation to discover his divine nature, the divine in him will manifest itself.

Experience of the Divine must be sought in the company of good people. It is an illusion to imagine that you can see God in some temple or shrine or in some kind of meditation. Only in the Divine manifesting in a human form can you experience the Divine. If one cannot experience the Divine in a living human being, how can one experience it in an inanimate stone? It is only when one perceives with love that one realises one's true nature. Those who are in the Sai

Organisations will be achieving their real purpose only when they rise above good and evil, look with equal regard upon all those around them and see divinity in them.

What man does is based on faith

Sai is unaffected by praise or blame. Sai is happy in whatever context Sai is remembered. Let no Sai devotee attach any value to the praise or blame offered to Sai. Here is an example of what happened the other day. A large group came to see Me. They had come to Prashaanthi Nilayam out of curiosity, after seeing some big reports in a newspaper. I told them that, if you have come only after seeing the papers, you are mere paper yourselves. To come or leave after reading newspapers or books means that your devotion is to the paper or the book and not to the Lord. If you wish to be real devotees of *Bhagavaan*, you should seek, for your own sake and not because of what you have read in books or papers.

Embodiments of Love! All human life is based upon faith. No one can subsist for a single moment without faith. Here is a small example. A man lays the foundation stone for a house today. If he does not have the confidence that by next year this house will be ready and that he would live till next year, will he seek to build a house at all? One gets up in the morning, takes up a bag to go to the market to buy vegetables. Without the belief that he will return home after buying the vegetables from the market, will he leave the house at all? From the time of waking till going to sleep, every thing that man does every moment is based on faith and confidence.

How is it, then that there is lack of faith in the Divinity which has given life, which has created this vast world and provided so many objects for man's comfort and sustenance? We develop faith in innumerable petty things, but we have doubts about the most sacred and the most vital requisite for good living viz., God. If we have faith in God all other beliefs are irrelevant. There are in the ocean certain rocks, which remain unshaken however much the waves may dash against them. Likewise, if you are resolute in achieving your aims, objectives or desires, you should never give up your efforts till your objectives are achieved and you should not be swayed by all kinds of passing thoughts. Only then will you be a true devotee!

Birth and death are action and reaction

Embodiments of Love! You are experiencing great joy in feeling that you are celebrating to, day as My birthday. For Me there is no birthday to be celebrated. It is for your happiness, for your sake and to fulfil your own wishes that I have agreed to take part in various programmes arranged for today. If one has no birth, there is no death. If there is death, then one must have been born. Birth and death are action and reaction. I am beyond both.

The body has no permanence. It is like a bubble on the water; it arises in water, expands in water and merges in water. Man is like the bubble; Naaraayana is the water. Without water the bubble cannot come into existence. All human bubbles are born in Naaraayana, grow in Naaraayana, and ultimately merge in Him. Why rejoice over the birth of the bubble or mourn its disappearance? As long as you have a body, engage yourself in sacred tasks, dedicate all your thoughts, and actions to the Divine.

Embodiments of the Divine! I must ask you to give Me as a birthday offering, only one thing--- REDUCE YOUR SELFISHNESS; Abate your wrong desires. Foster your spirit of sacrifice and grow into noble human beings. If you dedicate yourself to these objects, you will have realised

the purpose for which you attended this great World Conference, this Birthday Celebration and derived immeasurable bliss.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 23-11-1980

Love your religion, so that you may practise it with greater faith; and, when each one practises his religion with faith, there can be no hatred in the world, for all religions are built on universal love.

Love your country, so that it may become strong, happy and prosperous, an arena for the exercise of all the higher faculties of man.

Feel that Delhi or Calcutta is as much a part of yourself as your own town or village; any pain in the toe is as much a matter of concern for you as a pain on the top of the head.

Sri Sathya Sai

59. The search for fulfilment

FROM the point of view of spiritual progress, persons can be grouped under three heads: *Pushthi* (the full-filled or complete), *Maryaadha* (the part filled or limited) and the *Pravaaha* (empty or heedless).

The first group, the *Pushthi* people win, the Grace of God through adherence to good conduct, good work and good faith. They are loved by God and are thereby blessed with unbroken *Aanandha* (bliss). Love is the effect of Love only. Love can be earned only by Love. The ordinary men do not hanker after the love of God; they yearn after material goods and the satisfaction they can confer. They are prompted by the lower self to cater to the senses. But, the *Pushthi* persons have the higher love that is free from selfishness. Their thoughts, aspirations and deeds are all saturated with love.

The *Gopees* prayed to Krishna, "Lord! Play on the flute the song that can plant the seeds of Love in the loveless desert of our hearts; shower thereon the rain of love and let the plantlings grow and yield the rich harvest of love. The *Pushthi* group of devotees might be undistinguished in appearance but they can be recognised by the spiritual glow of inner bliss. To be blessed by the lord with Divine love, one must have passed through many lives of *saadhana* (spiritual discipline), the *saadhana* of love.

Joy is natural to man, sadness is unnatural

The *Maryaadha* people have attained limited achievement through spiritual effort, but even that is a noteworthy accomplishment. They have learnt about the glory of God through ardent scriptural studies and, after deep meditation on that glory, they have cultivated lasting love for God. But, you may dial the correct number in order to contact another on the telephone. If the 'other' does not lift the receiver, you have not benefited at all. It is not enough if you calculate the amount of your *saadhana*, or the hours you spend in study and *saadhana*. God cares more for the transformation of the heart into a reservoir of love, the transformation achieved through *shravana* (Listening) *Maanana* (revolving in the mind what is heard) and *nidhidhyaasa* (actual experience of the lesson that was heard). He does not count the recitations and adorations you offer as more valuable.

The heart filled with compassion is the temple in which God likes to install Himself. Scholarship is mostly superficial and even anti-spiritual. Purity of the heart has to be the goal of *saadhana*. One may *perform puuja* (ritualistic worship) for hours or sit for meditation every day. But, if he has no knowledge of Divinity he is invoking or picturing, these are of no avail. Divinity is his own nature. He is himself God. His Divine Nature must express itself in daily living. Peter was a fisherman but Jesus discovered that he could manifest divine qualities. If some one sobs and weeps in the market place, an anxious crowd gather around him to discover the reason, for, sadness is unnatural. When another person is obviously happy and smiling, no one is worried, for joy is natural to man.

Desire makes man feeble and fearful

In order to elevate oneself to the full-filled *Pushthi* category, one must learn self-confidence and self-satisfaction, to be content with one's Self, to derive joy from the *Aathma* (divine self) which one is. One should not be tempted by what appear to be sources of joy in the external world. The fame one can earn, the riches one can gather, the power one can exercise, are clouds that pass

with a turn of wind. The adulation and condemnation that the populace meters out are only verbal magic, tricks that intoxicate or hurt, for a brief moment. The *Maryaadha* (part-filled person) must seek to raise themselves up into the *Pushthi* group of full-filled individuals.

Next, the *Pravaaha* category, the heedless individuals who do not resist the pulls of the senses or of the objective world. They are drawn along the *Pravaaha* (the flood) of trivialities and trashes; they are ignorant of the ways by which they can cross the sea of *Samsaar* (worldly life and perpetual change); they fall into the whirlpools of misery. They do not have any knowledge of the Saviour. So, they are caught in the wheel of birth and death. The flood is in a state of motion, it does not allow them to get established anywhere. They are born to die; they die only to be born again. But, this is not the true destination of human life. How then can man escape from this wheel?

The tree originates from the seed. Desire is the seed from which man appears on earth. If man has no desire and no resolution to satisfy them, then man need not be born, to realise the unfulfilled desire. And, he need not die. So, man has to minimise desires and give up seeking the fulfilment of desire. Desire is what makes man feeble and fearful. He cannot rise to his full of stature when burdened with desire.

Use the intellect constantly to discriminate

But, there is no need to despair. Man has in him three springs of strength upon which he can draw---Divine, Spiritual and *Material*---*Paraa shakthi*, *A-paraa shakthi*, and *Avidhya Shakthi*. From the conviction that he has a body (*Aham Dehaasmi*) he can draw upon physical strength or *Auidhya shakthi*. Since he is an individualised soul or *jeevi* (*Aham Jeevaasmi*), he can draw upon spiritual-strength or *A-paraa-shakthi*.

Since self if man is one with Overself and he can earn the awareness of the Unity (*Aham Brahmaasmi*), he can draw upon the Universal Eternal Power or *Brahman* Itself, the *Paraa shakthi*. This is also called *Vishnu-Shakthi* (all pervasive divine energy); for it is both immanent and transcendent at the same time. But, those who cannot comprehend this all-prevading and all persuading *Shakthi*, give it a form and a name and adore it as a mother-Goddess, as Kaali or Amba. *A-paraa shakthi* is limited to the physical field of *the jeevi* while *A-vidhya shakthi* is further limited by the handicap of *Maaya* (delusive energy). But it is this latter that urges man to act and to move in society.

Paraa shakthi marks *the jnaani* (the realised soul). To reach that stage, one must constantly use the intellect to discriminate the true from the false, the eternal from the transitory. For example, one must examine how the mind works. It is commonly asserted that the mind runs fast after external objects. But the mind does not move towards the objects. The objects are drawn by the mind to itself. People who come to Puttaparthi from Bangalore exclaim as soon as they reach Gokulam on the outskirts, "Puttaparthi has come." But, Puttaparthi does not go towards them. It stays forever where it is. So too, the mind stays, receiving the impacts of objects which come into its sphere, developing desires and attachments for them.

Geetha exhorts men to be always Yogis

To clear the mind of these bonds, *dhyaana* (meditation) is the most fruitful *saadhana*. There are many who propagate and demonstrate process of meditation but only those who have discovered the ultimate goal of life and become masters of themselves can lead others as *Gurus* (preceptors). The *Shaasthras* (spiritual sciences) lay down what has to be acquired and what has to be given

up. This wisdom when applied to life through activity marks the real *Guru*. *Dhyaana* (meditation) cannot be completed; it should continue even after one rises up and moves out of the spot. The purity gained must be manifested in deeds.

Since the individual self is itself the Self, the fullness of the Self or Divinity must manifest in man also. *Poornam adah Poornam idham*, (That is full, this is full) say the *Vedhas* (sacred scriptures of the Hindus). From a big lump of jaggery, you may clip off a slice. The slice is as sweet as the lump. The quality is the same. God is sweet love. Man too must reveal the same sweet love, and thereby announce that his Reality is God; *dhyaana* must result in this awareness. Some practitioners of meditation possess equanimity; but only so long as they are engaged in it. As soon as they emerge, they start getting angry at all and sundry. Some are *Yogis* (spiritual persons) in the morning, *bhogis* (epicureans) at noon and *rogis* (sick) at night! The *Geetha* exhorts men to be "always *Yogis*" (*Sathatham Yoginah*). They should not act three roles in one day!

Bargaining with God is cheating oneself

Many believe that pilgrimages to holy places are conducive to spiritual progress. They journey to Thirupathi, Rameshwaram, Badhrinath or Amarnath and pray for the removal of their mundane troubles. They vow to remove their hair if through Divine intervention they win a prize in the State Lottery, as if God is in need of hair. This trick of bargaining is only cheating oneself, in an attempt to cheat God. Do not pray to God for wealth or fame or positions of power or even for the fruits of your actions. The genuine seeker will pray for nothing else than God. This longing will fill all the various acts of *his---puuja, bhajan, dhyaan* (ritual worship, devotional singing and meditation) etc. Every wave of emotion every tune of song, every beat of pulse will respond only to that wish. For God is the basis on which this creation rests.

The deepest yearning of man is to experience the One, the basis, the Being that has become. From east and west, from south and north, you have come in thousands and are now One in this Poornachandra Auditorium, feeling a blissful spiritual Unity. Be aware of the One which manifests as the many. That is the Divine Life. Aspire for such a life, not simply for long life. Aspire for the bliss that the awareness of the *Aathma* (Divine Self) can confer, not the pleasure the objects of the world can give.

God is Omnipresent. So, do not act differently when you are away from My presence. Be always and everywhere conscious of the presence. Be vigilant, even while engaged in little tasks. Maintain silence, in the recesses of the heart, as well as outside. The *Geetha* says, God's hands and feet are everywhere. You can hear his footfall only when no other sound hinders. God, out of His infinite Grace, assumes the Form that the devotee yearns for. He is Purity. He is the Supreme Wisdom, He is ever-free, ever merciful. Develop the awareness of God, see Him and serve Him in every living being.

Poornachandra Auditorium, 24-11-1980

You may boast that you have been visiting Puttaparthi since twenty years or that you have made the place your permanent residence; but, unless you follow the lessons I emphasise, that boast is mere empty vanity. If you develop love for all beings, in the faith that

God resides in all, you may be anywhere else, but your prayers would reach Me and My grace will reach you.

Sri Sathya Sai

60. The meaning of Christmas

THE meaning of *Avathaar* (Divine Incarnation) is this: to save mankind, God out of His love, affection and compassion, comes down to the level of man and arouses the Divine Consciousness in man. He makes man aware of Him in him, when He finds him desperately searching outside of himself for Him who is his very core.

In order to enable you to reach the highest goal of merging with the absolute, this chance has been granted to you as a reward for merit acquired in many previous lives. A bird needs two wings to fly; a cart needs two wheels to be pulled along. To journey towards the goal, man too needs study and steadfastness---*vidhya* (spiritual learning) and *thapas* (penance). The *Geetha* declares that among studies, the study of the *Aathma* is the holiest. It is known as *Aathma Vidhya* or *Brahma Vidhya* (science of the Self). The *Vidhya* shows the way; the *thapas* makes you reach the goal. The two are the two eyes that fulfil one purpose.

A farmer has to concentrate his efforts during certain favourable seasons, when ploughing and sowing have to be done. He cannot afford to count the cost or calculate the trouble. Rain or shine, night or day, he has to do the task, so that he can reap the harvest. So too, for you students, this is the period of life when you have to be active and alert. Your future is shaped by what you do now. Now is the very foundational stage of your life, when you prepare your mind, to meet its challenges and your intelligence, to solve its riddles.

God alone is the *Guru*, others are teachers

You are called '*Vidhyarthi*,' one who seeks *Vidhya*. But, it is a misfortune that most students seek, no *vidhya* (subjective enlightenment), but *Vishaya* (objective pleasure). Both *Guru* and *Sishya* (teacher and pupil) have fallen from the ideal. The pupil, should be the player, and the teacher, the director; the pupil should be like Arjuna, the wielder of the bow, the teacher should be like Krishna, the *Yogeshwara* (Lord of Divine Communion); the pupil should be *purusha* (person) and the *Guru* the *Purushothama* (spiritual preceptor). This is the reason why the *Guru* is exalted as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara and as *Parabrahma* (Supreme Reality) Itself.

God alone is the *guru*; others can at best be *Upaadhyaya*s or *Adhyaapak*s (teachers, instructors). The *Guru* out of His infinite compassion and wisdom counsels the most beneficent path. The *shishya* (pupil) out of his infinite devotion, follows it and attains the goal. Arjuna said, after listening to the Lord's counsel, "*Karishye vachanam thava*," "I shall act according to your words." You have to be pupils like him. Then, you can live in peace and joy in this warring world of misery and demonstrate in your lives the excellence of the *Bhaaratheeya* (Indian) tradition and culture.

God is Eternal Power, Omnipotent, Omniscient. He is the cause and consequence---the potter, the clay and the pot. Without God, there can be no Universe. He willed and the Universe happened. It is His play, the manifestation of His power. Man embodies His Will, His power, His Wisdom. But, he is unaware of this glory. The cloud of ignorance veils the truth. God sends sages, saints and prophets to unveil the Truth and Himself appears as an *Avathaar* (divine incarnation) to awaken and liberate him.

Resolve to practise what all Jesus taught

Two thousand years ago, when narrow pride and thick ignorance defiled mankind, Jesus came as the embodiment of Love and compassion and lived among men, holding forth the highest ideals of life. You must pay attention to the lessons he elaborated in the various stages of his life. 'I am the Messenger of God,' he declared, first. Yes. Each individual has to accept that role and live as examples of Divine Love and Charity. The *guru* must; act as the alarm-clock; he should awaken the sleeper to his duty to himself. " *Uththishtha! jaagratha,* " as the *Upanishaths* proclaim--- "Arise! Awake." And bear witness to the God within, in every thought, word and deed.

This day, Christmas is celebrated. Bring to mind the words he uttered, the advice he offered, the warning he gave, and decide to direct your daily lives along the path he laid down. His words must be imprinted on your hearts and you must resolve to practise all that he taught.

There are two points of view that struggle for acceptance by you---the *Paramaarthika* and the *Vyavahaarika*---the spiritual and the worldly, the reality-based and the appearance-based. After this discourse is over, when you proceed from this Hostel building towards Prashaanthi Nilayam, imagine you see a snake appearing on the road. In reality, it is only a length of rope. But, it appears as a snake and you feel a sense of terror. Your terror does not change the rope into a snake. When you apply light from a torch, you discover that the rope was ever a rope. The Universe is what appears; the Reality is Divinity, *Brahmam*. When the Light of Wisdom shines, the Truth is revealed. The Universe is enveloped by Divinity; it is the vesture. Jesus declared, "Death is the dress of life."

Jesus bore no ill-will towards any one

Jesus knew that God Wills all. So, even on the cross, when he suffered agony, he bore no ill-will towards any one and he exhorted those with him to treat all as instruments of His Will. "All are one; be alike to every one." Practise this attitude in your daily lives. Of course it is very difficult to develop unwavering faith in this great truth. The mind, as Arjuna complained, hops from belief to doubt, from one conclusion to its negation and it causes turmoil and confusion. But, there is one method by which it can be conquered.

The black-bee can bore a hole in the hardest wood. But, when dusk intervenes while it is sipping the nectar from the lotus-flower and, as a result, when the open petals close in on the bee, it finds itself imprisoned, with no hope of escape. It does not know how to deal with softness! So too, the mind can play its tricks and jump wantonly about on any arena; when placed on the lotus feet of the Lord, it becomes inactive and harmless. In order to offer the mind entirely to the Lord deep detachment from worldly desires is needed. Superficial devotion or shallow steadfastness cannot succeed. To fell the hard sandal wood tree, a heavy axe of steel is needed.

It is the privilege of this stage of life to cultivate this detachment, to subdue the vagaries of the mind, and to manifest the Divinity that is latent in you. That Divinity when expressed in action blossoms into loving service of fellow-beings. It renders the heart pure, free from pride and greed.

Be ever ready to cast the body away

Jesus wandered purposefully in lonely places for twelve long years, engaging himself in study, spiritual exercises and meditation on God. Of course, one must protect and preserve the body, which is a Divine gift, a boat equipped with instruments through which man can cross the Sea of

Perpetual Change and reach Divinity. This goal of life has to be reached before the body-boat develops leaks and disintegrates, through illness, sloth and senility. Physical, mental and spiritual health has to be fostered with vigilant care. Nevertheless, 'one' must be ever ready to east the body away in defence of *dharma* or *dhaiva* (goodness or God). Have Jesus as your ideal for this. He exhorted all to observe the basically valid teachings of the ancient scriptures and to derive peace and joy therefrom.

The Jews held the rituals and regulations laid down by the prophets in the scriptural texts as valid for all time and so, they held the teachings of Jesus as wrong. They were not moved by personal hatred towards Jesus.

The problem arises in every age---the conflict between the letter and the spirit---the doctrines that are held sacred, the *manthra* (sacred formula) that is held to be holy, the various do's and don'ts that have to be scrupulously followed, and the underlying truth. In the *Vedhic* Faith also, one can find today this conflict between the upholders of ancient tradition and the promoters of deeper understanding. These later also base their teachings on the *Vedhas*.

Thought, word and deed must be one

The best way to resolve the confusions and conflicts that hamper moral, ethical, material, technological and spiritual progress is for man to live as fully as man ought to, and rise to the height of the Divine that is his Reality. That is the one Eternal, Universal teaching. The thoughts that the intellect frames must be reflected as feelings in the mind and translated into action by the hands. Thought, word, and deed must be coordinated. They must fulfil one another. The sign of a holy person or *Maanava* is, "*Manasyekam Vaachasyekam Karmanyekam,*" "*One mind, one word, one act.*" The three are one, not different.

Christmas means the Mass that is held on the birthday of Christ. It is fundamentally a sacred religious rite. To deal with it as if it is a festival for drinking and dancing or even for recalling Jesus to memory is very wrong. The day must be spent in prayer; not merely this day, but cultivate the *saadhana* (spiritual discipline) of prayer as a normal way of life. Prayers for worldly ends do not reach God. They will reach only those deities who deal with such restricted spheres. But, all prayers arising from pure love, unselfish eagerness to render service and hearts that are all-inclusive will reach God. For, God is the very Embodiment of love. We know that we have to see the Moon only through Moonlight. So too, God who is love can be seen and realised only through love. Love is God, Live in Love. That is the Message I give you.

College Hostel, Vidhyaagiri, 24-12-1980

Above all, recognise this truth: Sai is in all. When you hate another, you are hating Sai; when you hate Sai, you are hating yourself When you inflict pain on another name, remember that the other is yourself, in another form, with another name.

Envy causes pain on those who are envied. When another's fortune is green, why should your eyes be red? Why get wild when another eats his fill?

Give up this vice of envy; be happy when another is happy. That is more pleasing to the Lord than all the manthras you recite, or all

the flowers you heap on his picture or image, or even the hours you spend in japam or dhyaanam (silent recitation of holy words or meditation).

Sri Sathya Sai