

Sathya Sai Speaks

*And, as we drink deep the cascade of Love
We thirst to near the Source and rest,
Each word, a joy drop, a mother's kiss
Each phrase, a father's pat, every sentence a lesson.
Our enraptured selves unfold, and bloom in Bliss*

*As we imbibe the limpid sweetness
Horizons widen, hatred fades.
The neighbour's face, we find, is ours!
The burden of dreary debility
Falls off; fear and fumbling, flee.*

*The voice finds welcome echo within
He became We and They, He says, to play a game:
We lose the Way, He rescues, redeems.
He hides; we seek. We hide; He finds.
'Tis all such sun, the loss and gain, the joy and pain.*

Let us listen and learn His Grace to earn.

N. Kasturi

1. "The most precious period"

IN one's life, the years sixteen to thirty are the most precious. This is the period when all of one's faculties and energies are at their peak. Hence one should strive to make the best use of this period. Noble qualities like self-confidence, sacrifice, aspiration and courage must be acquired then. If this time of one's life is wasted, there will only be failures in later years. Bad thoughts, bad practices and backbiting should be eschewed altogether. During this crucial period, one should try to understand the purpose of life and concentrate one's efforts on achieving one's ideals. No spiritual effort is possible when one has dissipated one's physical and mental abilities. It is a pity that young people misuse these precious years of their lives by falling into bad ways. Swaami expects them to develop all their human endowments and lead exemplary lives which will be an object-lesson to others.

What we witness today in the world, however, is a great deal of play-acting. All appear as devotees and all proclaim their spirit of sacrifice. Everyone declares himself or herself as a *saadhaka* (spiritual aspirant). Every believer claims that he is seeing God. One must enquire whether it is the so-called devotee who is seeking God or whether it is God who is searching for a true devotee. Is the *saadhaka* serving God or is God serving the *saadhaka*?--that is the question. The service that the *saadhaka* is doing is trivial.

Offering to God what God has provided is like offering to the Ganga water from the Ganga. The truth is it is God who is rendering service to the devotee. All the capacities given by God should be used in the service of the Divine. There is no need to go in quest of God. God is all the time searching for the genuine and steadfast devotee. The *saadhaka* is approaching God for the fulfilment of his desires. He is after petty and transient benefits. He does not seek to understand the nature of true love or the Divinity that underlies everything. Today's *saadhaka* proves himself to be a self-deluded being with no moral commitment.

Three most important human values

The real criterion of moral conduct is harmony between one's profession and one's practice. Morality consists in acting up to the rules of fight conduct prescribed by society at a particular time and place for an individual or group. If there is no connection between what one professes in words and his actions, morality cannot exist.

Of all human values, three are most important. The foremost is love of God. Where there is love there is sacrifice. There arises purity of heart. There should be a fusion of love, sacrifice and purity. They are not mere human qualities. They constitute vital organs of a human being. They are as essential for a human being as the head, hands and legs for the body. Without these attributes, no one is a complete human being.

Just as the Sun can be seen only by his own light, the love of the Divine can be acquired only by Divine Grace and not by trivial spiritual practices. These *saadhanas* (spiritual practices) are invariably motivated by selfish objectives. There is an element of selfishness in every service which man undertakes. All undertakings are tainted by egoism or the acquisitive urge. Only when the *saadhaka's* heart is filled with the Divine, will he be able to entertain pure and sacred love.

Time is all-powerful, not subject to any one

Students must bear in mind that their life is determined by their actions, whether they are good or bad. The other determining factor is Time. Time is all-powerful. It is not subject to any one. All are subject to it. It rolls on without beginning or end. Raama's exile, Raavana's death, emperor Bali's descent to the nether world, Sibi's supreme sacrifice, the ordeals of the Paandavas . are all examples of the power of Time over the destinies of men. It is only when one's actions are harmonised with the dictates of Time can one enjoy the type of bliss described as *Thrupthi*.

For this, the proper control of the mind, which is the cause of both happiness and sorrow, is necessary. Tiffs control cannot be achieved by merely reading the Scriptures or practising certain rituals. Mere scholarship or the acquisition of knowledge about the external world will not lead to internal peace. If one is engaged all the time in the acquisition of information, when is he to undertake the task of transformation?

Mahaabhaaratha war is the game of life you play

The games you play may be compared to the Mahaabhaaratha war. On one side were ranged the forces of evil, the Kauravas, and on the other the powers of good, the Paandavas. They played the game of Life with empire as the football. Till the end of the battle, Lord Krishna was the sole chief for the righteous Paandavas. The wicked Kauravas lost their commanders one after the other in the battle. The Paandavas, who had completely surrendered to Krishna, achieved ultimate victory. The contest could be described as one between the evil qualities of Desire, Hatred, Envy, Pride, etc. on the one side and good qualities like Truth, Virtue, Tranquillity, Non-violence and' Love on the other. The body is the battlefield. The captain of one team is the embodiment of good qualities. The captain of the other is the embodiment of mundane desires. There can only be defeat for those who adhere to everchanging, worldly desires. Only those who attach themselves to the unchanging, eternal Divine can hope for enduring success in life.

Gaandhaari, the wife of Dhritharaashtra and mother of the Kauravas, and Shakuni, were children of the same mother. Gaandhaari was like a vessel of nectar. Shakuni was a very clever man, but full of poison. Acting on the advice of Shakuni, the Kauravas lost their kingdom and everything else. No one should feel proud about his cleverness or intelligence or about his ability to win laurels in studies. Good character and fight thinking are more valuable than scholastic achievements or intellectual abilities. Utilise your intelligence and thoughts for achieving that bliss which comes from leading a life of righteousness and goodness. Enter on a life dedicated to ideals.

Devotion is the cord that binds God

Today is called Sankraanthi, the day when the Sun starts on its northward journey by entering the Makara sign of the Zodiac. *Samyak Kraanthi ithi Sankraanthi* ("change for the good is Sankraanthi"). We must transform ourselves completely. Sankraanthi reveals not only the beauty of Nature but the resplendent beauty of the Divine. The Divine will not consider your status or position, your pomp and show. It is beyond the reach of knowledge and intelligence. It can be secured only by *Prema* (pure love). The Lord is bound only by the intensity of the *Bhaktha's* (devotee's) devotion. Devotion is the cord that binds God. *Bhajans* (group singing of devotional songs) and prayers should not emanate only from the lips. They should flow from the heart. The Ganges of true devotion arises from the devotee's heart. Everything that is associated with

Divinity has its origin in the heart. Hence the heart should be emptied of all evil and kept pure and unsullied by right action.

It may not be possible to escape the consequences of one's good and bad actions. But even a mountain of sin can be wiped out by winning the Grace of the Divine. Hence one should strive to earn the love of God, which is all-embracing and all-powerful. From this Sankraanthi day, dedicate yourselves to the cultivation of good qualities and righteous action and develop that pure devotion which will redeem your life. This is my message and my benediction for you.

Discourse on Sankraanthi Day at the conclusion of Sports Festival,

Sathya Sai Institute, at Puurnachandra Auditorium,

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 13 January, 1984

Education is now sought after, more for securing a means of livelihood. The attempt of many parents and their children is to learn some skill which will give them a good job, in a factory or business establishment or bank, on a decent salary.

Of course, man must live and live comfortably. So, it is necessary that some useful skill is mastered. But, man needs things much more satisfying, much more essential, than comfort. He must have faith in himself, so that he may respect himself. This Aathmavishwasah (trust in the Self) lies at the very root of joy.

Sri Sathya Sai

2. "Know your Lineage"

DHARMA and Jnaana (fight conduct and spiritual wisdom) are two eyes given to man to discover his uniqueness and his divinity. *Dharma* indicates the right path which every individual, group or society should follow. *Dharma* destroys the one who violates it. *Dharma* also protects the one who protects it. The scriptures have declared, "Where there is *Dharma* there is Victory". There is no *Dharma* greater than Truth. The edifice of *Dharma* is erected on the foundation of Truth. *Nyaaya* (justice) is an essential attribute of *Dharma*. A society or nation or an individual shines with glory only when they adhere to justice, just as one acquires wealth by the pursuit of agriculture, business or profession, one must acquire merit and Divine Grace by adhering to *neethi* (morality) and *Dharma*.

However, *Dharma* alone is not enough. While *Dharma* leads to right action, it is necessary also to acquire *Jnaana*. True knowledge consists in understanding the unity that underlies the Cosmos. All the sufferings and problems in life arise from the sense of duality. Once the feeling of 'I' and 'mine' is got rid of, consciousness of the all-pervading Divinity will be realised.

The two greatest qualities in life

Today, it appears as if there is a revival of spiritual activity everywhere. Religious associations are coming up all over the world. But much of the activity of spiritual aspirants is motivated by self-interest. Devotees address prayers to God for the fulfilment of their material desires. All the study of scriptures is of little avail if genuine love of God does not flow spontaneously from the heart. It is only through such love that the Divine can be realised. Love and sacrifice are the two greatest qualities in life. It is on the basis of these qualities that our ancients dealt with the problems of society so that the individual, the family, the community and the nation may pursue the path of *Dharma*.

In the world the progeny of *Dharma* and *Adharma* are continually growing. *Adharma* (unrighteousness) married *Mithya* (delusion). *Mithya* is neither truth nor untruth. This couple had two children, a son called *Ahamkaara* (egoism) and a daughter called *Moha* (infatuation). As both *Ahamkaara* and *Moha* are the children of Ignorance, with no capacity to judge what is right and wrong, the unholy alliance between them resulted in the birth of *Lobha* (avarice) and *Vanchana* (deceit) as son and daughter. From the wrongful union of these two, *Eershya* (jealousy) and *Krodha* (hatred) were born. Out of their union, *Bheethi* (fear) and *Mruthyu* (death) were born. This lineage is known as *Adharma Santhathi* (the progeny of unrighteousness). In this lineage, every union was improper.

Now for the progeny of Dharma (righteousness).

Dharma married a great soul called *Sathya* (Truth). Out of the union of *Sathya* and *Dharma*, eight children were born. These are *Shraddha* (Earnestness), *Dhaya* (Compassion), *Shaanthi* (Peace), *Pushti* (Prosperity), *Shanthushthi* (Contentment), *Vridhhi* (Progress), *Lajja* (Modesty), *Gouravam* (Honour) and *Mukthi* (Liberation). It is now for each one to determine to which lineage one belongs. It would seem that ninety percent of the people in the world belong to the line of *Mithya* and *Adharma*.

When we practise *Dharma*, the Divinity 'in us' will manifest itself spontaneously. One should not limit *Dharma* to mere words. Man is regarded as the very embodiment of righteousness. But he will not be worthy of this appellation if he does not lead a life of *Dharma*. Everyone should

realise that to attain oneness with divinity is the goal of human life. Hence it is everyone's duty to develop faith in the Divine. With the growth of faith, if one leads a life devoted to *Dharma, Sathya and Neethi* (Righteousness, Truth and Justice), he will be achieving the purpose of life. The man who does not follow *Dharma* is a burden on the earth. All the wealth he may accumulate will not accompany him when he leaves the world. It is more important to earn the grace of God than earn all the wealth in the world. Develop the love of God and realise the bliss that is beyond all words.

Abbotsbury, Madras, 19 January, 1984

3. Parents should not pamper children

PARENTS today tend to lavish too much affection on their children. But such affection alone is not enough. There should be control also over the children. There should be both "love" and "law". Only when both love and restraint are present will the love prove beneficial.

For all the evil habits of children, who are naturally innocent and uninformed, the parents are primarily responsible. They do not make any efforts to teach proper ways of behaviour to the children. They pamper the children by giving them money freely. They want their boys to become high officers, to earn large incomes, acquire wealth and lead a life of comfort and ease. But they do not consider for a moment how they should make the children realise the need to develop good qualities. It is up to parents to teach the children to cultivate right attitudes and moral qualities. To encourage them merely to get on in life is not proper. Parents should feel happy only when they see their sons leading blameless lives, acquiring a good name and behaving properly. To rejoice merely at the birth of a son is foolish.

Dhritharaashtra had a hundred sons, the Kauravas. He knew very well that they were a wicked lot, pursuing bad ways. He knew also that his brother's sons, the Paandavas, were wedded to Dharma (righteousness) and that the Kauravas were inflicting many indignities and injuries on the Paandavas. Although Vyaasa told Dhritharaashtra several times that, out of his misplaced affection for his sons, he should not allow the latter to persecute the Paandavas, the doting father did not heed Vyaasa's advice. Consequently, he got involved in many sinful actions.

Children should be provided with right values

Vyaasa warned Dhritharaashtra: "Dhritharaashtra! I do not say that for you to love your sons is wrong. But you must know what kind of son you should love. Not knowing this, you are behaving like a blind man. By showing your love for a bad son, you are causing harm to the community and the country." By his blind infatuation for his sons, what is it that Dhritharaashtra achieved? In the final outcome, he had no one even to perform his funeral obsequies. The righteous Paandavas had to render this service to him.

It is not wrong to love children. But you (parents) should learn how to love them. Whenever the children go astray, wittingly or unwittingly, parents should hasten to correct their faults and bring them to the right path. The obligations of parents do not end with providing food, schooling and knowledge of worldly matters. The children should also be provided with right values. They should not be made to think that the acquisition of wealth is the be-all and end-all of life. Wealth does not accompany one when he leaves the world. Wealth is necessary only for meeting one's essential needs. Too much wealth is an embarrassment like an over-size shoe. Too little of it is likely to be painful, like a tight fitting shoe. So, it is desirable to have only that amount of wealth that is adequate for one's basic needs. It is deplorable that today, in the mad pursuit of money, people are forgetting all human qualities.

The persevering seeker secures wisdom

Young people today are totally oblivious to the importance of dedicating their lives to great ideals. It is up to the parents to endeavour to make their children lead purposeful lives. Teachers, on their part, should set an example and inculcate in their wards right values. Only a lighted lamp can serve to light other lamps. If teachers lack idealism how can they inspire their students to lead ideal lives ?

People talk about the spiritual life, but rarely practise it. They often act contrary to it. The reason is the lack of virtues. Without good qualities, all other attributes are useless. It is like pouring water in a pot full of holes. When the heart is oozing with bad thoughts and evil desires, how can you fill it with pure aspirations?

Governor Banerjee spoke about success and mentioned that "success begets success." But how is success to be achieved and what is the success you should aim at? The Geetha says: "*Shraddhaavaan labhathe jnaanam*". ("The persevering seeker secures wisdom.")

This means that without perseverance and earnestness no success can be achieved. You must take interest in the path shown by elders. You must devote attention to the knowledge taught by the ancients. You must pay heed to what the elders say. If you have no *shraddha* (earnestness) you cannot achieve anything, whatever other qualifications you may have.

Despite aeons of evolution and considerable progress in scientific knowledge, man is not able to make significant progress towards the Divine because of absence of strenuous striving in the spiritual sphere. Without spiritual practice, reading religious books and listening to spiritual discourses have no value. Study of the *Upanishaths and Shaasthras* (spiritual sciences) and reciting God's names may be good acts in themselves. But, if there is no love, which is the basis of all *saadhana* (spiritual discipline), they are of no use. They are like buttermilk. But the love of God is like well-boiled milk. Everything is contained in it all proteins and vitamins. Love reinforces one's physical, mental and spiritual energies. Devotional acts without love are like diluted buttermilk in which there are no nutrients.

Students should cultivate the quality of *sahana*

Dhyaana (meditation) and *Japa* (repetition of sacred formula) without love are lifeless rituals. Love which expresses itself in service to all living things is the best expression of the love of God. There is no true devotion without such love. It is love which is unchanging and which does not mind any sacrifice in serving others. When we have students filled with such love and imbued with the spirit of service, the nation will achieve unalloyed prosperity, peace and progress. Learn, first of all, to honour your parents. Be respectful to elders and heed their advice. Carry out the behests of your teachers. Place your trust in God.

Without faith in God, all other possessions are of no avail. Take, for instance, the case of Duryodhana. He was the lord of an empire. Both Duryodhana and Arjuna went to Krishna before the Kurukshetra battle. Duryodhana wanted only Krishna's army on his side. Arjuna was content to have Krishna alone on his side. This was enough to secure for him victory in the war. All the armies Duryodhana had were of no avail. Duryodhana relied on the clever strategies of Shakuni. He had no faith in the divine intelligence of Krishna. The lesson that students should learn from this episode is that they must rely, not on their intellectual cleverness but on the guidance of their higher intelligence, which transcends ordinary reason and thinking. They should seek the support of That which sustains everything in creation.

Relationship between spirituality and science

Students should cultivate the quality of *sahana* (forbearance). Whatever you do, do it without any selfish motive. You spend a great deal of time to acquire some material object or other. How much time do you devote to thoughts of God? You shed tears profusely for getting sensuous pleasures. Do you shed a single tear for experiencing God? How, then, can you realise God?

Today, manifestation of *Bhakthi* (devotion) has become a mass-produced manufactured product. But are the devotees practising what they profess? Without practice, can the fruits of devotion be realised? Spirituality is not separate from other aspects of life. You must understand that spirituality permeates everything. Science is spirituality. Mathematics is spirituality. Spirituality can be found in everything if you look for it. What, for instance, is the connection between Mathematics and spirituality. Spiritual mathematics is different from academic mathematics. According to academic mathematics 3 minus 1 is equal to two. But in spiritual mathematics 3 minus 1 is one! How is that, it may be asked. There is a mirror. When you look at it, you see an image. There are thus three things: The seer, the mirror and the image. When you take away the mirror, the image also goes and only one thing remains. Nature is the mirror. The Divine is the seer. The *jeevi* (individual) is the image. When the mirror of Nature is removed, the *Jeevi* goes and only the Divine remains.

Birth is the cause of all sorrow

It is the relationship with Nature (the phenomenal world) that produces the appearance of duality and individual separateness. What one should seek to realise is the oneness with Divinity. The means of realisation has been indicated in the 12th Canto of the Bhagavath-geetha where the qualities of the true Bhaktha (devotee) are described. The primary quality is absence of hatred towards any living thing: "*Adhveshthasa-sarva bhoothaanaam*" (Cultivate Universal love.) Avoid causing harm to others. Do not speak ill of any one. Give up pride and egoism. Cultivate purity of thought, speech and action.

What is the origin of pride? Is it knowledge? What is this knowledge? It is really nothing more than ignorance. What is the cause of ignorance? It is the feeling of duality. Wherefrom has duality originated? From *Raaga* and *Dhwesha* (attachment and hatred). What is the origin of these two? They are the products of circumstances. How have the circumstances come about? Through *Karmas* (past deeds). What is the cause of Karmas? It is Birth. It will thus be clear that birth is the cause of all sorrow. It is only by seeking freedom from birth that one can free oneself from sorrow. The opportunity that has been provided by being born as a human being should be used for realising this supreme goal.

It is the duty of parents to set children on the right path from their early years. They should not hesitate to correct them and even punish them when the children take to wrong ways. The best way they can show their love for their children is to do everything necessary to make them follow the right path. If any boy proves intractable or incorrigible, they should not hesitate to disown him. It is better to have one good son rather than a brood of bad children.

The years of youth are most precious years

When the boys come home for holidays, the parents must keep a watch over their activities, movements and companions. Some parents tend to pamper them at home on the ground that the boys might have lacked some things in the hostel. They are encouraged to see films or the TV. They are given unwholesome food. All this is undesirable. The children are mined by these indulgences. The parents should exercise restraints on themselves in the interest of the children. Because parents are present in large numbers, I have spoken in this strain.

You must bear in mind that the years of youth are the most precious years in one's life and they should not be wasted or misspent. To let children watch the TV from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. is to make them forget all that they have learnt at school or college. In addition, they learn many evil

things. If TV is used for teaching good things, it can serve a worthy purpose. But that is not the case. The younger generation is being ruined by undesirable films and TV programmes. Their minds are being poisoned. It is not a sign of parental love to let children be mined in this manner. Even parents should avoid going to cinemas. All the crimes and violence we witness today are largely the result of the evil influence of films on young minds.

Education must be a preparation for selfless service

While science and technology may appear, to confer many benefits, they also have many harmful effects. We must have the wisdom and discrimination to make the proper use of scientific knowledge. Students must learn how to use their learning to lead worthy and noble lives. If they cannot mould themselves properly in these crucial years, they cannot hope to lead better lives in later years. Parents and teachers have a duty to see that the children are brought up on right lines through love, precept, and, if necessary, corrective measures.

Some parents say that their boys do not listen to their words. This is a sign of weakness. Why should children refuse to obey their parents? If, from the beginning, the children are taught to respect parents and elders, this kind of attitude will not develop. A disobedient child should have no place in the home. It is only when parents show firmness in dealing with their children that they will develop along right lines. It is because parents and teachers fail to enforce discipline that students behave in the most irresponsible way and indulge in disorder and violence.

Education must be regarded as a sacred process and a preparation for unselfish service to society. There are innumerable persons in the world who are suffering from various physical and other disabilities. It is the duty of educated persons to serve them and help to relieve their suffering to the maximum extent possible. This is the best form of service to the Divine. There is pollution in the air, in the water we use and impurity in so many things. You must use the knowledge you acquire to purify what is impure. It is for this purpose that the science courses in the Sathya Sai Institute are being given a spiritual orientation. Service to society must become the primary purpose of education. Students of Sai Institutions should devote their knowledge not only to earn a living, but to use their talents and energies in whatever walk of life they may be engaged, to render service to society in all ways open to them.

Kunwarba Auditorium, Brindhaavan, 5 February 1.984

When you do not know, confess that you do not know; if you pretend to know and try to cover up ignorance, it is very dangerous, especially to the spiritual aspirant.

Sri Sathya Sai

4. Devotion without discipline is valueless

THE world attracts man in innumerable ways. Either in speculation or in exploration, man cannot go beyond the Universe. Whatever knowledge he acquires, however much he develops his powers of understanding, his knowledge is confined to things of this world and does not go beyond it. He can know about the objects in creation, but cannot understand the Supreme Principle that is at the base of all creation.

Physics is concerned with the physical properties of material objects. Chemistry teaches the composition and qualities of created things. Botany deals with plants and trees found in nature. Zoology is concerned with the study of living beings, till that man learns about these things relates to the natural sciences. It is not knowledge relating to the Supreme. Man, who is immersed in the temporary pleasure derived from his knowledge about the *Panchabhuthaas* (five basic elements) that constitute the physical Universe, does not know what is his own future, what is in store for him the next moment. He behaves like a mouse which is attracted to the onion in a mouse-trap. Caught up in the knowledge and skills he has acquired and satisfied with the benefits from them, man does not try to find out the truth about his future and his real destiny.

Man lacking gratitude forfeits the Grace of God

The teacher should serve as the signpost for the community. The student determines the future of the nation. Together, they help to promote the greatness and welfare of the nation. Both teachers and students should realise that their welfare is bound up with the well-being of society as a whole. Individuals are prepared to engage themselves in various activities for the sake of their own personal comfort and for the acquisition of wealth and position and for ensuring the good of their kith and kin. But few of them are prepared to make any efforts or sacrifice for the general good of society. It is not realised that all the pleasures and comforts enjoyed by one are really derived from society and are not solely got from one's own means. Man does not show any gratitude to the society which has enabled him to enjoy his wealth, position and power. A man lacking gratitude is worse than an animal. He forfeits the grace of God.

To secure 'the grace of God one must adhere to right conduct and observe purity in thought, word and deed. Kindness and compassion are the hall-mark of a true human being. Young men of to-day are ready to listen to a thousand lies, but do not have the patience to pay heed to a single truth. One honest man who speaks with love is better than a hundred flatterers.

Young people do not realise the value of health and strength they enjoy during their years of youth. They should learn to lead purposeful, unselfish lives even while they have the benefits of youth and health, instead of dissipating all their energies and talents in the pursuit of sensuous objects and evil desires. An evil-minded person in a village is more harmful to the community than even a polluted pond.

Young persons take great pains to acquire degrees for securing good jobs. But they hardly take any trouble to develop their character and personality. Good conduct and character are the most essential requisites for a man. They are the basis for the spiritual life. If the spiritual aspect is neglected, man becomes an artificial, mechanical being with no genuine human quality in him. Young people today do not understand what is meant by spirituality. It is the knowledge of Divinity, which is 'the core of man's true nature. Spirituality reveals the basic principle that is immanent in everything and sustains the entire Cosmos.

***Vijnaana* without *viveka* will destroy millions**

Young people today lack a broad-minded Universal outlook which will enable them to lead exemplary lives. They are too much self-centred and, like frogs in a well, are preoccupied only with their narrow selfish interests. It is essential that they should broaden their vision and develop large-heartedness.

The uneducated persons in the world may not appear to be great patriots, but they do not do any harm to their country. The world is being destroyed by the highly educated who claim to be patriots. For example, there are great scientists in the United States of America and in the Soviet Union. Out of narrow considerations of national interest, they are busy producing monstrous bombs which will destroy millions. They do not realise that their country is only a part of this world. They are in perpetual dread of the destructive power of the weapons they have created. What is the reason for all this? It is the fact that while *Vijnaana* (science) has progressed, there has been no growth of *Viveka* (wisdom) at all. It is only when wisdom and science march together that the true character of science will be realised.

A loving heart is the only means to Divine Grace

Who is entitled to wield authority? Is it the person who has high educational qualifications and feels puffed up by his knowledge? No. Or is it the person who claims that he has all material resources and can use them as he likes? No. No one who is filled with pride and conceit is fit to wield power. It is only the person who is imbued with humility and appears to be not very knowledgeable that is fittest to wield authority. Hanumaan is an example of such a person. Although he was endowed with enormous prowess, he appeared as a simple person. This humility enabled him to leap over the ocean. Socrates, who was hailed as the wisest man among the Greeks, always professed that he knew nothing.

The knowledge that is paraded is like a seed ostentatiously planted on a rock for all to see. It will not sprout and yield fruit. It is only the seed that is planted in the soil will grow into a tree and bear fruit. The scholar who is humble and respectful towards everyone is the truly great man. One who lacks these qualities, however knowledgeable he may be, is only an incarnation of egoistic pride. The truly educated person should not have the slightest trace of ego. You may achieve great distinction in sports or in your examinations or in any particular field of study. But if you develop pride or arrogance as a result, it will bring about your downfall.

You must realise that the grace of the Divine cannot be got by sweet talk or staging songs. When your hearts are pure, the Divine will dwell in them. The Divine is not pleased by showy offerings or expensive paraphernalia. A loving heart is the only means to Divine Grace. 'All the study of scriptures will be of no avail for realising the Divine.

Five types of duties laid down for man

Five types of *Dharma* (duties) have been laid down for man. One is *Kula Dharma* (duties relating to his occupational group). The second is *Dhesha Dharma* (duty to the nation). The third is *Matha Dharma* (duties pertaining to his religion). The fourth is *Gana Dharma* (duties relating to society). The fifth is *Aapath Dharma* (the duty when he faces danger).

All these five types of duties are related to one's life in the phenomenal world and are not concerned with the Supreme Reality. All these duties have penalties for their violation. Without these penalties organised life is impossible. Such punishments should not be regarded as unwarranted impositions. On the contrary, they should be considered as essential corrective

measures conducive to one's good. Only the person who has been subject to such restraints can achieve anything great in life. Discipline is like the reins which regulate the movements of a horse. It is like the goad that controls the elephant. Without discipline and the punishment that may be inflicted if it is violated--man will not be able to correct his mistakes.

Seeing the change that the Sai devotees in Thamil Naadu are effecting in the lives of people around them, while transforming their own lives by their Saadhana, devotees elsewhere should ask themselves whether they are doing all they can to elevate their own lives and contribute to the improvement of others. Many have been coming to Bhagavaan for many years. They must examine in what way they have improved their character and conduct. How far have they shed their undesirable qualities? What good habits have they cultivated? How far are they living up to the teachings of Bhagavaan? How far do they adhere to the disciplines of the *Aashram*? These disciplines are intended for the benefit of the devotees themselves. Devotees coming from abroad have been strictly carrying out the instructions given to them.

Life must be lived for a purpose, an ideal

I expected that at least the students would observe strict discipline and set an example to others. It was unfortunate that this was not always the case. The students were a small number and it should be easy to develop unity amongst them and real fellow-feeling. How can they hope to serve the country well if they have not learnt to cooperate with each other while at College?

Students! Education should serve to teach you two things: What is life and how you should live. Life is not mere existence. It must be lived for a purpose, an ideal. A life without ideals is utterly worthless. Only character and humility can lend meaning to life. Students should strive to develop these qualities. Earning of money cannot be the sole purpose of education. If money was all that mattered, it could be got by other means than education by begging or stealing. Education should help one to acquire good qualities.

The Sai educational institutions have been established not to enable students to earn a living but to make them acquire good traits and lead ideal lives. I wish that henceforth you should concentrate not only on your studies but also on the development of your character so that you may serve as an example to others and promote Sai ideals everywhere by your actions.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 9 February 1984

The fate of the country will depend on the character of its people and character is elevated and purified by saadhana, the hard way of regulation of behaviour and the control of desire. God is the guardian, and as guardian, He has to warn and punish to wean people away from harmful habits. If it is necessary, the guardian will resort to the infliction of pain too, as a curative and corrective treatment.

Sri Sathya Sai

5. The Message of Shivaraathri

The 'Chaathaka' bird yearns for moonbeams cool; The bee does yearn for honeyed floral charm; The sick man yearns for curative medicine sweet The devotees yearn for the Lord in Parthi dwells. That, when known, all is known, Which unknown, none is known, That is Brahman, beyond reach of words, This is the Truth, the Path, the word of Sai.

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine *Aathma* ! Having achieved the rare fortune of a human body, one should ever strive to manifest the excellence which is its credential and to gain, as a result of that manifestation, Divinity Itself. When that is gained, nothing else need be gained. When the vision of That is won, there is nothing more to be visualised. When that is loved, nothing else would appear as worthy of love. All else would be trash and dust. When that is known, all is as good as known.

The 'Chaathaka' bird is all alert to drink the first few nectarine rain-drops that fall from the cloud. It does not allow either the fearsome typhoon, or the reverberations of thunder or the blinding flashes of lightning or even disastrous bolts from the clouds, to distract its concentration. The *Saadhaka* (spiritual aspirant), too, should in the same manner fill his heart with the yearning for God and await His nectarine grace of Love, not being distracted or disturbed by the joy and grief, profit and loss, honour and dishonour, that pummel him from all sides, or by the ridicule, the opposition or even hatred directed on him by his parents, kinsmen, and companions.

Prayers should rise from the heart, not from the lips

But, most *Saadhakas* today are only acting the part and pretending to be spiritually progressing. Their prayers and petitions to the Lord rise, not from the heart, but only from the lips. If the Lord takes them at their word and presents Himself before them offering them the Liberation they demand, they start stuttering and shivering. "Lord! I asked for Liberation, only as a repetitive formula. I do not desire Liberation, if it involves deserting my wife and children and my hard-earned wealth. Confer this gift on me, after my death. That would be more welcome".

There was a woodcutter once who collected and bundled a heavy load of fuel one day, since he needed extra money that day. On the jungle track, he waited long for someone who could help to lift the load on his head. Pining over his tragic poverty he cursed his fate.

He prayed pathetically to Yama, the God of Death. "Why have you forgotten me. Take me into your custody. End this miserable life". And Yama appeared in answer to the call.. "Come, I shall take you to my *Kingdom*", Yama said. The woodcutter replied, "Not so soon, my dear friend. But, you can do me another service. Please lift this bundle of fuel and place it on my head".

These *Saadhakas* bargain with God. They try to use the Lord to solve their problems and promise to adore Him when He brings them prosperity. They believe they can tempt Him with gifts of money, coconuts or cranial hair, as if they possess them by their own unaided skill! No. Offer Him steadfast faith, pure unselfish Love. Man has not tried to understand the magnificence of Love, its precious possibilities. It is far more valuable than tons and tons of erudition and miles-long titles before one's name. Place these on one pan of the balance called 'Life' and place one single drop of Love Divine in the other. The drop will outweigh the junk.

The three criteria for the *Saathwik* quality

The Saadhaka must adhere to *Sathwa* ideal - serenity, purity and equanimity. His inborn nature and social nurture might help him in this, but he must consciously and steadily cultivate this perseverance to attain purity of thought, word and deed. It is wrong to attribute the ups and downs in one's life to the will of God; they are due to the cultivation or neglect of this quality of perseverance.

Expansive Love, purity of intention and an eagerness to sacrifice--these three are the criteria for the *Saathwik* quality. They are the chief limbs of the spiritual body which require attention. Mental health and spiritual well-being depend on these limbs. The assertion, "I take refuge in Buddha" must be based on an illumined intellect. "I take refuge in *Sangha*" must therefore urge the Saadhaka to utilise the intellect as an instrument for the service of *sangha* (society). When the third statement, "I take refuge in *Dharma* (righteousness)" is made, it directs the Saadhaka to utilise it for strengthening and promoting righteousness, morality and virtue. The path of Love is the path of Dharma. Love results in enthusiastic service. Who deserves Love most? Nothing on earth deserves pure Love more than God, if one is aware of God in man, embodiment of Divinity. Everyone has passed through numberless lives in the past, lives spent in utter selfishness. So, egoistic impulses enslave him very drastically even now, preventing unselfish Love from sprouting and spreading. God seeks in man Love and Law. Love has to be regulated by Law. Without Law, Love cannot expand. It will be narrow and crooked. They are the negative and the positive.

People take up social service to advertise themselves

Love implies understanding and consequently, sympathy and compassion. These confer *Aanandha* (Divine Bliss). But man is lacking in Love and so in *Aanandha* also. When men form conflicting groups and plot to destroy each other, how can joy and peace reside in them? Ancient myths speak of wars of extermination between Gods and demons and between men and *raakshasas* (demons). But history today has to record wars between *raakshasas* who call themselves men.

Love is directed towards selfish ends. Sacrifice and charity are indulged in for the sake of self-aggrandizement. A person donates ten rupees and insists on the fact being published in a ten-inch long headline. People take part in social service in order to advertise themselves. How can the sweet contents be consumed when the bottle is tightly closed by the two corks--pomp and personal publicity. These have to be removed by the screw of selflessness. Then the innate virtues of Love and sacrifice can emerge and elevate your lives.

Purpose of fast and vigil on holy days

The nature of man is a mixture of progressive and regressive characteristics. He must take note of this and foster the former, to the exclusion of the latter. The will to renounce, to share, to give up, is a precious virtue. Curiosity, the longing to know, is another quality which must be used to know the Reality which appears as many and momentary. This knowledge can be attained only when the consciousness is purified, by the grace of God. Holy days like *Shivaraathri* are marked out in order to impress upon man's mind his duty to impose a 'fast' on the senses and a 'vigil' on his intelligence to keep away polluting impulses and inclinations. This is the Day when Shiva consumed the deadly poison that threatened to destroy the world and saved mankind from perdition.

The aspirant for Divine grace has to remember this day with gratitude. He must not exult when his happiness is promoted, nor be disheartened when misery becomes his lot. "Thy will, not mine" shall be his constant assertion to himself. This is seldom the case. Few seekers seek to unravel the intention of God, to tread the path that leads to Him, to follow the ideals He lays down. They follow their own instincts and judgements and get distress and despair as reward. They are not aware of the sacrilege they commit. They proclaim that God is the inner motivator and that He is present everywhere but they behave as if He is absent in the places they do not like Him to be. They fritter away precious time in dry discussions and controversies about God.

Each one can explore the Truth of God only as far as his capacity--moral, intellectual and mental--can delve into the mystery. One can collect from the ocean only as much water as his vessel holds. God is immeasurably vast; He is beyond the reach of the most daring imagination. A pupil of a particular standard in school has to study the texts prescribed for pupils of that level of intelligence. Annamaachaarya, the mystic poet, realised the limitation imposed by one's own failings, He sang:

"To what extent our minds do reach

To that extent your vision we get".

Do not allow the mind to dwell on others' faults

God appears to each one in the Form and the magnitude of glory which he can contain. The feeling of separation from God, the Source and Sustenance, is a laudable quality. Nursing it and fostering it can help to consecrate one's heart. Do not allow the mind to dwell on the faults and vices of others; it will be contaminated thereby. Fix it on the fairness and virtues of others; it will be sanctified thereby.

I know that during moments of emotional frenzy, you set aside your real nature and you indulge in abusing others or wish that they come to harm or exult over their distress. Such evil thoughts get implanted in your own minds and grow wild, yielding for your consumption, distress and dishonour in return. Why worry about others? Speak to them if you like them. If you do not like them, leave them alone. Why seek faults in them and talk ill of them? To do so is to invite spiritual downfall. Such people lose all the gains they hope to secure by *japa*, *puuja*, *dhyaana*, or *dharshan* (repetition of Lord's Name, ritual worship, meditation and divine vision). They will remain bitter despite all these saadhanas (spiritual disciplines), like the bitter gourd which a pilgrim carried with him, intending to make it sweet by dipping it in holy waters.

Mind of man should undergo transformation

The mind of man has to undergo transformation. It must promote not bondage but liberation. It must turn Godward and inward, not world ward and outward. Then only can attempts at economic, political and social transformation succeed in uplifting man's destiny. The mind plays many tricks to please you and give you a great opinion about yourselves. It revels in hypocrisy, riding on two horses at the same time. You may prostrate before Swaami and declare that you have surrendered. But, once you are away, you may behave otherwise and allow faith to fade away. Even the thought that you have not benefited from the *puuja* or *japam* you do, should not pollute your faith. To practise *Saadhana* is your duty, your innermost urge, your genuine activity. Leave the rest to the Will of God. This must be your resolve on holy *Shivaraathri*.

Prashanthi Nilayam, 29 February 1984

6. Students and *Saadhana*

THE power of the Spirit is indescribable. It is limitless. It can raise man from animality to Divinity. All knowledge which one acquires is of no use if it is not put into practice. It is like a lamp in the hand of a blind man.

The sage Naaradha, who was a master of the sixty-four sciences and arts, unable to achieve peace of mind, went to the sage Sanathkumaara to learn about the means of securing tranquillity. Sanathkumaara asked him whether he had tried to find out the truth about himself. Naaradha confessed that was the one thing he had not learnt. Sanathkumaara then told him that this ignorance was the cause of his lack of mental peace.

Today, from the time one wakes up, one is keen to know all about what is happening in the U S., Russia, Punjab and Delhi. The person who is so concerned about the news from everywhere, is not aware of the nuisance arising from within himself. It is only the person who has transformed himself that can reform others.

The ancient *Yoga Shaasthras* (spiritual sciences of divine communion) of Bhaarath have indicated different methods of self realisation. The awakening of the sleeping *Kundalini Shakthi* is one of them. The *Kundalini Shakthi* (dormant spiritual energy in man) is aroused by the process of breath control and is gradually led up to the top where it merges with the *Sahasraara* (the thousand-petalled lotus seated in the brain).

Meditation is wrongly equated with concentration

The vital force that is in man is also known as consciousness. To merge this consciousness in the Universal Consciousness has been described as Liberation in *Vedhaantha* (the concluding essence of *Vedhas*). Today various types of meditation are being promoted in India and outside. Many persons wrongly equate *dhyana* (meditation) with *ekaagratha* (concentration). There is no relationship between the two. Concentration is a routine everyday phenomenon in. life in any form of human activity--reading, walking, or eating. Where is the need to waste one's time on achieving something which comes naturally? What we should find out is how this concentration comes about.

Here is a book in one's hand. We see this book with our eyes. The moment we see it, we are able to read the letters. As soon as the letters are read, the intellect tries to understand the meaning and ruminate on it in the memory. The hand holding the book is a limb of the body. The eyes that see it are a sense organ. The intellect that understands and the memory that taminates are equally sense organs. It is the coordinated action of all the organs that enables us to examine any subject. Concentration thus takes place at the lower level of the sense organs.

Meditation is a process that takes place beyond the senses. Between the concentration at the sensory level and meditation that is above the senses there is a border line where *chinthana* (contemplation) takes place. Contemplation is the second half of *chith* (intelligence), whose other function is discrimination between fight and wrong.

Example of rose and the thorns

An illustration will make this clear. There is a rose plant, with branches, leaves, flowers and thorns. Locating the place where there is a flower calls for concentration. At this stage, we are concerned only with locating the flower. But the flower has to be plucked without touching the thorns. Love is the flower. Lust is the thorn. There is no rose without a thorn. How to get at the

flower of Love without touching the thorn of lust is the problem. This is where contemplation is needed. Having plucked the flower, how shall we use it? By offering it to the Divine.

Meditation means offering the flower of Love to the Divine. In the rose plant of our body, there is the rose of pure and sacred Love emitting the fragrance of good qualities. Below the rose, however, there are thorns in the form of sensual desires. The purpose of meditation is to separate the rose of selfless Love from the senses and offer it to the Lord.

Dhyaana (meditation) has been accorded a pre-eminent place in Bhaarath from ancient times. Nowadays people sit for meditation, considering it as a kind of pill which is taken when one has a headache or some other pain. Meditation is not such a simple affair. In the hoary past, sages like Sanathkumaara, Naaradha and Thumburu engaged themselves in meditation as a means of awakening the *Kundalini Shakthi* and leading it up to the *Sahasraara*. Now, meditation should be practised as a means of cultivating pure, selfless love, renouncing all attachments to worldly things.

Do's and Dont's of meditation

Even in sitting for meditation, certain rules have to be observed. The first requisite is to sit in the *Padhmaasana*, lotus posture. While seated in this asana (posture), care must be taken to keep the spine straight and steady, without bending this way or that. Some persons bend their necks during meditation. This is very harmful, as the arresting of the rising *Kundalini Shakthi* at the throat, where some subtle *naadis* (arteries) operate, may endanger the entire physical system. Many have suffered mental derangement on account of misdirection of the *Kundalini Shakthi*. During meditation one should not bend backwards. That is also harmful. The cloth one wears during meditation should be tied loosely so that there is no pressure on the waist. The eyes have to be concentrated on the tip of the nose. If the eyes are open, they are likely to turn in different directions and one's attention is likely to get distracted. The eyes should be half open. If they are fully closed, one may be overcome by sleep.

Before sitting for meditation, the mind should be freed from bad thoughts and filled with sacred thoughts. This calls for control over all the sense organs. The ears should be trained to listen only to matters relating to the Divine and to eschew evil gossip. The eyes should be told to see God. The mind should be restrained from restlessness by making it concentrate on the breathing process and relating inhalation and exhalation to the repetition of the *manthra*, "So-Ham," "So Ham" ("I am He"). By this process, the life-breath is controlled. This reveals the great power of *Yoga*. There is no need to undertake a separate exercise for awakening the *Kundalini Shakthi*. The process of breath control itself will achieve this purpose.

Three stages of meditation upon a Form

Some persons use a *Jyothi* (lamp) as a basis for meditation. The lamp reveals the oneness that is the basis of the Unity or the Divine as well as the multiplicity that reflects the manifestations of the Divine. In this method, the experience of bliss does not come quickly. There are three stages in this type of meditation: *uuha* (imagining the Form), *bhaava* (experiencing the Form) and *saakshaathkaara* (seeing It as a Reality). For instance, if one wishes to meditate upon Baba, he first tries to imagine with the closed eyes the figure of Baba as seen by him earlier. This figure vanishes within a few moments. In experiencing the figure, the process is longer and the impression also lasts longer. In this process, one starts envisaging the figure from head to foot and from the feet upwards. Gradually, by this process the picture of Baba gets firmly implanted

and becomes an inner reality. While the imagining process gives only a momentary glimpse, the experiencing method leads to the complete identification of the seeker with the Divine Form. Awareness of the Divine results in oneness with the Divine (*Brahmavith Brahmaiva Bhavathi*).

When we are experiencing the Divine Form, what is happening to our mind? The mind experiences every part of the Lord from head to foot and ultimately becomes one with the Form. It is the process of identification of the mind with the Divine form that constitutes true meditation. Meditation is not merging the Form in the mind. It is merging the mind in the Form so that the mind as such does not exist.

Conserve energy by all possible means

While sitting for meditation in a group, one should not be in contact with anyone else. This is highly important. Meditation is like the process of electrifying a wire. If a live wire comes in contact with something, it will produce a shock. During meditation, spiritual energy is generated. How is this energy lost? It is lost through finger nails and the hairs on one's body. This was the reason why the ancient *yogis* (spiritually advanced persons) allowed their nails and hairs to grow freely. Spiritual energy has to be conserved by all possible means. The *rishis* (saints) practised silence to conserve the energy lost through speech.

Do not develop too close relationship with one another. Such close relationship results in intimate friendship which produces mutual obligations and expectations. From these arise the sense of ego. When expectations are not fulfilled, resentment emerges.. When they are realised, the ego gets inflated. Either way, the consequences of entertaining desires are undesirable. When resentment grows, the discriminating power is weakened. One loses control over his tongue and indulges in all kinds of abuse. Abuse leads to sinful conduct. The whole process is generated by excessive association with one another.

Young persons tend to let their minds wander hither and thither. They should concentrate on their studies and should not give their minds a free rein. They should reduce their worldly concerns and devote some time to meditation every morning and evening. This will help to purify their minds and set them on the road to Divinity like the river losing itself in the ocean, the mind must merge in the Divine. Then there will be no mind at all. That blissful state can be realised only through the path of Love. Love is God. Live in Love. Realisation of the power of Love is the true aim of meditation. That Love is utterly selfless and is dedicated to the Divine.

Methods of meditation are many, but goal is one

In the practice of meditation, it should be realised that all cannot follow the same pattern or method. It varies according to the evolution and circumstances of each individual and his or her capacity and earnestness. Some worship the Supreme as the Universal Mother. Some look upon the Almighty as Father. Some regard God as the Supreme Friend. Some devotees approach the Divine as the Beloved or the Master. Jayadheva, Gauranga and Raamakrishna Paramahansa belonged to the last mentioned category. They did not practise meditation. They felt the presence of God everywhere. Where could they go for meditation? Such was their experience. To the true *saadhaka* evidence of the omnipresence of God can be found everywhere. By merely closing one's eyes, one does not engage in meditation. One must feel one's unity with God in one's inner being.

Prayer is for the mind what food is for the body. Just as wholesome food gives health and strength to the body, prayer purifies the mind and strengthens the spirit. If *bhajans* (devotional

songs) are done in an ostentatious manner, the ego gets bloated. Young people must proceed from thamas (the darkness of ignorance) to thapas (spiritual penance). They must be steadfast in pursuing whatever they take up. There is no meaning in doing meditation for two days and giving it up on the third day. Meditation must become an integral part of one's life. Along with it, all the knowledge and skills required for one's profession or vocation should be acquired.

Being in Swaami's college and residing in Swaami's hostel you are all regarded as exemplary students and respected as such. But you will not win that respect unless, when you go out into the outside world, you maintain the same discipline and strength of character wherever you may be and preserve the sacred atmosphere and sublimity associated with Sathya Sai Institutions.

Discourse to students of Sathya Sai Institute Hostel,

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 11 March 1984

God is no partial benefactor; He gives the fruit from every tree, according to the seed. You have planted the sour mango, hoping to use the fruit for pickles; then, why lament that the fruit is not sweet to the tongue? Do good and aspire to get the fruit of goodness--that is pardonable. It is not as bad as doing bad and blaming God that He has given you the need for evil deeds.

Sri Sathya Sai

17. Examinations then and now

FOR every man the development of his personality is a primary duty. The *Samskrith* word for "Personality" is marked by *Pourusham* (vitality and heroism). This is not found in everybody. It is revealed only in outstanding persons, who have made a mark in history. The Raamaayana, which is the textbook on Dharma (righteousness) for the Hindhus, describes Raama's personality as the product of character, morality and adherence to truth. Emperor Ashoka was another great personality in history.

A true individual is one who manifests the divinity that is within him. The word "person" is used in Latin to describe the character in a play. It was later used in the English language to describe a person of divine descent.

It is derived from the *Samskrith* word "*Purusha*", which describes the divine origin of the individual. Hence, the primary purpose of education must be to make the individual develop his personality by the pursuit of spiritual and moral disciplines. Education is thus a process through which man is led to his highest status. It is the failure to infuse education with ethical content that is responsible for the futility of education to-day.

Examinations in ancient days were morality tests

In ancient times examinations were held not as an imposition on students but for the development and protection of the personality of the students. Examinations to-day have become a kind of punishment for the students. Unlike present-day examinations, which are primarily memory tests, examinations in ancient days were morality tests. The growth of educational institutions to-day is more an index of a growing disease rather than a means of training people to solve their problems. Everywhere there is trouble, violence and confusion, most of which is mused by educated persons. Hijacking, kidnapping, looting and other anti-social acts are indulged in mostly by educated persons. Because of the absence of character and morality in education, the educated persons are behaving in an unbecoming manner. Improper education results in great harm to the whole nation.

There is a wish-fulfilling tree in the shrine of the heart; that tree is surrounded by weeds. Unless the weeds are removed, the wish-fulfilling tree cannot be seen. That wish-fulfilling tree is a proper system of moral education. If the weeds that have grown round the tree are not removed, the educational system will not grow properly and yield good fruits.

In preparing question papers for examinations, teachers should observe certain rules. The questions should relate to what has been taught to the students. Very often questions do not bear any relation to what the students have been taught or to the prescribed *syllabi*. This results in misbehaviour by the students. The examiner should also know the answers for the questions he prepares. The other day an issue relating to a Medical Examination question paper went up to the Supreme Court. Teachers often fail to complete the syllabus within the prescribed period.

Right teaching is absent today

Teaching has become a process of transmission from head to head. Teachers teach with the head, and students listen to them with the head. Students go to the examination-hall with a headload of information, empty it out on the answer books, and return home

empty-headed. This kind of student may earn degrees, but what good will these youths bring to the people around? True teaching goes straight to the heart and imprints itself permanently on the hearts of the students.

By preparing students merely for answering certain questions in examinations they are induced to concentrate only on portions of a subject and not the subject as a whole. There is need for an interdisciplinary approach so that the connection between one subject and another is properly understood.

Teachers should regard their profession as one in which they not only teach but also continuously learn more and more about the subject that they have to deal with. It should be like the battery in a car which gets charged when the car is running.

University teachers, especially those serving in the Sathya Sai Institute, have to bear in mind certain important obligations. The foremost among them is the eschewing of involvement in politics. A great national leader like Baala Gangaadhar Thilak, who played a key role in the national struggle was a teacher in a High School at Poona. When he was asked, what ministerial position he would like to have when India became free, he replied that he would continue to remain a teacher and not seek any ministerial job. The proper training of young men who might become future ministers was, in his view, a more important job than being a minister himself. This showed Thilak's spirit of sacrifice and devotion to the national interest.

Baba's discourse as Chancellor of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, inaugurating the Five-Day Workshops on Examination Reform, jointly sponsored by the Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi and the Sathya Sai Institute at the Institute's Campus, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 19 March 1984

God is Omnipresent; He is immanent in every being in equal measure. So, man must visualise Him equally in himself and in others.

That is to say, he sees only God in all. So how can he injure others or fear that he will come to harm through others? This is the basis of the Indian ideal of Ahimsa.

Sri Sathya Sai

8. Teachers and students

MAN does not become fully human merely by making himself a prosperous moral person. Spiritual progress has also to be achieved. Body, mind and spirit--these three together make up the man. The animal is concerned primarily with the body. Man has risen since he has been equipped with a mind. Cultivation of the spirit will elevate him to Divinity. The three are intertwined and interdependent. Each promotes the other. Without the mind, the body cannot decide on any step. Mind and body have to subserve the spirit and become aware of the Divine *Aathma* (Divine Self).

Health is very important for a fully disciplined life. Health means wholeness, fullness. The senses and the mind have to be controlled and regulated, so that man can win the battle of life. Self-control is sense control, mind control. This is, otherwise called *samskruthi* (culture). Culture must be evident in every aspect of life while studying, eating, sleeping, playing games etc. Culture expresses itself as discipline.

You must ensure that living is a purposeful process. Without such a faith, life is rendered wild and wasteful. With it, you can attain Divinity. The faith will induce a regulated and disciplined life. A farmer was once charged before a court in Greece for adulterating the milk he was selling. The judge found that the milk was indeed not pure and was about to deliver the sentence when the farmer's earnest plea of innocence induced him to probe further into his habits. He found that the farmer milked his cows on some days at 4 a.m, some days at 6 a.m. and on some other days, when he could not sleep long, even at 3 a.m. The quality of the milk was affected by this irregularity and waywardness in milking. The farmer was admonished and advised to adhere to a regular time.

Duty and discipline to be observed by teachers

Duty is best discharged through discipline. Discipline for teachers cannot be limited to punctuality and adherence to the timetable. Duty for them involves intensive preparation, choosing the most effective means of communication and discovering how best to instruct and inspire the pupils under their care. The pupils and the teachers must both have high ideals and aspirations. You know Darwin, the great scientist. Though born in a poor family, Darwin even as a boy had a heart full of ambition. He came under the care of a teacher named Henslow who discovered his talents and fostered his aspirations. He filled his pupil with courage and enthusiasm until he became an image of his master.

Vaalmeeki, by meditating on the glory of Raama, was able to mould himself into the immortal poet who composed the Raamaayana. He became an embodiment of that glory, and therefore, he could create that great epic. When we decide on writing a letter, we gather in our minds the facts to be communicated, the manner in which it has to be written, and then, we start writing it. When we decide on building a house, we build it first in our minds--the drawing room here, the dining hall there, the kitchen at this end, etc., and then, draw the plan on paper. What we do is to project an ideal into action, into a concrete program.

The external action or achievement is only a reflection of the Inner Being, which frames the ideas and concepts. So, the transformation and refinement have to be done in the inner region of the mind. Constant reflection on the glory of God helps to transmute the body, mind and spirit. The face mirrors the moods of the mind. When the mind is gloomy, the face records it; when the mind is full of *Aanandha* (Divine Bliss), the face spreads *Aanandha* all around.

The highest duty is to have a high ideal

Aurangzeb was Emperor Shah Jehan's son. He was tired of waiting to ascend the throne; so he imprisoned the father and crowned himself. His evil-minded comrades desired to put an end to Shah Jehan's life, so that Aurangzeb could be safe on the throne. They planned to execute him. When Shah Jehan came to know of their plot, he felt glad that he could escape the humiliation and misery of exile and imprisonment. Aurangzeb gave up the idea of execution, when he found that the father was welcoming that fate. He did not relish the idea of satisfying the old man. He decided to keep him in prison until his death, with a single feeble-minded servant and the Holy Quoran as his only companions.

Shah Jehan was elated at the opportunity to read the Holy Quoran to the companion. But, he had to give up the attempt when there was no response from him. He said to himself: "What have I to do with companions now? Peace is the first companion. The joy of Love is the second, the third is Affection, the fourth is Adoration. and the fifth is Sweetness. All these together are inspiring me to become aware of my soul". With this resolution, he spent himself in the Holy Quoran, and became one with its message. This is the highest duty, to have a high ideal, to reach It and become IT.

Faith is the foundation for any forward step

When ridiculing, reprimanding or punishing pupils, teachers must try to picture themselves in their position and discover how they would have reacted to the same, when they were pupils. Self- inquiry of this kind will be very useful. The word *Upa-ni-shath* teaches a great lesson. 'Upa' means near, 'ni' means down and 'shath' means sit; the pupil sits down, at the feet of the Guru and also near him. 'Thath' (That) is the *Guru*; 'Thwam' (You) is the pupil. The "*thwam*" poses the question and the "*Thath*" gifts the answer. The bond is love from "*Thath*", humility from the "*Thwam*". And '*asi*' (*is*) connotes the *Aanandha* at the knowledge, the illumination, that is shared. The educational process adopted at Prashaanthi Nilayam might appear to be novel but it is really superior and highly beneficial. It has not been devised for awarding degrees only; it is aimed' at equipping the student for an integrated life. The student must be aware of all aspects of the adventure of life. One must be aware of the do's and dont's, the ups and downs of all fields of activity--moral, material, scientific, philosophical, political and economic. Or else, one will be haunted by doubts when faced with difficult situations and problems.

Therefore, teachers as well as students must develop faith in the validity and worth of this process. A Thelugu proverb exhorts man thus: "Believe and Live". Faith is the very foundation for any forward step. If the step has to await the dawn of faith through experience, one cannot progress at all.

Journey of the spirit from the individual to the Universal

The journey of the spirit is from the individual to the universal, from '*I*' to '*We*.' It is said by some, "*I and You are one*" but the reality is "*I and You are We*" and "*We and We are one*." Students have to be aware of the mergence of the self in the all-pervading Self--not merely physical existence. In deep sleep, the '*I*' alone persists but even the '*I*' is not perceived! A person whose eyes are closed declares that he does not see anything. "*It is all 'dark*." So, he sees darkness! Something in him sees both light and darkness. That is the Witness.

When baby Krishna clamoured for milk, Yasodha said that it was too early an hour and she would feed him only at nightfall. Krishna closed his eyes and said night had fallen. The mother said that the darkness of night is different. It cannot happen when one person closes his eyes. But Krishna argued that light contains darkness and darkness has light in it. When one is present, the second is not evident, that is all. The Sun illumines the world but hides the stars. The child contains the old man; the old man has childhood persisting in him | Grief has joy latent in it; joy has the potence to land the person in grief. When one is evident, the other is hidden, that is all.

Teachers must endeavour to help each pupil to unfold his native talents and innate skills and recognise his latent potentialities. When you plant a sapling, you provide it water and manure; you ensure that it receives plentiful sunlight and air. But, the wonder is the plant does not become air, soil, manure or water. It grows as the very plant which was the Truth of the seed. Recollect your own childhood and boyhood, ' the struggle for preserving and promoting your individuality and deal with your students who have the same problems and the-same purpose.

Self-examination helps correction of one's attitude

There is a Telugu proverb, "It is always an old mud pot, if the mother-in-law breaks *it*." When she stumbles over a glass tumbler and breaks it, she blames the daughter-in-law for keeping it at that spot. When the daughter-in-law stumbles and breaks it, the fault still is the daughter-in-law's. "Have you no eyes?" she asks. The mother-in-law holds that she is never in the wrong. Such an attitude has to be given up. Self examination helps the correction of one's attitudes. Emperor *Bhoja* had a unique way of testing and judging the worth of *Gurus*. He never pitted one *Guru* against another. He arranged contests and competitions between the pupils of different *Gurus* and from the result of these tests, he honoured the *Gurus*.

The *Aathma* is the Truth of Truths

In our educational institutions and in this Institute, students must shape themselves as 'images' of their teachers. They must spread the message of our ideals throughout the world. Teachers must live that message and students must imbibe it and become it. The *Aathma* is the Truth of Truths. When one achieves its awareness, all knowledge is added unto-him.

Imagine a coconut tree with a headload of nuts. It casts a long 'shadow on the ground and the shadow fruits are equally plentiful. When one climbs the tree and plucks the fruit, he can also be seen moving along the shadow tree and plucking the shadow fruit. So too, when one seeks to know the *Aathma* and succeeds, he can at the same time progress along the "World" (which is an illusory shadow) and gain the shadow-fruit (which is. trivial and temporary).

This is a noble task-- hard but heavenly Saadhana (spiritual effort). Teachers have to undertake it with patience and humility, always standing forth as examples and ideals. They can then confer on the world the invaluable boon of *Aathmic* Awareness, through the students whom they instruct.

*Bhagavan's valedictory Discourse, Workshop on
Examination Reform at the Institute of Higher Learning,
Prashaanthi Nilayam, 23 March 1984*

9. Manifest your Divinity

EDUCATED persons did not seem to have any regard for moral values. They have no gratitude for those who helped them in times of need. They have no consideration for their kith and kin and do not hesitate to inflict harm on them. Students who have gone through many years of higher education are reported to have behaved in an unworthy manner. Educated young men and women do not behave like cultured human beings after a few months of married life. Many lead miserable lives. What is the value of an education which does not enable a man to do his duty by his wife and children?

The first requisite is the elimination of the bad-. qualities prevailing among educated persons. They have to return to the path of morality and right conduct. Many educated persons have neither fear of sin nor love of God. Those who appear to be pious and god-loving have no genuine good qualities and by their external postures seem to be attempting to impose even on the Divine. It is this kind of hypocritical behaviour which is vitiating the atmosphere everywhere and promoting-disorder and confusion. Everyone should, therefore, embark upon getting rid of bad traits and implanting divine qualities. Man should realise the divine within. For this the path of love is the means.

Beginning of the Four *Yugas* and their significance

Of the four *Yugas*--*Kritha*, *Thretha*, *Dhwaapara* and *Kali Yuga* we are today in the *Kali yuga* (Iron Age). The *Kritha yuga* is said to have begun in the Vaishakha month; the *Thretha yuga* in the month of Kaarthika and the *Dhwaapara yuga* in the month of Mrigasirsha. The ancients celebrated the days of the beginning of each *yuga* in an appropriate manner, with due ceremony. By efflux of time, with the decline in human qualities, the significance of these observances was forgotten and the *Ugaadhi* day came to be observed only as the beginning of a new year in the *almanac*. Thus the beginning of the *Kali yuga*, which was originally in the month of Maagha, came to be observed in Chaithra *maasa*, when the Sun enters the Mesha (Ram) asterism and marks the beginning of a new year. The *Ugaadhi* is not celebrated as in olden times. We have now only new year days based upon the position of the Sun or the Moon.

The name of the new year is *Rakthaakshi*. The name is obviously dreadful. *Rakthaakshi* means bloodshot eye. It is only when one is filled with hatred and greed and wickedness that one's eyes turn red. But it is wrong to judge anything by the name only. The name may be attractive and sweet but the person may be quite different. A man with the name *Dharmaraaja* (the King of righteousness) may be evil from head to foot. A person named Sundararaaja (a prince of beauty) may be loathsome.

Rakthaakshi bears a dreadful name, but the year is likely to prove a very peaceful one. The ruler for this year is *Chandra* (the Moon deity). His minister is *Shukra*. Moon and *Shukra* are well disposed towards each other. More than that, *Suurya* (the Sun), who is the presiding deity for food crops, is favourably placed. *Suurya* is capable of destroying everything and creating everything. This year, because of the Sun's position, there will be no lack of rains and there will be sufficient foodgrains.

Lead a righteous life to purify your hearts

Looking, however, at the world scene as a whole, there is fear about the likelihood of a disastrous war, because of conflicts between countries in different parts of the world. It is likely

that peace may be affected in some areas, but there is no ground for apprehending any grave crisis. No major calamity appears likely this year. All godly persons should strive to promote the welfare of the world by their prayers and actions.

There was a famous sculptor in Italy known as Michaelangelo. A friend of his found him one day chiselling a big piece of rock. The friend told him: "Why are you working so hard with this rock? Why don't you go home and take some rest.?" Michaelangelo replied: "I am trying to release the Divine that is in the rock. I wish to bring out of this lifeless stone the Living divinity that is embedded in it." *If that sculptor could create out of an inanimate piece of stone a living Image of God, cannot human beings vibrant with life manifest the living Divinity that resides in them?*

What is the reason for this incapacity to realise the Divinity within? It is because we do not realise the soiled cover in which it is wrapped up. If our clothes get dirty, we change them because we are ashamed to appear in dirty garments. If our house, is dirty, we try to clean it so that visitors may not get a bad impression. But when our minds and our hearts are polluted, we do not feel ashamed. Is it not strange that we should be so much concerned about the cleanness of our clothes or our homes, but are not concerned about the purity of our hearts and minds which affect our entire life?

To purify our hearts and minds, the first thing we have to do is to lead a righteous life. Our actions must be based on morality. Indulging in abuse of others or inflicting pain on them is not a sign of human nature. The evil that we do to others ultimately recoils on us. Auspicious days like *Ugaadhi* should be used for making resolutions to change our ways of life and to purify our behaviour by giving up all bad qualities.

Discourse on Ugaadhi, Thelugu New Year's Day,

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 2 April 1984

Faith in God in desperate situations wins victory; want of it brings about defeat and death.

Sri Sathya Sai

10. Who is the greatest?

DURING a visit to Ooty in April 1984, Bhagavaan related the following story about Sage Naaradha's encounter with Lord Naaraayana, to the small group of devotees accompanying him:

On one occasion Naaradha went to the Lord. In the course of their conversation, Naaraayana asked Naaradha: "You are moving around three worlds, what news have you brought for Me from your wanderings? Have you seen anything great in my creation?" "What is greater than Yourself in the world", said Naaradha. "I am asking you about my creation and not about myself", said Naaraayana.

Naaradha said: "I do not understand the question." "There *are the Panchabhuthas* (five basic elements). Which is the greatest among them?" Naaraayana asked. Naaradha said: "The earth is the biggest." Naaraayana said: "In the earth three-fourths are occupied by water."

Naaradha agreed that water is greater than the earth. But Naaraayana observed: "All the oceans were drunk by the sage Agasthya in one gulp. Therefore, who is greater, water or Agasthya?" Naaradha agreed that Agasthya was greater. But Naaraayana observed that "Agasthya is remaining as a star in the sky. In the vast firmament, Agasthya is merely twinkling as a small star; is not the firmament greater than the star?" Naaradha said that the firmament is greater than Agasthya. Then Naaraayana said, In my *Avathaar* as Vaamana I covered the entire earth and sky with one foot of mine. So is the firmament greater or my foot? Then Naaradha said: 'Your Foot'.

Lord's Devotees are greater than the Lord

"If my foot itself is so great, am I not greater than my foot?" Naaraayana asked. Naaradha agreed. Then Naaraayana said: "Although I am great, I am confined in the hearts of my devotees. So the devotees are greater than myself. And therefore, wherever my devotees sing my name I am there".

Hence, everyone must cultivate a broad mind, a large-hearted outlook. Broad mindedness is expansion, narrow-mindedness is contraction. Devotees should also cultivate broad mindedness. It is to broaden the heart that name of the Lord should be chanted. Instead of singing by oneself, when devotees sing in groups, a sense of unity develops. By all people singing in unison and all hands clapping together, all hearts become one. This unity is proclaimed by the *Vedhas* by describing the different organs of the Lord as the source of the power in the different sense organs of a human being.

(On another evening at Ooty, Bhagavaan expatiated on how devotional songs should be sung).

Naaradha once asked Sriman Naaraayana what was His permanent address. Naaraayana replied: "Wherever my Bhaktha (devotee) sings my name, I am present there". Then Naaradha asked: "There are innumerable places in which the devotees sing your name, how can you be present in all those places at the same time?" (*Bhagavan explained that it was not any kind of singing that appealed to the Lord*). In singing there are some who indulge in gymnastics and do not reveal genuine devotional feeling. When songs are sung in that manner, how can the Lord be present there.?' (*Bhagavan illustrated it by reciting merely the musical notation Sa, Ri, Ga*).

Devotional singing which attracts the Lord

Where the singers merely emphasise the *Raaga* and the *Thaala* (tune and rhythm), He will not be present. It is only when the song is melodious combining *Raaga*, *Thaala* and *Bhaava* (the tune, the rhythm and the feeling) only there will He be present. The singing must be full of feeling. The Lord is moved only by the feeling that is expressed, not by musical talent as such. It does not matter if the *raaga* is not perfect and the *thaala* is not perfect. Those appeal only at the worldly level. The Lord loves only the sincerity of feeling.

There was a great musician in Akbar's Court known as Thansen. He used to sing night and day and the music was mellifluous. It was perfect music but there was no deep feeling in his singing.

One day Akbar and Thansen were going round the city. Akbar found an old man singing to himself songs in praise of God. Akbar stopped his chariot and went on listening to the song of the devotee and even without his knowing it, tears started flowing from his eyes. His

heart was deeply moved. He went some distance and told Thansen: "You have been singing for a long time before me and I have always found your music very sweet to the ears but it has never moved my heart, but the music of this devotee has melted my heart. I wish to know the difference between your singing and the singing of this devotee!" Thansen replied: "Mahaaraaja! I have been singing to please you, but this devotee is singing to please God, that is the difference."

So something which is sung to please a man cannot move the heart. Only that which is addressed to God can have that effect. What pleases the Lord alone can change the mind of man. Both the devotee and the great musician Thansen were singing well, but only the song filled with devotional feeling could appeal to God.

Ooty, South India, April 1984

The age span, 16-30 years, is crucial, for that is the period when life adds sweetness to itself, when talents, skills, and attitudes are accumulated, sublimated and sanctified. If the tonic of unselfish Seva (selfless service) is administered to the mind during this period, life's mission is fulfilled--for the process of sublimation and sanctification will be hastened by this tonic.

Sri Sathya Sai

11. Spread the message of Love

THE individual, the society and the nation constituted an inextricably linked organism. The peace and welfare of the nation depend on the peace and progress of society, which in their turn are dependent on the peace and good conduct of individuals. Unless individuals develop mutual regard and tolerance and cultivate equal-mindedness towards each other, there can be no peace and harmony in the community. Material progress alone cannot bring about peace and harmony and happiness among people. America is an example of a country with a high degree of material progress, in which the people have little love for each other and have neither happiness nor peace of mind.

The astonishing, progress of science and technology has not brought with it corresponding powers of discrimination and wisdom. Man must realise that the sense organs, through which he explores the external and discovers the powers latent in Nature and the physical universe, function because of the Divinity which is immanent in them. Without the power of the Divine, the eyes cannot see or the ears hear or the mind think.

Unselfish love is the only way to attain God

Our ancients were not ignorant of science. But in pursuing scientific enquiries, they did not rest content with knowing all about creation. They were keen to understand the Creator who was responsible for the creation. They sought to know the nature of the unchanging reality, that was behind the continually changing phenomenal Universe. This spiritual quest leads to the realisation of the Divinity that is present in all living things and permeates all things in the Universe.

Members of the Sai Organisation must carry on their work in the firm faith that all are the children of one God. They must carry on their service activities in a spirit of unselfish dedication to the Divine. The practice of pure unselfish love is the only way to attain God. They should purify their hearts and minds, regarding their body as the temple of the Divine.

Today we see disorder, violence and hatred in various parts of the country. Conditions appear to be deteriorating from day to day. In this situation, the duty of the Sai devotees is clear. They must cultivate *Premathathwa* (the principle of love) and make it the basis of all their actions. They must wean the villagers away from bad habits and advise them not to fall victims to the divisive forces that are rampant amongst them, There is no place for party politics in the field of rural betterment.

Sai workers should identify themselves with the interests of the villagers and serve them with love and sympathy. This is the *saadhana* (spiritual effort) in which they should engage themselves.

Dharmakshethra, on the occasion of the sixteenth anniversary celebrations, 12-5-1984

People boast that they have been coming to Puttaparthi since 20, 15 or 10 years, as if we have some grades of senior or junior according to the year, during which they have contacted Puttaparthi; but really speaking, one has to value only the

beneficial changes brought about by that contact in the character and conduct of the individual.

How much have you imbibed, of the lessons learnt from here? How much have you succeeded in stopping the leaks which, as outer-faced senses, were draining your discrimination and drying up the fountain of inner joy?

Sri Sathya Sai

12. Combine morals with business

THE world attracts man in multifarious ways, but it will not allow man's thoughts or intelligence to go beyond its own limits. Content with the satisfaction derived from the physical world, man does not consider what is in store for him in the future. He devotes all his energies, physical and mental, and all his resources to achieving material comforts, power, position and honour, but makes no attempt to show his gratitude to the society from which he derives all these comforts, wealth and position.

For right living, righteousness and character are essential. The divine is the life-breath of man. The fulfilment of life consists in dedicating all one's energies to these objectives. Man, however, does not have faith in the divine. Whether one believes in God or not, one can see from moment to moment evidence of the presence of Divinity wherever one turns. Without Divinity humanness will not blossom. A man's life shines amidst enormous vicissitudes only when he displays qualities like equanimity and compassion. Because man covers his mind in a cloak of ignorance, blinkers his eyes with egoism, and closes his heart with the doors of pride, he forgets the Lord who created him and protects him.

Such a man is unable to listen to any teaching. He worships at the shrine of the sense organs. As his desires go on mounting, he is unable to listen to what is wholesome for him. He has no relish for the company of the good. He has no awareness of the transience of life. He does not realise that his life and all that he enjoys may pass away in a moment. He does not recognise the passing nature of both joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, success and failure. Obsessed with the acquisition of wealth and power, he does not realise the Divinity that is his essential nature. Immersed in ignorance, he wastes his life in the pursuit of impermanent things.

Thirst for wealth has no limit, it is insatiable

It is on the basis of this fact that Sri Shankaraachaarya declared in a famous verse in the *Bhaja Govindham*: "Oh! Man do not be proud of your wealth, progeny or youth. All these will be taken away in a moment by Time. Destroy this world of illusions and enter the seat of the Eternal." The *thrishna* (thirst) for wealth is folly! *Thrishna* has two meanings, "thirst and desire." It is natural for man to have desires and thirst. But there is a difference between desire and thirst. It is natural for men not to be content with what they have, but to desire for more and more goods and more and more comforts. But in seeking fulfilment of such desires, one should take care not to cause any harm or suffering to others. *Thrishna* is different from desire. It has no limit. It is insatiable.

One should earn his living by just means

Dharma (the code of righteousness) lays down for men a regulatory path. Like the effulgence of the rays of the Sun, *Dharma* illumines the paths which men should follow for the welfare and progress of society. Among the laws of *Dharma*, *Nyaayam* (justness) is most important. Rectitude means that one should earn his living by just means and be an example to others by just living. Justness consists in making no difference between oneself and others. Whatever may happen to Oneself or one's relations, whatever difficulties one may have to face, one should not swerve from the path of rectitude. Justness is like the mariner's compass. In whatever way you put it, the needle will point only towards the North. Similarly, justness reveals the Divinity in man and makes him enjoy the bliss of the Divine. Hence, the ideal human life should be one in which rectitude forms the basis for every action.

Today, whatever prosperity one enjoys, whatever comforts one secures, all of them are derived from society. Some rules of Dharma have been laid down for ensuring that the wealth that is earned from society is devoted to the benefit of society. In the process of acquiring wealth one may be guilty of some lapses. It is to make amends for such lapses that one must practise charity.

Life consists of a constant interchange of pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, heat and cold. Happiness is an interval between two pains. The sour rind that covers an orange protects the sweet juice inside. We must look upon pain, anxiety and sorrow as the protecting cover for the peace and bliss that is experienced later. It is a mistake to seek an unending series of pleasures and comforts in life. Real happiness cannot be found that way. Without experiencing difficulties and troubles one cannot know the value of peace and pleasure.

People suffer because they set no limits to desires

Man thinks that the more he has of worldly goods the happier he would be. But, as desires grow, disappointments and troubles also increase. There should be a limit to our desires, attachments and ambitions. The world is suffering from numerous troubles because people set no limits on their desires. Nature has prescribed limits for everything--for the temperature of the body, the capacity of the eye to tolerate light or for the ear to listen to sound. When these limits are crossed, harm is caused to the organs concerned.

Life itself is like a limited company. All actions in it should be governed by the limits applicable to each of them. When desires are controlled, genuine happiness is experienced. Even in practising charity, limits should be observed. One's gifts should not exceed one's financial capacity. Nor should they be below one's capacity. In the former case, one will face financial troubles. In the latter, one will be withholding from those in need what is due to them. Charity is not limited to money alone. One must share one's physical, mental and spiritual resources with those in need in society. It is through such sharing and sacrifice that the awareness of the Spirit (*Aathma jnaana*) is achieved. Charity should not be indiscriminate. Help should be rendered according to the needs of the case. The hungry must be fed, the naked must be clothed.

Although one may know how much good can be derived through *thyaaga* (sacrifice), one does not make any sacrifice. One may aspire for wealth, but one should only seek what one is entitled or competent to get. A bank cashier handles lakhs of Rupees every day. But he is entitled only to his salary. He should not desire for more money than what he can earn legitimately. Excessive wealth carries with it many dangers. Human values are forgotten by the affluent. As long as there is wealth the evils resulting from it are not realised. It is only when it is lost that one begins to realise one's follies. It is better to be forewarned and learn to lead a righteous and upright life from the beginning. Wealth may come and go. Morality is what one should cultivate. What is morality? It is right conduct in accordance with time and place.

Businessmen are responsible for to-day's corruption

What is the root-cause of all the disorder, chaos, crime, falsehood and violence that prevail in the country today? It is the behaviour of people contrary to the dignity of human nature that is responsible for the present situation. All the education that one receives has no relation to human values. Whether it be in the sphere of political behaviour or social conduct, economic activity or spiritual pursuits, all one's actions are based upon the tendencies of the mind. No change in any form of activity is possible unless the mind is changed. That is why the *Vedhas* (ancient scriptures of spiritual wisdom) proclaimed that the mind is the cause of the bondage and the

liberation of men. One who wants to change others must first change himself. The heart is like a lock and the mind is like a key. If you turn the key to the right, you open the heart to God; if you turn it to the left, you turn it towards attachment to worldly things.

There is no use blaming the government for all the evils prevailing today. The people are responsible for the injustice, the wickedness, the falsehood and the corruption prevalent in the country. The people cannot disown their responsibility for the actions of a government which has been placed in power by their votes. Whether a government is good or bad depends on the people themselves. There is widespread talk in the country about corruption. Many come and ask me: Swaami! when will corruption end in this country? Who is responsible for this corruption? Is it the government? No. It is the businessmen who are directly responsible for this corruption.

Engage in business with faith in the Divine

For their own selfish reasons and private gain businessmen have been financing those in power and making them more and more powerful. If you businessmen live up to your fight principles, all this corruption can be ended in a moment. It is true that there is no one who does not desire wealth. An old Telugu proverb says that even a dying person will get up if he sees somebody offering money. It is not surprising if, when bribes are offered, officials do not refuse them. It is for businessmen to set a limit to their business and their profits and utilise their abilities for the promotion of public good. It may be difficult to combine business with morality. Therefore, the first requisite is to install morality in the heart and, with faith in the Divine, engage oneself in business. If this is done the nation will benefit from the business man's efforts and he will be serving society.

Today everyone talks only about what he wants. He says: I want this, I want that. If he loses anything he bemoans his loss. The whole of life is spent in acquisition and losing and there is no peace of mind. Businessmen have to understand the basis of human relations and cultivate harmony and understanding. Unless such a broad-minded approach is developed, businessmen will not experience the bliss of the Divine.

How long can the pleasure derived from education, wealth, health or position last? Like the lamp that sheds its light on all alike, you must cultivate love towards all.

Purify yourself by engaging in service to society

Love lives by giving and forgiving. Self lives by getting and forgetting. Everybody seeks Liberation. Everyone wants immortality. But how is immortality to be got? Removal of immorality is the only way to immortality. If we are filled with hatred, envy, pride and other evil qualities, how can we hope to achieve immortality? You must cultivate good thoughts and do good actions. You must engage yourself in service to society. By this process you purify yourself. You cannot reach the Divine unless you are pure. The unchanging, eternal, ever pure, blissful Supreme is the goal. By your steady pursuit of Saadhana (spiritual effort), you must strive to reach that goal. While remaining in the world of business, you must keep this high goal in view and carry on your business, whatever it may be.

Do not regard all your various possessions, houses, vehicles, wealth, etc., as permanent. There have been great emperors in the past who ruled over vast empires. When they passed away, what did they take with them? Posterity does not care even to remember their names.

What you cannot take with you does not really belong to you, You are filled with fear, like the ticketless traveller who gets into the train. In the journey of life, if you want to travel without fear

you must have the ticket of a good conscience. If you adhere to right conduct, you will have no need to fear any one.

Seek peace of mind through good deeds

The great conqueror, Alexander, when he was approaching his end, called all his warriors and told them that when he died, his body should be taken to the grave with his two hands held upwards. On seeing the funeral procession with hands of the emperor held up, the people asked why the emperor was being carried in that manner. They were told that the great emperor, who had amassed immense wealth wanted to show that when he was leaving the world he was going empty handed, taking nothing with him. The lesson of this episode is that we should seek not unlimited worldly possessions but contentment and peace of mind through good deeds. All that we accumulate is really not our property. It belongs to the people..

If conditions in Bhaarath are to be improved; it is only businessmen who can do this. Businessmen can even reform the government. Businessmen can promote the world's progress. They can also ruin the world economy. By their own right conduct, businessmen should try to set right the administration.

Bhaarath is the land of our birth. It is a *Thyaaga bhuumi*, sacred land (devoted to sacrifice), *Karmabhuum* (devoted to right action) and *Yoga bhuumi* (devoted to the practice of *yoga*). We are trying to convert such a sacred country to *Bhoga bhuumi* (a land of luxury and pleasure). All the sources of *Bhoga* (pleasure) are in fact the causes of *Roga* (disease).

This is the biggest mistake we are committing. Our willingness to sacrifice constitutes real *yoga*. Of the four *Purusharthas*--the objectives of life, (*Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kaama*, *Moksha*)--the ignorant man confines himself to *Artha* (Wealth) and *Kaama* (worldly desires). The *Jnaani* (wise man) seeks only *Dharma* (virtue) and *Moksha* (Liberation). However, every person should seek all the four *Purusharthas*. This should be done by. associating *Artha* (the acquisition of wealth) with *Dharma* (virtue), and *Kaama* (satisfaction of desire) with *Moksha* (Liberation).

The four avenues for utilisation of one's earnings

You must earn wealth by adhering to *Dharma* (Right action). Utilise the wealth for right ends. Our ancients laid down four avenues for the utilisation of wealth or earnings. One fourth should be used for personal use and for supporting the family. Another fourth should be used for charitable and religious purposes. A third quarter should be spent on other living things like animals, birds, etc. The remaining fourth should be offered for supporting the State. It is only when one's wealth is utilised in this manner will it be really beneficial and meaningful.

Today many persons give money for charitable purposes. But the reason for their action is to reduce the burden of taxes in one way or another. You all know how large temples are being built at Benares, Prayaag, Delhi, and other places. There are Birla Mandhirs (places of worship) at many pilgrim centres. They are quite impressive and attractive.

They are built in marble and are additions to the nation's architectural achievements. Crores are spent on them. It is, no doubt, good to build temples. But the real temple is one's own body. Without purifying one's self, what use is there in building temples? Temples built at the cost of crores of rupees are not properly maintained. Swarms of beggars ruin the surroundings of the temples.

Service to society is everyone's primary duty

How much better would it be if the crores of rupees spent on erecting temples are used for improving the condition of the poor, the destitute and the helpless? Institutions for helping the indigent unfortunates are more useful than edifices for worshipping some deities. To give a helping hand to the helpless is real service. Love towards one's fellow beings is the best spiritual discipline. Misuse of money is a great evil. Wealth must be used only for good purposes. Money is capable of leading man to any place, good or bad. Hence he should take care to see that wealth does not lead him to bad ways, or bring a bad name to this great country.

By limiting their desires and reducing the amenities required for comfortable living, the wealthy should devote themselves to the service of the poor and the forlorn. Seek to derive happiness from service to your fellowmen. Happiness is union with God. The Sathya Sai Organisations should not be content with conducting *bhajans* (group singing of devotional songs). Their motto should be *Seva* (selfless service) all the time. They should take up every form of activity and give it a spiritual meaning. It is only those who are imbued with the spirit of selfless service that are fit to become leaders of the nation.

Service to society is everyone's primary duty. Businessmen should develop a moral approach, use right means for earning wealth and utilise it for the benefit of society.

I may have caused some But without minding it, you uneasiness to all of you. should all take to heart what I have said and try to practise what I have said. Thereby you will be achieving real happiness. I bless you all.

Discourse at a meeting organised by the Indian Merchants

Chamber, attended by several thousand businessmen at

Brabourne Stadium, Bombay, 14 May 1984

Why should you have fear or sorrow, with the Lord installed in the altar of your heart?

Do you not know He is there, guarding you and guiding you? He is in all beings, at all times.

Endeavour to remember this fact whatever you may be doing, whoever you may be contacting, in whatever manner. You will succeed in this, provided you do not give up the recitation of His Name.

Sri Sathya Sai

13. Make adoption meaningful to villagers

HOWEVER carefully a man may live, he is prone to commit five types of dhoshas (offences) unwittingly. The first of these relates to the use of words. The second relates to actions like sweeping and cleaning. The third relates to walking. The fourth relates to the use of fire for different purposes. The fifth concerns the use of water. The words one uses may cause pain to others, or harm them in one way or another.

Moreover, in the act of speaking many germs may get killed. Their death affects us even if we are not aware of it. When we sweep or clean the house, countless ants or other insects may be destroyed. Likewise, when we are walking, many tiny creatures may get crushed under the feet without our knowing it. When fire is lit for one purpose or another, some living objects may get burnt. When water is used for washing or other purposes, several microbes and other organisms may be killed. These five types of offences, though they may be committed unconsciously, have their effects on a man's life and may cause suffering and sorrow. How is one to avert the consequences of such offences? The *Vedhaantha* (concluding essence of ancient revealed scriptures, the *Vedhas*) has laid down five kinds of *Yajnas* (sacrificial acts) to expiate for such offences. These are: *Dheva Yajna*, *Pithru Yajna*, *Dhaiva Yajna*, *Bhuutha Yajna* and *Athithi Yajna*. These five kinds of *Yajnas* help to mitigate the consequences of the five types of *dhoshas* (offences).

The Yajnas to propitiate the Divine and the parents

Dheva Yajna (propitiating the Divine) comprises various forms of worship to atone for offences committed by speech. They are *Shravanam* (listening to things divine), *keerthanam* (singing the praise of God), *Vishnusmaranam* (contemplation on God), *mananam* (reciting the divine names), *vandhanam* (prostration), *dhaasyam* (service) and *aathmanivedhanam* (self-surrender). The *bhajans* (devotional songs) you do and the *nagarsankeerthan* (street singing of spirituals) done by devotees, can be regarded as a form of *Dheva yajna*.

Pithru yajna is the service which one does to one's parents by way of gratitude for the gift of life and upbringing received from them. To please the parents by one's actions, to look after them in their old age and to protect them in every way possible---all these constitute *Pithru yajna*. Such acts serve to atone for some types of misdeeds. When the *Upanishaths* laid down that the mother and the father should be revered as God, they revealed the spiritual value of respect for parents.

Dhaiva yajna comprises such acts as study of the *Vedhas* (revealed ancient scriptures), reading sacred books like the *Geetha*, the *Upanishaths* and the epics. This has an expiatory effect for some kinds of unconscious offences.

Means to propitiate lesser beings in creation

Bhuutha yajna includes various kinds of actions done for the protection and welfare of animals, insects and other living objects. In ancient days various duties were prescribed for people to regulate their lives on right lines. For instance, on festive occasions, the place in front of every house was strewn artistically with rice flour, which was a kind of offering to birds, ants and other insects. By this means the lesser beings in creation were propitiated. Unfortunately, this ennobling custom has either gone out of vogue or is surviving as a meaningless ritual by the use of a white powder instead of rice flour.

In the old days people used to take rice flour or sugar and scatter it over anthills or other places for consumption by insects. What was once a sacred obligation to other living things in creation is now treated as a superstition. It is not realised that by this type of *Bhootha yajna* considerable merit was earned and many evil consequences of one's actions were averted.

The fifth *Yajna* is *Athithi yajna* (the service rendered to guests). To satisfy a person who comes to your house by offering him food according to your means, or at least offering him buttermilk or water, is a sacred duty. It is an important form of *saadhana* for the spiritual aspirant.

In rendering *seva* (selfless service), members of the Sai Seva Dhal should not think that their services should be confined to the poor and the destitute. There is no need to make any artificial distinction between the rich and the poor in the sphere of service. What matters is the service done to a person that needs it. There may be servants who attend to the needs of the well-to-do. But when you are out to render service, your concern should only be with what kind of service is required, when and where, and not the status or position of the person concerned. The first requisite is a genuine spirit of love and fellow-feeling. If there is no feeling of kindness and compassion, whatever service that is done becomes an artificial exercise, done for getting publicity or recognition. Sai sevaks (volunteers) do not need name or position. Ostentation in rendering service is totally out of place. It will only inflate the ego. You should render service to the limit of your capacity, neither more nor less.

Power of the Divine reveals itself in numerous ways

The first quality every member of the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation should have is firm faith in God. This faith must be based on the awareness that God is Omnipresent. The Divine pervades everything in the Universe. This may not be understood by everyone. Some may not agree that the Divine is Omnipresent. But whether they accept this fact or not, the truth is, evidence of the presence of God can be found wherever one turns.

Is it possible for this boundless creation to be brought into existence by man, if there had been no Divine Principle behind it? For instance, fire is latent in the branches of a tree and in the tree itself. If the branches rub against each other, they may generate a fire which could burn down the tree, branches and all. Which is the power that filled the branches with the latent fire and ensured at the same time that they did not destroy themselves by releasing that fire? Is man responsible for this? Take, again, the example of the process by which the food that we take is converted into blood. Is this the invention of any man?

It is the immanent, all-pervasive power of the Divine that reveals Itself in numerous ways. We see flowers of all kinds. Men are able to make plastic flowers of the same kind. But can any one fill the plastic flowers with the native fragrance that is got from natural flowers? This is possible only by the Divine. There is sweet water inside a tender coconut. Who poured the water inside the coconut? Was it the work of any man? No. Only the Divine can do such a thing.

Serve to meet the essential needs of villagers

Examples such as these should serve to confirm your faith in the Divine. No one can probe the mystery of the power of the Divine or grasp its infinite magnitude. If members of the Sathya Sai Organisation have no faith in the Divine, there is no purpose in their remaining in the organisation. Such persons need not join the organisation or continue in it. It is with faith that one should take up social service. Society is our primary concern. The Divine is manifest in society.

Venugopal (President of the Andhra Pradesh Sai Samithi) stated that the State Samithi had adopted two hundred villages. He gave a list of the names of these villages. But is the mere selection of villages for adoption enough? ' Will one's hunger be appeased if only the leaf is spread out before him for serving food? The hunger will be appeased only if food is served and it is consumed. You go to an adopted village, conduct *Nagara-sankeerthan* (public devotional singing in streets) and undertake renovation of a dilapidated temple. Can these activities fulfil the purposes of adopting the village? They all merely symbolise preparations for serving food. They only whet the appetite of the villagers. What you must do is to find out what are the essential needs of the villagers. Do they suffer from poor water supply? You may feel that you need money for digging a well. But if all Seva Dhal members work whole-heartedly, two wells can be dug in a single day. You must render service out of spontaneous urge from within, with a heart filled with love.

Seva must be a spiritual experience

How is service, in fact, done at present? There are doubtless persons who undertake service with love. But for whose sake are they doing it? It is for their own sake, not for the sake of others. It may not be done to achieve name or to gain something. It is done for the pleasure derived from it. To engage in service activities with pleasure and to regard a day devoted to service as a good holiday is not enough. The pleasure derived from service must be a spiritual experience. Service must be regarded as a *yajna* (a ritual sacrificial act) to atone for one or other type of lapses one may have committed.

To utilise one's wealth, one's talents and resources for the service of the people and help to all living things must be regarded as an offering to, and a form of worship, of the Divine. Only then can *Seva* (selfless service) become true service. Putting in one's appearance once a week or month in the name of service should not be thought as sufficient. Each Seva Dhal member should ask himself whether he is rendering real service to the maximum extent of his capacity.

Today you have all come to this conference as delegates wearing the Seva Dhal delegates badges. You must ask yourselves whether you are really qualified to wear this badge. Each one must ask himself: Have I done genuine service? Or have I joined one group only in the expectation of getting the chance to approach Swaami? Examine yourself with a pure mind.

You all know how large is Andhra Pradesh in area. If the number of delegates is so small, you yourself can decide whether this is not a matter for shame. The greatest loss the country has suffered in recent years is the loss of a sense of decency and self-respect. For instance, if the clothes we wear become soiled we feel ashamed to be seen in them by our friends. We try to dress well before we go out, because we want to be respected. Likewise, we try to keep our dwellings dean because we do not want to feel ashamed when visitors see the dirty state of the house.

Motives of actions must be pure and unselfish

While we feel so concerned about, the state of our house or clothes, the heart in which the Divine resides is utterly polluted. It is filled with unclean thoughts and impure fancies. How many go about the world with such impurities in their minds without a sense of shame. If they make an honest examination of the impure state of their minds and the kind of double life they are leading, they will be able to get rid of their bad thoughts in a moment. What they are doing is to conceal their thoughts, but are externally well-dressed and move about as impeccable persons.

Of what use is such conduct? We attach importance to the external appearance of the body and value the respect shown to it. But one who cares only for the body-and ignores the state of his mind is only a two-legged animal.

It is not enough to appear to do fight actions. Your motives and impulses must also be pure and unselfish. It is only when your motives are pure that the Divine will extend His grace. Whatever service you render, it must be unsullied. The motive is all important. The form of the action does not matter. Without pure impulses, actions get tainted at the source. If you are a good man, your actions will necessarily be good.

Sai Sevaks should promote a co-operative attitude

There is a Thelugu proverb which says: "If the whole village unites, the entire farm can be harvested." With unity any work can be accomplished. You must strive to promote unity. You must fraternise with the villagers and demonstrate your awareness of the Divine that is present in everybody. You should not get entangled in local politics. Political differences have entered the villages and mined community life in the rural areas. You should tell the villagers: "Every individual can have his own political views. But these should not affect the welfare of the village as a whole."

In matters concerning the progress and wellbeing of the village, all the villagers should act as one regardless of party differences. You may support any party of your choice. But this should not affect your attitude to matters concerning the development of the village. All of you should act unitedly. Sai Sevaks (volunteers) should promote such a cooperative attitude.

Insanitary conditions account for most diseases in rural areas. You have to provide sanitary facilities for the villagers such as dust bins, drains, latrines, etc. In all such work, the involvement of the villagers should be ensured so that they learn to develop self-reliance. You must try to wean the addicts from the drink evil, which has ruined many homes. Provision of roads, wells, lights and the like should be undertaken wherever they are required. The service you do must meet the needs of the villagers and give satisfaction to them.

A malady that is noticed in the organisation

Adoption of a village can become meaningful only when you give love to them and earn the love of the villagers. Nothing should be done in a spirit of condescension. I know there are many good workers in the Seva Dhal. Not in Aandhra Pradesh alone, but in all the States. There is however, a malady that is noticed in the organisation. If the leaders behave well, the workers can render excellent service. The primary requisite is to see that the right persons are chosen as leaders. They must be dynamic persons. They must be filled with the spirit of service to society and dedication. They must feel that they owe everything to society and that their life can be worth while only when they have discharged their obligations to society. They must consider social service as their primary aim in life. It is only when they devote all their physical, mental and other resources to the service of the community that they will be doing real *saadhana*.

Saadhana (spiritual effort) does not mean performing *japa* in a lonely place. There is no greater *saadhana* than service to one's fellowmen done in an unselfish spirit. Ignoring the sufferings of others, if you occupy yourself in meditation or other devotional activity, it has no spiritual value at all. It is only one form of selfishness. Through genuine selfless service, not only can peace of mind be achieved, but progress can be made in self realisation and the ultimate goal of life can be attained.

As members of the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, you have to be an example to others. In whatever service you do, it is the quality that counts, not the quantity. No act of service should be considered trivial or debasing. Nor should there be unhealthy rivalry in rendering service. If one State has "adopted" two hundred villages, another should not think it should adopt an equal number or more to produce a better impression. Mere numerical claims have no meaning. It is better to render proper service in two villages than nominal service in two hundred. It is not the presentation of lists of adopted villages that matters.

Be your own judges of the service you render

What is the real work that has been done in the two hundred adopted villages? Let those who have worked in these villages speak up. For whose satisfaction are you claiming to serve the villagers? You must be your own judges of the work you are doing. Consult your conscience and see whether you are rendering proper service. I do not want anything to be done for Swaami's sake. My only object is promotion or the welfare of mankind. When you render service in the villages, you are redeeming your lives.

The sages of yore acquired various kinds of powers by their penance. They were able by these powers to fulfil whatever they promised. They used their powers with restraint. There is nothing wrong in acquiring even titanic strength. But it should be used in a humane way. It should not be wielded to oppress others. Shakespeare, the famous English dramatist, observed: "It is glorious to have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant." Everyone must heed this warning.

There are all kinds of organisations in the world today, including spiritual organisations and service organisations. What are these organisations doing? How useful are they to the people? There is no proper answer. What use is there in having such organisations? ' If the Sai organisations also function in this manner, what purpose is served by starting them? You must all be filled with the zeal to render service at any time, at any place, when the need is there. You must try to attract young people to the service organisation.

If you misuse the present, the future will be worse

With more young people in the Seva Dhal, you can carry out many welfare activities in the years to come. The present is a product of the past, but it is also the seed for the future. If you make good use of the present, you can ensure a better future. If you misuse the present, the future will be worse. Hence, all those who are in the Sai Seva Organisation should engage themselves in worthwhile activities and achieve fulfilment in the service they render.

Every village today is exposed to many diseases. We need not blame any one for this situation. We must be concerned only about the resources in men and materials at our disposal and use them with devotion for carrying out our welfare services. We have to do this work with faith. People display devotion and earnestness in the presence of Swaami, but act in a contrary fashion when they are away from Swaami. This is not a sign of true *Bhakthi*. *Bhakthi* (devotion) means wholehearted love for Bhagavan. Such love can tame even wild animals. It is only when your hearts are filled with such love that you can claim to be Bhakthas (devotees). You must show that love to anyone whom you see or talk to and in every one of your actions.

The grace of God is like insurance

Every act must be regarded as an offering to the Divine. It may not be easy to develop such an attitude. But if the effort is made sincerely, it can be achieved. It does not call for abandonment

of hearth and home or giving up your wealth and position. What I ask from you is to devote at least half an hour in a day of twenty four hours to service. Is this beyond your capacity.:' If you can serve the government or someone else for eight hours a day for the money you earn from them, experiencing in the process many trials and difficulties, can't you devote some time of win the grace of God, the benefit from which is immeasurable? What you earn through the grace of God will confer on you enduring; benefits greater than the wealth you earn by other means. The grace of God is like insurance. It will help you in your time of need without any limit. Material wealth confers *Bhoga* (enjoyment)which leads to *Roga* (illness). But selfless service is *Yoga* which secures Divine grace.

"Shivam," Hyderabad, 20 May 1984

14. The triple promise

LIKE Raama and Krishna in earlier *yugas*, I have come to carry out three *Prathijnaas* (promises). Once Swaami has accepted a devotee as 'You are mine,' He will not abandon him, whatever happens. Swaami has come to give, not to receive. When I undertake anything for the good of the world I will not give it up, come what may." This *historic declaration was made by Bhagavan in the course of a thrilling address on Guru Puurnima day in the Poornachandra Auditorium. The unprecedented gathering of devotees from all parts of the world cheered rapturously when Bhagavan made this announcement of His Avathaaric mission.*

Embodiments of Divine *Aathma!* He alone is the *Guru* (preceptor) who imparts that Higher Knowledge by knowing which all that needs to be known can be known and without which all else is useless.

The sacred Bhaaratheeya Culture has survived the ravages of time and the vicissitudes of history. *Sanaathana Dharma* (Eternal Universal Religion) is the core of this culture. Like a diamond that shines in a hundred facets, the Bhaaratheeya Culture has scattered its brilliance in all directions and spread the fragrance of its wisdom like a thousand petalled lotus. It is based on ethics and character. Spirituality is its life-breath. Truth and Love were the ideals cherished by the great seers of Bhaarith, who made Bhaarith shine like a beaconlight for mankind. They regarded God as the great moving spirit inspiring them. But, today, forgetting God and immersing themselves in worldly pleasures and possessions, people are dehumanising themselves.

Cause of commotions and conflicts in the world

Today all over the world you hear about plans to build a new society. The Universal provision of daily necessities and various amenities and the equal distribution of wealth are among the declared aims of this movement. This may be desirable. But is it practicable? It may be possible to distribute equally property and possessions, amenities and comforts. But is it possible to limit equally the desires of all persons? If desires are not limited equally, there is bound to be frustration. The socialist doctrine is an important concept. But it is no less essential to recognise the reality of God as the primal source of all things in the world.

According to the Indian seers, the source of the food one consumes, the power that sustains all living things and the basis of all objects in creation is God. It is because this basic truth has been forgotten that the world today is bedevilled by famines, conflicts, wars and commotion.

We must enquire deeply whether the daily necessities, the comforts and pleasures enjoyed by man are created by man or by God. Can man create the land on which his food is grown? Can he produce water? Can he control the air? Can he create the wood in which fire is latent? All these can be created only by God and are beyond the power of man.

Process of creation is common to all in the world

The saint Purandharadhaasa went from street to street proclaiming that everything is Divine. He sang: "Who planted and watered the tree that grows upon a hill? Who painted the feathers of the peacock? Who provided the green-feathered parrot with a rosy beak?" These are possible only for the Divine.

Moreover, today we must also seek to discover the unity that underlies the diversity among mankind. The most noteworthy characteristic of *Sanaathana Dharma* is its concern for the well-being of humanity as a whole. This concern stems from the consciousness that all are children of

one mother. There may be differences among people in mental and physical prowess. There may be differences in the doctrines they profess and in the knowledge and skills they have. Even in qualities there may be variations. But in respect of one thing there is no distinction. This relates to the process of creation which is common to all. It is this which must make us accept the equality of all beings. It is on the basis of this idea that the new society should be established.

When I began my discourse, I addressed you all as "Embodiments of the Divine *Aathma*". In the Bhaagavatha and in the Geetha the Lord has declared: ".till beings in creation are manifestations of one fragment of Myself." ("Mamaivaamsho *jeevabhoothassanaathanah*"). The Divine is manifest in every being. Only when this truth is understood can you know the meaning or the term "*Dhivyaathma swaruupulaara*" (Embodiments of the Divine *Aathma*). But relying on differences in physical and intellectual abilities men develop hatred towards each other. When such hatred grows in society, corrective measures have to be taken. This may be illustrated by incidents in the Mahaabhaaratha. Overthrowing arrogant and oppressive rulers, Krishna installed on the throne Yudhishtira, who was wedded to Dharma and *Sathya* (Righteousness and Truth). Although he had won the Kingdom, Krishna did not rule over it himself. Some qualifications are required for ruling a kingdom.

Concept of establishment of reign of *Dharma*

Krishna installed as rulers only those who had those qualifications. This is the truth underlying the concept of "*Dharma samsthaapana*" (establishment of the reign of *Dharma*). Whoever wishes to reform society or the government should examine his own competence and fitness for the task.

We are today celebrating *Guru Puurnima*. What is the real *Guru Puurnima*? Is it simply the full moon day in the month of Aashaada? This is the common view. But the great ones have given other meanings to it. One meaning is that it was on this day Vyaasa began writing *the Brahma Suuthra*. It was also on this day that the Buddha attained enlightenment and taught his disciples: "All is sorrow; All is transient; All is void." For these reasons, the day is known as *Guru Puurnima*, *Vyaasa Puurnima* or *Buddha Puurnima*.

In this context, it may be asked: Who is fit to be a *Guru* and who is fit to be a *shishya* (disciple)? If we examine the Geetha, we will know whether we are the ideal *shishyas* (disciples) or not. In the Bhagavath Geetha, the *shishya is Narotthama* (the highest among men), the *Guru is Purushothama* (the Supreme Person); the *shishya is a Mahaathma* (high-souled), the *Guru is Paramaathma* (the Over-soul); the *shishya is Aadarsha-muurthi* (an ideal person), the *Guru is an Avathaara-muurthi* (incarnation of the Divine); the *shishya is a Paathradhaara* (an actor), the *Guru is Suuthradhaara* (the director of the play); the *shishya is a Dhanurdhara* (wielder of the bow), the *Guru is Yogeshwara* (the Lord of Yoga). It is this type of *Guru-Shishya* relationship which illustrates the ideal combination.

The signs and qualities of a true *Guru*

The true *Guru* is one, who has no ego or selfishness, and who can raise the *shishya* to his own level. Donning the saffron robe, mouthing a few *manthras* (sacred formulas) and expounding some texts are the signs of many *Gurus* these days. The signs of a true *Guru are* large-heartedness, absolute selflessness, purity in living, freedom from acquisitiveness, absence of envy, and equal mindedness in his conduct towards everyone. Freedom from envy is an essential quality in a *Guru* or *shishya*, because envy is the root cause of many evils.

The *Guru's* role is to lead the *shishya* on the Godward path. He must teach the *shishya* the true purpose for which each of his sense organs is to be used--his eyes, his tongue, and his limbs. All the senses are to be used for discovering and experiencing the Divine. This was what Thyaagaraaja and Pothana commended in their songs.

Every action in daily life should be turned into an act of devotion to God. In Kaashi (Benares) the municipal authorities appointed some persons to light the street lights. A *saadhaka* was one such employee. He had to fill the lamp with oil and fix a chimney to protect the flame. He used to go to every lamp singing the glory of Raama and cleaning the chimney and lighting the lamp while singing. The municipal authorities noticed that the lamps in the streets in which the *saadhaka* was lighting the lamps were shining brighter than those elsewhere. They found that a great devotee was lighting the lamps with devotion to God and this accounted for their exceptional brilliance. The moral of this story is that when you do any act in a spirit of dedication, as an offering to God, you can experience joy and find fulfilment.

***Avathaars* make their advent with certain resolves**

Hence everyone should set before himself certain resolutions. Without these he can make no progress. Even *Avathaars* (divine incarnations) make their advent with certain resolves. They also set certain limits to their roles. Krishna incarnated with three resolves: (1) *Dharma samsthaapanaarthaaya sambhavaami yuge yuge* ("I Incarnate from age to age to establish Dharma"); (2) *Yogakshemam Vahaamgaham* ("I shall promote the progress well-being of my devotees"); (3) *Mokshayishyaami maa suchah* ("I shall liberate those who take refuge in Me"). Raama also had three resolves: One word, one arrow, one wife. Raama declared that whoever sought asylum from him, would be totally protected.

Similarly all divine personalities make their advent for some definite purposes. They will not deviate from them in any circumstance. Swaami's *Premathathva* (essential nature of Love) is of the same character. Swaami's *Prema* (Divine Love) has no trace of self-interest in it. It is absolutely pure. Swaami knows only how to give, not how to receive. Swaami's hand is held above for conferring something, not stretched for seeking anything. Moreover, once Swaami has declared, "You are mine", whatever wrong ways they may pursue, Swaami will not abandon them. It may be asked why anyone who has been accepted by Swaami as "You are mine," should be subject to hardships and troubles. These troubles are the consequences of their own karma (actions). They have to see that their conduct is right. If, supposing, the Lord blesses a man with a hundred years of life, he should not get puffed up with pride and start jumping from a tree in the confidence that he will live for a century. He may live for a hundred years, but may have his leg broken in the fall. So, in accepting the blessing of God, one should also try to lead a righteous life.

The three resolves which Sai is determined to fulfil

When I have given a word to anyone, even if they turn against me I will not bear any ill-will towards them. Even if they revile me, I shall continue to love them. I will stand up to my pledge fight up to the end. Some day they will return to the right path.

Owing to the compulsion of circumstances some changes may take place. They are not permanent. I will not change my course because of such happenings. This is my second resolve.

This is my third resolve: When I undertake anything because I feel it is for the welfare of all and that it is good for society as a whole, I will not give it up, come what may. Even if the whole world is against me, I will not turn back, I will only go forward.

These are my three resolves: The foot that is put forward will not retreat. I will not go back on the word I have given. I only give and do not receive.

These are my three resolves and I am determined to fulfil them and to set an example. Only then others will follow these ideals. What the country requires today are persons with *aadharsha* (ideals), not *aashas* (cravings). Desires may change from time to time. But the ideals remain long after one is dead. Hence every one should try to live up to some ideals. You should lead exemplary lives. You should become noble souls and secure real bliss, which can come only from the Divine.

On this *Gurupuurnima* day, try to transform your heart making it pure and sacred. *Pavithram* (purity) is the true characteristic of a human being. This purity should be manifested in everything one does: in his thoughts, in what he sees or says and in all that he does. It is only when you display such purity that you can become embodiments of the Divine Aathma. Then the distinction between the Divine and the mundane disappears. Everything becomes Divinised. The difference between the object and the subject will also go. Everything then becomes *puurnam* (the whole). The realisation of that wholeness is the real *Gum Puurnima* not the offer of *paadha puuja* (ritual homage to the feet) to some gum and obtaining a *manthra* from him. Resolve today to turn your thoughts to God, to strive for the purification of your heart and to seek Self-realisation.

Discourse on Guru Puurnima Day at Puurnachandra Auditorium,

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 13 July 1984

15. The bliss of Divine love

IN the field of the heart grows a *kalpatharu* (wish fulfilling tree). Around it all kinds of shrubs have grown. If the shrubs are cleared, the wish-fulfilling tree will be visible. Today the aspirations of man soar to the sky. We should realise that man has not only a mind which conceives thoughts, but also a heart which can put them into practice. From the heart emanate such good qualities as kindness, compassion, sympathy, non-violence and equal-mindedness. Evil qualities like anger, envy, hatred, cruelty, greed also flow from the heart. Man has the power of discrimination through his *Buddhi* (intellect) to decide what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil.

However, the possession of *Buddhi* alone is not enough. He has to cultivate the spirit of enquiry to be convinced what is right or wrong. Even that is not enough. After having found what is right or wrong, he must live up to his convictions. Thinking, discriminating and practice--all three constitute the basic human characteristics. By the unity of these three, the light of Inaam (spiritual wisdom) illumines the heart. The mere presence of the light is not enough. We should seek to go forward with the help of that illumination. If, having this light we do not follow the path revealed by it, we are as unseeing as the blind.

The heart is the seat of the Divine

Once, Lord Krishna appeared before Suurdhas, the blind saint, and told him: "Suurdhas, if you are keen to see the world, I shall restore your sight to you this very moment." The great devotee that he was, Suurdhas replied: "Those who are endowed with eyes are really blind when they do not gaze upon your auspicious, beautiful form. Having ears, they are nevertheless deaf when they do not choose to listen to the music of your melodious song. Having in their hands the power to attain the Divine, they drown themselves in the ocean of *Samsaara* (worldly life). Although you dwell in their hearts, they are deluded by the false, meretricious and transient attractions of the world. Though they have large eyes, they are not able to see you. Hence, I have no need for such hearts, such eyes or such ears. Give me, O Lord, ears that will listen to your song, eyes that will see your beautiful form and a heart in which you are installed," pleaded Suurdhas.

All religions are unanimous in regarding the heart as the seat of the Divine. The Hindu *Shaasthras* (ancient scriptures) have declared that the heart is the temple of God. The sacred *Upanishaths* (*Vedhic* metaphysical treatises) have referred to the heart as a cave in which the Divine dwells. It is stated in the Bible that the man with a pure heart can see God. The Muslims regard the heart as located between the two fingers of God. The *Guru* of the Sikhs, Naanak declared that only a man with a pure heart can be regarded as a true Sikh. In this way the various faiths have affirmed that the heart' is the abode of God.

The great lesson lotus teaches man

But the *saadhus* (the saints and mystics) have defined the heart in another way. Treating the Omkaar *manthra* as a rocking cradle the *Mahaavakya*, "*Thath Thwam Asi*" ("That Thou art") as a bed and *Chaithanyam* (the Universal Consciousness) as a baby, the great souls of the seven worlds have sung lullabies to the Lord. For them the heart is the cradle of the Lord. The *saadhaks* (spiritual aspirants) should therefore regard the heart as the veritable dwelling of the Divine.

Many great souls have experienced the heart as a lotus. Although rooted in mire, and growing up in muddy water, the lotus shines in purity. When the lotus opens its petals and looks up it seems

to be saying: "O Lord, please come and dwell in *me*." Though born in mire it does not wallow in it. Though surrounded by polluted water it is not polluted by it. This is the great lesson the lotus has to teach man. "Though you are living in a corrupt world and-are born in the mire of an unrighteous society you must turn your mind towards God and make your heart a shrine for God" this is the message of the lotus to man.

If you see a scholar you tend to show respect to him. But when you meet persons with the qualities of kindness you develop a love for them. You regard them as one of yourselves. What is the reason? The scholar has doubtless intellectual abilities but his conduct may not be exemplary. When we meet a person exhibiting qualities of forbearance, compassion and sympathy we tend to love him for his way of life. Mere intellect without practical action is valueless. Only thought that is combined with action deserves to be esteemed.

We must therefore put into practice the precepts we profess. It is not possible for any one to determine whether a man is good or bad by examining his heart. You have to judge him by his actions and behaviour.

What is studied must be put into practice

Lord Acton was a profound thinker and a great scholar. He had achieved eminence as an acute thinker. But the great scholar was not equally good at living up to his ideas. In the absence of right living all his scholarship was of little worth. On the eve of his sixtieth birthday he held a big banquet to which many great scholars and leading journalists were invited. The next day the papers wrote about Lord Acton. They admitted that he was a great personality and an outstanding scholar, but they pointed out that in his actions he had not been exemplary or done anything for the good of mankind. Despite his deep scholarship he had not been of service to the nation.

Books are not intended merely to be read. Sacred scriptures like the Koran, the Bible, the Upanishaths, the Zenda Avesta, the Granth Saheb and others are worshipped in shrines today. But no attempt is made to live up to their teachings. People are forgetting the purposes for which these sacred books came into existence. By a mere study of books no change can take place in our lives. What is studied must be put into practice. Knowledge that is not put into practice is like food that is not digested. When you want to digest food you have to chew it well and take it in an easily digestible form.

Entire Cosmos is governed by action

This means that it is not enough to browse through a book but one must study it deeply, reflect on its contents and absorb its meaning so that one can practise what one has learnt. That is why all religious books have emphasised the doctrine of action. The entire cosmos is governed by action. In such a context there is no purpose in indulging in intellectual speculation without putting knowledge into practice.

The Bhagavathgeetha also lays stress on the *Karma-Siddhaantha* (doctrine of action). Krishna declared: "There is nothing I need in this world for which I must strive. Nevertheless I am continuously engaged in action because if I, who am to stand out as an example to the world, do not perform actions, the people of the world will renounce activities." Moreover, if thoughts are not translated into deeds they will develop into a kind of disease. A man who feels hungry and craves for food, if he does not get it, he will develop illness. Similarly, a man who feels thirsty and wants water, unless he makes efforts to secure water, he will become weak and collapse.

Desires continually crop up in man. He is always wanting something. He yearns for various things. But this yearning for material things cannot be regarded as love. This may be called *apeksha* (fascination for worldly objects). When the yearning is turned towards God and becomes an intense longing for spiritual attainments, it is called Prema. Prema (pure love) is not related to the mind. It springs from the heart. That is why divinity can be realised only through the heart.

Divine Love of *Gopees* and Prahlaadha

There are many examples to illustrate this truth. If you take the love of the *Gopees* (milkmaids of Brindhaavan) for example, you may ask for what purpose did they love Krishna. They had no concern for worldly things. They were concerned only with the spiritual quest. Anyone looking at the *Gopees* conduct from a worldly point of view might regard their actions as improper. Likewise Prahlaadha's love for the Divine was not understood by those who judged him :from the worldly point of view. Would Prahlaadha have been able to bear with indifference all the tortures to which he was subjected if he was a worldly person? He went through ordeals as a child which no man could have endured.

When the king's minions goaded him with spears he prayed to the Lord and praised His glories without shedding a tear or showing any signs of fear. If his devotion had been concerned with worldly desires should he not have shed tears? Should he not have displayed fear being a mere child? He did not do so because the Lord Naaraayana was installed in his heart. The Lord's name was ever on his tongue. The Naaraayana consciousness filled his entire being from head to foot. Because of this, none of the pains inflicted on him by physical instruments affected him at all. With his thoughts centred on God the pains of the world did not affect him.

Look at the love of the *gopees*. When their mothers-in-law beat them or their husbands abused them they did not breathe a word, they did not complain, because they carried the image of Krishna in their hearts. Would it have been possible for them to put up with all the troubles inflicted on them if their love for Krishna was mere sensuous love? They were unlettered simple village folk but their love for the Lord was so transcendent that even Naaradha praised them for their pure and unalloyed devotion.

Real meaning of the spiritual quest

It is only when what is uttered from the mouth moves the heart to action that there will be proper conduct. A *saadhaka* decorates the idol of his chosen deity and makes offerings to it during worship. A farmer ploughs his land and irrigates it to grow the crop of his choice. The *bhaktha* (devotee) is the cultivator for the field of his heart. He must irrigate the field of his heart with the water of *Prema*, manure it with *Saadhana*, sow the seeds of the Divine name and fence it with spiritual discipline. Only then will he experience bliss---the bliss of Divine love and not worldly love. However, in this *Kali yuga* scriptures are read but there is no change in the heart which inspires spiritual endeavour. Because the heart is not transformed and sublimated people lead empty and futile lives.

Every good thought must spur one to action. For instance when a *saadhaka* sings a hymn he must feel immersed in its meaning and become one with it. It is the heart that brings about such a feeling of oneness. God resides in the heart. He is beyond the reach of external objects. Modern man sheds copious tears for achieving wealth, health, position and fame. He is carried away by

the stream of his tears, Does he shed a single tear for getting the grace of God or winning His love? Purandharadhaasa sang: "Of what use are eyes that cannot see God?" You use your eyes all your life to see the external world. What do you achieve thereby? No one attempts to see the Unseen. The daily chores are repeated endlessly---bathing and eating and sleeping. But there is no yearning to see the Unseen Divine. It is only when you develop that desire will your life become meaningful. It is that that will give you peace.

Do not regard the body as an end in itself

It is because you do not seek that which should be sought, do not experience that which has to be experienced, you are plunged in grief and do not have peace of mind. That is why the *Upanishaths* declared: "Lead me from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality." The meaning of this prayer is that man should realise the permanent unchanging Reality that underlies the changing appearances of the phenomenal world, shed his ignorance of his own true nature and seek oneness with the Immortal *Aathma* (divine spirit) that resides in his body which is subject to decay and death. The spiritual quest does not mean merely engaging oneself in meditation, *japa* (repetition of Lord's Name or some sacred formula) and the like. It embraces all activities aimed at realising the *Aathma* which has assumed a human form.

The body must be regarded as the base for spiritual activity. With it as the basis, you must engage yourself in spiritual activity. You must not regard the body as an end in itself which has to be pampered and kept in comfort. All our mental and other abilities should not be used only for worldly achievements. Only by seeking the higher *Inaam* (spiritual knowledge) can man rise above the level of the animal. The animal is concerned only with the present. Man alone can realise that the present is the product of the past and that the future will be determined by what he does in the present. Only if you act tightly in the present can the future be good and ennobling. This requires steadfastness and determination to adhere to the path of righteousness whatever may be the difficulties.

Do not be a victim of doubts and vascillations

You read many books and engage yourself in many devotional activities. You must ask yourselves how far these studies and actions have helped to transform your lives. You will find that there has been no significant change. But you need not wait to assess the fruits of your actions. It is enough if you realise what is your duty and decide to carry it out regardless of consequences.

You have today a golden opportunity to act in this spirit. Make the best use of the grace of Sai to change your lives. Do not let slip this glorious chance to make your devotion the means of your liberation. Do not listen to what others say. Try to correct your own conduct and redeem yourselves. Use your own intelligence and hold fast to the truth you arrive at. Do not become slaves of others. You must use your own capacity for enquiry and discrimination. You must arrive at the truth for yourself and put it into practice. You should not be a victim of doubts and vascillations.

No act of service should be considered trivial

Your troubles are often self-created. If you develop firm faith in God and surrender to His Will, He Will not fail you. This is the concept of *Sharanaagathi* (submission to the Will of the Divine). The bliss that can be derived from this surrender to God cannot be got through any other means. Regard whatever happens to you as something intended for your good. Discover the bliss

that can be derived from trials and tribulations. It is during their exile in the forest for twelve years that the devotion of the Paandavas developed to the highest degree.

It is not a sign of true *bhakthi* (devotion) to expect that life should be one unbroken chain of happiness and comfort. Is that true happiness at all? Thyaagaraaja asked whether happiness lay in the possession of wealth or in the service of the Lord. He found no joy in acquisition of wealth. He experienced the greatest joy in recognising the omnipresence of the Lord. Similarly, all devotees should be conscious of the immanence of God in everything and carry on their daily duties as a consecration to the Divine. When such devotion is developed the Lord will illumine your hearts and fill it with bliss.

Puurnachandra Auditorium, Prashaanthi Nilayam,

14 July 1984

16. Ceiling on desires - II

WE have undertaken tasks of varying magnitudes and description. Before we embark on the execution of these programmes we have to ask ourselves three questions. One: for whose sake are we undertaking these programmes? Two: For what purpose? Three: How are we going to execute these programmes? These may be three different questions, but the answer is one. If we examine deeply, the answer to the first question is: "All for our own *sake*." The answer to the second is: "For our own happiness and joy." The answer to the third question is that "the results of our work will depend on what we do. If we do something good, the result will be good, if we do something bad, the result will be likewise."

In this world it is not possible to make use of anything without transforming it in one way or the other to make it useful. You cannot have rice for eating without converting paddy to rice grains and then cooking it. Similarly, you cannot have cloth without transforming cotton into yam and then weaving it into cloth. Similarly, a human being needs transformation in respect of three things: The first is bodily transformation; the second pertains to the mind; the third relates to the *Aathma*. The *Aathma* (Divine Soul) is changeless. It is only the body and the mind that require transformation. How does transformation take place? For instance, if we ask the question whether silver can become God or stone become God, the answer is 'YES.'

We are not aware of our internal impurities

When a sculptor converts a piece of rock into a beautiful idol to be worshipped in a shrine, what was inert and worthless becomes sacred. This is transformation. Similarly, an idol made out of silver becomes an object of worship. In the same manner, everything which is petty and worldly can be transformed in course of time into something sacred and divine. Such a transformation is necessary for man.

Take, for instance, the body. It is an entity which houses much that is bad and that is undesirable. Externally we take great care of the body through bathing and cleaning. We are aware of the external impurity and we try to get rid of it. But, are we aware of the internal impurities? How do we purify them? For this internal purification, we have to acquire sacred thoughts and do sacred deeds. We have the concepts of *Jeeva* (individual being) and *Dheva* (celestial being). Man is composed of the three *Gunas* (qualities), *Sathwa*, *Rajas*, *Thamas* (serenity, restless activity, inactivity). As long as you are part of these *Gunas*, you are *Jeeva*. Once you transcend these three qualities you become *Dheva* (God). The three *Gunas* are like the husk that covers the rice in the paddy. When you remove the husk it becomes the rice-grain. Whatever we do, whatever actions we undertake, if they were to be permeated with thoughts centred on God, they would become sacred. Today in our *seva* (selfless service) activities, we do not have this lofty sense of dedication. We should get rid of the thought that *seva* activities are being done for others. You should understand that they are being undertaken for your own sake and for your own betterment.

Four ways we should try to change ourselves

In *Vedhaanthic* parlance this identification of yourself with others is called *Maithri*. In *seva* activities you have to develop *Maithri* (friendliness). Another attitude you have to develop is *Karuna* (compassion). The third is called *Mudhitha* (contented) and the fourth is called *Upeksha* (indifferent to results). In all these four ways we should try to change ourselves and others.

What is *Maithri*? It is commonly equated with friendship. In the worldly sense this friendship is a mutual relationship. True friendship lies in regarding other people's comforts or joys or sorrows as your own. For instance we have an example in Raamaayana in the relationship between Raama and Sugreeva. Their friendship was based on the fact that each could experience the suffering of the other as his own (*Samaana avastha*). The bond of friendship is drawn when there is a recognition of sharing of experiences common to both.

What is *Karuna* (compassion)? Seeing a person in distress and expressing verbally sympathy is not compassion. Compassion must express itself in action to relieve the suffering. Nor should you adopt an attitude of aloofness or indifference on the plea that each one is suffering for his own folly. Though suffering may be due to one's mistakes--mistakes to which everyone is prone--we should seek to remedy such suffering just as we try to get rid of our own suffering. Some people try to show off their sympathy by setting up charitable institutions like hospitals, etc.

True compassion should emanate from the heart. It should not find expression in outward manifestations which only reveal one's vanity. In the Sathya Sai Organisations there is no place for such demonstrations of vanity. Everything that is done to help the poor or the suffering should be based on the feelings coming from the heart and appealing to the hearts of those who are helped.

Process of freeing yourself from bondage

Next comes *Muditha*. This means acquiring peace of mind through cultivating equanimity in the experience of honour and dishonour, praise or calumny, loss or gain, joy or sorrow. These pairs of opposites should be regarded as things which come and go, like passing clouds. Every *Sevak* (volunteer) should develop such an equanimity of mind.

The fourth requisite is *Upeksha*. *Apeksha* (craving for the fruits) binds man. *Upeksha* (indifferent to results) frees man. *Apeksha* means involvement with the worldly concerns. *Upeksha* means getting rid of this involvement. Take the example of a pumpkin. A green pumpkin, when it is placed in water, it sinks. The pumpkin has plenty of water within it and when placed in water it sinks. The same pumpkin, when it is dried and has no water inside it, floats on water. What is the reason? In the first place the pumpkin has friendship for water and it makes water part of its own self. Similarly, when you are worldly yourself and you move in the world you are bound to it. When you free yourself from worldly attachments you go towards divinity and you are freed from bondage to the world. It is the process of "freeing yourself" that is called "Upeksha."

When you are tied to *kaama* you cannot get Raama

In the Raamaayana, when Raama decided to go to the forest, Seetha wanted to accompany him and she gave away all her possessions. By giving up attachments to the possessions she could get Raama. But, when in the forest she developed a desire for the golden deer, she was separated from Raama. In the first place when she removed *Kaama* (the desire for possessions) she became one with Raama. The meaning of this episode is, so long as you are tied to *Kaama*, you cannot hope to get Raama or God.

This does not mean that you have to renounce the world. Living in this world as you are, you must strike a balance between worldly life and spiritual life. Man's life is like gold in its native state, associated with dirt, which is impure. It is impure in the initial stages. When you begin to purify your thoughts, speech and actions through seeking good contacts and cultivating noble ideas, you will be transforming yourself. This is the process of *Upeksha*.

More than *Thapas* (penance) *Dhyaana* (meditation), service to others is the means by which one transforms oneself. In rendering service, you should be moved by genuine concern for those you serve. You should try to ascertain the cause of their suffering and try to remove it. Only then can you do *seva* (selfless-service) properly. Momentary sympathy or charity or competing with others in exhibiting one's generosity is not true *seva*. In rendering service if you try to do something which is beyond your capacity it is a sign of your ego. If you give less than what you can, then you are a thief (denying to others what is due to them). You must be discriminating in your service. You must regard service as a *saadhana* (spiritual effort).

Do not do *seva* to please others

You should believe that service is a path to God realisation. These activities are to be undertaken not for the sake of Sathya Sai or even for the sake of society. They are purely and essentially for your own sake. It is to transform your own lives that you undertake *seva*. Through the medium of *seva* you can reap the fruits of *japa* and *dhyaana*. By making your fellow-beings happy you are making God Himself happy.

The *seva* that you do, should not be done out of a sense of compulsion or to please others. It should be wholehearted and spontaneous. In organising *seva* activities do not attempt to compare one State with another. Because some States have taken up some work in some villages, you should not feel that you should do the same thing. Do whatever you feel is your duty and what is necessary for the areas in which you are working. Do it with all your heart without comparing yourself with others.

There is the programme connected with Ceiling on Desires. You must realise that this programme has not been launched to raise funds. The object of the programme is to prevent waste of money, time, food or other resources and to use all these for the welfare of the people. The money that is saved need not be kept for the Sathya Sai Organisations. It may be used in the best way you choose for the benefit of others. Do not waste time. Time wasted is life wasted. Time is God. Sanctify all the time at your disposal by undertaking *seva* activities in a pure and unselfish spirit.

Aims of the "Ceiling on Desires" programme

Today we waste time on unnecessary and unwanted things, in indulging in unnecessary talk and doing meaningless actions. In all these actions we are sacrificing the body to time. Instead we should try to make time our servant. It means spending our time in good thoughts and good deeds. Every second of your daily existence you must ask these questions "How am I utilising time? Is it for a good or bad purpose?"

Likewise, with regard to food you must ask: "Am I just eating what I need or more? Am I wasting food?" So also with regard to money: "Am I using this money for my own selfish needs or for boosting my name and fame, or to satisfy my ego and vanity?" Once you start seeking answers to these questions, there is no greater *saadhana*.

These are the aims of the "Ceiling on Desires" programme. It was never the purpose of this programme to collect money for the Sathya Sai Organisations. The object was to encourage you to share your money with others, to give you an opportunity to utilise your surplus resources for some good and noble purpose which will sanctify your life.

Three types of strength are given to a person: physical strength, mental strength and the power of money. It has been said that all these should be offered as *yajna* (sacrifice). This sacrifice is not

offered to God. God, who has given you the body and the mind, does not need them for himself. God is also the source of all wealth. What does He want with your wealth? Use it for sacred purposes. The seva programme is intended only to provide you with opportunities to make your lives sacred and worthwhile. It is to develop the spirit of sacrifice.

Understand the basic purpose of all service activities

Was it beyond the power of Raama to discover Seetha in Lanka Himself? What need was there for Him to send Hanumaan? Raama wanted Hanumaan to go on the search, so that He could show to the world the devotion and steadfastness and faith of Hanumaan. It is a case of Grace on the part of Raama. In the same manner, if Sai so much as wants to do so many things Himself, He could do anything. This endeavour is not for the sake of Sai. It is done through these *Seva* Organisations so that members of the organisation get the chance to do service and redeem themselves. Try to understand the basic truth that these avenues of service have been provided so that you will get good name for yourselves and not for the sake of Sai.

If people have any wrong notions about the service programme, endeavour to remove their doubts and explain the real purposes. For instance, some people say for the sake of the 60th Birthday Celebrations they have embarked on this project of "Ceiling on Desires." This is a wrong notion. Tell these people it is not so. Sathya Sai does not need anything and He does not ask anything from you. Our idea is that we should undertake some development programme, so that the villages can get benefited. The idea is to save money that is now being wasted in one way or the other, so that it may be made available for doing something good. Above all, the basic purpose of all service activities is to effect a transformation from the state of man to the state of Divinity. Fill your hearts with that which is godly. Then there will be meaning to your volunteer service.

The Mandhir, Prashanthi Nilayam, 14 July 1984

Bhaaratheeya culture has emphasised the valid ways in which one has to spend energy and money for service of the distressed, the diseased, the hungry, the illiterate, the ill-housed, the ill-clothed. Bharatheeya culture condemns the spending of energy and money for pomp, for vengeance, for competitive faction, for material triumphs. Wealth is to be held on trust and used for promoting the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God.

Bharatheeya culture also lays down that nothing should be done to damage any one's faith in God or in his own self.

Faith is a tender plant and it needs all the nurture that you can give.

Sri Sathya Sai

17. The journey to God: four stages

IT is not easy for the mind of man immersed in worldly concerns to turn to God. Meditation, repetition of the names of the Lord, *bhajans* (group singing of devotional songs), reading of scriptures and other such activities are designed to purify the mind so that it can concentrate on God. As a field has to be properly ploughed and prepared for sowing so as to reap a good harvest, the field of our heart has to be rendered pure and sacred through good and holy actions and *saadhana* (spiritual discipline) if it is to yield the fruit of Divine Wisdom. There are four stages in the spiritual journey to God. In the first stage, one-half of the time of the mind may be devoted to the pursuit of the three *Purusharthas* (goals of life)---Dharma, *Artha* and *Kaama*--for earning one's livelihood and carrying on one's worldly duties to family and kith and kin. One quarter should be used for the study of scriptures and the remaining fourth for contemplation on God. Gradually you proceed to the second stage (the intermediate stage) when only one-fourth of the time is devoted to worldly affairs, half the time is used for study of scriptures and the remaining fourth for meditation on God. At the next higher stage, half the mind's time should be devoted to scriptural studies and the other half to meditation.

Bhakthi is the means to transform the mind Godward

In the fourth stage that of the *Mumukshu* (the seeker of Liberation) the entire time of the mind should be devoted to God realisation. This is the stage described in the Geetha as "*Sathatham Yoginah*" (always immersed in union with God). If you pursue your spiritual discipline, while regulating your daily life in the manner, discharging your daily duties, you are bound to become the recipient of God's grace.

In the Bhagavath Geetha, Krishna has declared that He and the Geetha are one, When you reverentially study the Geetha at home, you must regard the Geetha as Krishna Himself installed: in your shrine. Where Krishna and Geetha reside, it is not a mere home but a temple. It has been declared that for those who have installed the Geetha, the Ganga, the *Gaayathri* and *Govindha* in their hearts, *Moksha* (Liberation) is certain.

If the body is regarded as a home, there are in it a master (the husband) and a wife. The master is a pure, unsullied, unwavering person. The wife is fickle and full of impurities. It is difficult for the two to get on harmoniously. Either of them must give way to the other. It is obviously not desirable for the pure and untainted husband to give in to the ways of the vacillating and impure wife. If the wife comes under the sway of the husband and follows his dictates, the home will be filled with peace and joy. In the body, the master of the house is the *Aathma*, which is ever pure and steady. The mind which is ever wavering and unsteady, is the wife. It is when the mind is transformed and brought under the control of the *Aathma* (soul) that the body experiences *Aanandha* (Divine Bliss). The means by which the mind is transformed is *Bhakthi* (intense love of God). The mind must be progressively turned towards God until it merges in God.

The Mandhir, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 19 August, 1984

When a man is good to you, attribute that goodness to the godliness in him; when a man is bad to you, be happy that you have given him some satisfaction, by becoming the target for his attention! If he harms the body, sages are unaffected, because they

know that they are not the body! If they try to harm the soul, sages know that it is impossible, for the soul is ever in Bliss! By means of saadhana, become that type of sage, unaffected by pleasure and pain, loss or gain, victory or defeat.

Sri Sathya Sai

18. The malaise and the cure

ARJUNA had fought many battles, but he had never experienced any sorrow or attachment then. In the Mahaabhaaratha war, however, the same Arjuna felt that those ranged against him were his own uncles, grandparents and teachers, and he became despondent. He was the victim of the bondage of 'myness' and of his attachment to his kith and kin.

When Krishna set out on His mission of peace, Arjuna was keen on waging war with his cousins, the Kauravas, and he tried to persuade Krishna to see that His peace mission would not succeed. Arjuna pleaded with Krishna with all the strength he could command, "Krishna, this issue cannot be settled by negotiations. The Kauravas won't agree to any compromise. Why talk words of peace? They will never accept them. Let us not indulge in this mission! Will the arrogant lot agree to our proposals? Why do you waste your efforts, Krishna?"

What was the reason for Arjuna's attitude at that time and later, on the battlefield? When he did not see his enemies face to face, his attitude was impersonal. But once he beheld his opponents on the battlefield, he saw them as relatives, teachers and friends, his eyes were clouded and he became dizzy. He said, "Krishna, I won't be able to fight. I am laying down my armour."

Ignorance of Arjuna is responsible for his anguish

When Krishna heard these words, He was very angry and rebuked Arjuna: "This weak-mindedness is unbecoming in a renowned warrior like you, 'esteemed as an unrivalled hero. You seem to be suffering from timidity. The battle is about to be joined. Preparations for the war have been on for the past three months. If you had shown this hesitation in the beginning itself I would never have taken on this task. But, after securing the help of our allies and kinsmen and assembling them and their forces, if you withdraw from the fray, you are false to the dharma (right action) of a true *Kshathriya*. You are appearing as a faint-hearted poltroon. Coming generations will jeer at your cowardice. You are known by the name Arjuna. Remember the meaning of this name."

Arjuna means sacredness and purity. Ignorance of himself was the only reason for the anguish which overcame him. Being fully aware of the nature of this particular disease, Krishna prepared Himself to treat it. Krishna could have straightaway taught "*Bhakthi Yoga*," "*Karma Yoga*" and "*Nishkaama Yoga*," to Arjuna. He did not do so. In fact, Krishna started speaking only in the second chapter. The first chapter of the Geetha is devoted to the narration of the grief and anguish of Arjuna. Krishna allowed him to have his say. Krishna began his teaching: from the 11th verse of the second chapter. Until then, Krishna listened with extreme patience to everything Arjuna said. Then He asked Arjuna, "Have you said all you had to say?" Arjuna was silent. Krishna told him, "The malady of weak-mindedness is afflicting you. I know how to cure it. I'll do it. Your ignorance is responsible for this attachment and infatuation." Then He instructed Arjuna in "*Saankhya Yoga*" (the path of jnaana).

Distinguish between the eternal and the transient

"*Saankhya Yoga*" enables one to distinguish between the eternal and transient, '*Aathma*' and '*an-aathma*.' It implies the awareness of the basic truth, but a person suffering from ignorance, how would he be able to understand *Aathma* and *an-aathma*? Still, when a patient is in great danger, the doctor has to see that he gets out of danger. Afterwards he can undertake the regular treatment. Unless the patient is saved from danger, other remedies will be futile. When a person

is drowning, we have to first take him out of the water to the shore and then offer the necessary treatment. We don't start the treatment while the person is struggling frantically. So Krishna gave Arjuna at the outset a strong injection of courage to save him from sorrow and dejection. He explained the principle of *Aathma and an-aathma* to him. "Arjuna, with fear you will not be able to accomplish anything. Don't give way to fear; you are the fearless *Aathma*. It is only in that state of *Aathmic* awareness that I can make you achieve victory."

In truth Krishna is '*Aathma*,' Arjuna is caught in the '*un-aathma*' ignorance. Krishna said, "I would like to explain things related to you and Me. Let us suppose that I were to become you, and you were to become Me. If I were to become you, I would also become weak-minded, but it is impossible for such weakness to enter Me. On the other hand, if you want to become Me, then you have to follow Me!" Then Arjuna said, "Swaami, I will follow your command implicitly." After instilling courage into Arjuna, He directed him to enter the battle.

Body, mind and intelligence are temporary agents

Krishna said: "Arjuna, you think that these people are your relatives and friends. But, consider this :who is a relative? Who is the body? Who is the Indweller? All bodies are like bubbles on water. You and I and these friends and relatives have been in existence in many previous lives. Body, mind and intelligence are all temporary agents. They are like the clothes we wear and discard. They are inert. Why develop such a close attachment to these things, subjecting yourself to sorrow and infatuation! Do your duty: all the honour and other things due to you as a prince, will be showered on you. On the battlefield, there can be no room for faint-heartedness. You can't play two roles at the same time when one role is opposed to the other. Now you are on the battlefield and have come to fight. So, *FIGHT!*"

In the very opening verse of the Geetha, we find Dhritharaashtra asking Sanjaya: "Sanjaya, what are my people doing, and what are the Paandavas doing on the battlefield of Kurukshethra, which is a Dharmakshethra?" It is a place where sacrifices are performed. The children of "*Kuru*" used to play on that very field. Therefore it is called *Kurukshethra*. Sacred and auspicious acts had been done on that very spot. So it is *Dharmakshethra*, as well.

Our body itself may be called a *Dharmkshethra*. For, when a child is born, it is pure and without blemish. It is not a victim yet of any of the six 'enemies of man'-- anger, greed, lust, egotism, pride and jealousy. It is always happy. It cries only when hungry. Whoever fondless, king or commoner, saint or thief, child is happy. The child's body is not affected by any of the three gunas (innate qualities) and is a *Dharmakshethra*. As the body grows, it begins collecting qualities such as jealousy, hatred and attachment. When these evil tendencies develop the body becomes a '*Kurukshethra*.'

Identification with body and senses leads to tragedy

The battle between the Paandavas and the Kauravas did not last more than 18 days, but the war between good and bad qualities in us is waged all through life. *Rajo guna and Thamo guna* (qualities of passion and inertia) are associated with the ego and the sense of 'mine.' The word *Paandava* itself stands for purity and *saathwik* nature. *Paandu* means whiteness and purity. The children of Paandu, the five Paandavas, were pure. The war between the Paandavas and the Kauravas signifies the inner war in each of us--the war of '*Saathwa guna*' against the other two *gunas*, *Rajas* and *Thamas*.

Answering Dhritrashtra's question, Sanjaya said, "Why do you ask me what they are doing? Since they have all gathered for war, they are of course fighting." There is, however, an inner meaning to the question. This is to be found in his use of the word *Dharmakshethra*. Dhritrashtra hoped, "My children are bad and wicked, but since they have entered the Field of '*Dharma*' (Dharmakshethra), it is possible their minds may be transformed into good."

"*Dhritrashtra*" means one who considers things which do not belong to one as one's very own. He is not the body; but he owns it. He is not the senses, but he derives pride in owning them. A person who considers the kingdom which does not belong to him as his own, is a "Dhritrashtra." Every person of Dhritrashtra's lineage identified himself with the body and the senses that led to the tragedy.

Consequences of acting without foresight

Among the Paandavas, there were some who were superior to Arjuna in some respect. Dharmaraja, the eldest brother, was more serene. Why then was the sacred Geetha not taught to him? In terms of physical prowess, Bheema was a much stronger person. Why was it not directed to Bheema? Why was it taught to Arjuna? Dharmaraja was the embodiment of *Dharma*, no doubt. But, he did not have the foresight to visualise the ravages of war. He did not consider what the consequences of his action would be. He became wise only after the event. Bheema had enormous physical strength and valour, but he did not have enough intelligence. But, Arjuna had foresight. He told Krishna, "I would rather be dead than fight against these people, because, if I should win, it would be at the cost of putting them to death and causing much suffering." In contrast to this, Dharmaraja waged the war and when he lost his kith and kin, he sat down in gloom regretting all that had happened!

The need for the relationship of guru and disciple

When one acts without foresight, one has to repent for the consequences of the indiscriminate action. This was the case with King Dhasharatha. In the war between the gods and the demons, he fought on the side of the *Dhevas*, taking Queen Kaikeyi, the daughter of the king of Kashmir with him. She was well-versed in the art of warfare. It was Kaikeyi who taught the strategy of war and the art of archery to Rama. While Dhasharatha was engaged in the battle, one of the wheels of his chariot was about to come off as the linchpin of the axle had come out. Kaikeyi saved the situation by using her finger as a pin to hold the wheel in position. After the end of the battle, Dhasharatha noticed that Kaikeyi's hand was bleeding profusely. Seeing her plight and realising her courage and sense of sacrifice, Dhasharatha told her, "Kaikeyi, you ..can ask from me two boons." He did not specify what type of boon she should ask of him or when. He promised these boons without any thought of the consequences. Kaikeyi asked for these boons later, at a time which was advantageous to her but disastrously mortal for him!

Krishna considered Arjuna as the fittest person for imbibing the Geetha. Arjuna foresaw the aftermath of the war and that was why he shied away from the fight. He knew the consequences would be terrible. Only a pure heart can feel sorry for something even before the event takes place.

Krishna and Arjuna were inseparable companions for seventy-five years, because Arjuna's was a pure heart. Although they had lived together for so long, Krishna had not instructed Arjuna, because during all that period Arjuna was moving with Krishna as his brother-in-law. He was conscious only of the family relationship. The moment Arjuna surrendered and accepted

discipleship, Krishna stood forth as his teacher. If we really desire to acquire higher knowledge from some one, it will be possible only when there is the relationship of guru (preceptor) and *sisya* (disciple).

Develop the capacity to face adverse situations

When Arjuna told Krishna, "You are my father; you are my mother; you are my teacher; you are my wealth and my everything," surrendering himself completely to Krishna, then only did Krishna reply: "You are my disciple; you do my work; do everything for Me and I shall take care of you."

While dealing with "*Saankhya Yoga*" Krishna taught Arjuna how to surrender totally to His Will. Krishna freed Arjuna from the sense of identifying his body with the *Aathma* (the indwelling Divine Spirit). As long as that overwhelming body-consciousness persists, we will not be able to practise any spiritual discipline of *Dharma Maarga*, *Karma Maarga* or *Bhakthi Maarga*. In fact, attachments pollute the heart. Without cleansing the heart of these impurities, it is not possible to fill it with holy feelings. "*Arjuna*," said Krishna, "you are steeped in body-consciousness. Cast off that delusion, then only will I be able to fill your heart with wisdom and bliss."

Ignorance is the most important cause of sorrow. "Have you yearned for God, for Dharma? When you cry out for God and for *Dharma*, the yearning becomes *yoga saadhana* (spiritual effort). You clamour for a number of things, but when there is a decline in 'Dharma,' you must cultivate courage. You must develop the capacity to face adverse situations. Today you should have immense courage and unshakable determination. Avoid blind and foolish courage. One should have the capacity to discriminate and behave in accordance with the time, place and circumstance. Here and elsewhere, you should always have courage in your heart and the determination needed to accomplish the task." Thus did Krishna exhort Arjuna.

Prashanthi Nilayam, 5-9-1984

The word, Vishnu, means 'That which pervades everywhere', the Omnipresent.

When people are told about an idol of Vishnu, they laugh and condemn it as foolish. But, when we desire to drink the ambrosia that the all-pervading Vishnu is we require a spoon, a cup or a vessel.

The idol is only such a contrivance, by which it is possible to consume the bliss. The cup can be of any shape or design; the joy consists in the nectar that it is able to convey to the person who is thirsty and anguished. Raso vai sah---God is ambrosia, sweet, sustaining, strength-giving. You can imbibe Him through a cup, shaped as Nataraja or Durga or Krishna, or Linga, or Ganesha, or Christ or any other Form that will arouse the ardour and satisfy the agony.

Sri Sathya Sai

19. *Asuuya* and *dhwesha* : the deadly vices

ARVATHRA *Sarvaani Bhuuthani Dhehi* ("The *Dhehi* is the indweller in all human beings"). The body is transient. The *Dhehi* is eternal and real. The *Dhehi* is known as such not because it is in a body. The entire Cosmos is the body of the Divine and therefore the term *Dhehi* applies to this Cosmic Consciousness. To realise the nature of this all-pervading *Aathma* (soul), which is the unchanging reality, it is not enough to seek authority from the *Shaasthras* (ancient scriptures) alone. The *Aathma* is not realised through *Shaasthras*. The realisation of the Self has to be obtained on the basis of the authority of the *Shaasthras*, but through one's own earnest *Saadhana* (spiritual efforts). The *Vedhas* (ancient sacred scriptures), *Upanishaths*, *Shaasthras* and *Puraanas* (ancient scriptures of spiritual wisdom, metaphysical treatises and mythological legends) all serve as sign-posts. They indicate the direction one should take. They show the goal that should be sought, but the journey has to be made by ourselves.

The teachings of the Geetha begin in the second canto with the words of the Lord: *Ashochyaan Anvashochasthvam* (You grieve about things for which you should not grieve). Starting with this statement, the Geetha gradually reveals the means by which sorrow can be eliminated. The Lord tells Arjuna: "You are having grief about things over which one should not grieve." The devotee who is dear to the Lord All things in the Universe have five qualities--*Asthi*, *Bhaathi*, *Priyam*, *Ruupam* and *Naamam* (Being, Awareness, Bliss, Form and Name). The first three qualities *Asthi*, *Bhaathi* and *Priyam* are also called *Sath*, *Chith* and *Aanandham* (Being, Awareness, Bliss Absolute). These three attributes are eternal and therefore Divine. For them, there is neither birth nor death. But form and name are artificial creations. Because they are artificial products, they are liable to change. They are like relations in a family. They come and go and are not permanent members of the home. Likewise, joy and sorrow are also family relations, who come and go. To imagine that these passing relationships are eternal realities, and to develop permanent attachments to them, is wrong. These relationships are liable to change and to disappear. To feel grief over loss of such relations is not proper. How is one to recognise the transience and falseness of these relationships? Bhagavaan has indicated in the *Bhakthi Yoga* (Divine Union through Devotion) of the Geetha that the man who has cultivated the 26 good qualities mentioned therein is the devotee who is dear to Him. It is not necessary to cultivate all these 26 qualities. As one stick in a match box is enough for lighting a lamp, even one of the qualities mentioned by the Lord is enough to develop one's spiritual awareness. If some of the important good qualities mentioned in the Geetha are made the basis for our spiritual endeavour, a great transformation will take place in our lives.

The cultivation of good qualities implies getting rid of all bad qualities. Among the latter, two are particularly undesirable. They are *Asuuya* (jealousy) and *Dhwesha* (hatred). These two bad qualities are like two conspirators, one aids and abets the other in every action. *Asuuya* is like the pest which attacks the root of a tree. *Dhwesha* is like the pest which attacks the branches, leaves and flowers. When the two combine, the tree, which may look beautiful and flourishing, is utterly destroyed.

Practise love constantly to get rid of hatred

Similarly, *Asuuya* attacks a person from inside and is not visible. *Dhwesha* exhibits itself in open forms. There is hardly anyone who is free from the vice of jealousy. Jealousy may arise even over very trivial matters, and out of jealousy hatred arises. To get rid of hatred one must constantly practise love. Where there is love, there will be no room for jealousy and hatred and

where there is no jealousy and hatred, there is *Aanandha* (real joy). This joy reveals itself in Beauty. It has been well said, "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever." If you see beauty in any thing, you will derive joy from it. But what is the beauty that one should seek which will be the source of permanent joy? Only God is the embodiment of Beauty that is the source of everlasting joy.

The devotee's primary duty is to seek the nectar of bliss to be got from the contemplation of the beauty of God. The means of experiencing such joy is to cultivate good qualities and get rid of bad traits. Although Arjuna was listening to Krishna's message, he did not fully digest the implications of the message. For instance, during the great Kurukshethra war, one day there was a fierce battle between Bheeshma on the one side and Arjuna on the other. Bheeshma had fallen in the battle. Despite his devotion to Krishna, Arjuna was feeling that he had been responsible for the victory over Bheeshma. As the Sun went down, both Krishna and Arjuna returned in the chariot to Arjuna's camp.

God has pledged to protect His devotees

Arjuna asked Krishna to get down from the chariot and go to the house. In his conceit, he was regarding himself as the master of the chariot and Krishna as only the charioteer and according to the customary practice, the charioteer should first get down and only then the master could get down. Although Arjuna repeatedly asked Krishna to get down first, Krishna told Arjuna that he should get down first. Ultimately, to avoid an unpleasant tiff with Krishna, because he would need Krishna's help for the next day's battle, Arjuna got' down from the chariot. Krishna asked him to get into the house immediately and after Arjuna had gone in, Krishna jumped out of the chariot. Immediately the entire chariot went up' in flames. Seeing this, Yudhishtthira and Arjuna asked Krishna the reason for such an extraordinary event.

Krishna replied: "None can understand the nature of Divinity or the sports of the Divine. The Divine has no self-interest. God has pledged Himself to protect His devotees and uphold them. In today's battle all the deadly arrows which Bheeshma had aimed at you were all kept pressed under my feet and because of this, these arrows did not cause any harm to you. If I had got out of the chariot first, these deadly arrows would have reduced you to ashes. Being unaware of this truth, you wanted me to get down first from the chariot. On hearing these words from Krishna, Arjuna gave up his conceit.

Many forms of jealousy and their consequence

Jealousy expresses itself even in the form of finding faults in the Divine. It manifests itself in many forms. If one has earned a better name than another, jealousy develops towards him. Some people are even jealous of those who are more handsome than themselves. Students even envy others who secure more marks in the examination. The jealous person cannot bear to see anyone who is better placed, more handsome or prosperous than himself. This is a sign of human weakness. Once jealousy takes root in a man's mind, it, in due course, destroys all his other achievements. It promotes demonic qualities. It dehumanises the man. It reduces him to the condition 'of an animal. Because of its egregious evil tendency, jealousy should be rooted out from the very beginning. You must learn to enjoy at another's prosperity and happiness. This is a great virtue. It is one of the teachings of the Bhagavathgeetha. In the ninth canto of the Bhagavathgeetha, Krishna tells Arjuna, "Oh Arjuna, be free from the evil of jealousy. Become an *Anasuyaka* (one who has no jealousy)."

A person free from jealousy can convert Divinity itself into a little babe. This is illustrated by the story of Anasuuya. When Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara came to her to test her chastity and purity, the three Divinities were turned into infants by the power of Anasuuya's purity. By freeing oneself from jealousy, one can even conquer the qualities of *Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas* (quality of purity, passion and inertia), Jealousy not only does harm to others but is also self-destructive. For the man filled with jealousy, there is no sleep and he cannot even eat heartily. It is like a consumptive disease which weakens a person from inside. It is a wasting disease which is widespread in this *Kali Yuga* (age of conflict). It is because of jealousy that man is a prey to *Ashaanthi* (peacelessness).

What Buddha taught to his devotees

Once Buddha set out to seek alms. He was approaching a village where there were a number of devotees of Buddha. At that time, some wicked persons confronted him on the way and abused Buddha in various ways. Buddha sat on a rock nearby without proceeding with his journey. He addressed his traducers: "Dear children, what is the pleasure you derive from abusing me?" Without giving the reasons, they continued abusing him in worse terms. Buddha sat down saying, "If abusing me gives you pleasure, enjoy at yourselves." Exhausted by their abuse, they were preparing to leave. At that time, Buddha told them, "I stayed here all the time because if I had gone to the village, my devotees there would not have spared you, if you had indulged in all this abuse before them. It is to save you from this calamity that I had put up with all your abuse, given you a free rein and stayed here."

"If we want to please others, we have to do many things and even spend a lot of money. I am happy that today without incurring any expense or taking any trouble I could give so much pleasure to all of you! What a fine day for *me!*" exclaimed Buddha. "You have derived joy from abusing me. So, I am the cause of your joy. I have given you satisfaction thereby. To bring comfort and happiness to people, many build choultries, dig wells, or do other charitable acts. But without undertaking any of these acts, I have been able to give great satisfaction to these evil-minded men. This is a great achievement, indeed," observed Buddha.

Jealousy is a canker that is self-destroying

Buddha also brought home to them another lesson. He asked one of them: "Child! A beggar comes to your house asking for alms: 'Blessed mother, give me food!' You bring some food. If the beggar says, 'This is not the alms I asked for, and I will not accept it' what will you do?" The man replied: "I will keep back the offering." Buddha said: "In the same manner, you attempted to offer me the *bhiksha* (alms) of your abuse. I did not accept it. To whom does it belong? It remains with you. So, you have only abused yourself, not *me*," said Buddha.

If a registered letter is addressed, to some one, who declines to receive it, the postal department 'will deliver it back to the sender. Similarly, if you criticise someone or hate somebody, if the other person remains unaffected and unperturbed,' your criticism and hatred come back to you. Jealousy and hatred do more harm to those who entertain these feelings than to those towards whom these are expressed.

Jealousy is a canker that is self-destroying

Once a sage was cultivating a beautiful garden growing a variety of flowers and fruits. Even in him egoism reared its head and in its wake jealousy also took root. When these two were present, hatred also joined the evil brood. Seeing this, the Lord, who felt that a sage wearing the saffron

robe and claiming to have renounced all attachments, should not entertain such evil qualities, entered the sage's garden in the guise of an old Braahmana to reform the sage.

The story of the sage and his ego

The Braahmana saw a tree and praising its beautiful flowers and fruits, he asked the sage who was responsible for raising such a fine garden. The 'sage replied: "Oh, Venerable Braahmana This garden has been created by me by indefatigable efforts, night and day, caring for every plant like a child. Every tree was planted by me and reared by me. All the pruning and laying out of the garden are my handiwork." And so on, he was boasting that "everything is my work, my achievement." "All these flowers and fruits I am growing for the sake of others," he said.

The Braahmana left and shortly thereafter a cow entered the garden and caused havoc among the flower plants. Seeing this from a distance, the sage hurled a big stick at the cow. The moment the stick hit the cow, the animal died. The sage inwardly feared that he might be guilty of the sin of *go-hathya* (cow slaughter). Meanwhile, the old Braahmana returned and, seeing the dead cow, exclaimed: "What a pity! Who could have killed the poor cow?" The sage replied: "It is all God's Will. Otherwise, will the cow lose its life, even if someone wanted to kill it?"

Immediately the 'Braahmana said: "You reared the garden and you made the flowers bloom. But when the cow dies, God is responsible for its death, Is it? You claim credit for all the good things, but when anything untoward happens you attribute it to God. Your conceit is totally unbecoming." The Braahmana then 'revealed His true form and said: "I am not. a Braahmana. I assumed this form only to remove from you the ego that has taken root in you."

To experience God, fill yourselves with Love

Everyone should strive to rid himself of egoism, jealousy and hatred. This elimination cannot be achieved by mere study of books. Constant effort is required. By cultivating love and dedicating all actions to God, these evil traits have to be got rid of. As long as jealousy remains, to the slightest extent, it will destroy every good quality in us. That is why the Geetha teaches that the total elimination of jealousy is a primary requisite for the *saadhak* (spiritual aspirant).

It is only when one's daily life is governed by the cultivation of virtues and the promotion of an environment conducive to spiritual effort will it be possible to grasp the meaning of Self-realisation. The Over-Soul is subtle and all-pervading. Its effulgence is everywhere. It is not embodied in any particular object. It shines everywhere. There is light in this hall. What is the source of this light? It is the lamp that is burning somewhere. The flame of the lamp has a form. But the light emanating from it has no form. The *Aathma* (Divinity) has effulgence but has no form or name. It can assume any name or form. Forms and names are sustained by the *Aathma*.

There is an electric bulb which gives light. An electric fan produces breeze. Different machines are operated by electricity. All these appliances are varied in their forms and functions. But the power that makes them function is one and the same. Likewise, the *Aathma-Principle* demonstrates its oneness in all the myriad entities in which it assumes various forms and names. Just as there are bulbs with varying wattage and serving different purposes, there are differences among living beings. But the current running through all the different bulbs is the same. The variations in the amount of light that comes from them are due to differences in the capacity of the bulbs. Likewise one who 'is filled with love shines radiantly. One lacking in love resembles a dim light. To get more light the bulb has to be changed, not the current.

Death is sweeter than the blindness of ignorance

God is the embodiment of Love. If you wish to experience God, you have to fill yourselves with love. Through Love alone can you experience the embodiment of Love that is God. The man filled with jealousy and hatred is like a blind man who cannot see the sun however brightly he may shine. He cannot see God however near God may be. Blinded by ignorance, the man filled with jealousy and hatred cannot hope to see God, like a blind man groping for something which **is** near him. The man filled with good qualities like truth, love, absence of jealousy, ego and hatred, can see God without searching for Him. He becomes a *Jnaani* (a man of spiritual wisdom). It has been well said: Death is sweeter than the blindness of ignorance.

Students, who have to develop their character and conduct during their youth, should give no room for evil traits like jealousy. They must feel happy when other students do well in studies or sports. To feel jealous towards a student who has come first is a threefold offence. The first offence is one's neglect of studies; the second offence is to entertain jealousy towards the better student; and the third is to lament over one's own failure. Students should not have such narrow ideas. They should learn a lesson from Dhuryodhana's fate. Because of his hatred and jealousy towards the Paandavas, he brought about the complete ruin of himself and his family.

Mandhir, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 6 September, 1984.

The significance of yajna, dhama and thapas (sacrifice, self-control and penance), of sahana, saadhana, samyama (forbearance, spiritual discipline and restraint), of the great Mahaavaakyas (Vedhic dicta) enshrined in the Vedhas, of the three Yogas bhakthi, karma and jnaana-- s elaborated in the Geetha, of the Dhaivi and Asuri (godly and demonic) natures--all these and many more of the fundamentals of Indian culture have to be taught to the children in schools and colleges. They must be encouraged to practise them, for their own as well as for the country's good.

Sri Sathya Sai

20. God knocks, asks and gives

THE name that is applied to the Festival celebrated with great joy by Keralites this day, Onam, is derived from the Samskrith *Shraavanam* and *Shronam*, indicating the ascendant star of the day. The month too is *Shraavanam*. That word reminds people of the very first step in spiritual *saadhana*, the first of the famous nine, namely, listening to the Glory of God and imbibing joy therefrom.

Keralites believe that the Lord, who incarnated as Vaamana, and Emperor Bali, who was immortalised by the Grace of that *Avathaar*, bless that region of Bhaarath this day by their Presence together. In every home, They are worshipped with flowers and incense, ritual offerings, song, dance and folk sports. Tradition declares that the Emperor prayed for the chance to re-visit the area he ruled over and loved and he insisted that the Lord who led him into Self-realisation must lead him. This faith is being rewarded every year. Many do achieve the vision of both Vaamana and Bali, there as well as elsewhere.

Bali was an *Asura* by birth but he emulated his father, Virochana, who had risen to great spiritual heights through deeds of self-sacrifice and his grand-father, Prahlada, one of the foremost devotees of the Lord. He ruled over his vast empire with vigilant care and affection. His subjects were healthy, happy and filled with gratitude. People were so prosperous and holy that there was not even a single person in want in the entire realm.

The *Guru* should practise what he teaches

He was engaged in an elaborate *Yajna*, (*Vedhic ritual* sacrifice) under the guidance of his *Guru* (preceptor), Shukraacharya, where he was giving away to *Pandiths* and priests land, homes, cattle and gold when the Lord appeared at the place as a young dwarfish mendicant *Braahmana*, named Vaamana. Bali tempted Him with gifts of dominion, riches and power, but Vaamana asked only for a patch of space, as much as could be measured by three steps of His feet.

The Emperor's preceptor realised that the mendicant was the Lord Himself and that the three steps will encompass Bali's empire and beyond. He warned his disciple of the disaster that would ensue. He tried personally to prevent the gift, by entering the spout of the vessel used by the Emperor to conclude the rite of gifting. When a bunch of blades of grass was inserted into the spout to clear the obstruction, Shukraacharya lost the eye which was pricked by the bunch. Teaching and practising what he preaches are the two eyes of the *Guru*. Shukraacharya taught but did not himself honour his teaching. So, the loss of the eye was highly symbolic.

The "three feet" of space that the Lord wished to accept and sanctify after magnifying Himself into *Thrivikrama* (Three-fold conqueror), are often identified as the Earth, Space and Outer-space, the *Bhuuloka*, the *Bhuvarloka* and the *Suvarloka*. But, the Lord, who has projected the Cosmos by His own will, does not crave for a fraction of His own creation. Nor are the three *lokas* situated one over the other. They are regions of consciousness, existing contemporaneously in Bali and everyone else. When you pay attention to the *Lokas*, the individual personality does not impinge on your attention; when the individual personality is cognised, the *Lokas* recede from view.

When the heart is pure, the Lord resides therein

When you look upon this chair as chair, you are not aware of the word; when you observe the word, the chair passes out of view. Take the instance of the idol of Shirdhi Sai Baba in silver.

When you adore it as Sai Baba, you are not aware of the silver; when you know it as so much silver, you exclude Sai Baba. So, too, when man concentrates on the *Bhuuloka* in him, the other two are beyond cognition.

The *Bhuuloka* in man is the *Dhehaloka* (the physical home of body which he carries about and in which he resides). The *Bhuvarloka* in him is the *Praanaloka* (the vital equipment or sheath that activates the *Bhuuloka* and the principle of consciousness encased therein) and the *Suvarloka* is the inner treasure chest, the *Aanandha* (delight), which prompts by its very presence the spiritual bud to blossom. Vaamana sought Bali's willing acquiescence in the Divine Process of purifying and sanctifying these three levels of his being-- the Body, the Awareness and the Cosmic Essence. Vaamana spoke of this blessing, symbolically, as three 'foot-measures' of land!

And, Bali, unaware of the inner meaning, agreed to give Vaamana what obviously He wanted. He was indeed in great ecstasy at the unique chance to offer to the Lord what He claimed out of what He had himself given!

Vaamana assumed His Cosmic Form and measured the three steps, covering the Cosmos, including Bali. Bali surrendered totally to the Divine Will; he was amply rewarded. He lived up to the heritage handed down to him by his father Virochana and grandfather Prahlada. *The Bhaagavatha Puraana* declares that he was consigned to *Suthala*, the most sacred of the nether regions. In other words, Bali was blessed with an inner vision of the Lord in his heart. The Lord assured him that He would grant him His constant presence in the *Suthala* region. The Message of Onam is that the Lord is won by means of total surrender of the ego. When the heart is pure, the Lord resides therein and guides man to Himself.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 7-9-1984

Prayer has great efficacy. The Vedhic seers prayed for the peace and happiness of all mankind, of all animate and inanimate things. Cultivate that Universal vision.

Sri Sathya Sai

21. Geetha - the Kalpatharu

HUMANS have, perforce, to engage themselves in some action or other. They have to be active, either physically or mentally or both. Apart from securing a contented and happy life, man craves for wealth, for fame, for power and possessions and popular esteem. But, the central teaching of the Geetha is disinterested activity, that is to say, activity suffused with enthusiasm and intelligence, done with perfection, without hope or expectation of rewards and even fruits. "You are entitled to do the work but not to the fruits thereof," says Krishna to Arjuna. The process is really more pleasant and satisfying than the end product. When a person engages himself in arranging for the celebration of a wedding, he forgets his fatigue, the expense or time and money while despatching invitations, deciding the menu, decorating the house, receiving guests and kinsmen, and supervising the ceremony. When the wedding is over, the joy declines and the fatigue comes into consciousness. The aftermath tastes insipid.

Leave the result of your work to the Will of God

When work is undertaken with an egotistic attitude, impelled by selfish motives and inspired by hopes of self-advancement, it feeds greed and pride, envy and hatred. Then, it fastens the bond and fosters the feeling of attachment to more and more profitable works. It promotes ingratitude to those who lent their hands and brains and to God Himself who endowed the person with the urge and the skill. "I did it", one says when the work succeeds; or "Others spoiled it" one says when it fails. Resentment, depression and despair follow when the work results in failure.

The more deeply one is attached to the fruits, the more intense and painful is one's grief when one is disappointed. The only means, therefore, to escape from both pride and pain is to leave the result to the Will of God, while one is happy in the thought that one has done one's duty with all the dedication and care that one is capable of. No one can do better than his best. The body is gifted with all its inherent excellences and defects so that it can be used, every moment of life, for purposes that can sanctify time through service, sacrifice and love.

The word Karma translated as work or action also connotes the rites prescribed by the *Vedhas* (ancient sacred scriptures) in the section named so. They are aimed at securing for the persons performing them a variety of material gains. Some of them promise as reward even a sojourn in heaven. But, they are all result-oriented. Though they cleanse the mind and foster renunciation, they yield the best results only when they have the attainment of world peace and world prosperity as the goal. Karma then becomes Karma-yoga, karma yoked with unselfish ideals. All acts undertaken by persons after surrendering their wills and wants to the Lord (*Sarva dharmaan parithyajya, Maam ekam Sharanam Vraja--Giving up all ideas of do's and dont's, surrender to Me alone*) become so holy and so pure that they do not bind one, either by the iron chain of misery or the golden chain of exultation.

Karma has to be an act of fulfilment and adoration

The Geetha does not encourage inertia, indifference or slothfulness. It recommends Karma as a *Yoga* (divine communion), as an activity in tune with the Divine Will, directed to the promotion of one's spiritual consummation. Karma has to be an act of fulfilment, of adoration and of one's duty to oneself and others. The Geetha marks out the steps and the path towards the realisation of this goal. It accepts all attitudes as valuable and sublimates each one into a *saadhana* (spiritual effort). It elevates the *Karma Kaanda* into a means for the uplift of the self and the advancement

of mankind. It is *Kalpa Vriksha* (Wish-fulfilling Tree), which bestows boons to aspirants of all levels of commitment.

It is an ocean of spiritual wisdom from which each one can bring away as much as the vessel he carries with him can hold. The rational seeker, the actional *saadhak* and the devotional aspirant all get equal attention and care from the Lord. In fact, the Geetha infuses into every act of daily life the sublimity of *Vedhaantha*, the immanence and transcendence of the Divine Principle. The *Vedhaantha* is interpreted in such simple terms that even the common man can understand and observe them in daily life.

The Geetha is the authentic Messenger of God; it conveys His Message in clear, convincing fullness. It is the Mother's comforting counsel for mankind. Grasping it, man can swim safe across the storm-ridden sea of life. It is the surest guide to the *saadhak*. It is a mine of *manthras*; it is an ever-active fountain of *Vedhaanthic* truths. It is the royal road to victory for seekers of Freedom. It renders that road a path of flowers.

Mandhir, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 10 September, 1984

Tongue is a tool that you can use in order to give vent to your thoughts, your ideas, your feelings, your desires, your prayers, your joys, your sorrows. If you are angry, you use it to speak out harsh words very loudly.

If you are pleased, you use it to speak soft words in a low pleasant voice. I want you to use your tongue only for your good and the good of others.

If you speak harshly to another, he too talks loud and harsh; angry words cause more angry words. But, if you use soft and sweet word, when another is angry towards you, he will calm down, he will be sorry that he used his tongue in that way.

Sri Sathya Sai

22. Significance of Ganesh worship

VINAAYAKA means one who removes all obstacles in the way of fulfilling any action. Vinaayaka also demonstrated the truth that His Divine parents (Parameshwara and Paarvathi) were the two to whom he owed his birth and existence and whom he should seek as his redeemers. This is the reason he is described as Vinaayaka and *Vighneshwara* (The Lord of Obstacles). He is also called Ganapathi--the Lord of all the *Ganas* (the host of spirits). There is an inner meaning for this name. Ganapathi is known for his supreme intelligence. It is because of this intelligence, he is able to keep under his control the vast array of spirits.

Only the person who has *suukshma buddhi* (acute power of intellect) can realise this nature of Divinity. Saint Thyaagaraaja enquired whether one needed refined intelligence to recognise the Lord. How could a monkey (Hanumaan) cross the ocean? How could Lakshmi attain the Lord? How could Yasodha bind Krishna? How could Bharatha enjoy the glory of Raama without satiety? All this was due to the power of supreme devotion to the Lord. There was nothing greater than devotion to Raama, declared Thyaagaraaja.

Ganapathi, who was endowed with supreme intelligence which enabled him to understand the all-encompassing nature of the Divine, subjected himself to a test by which he could impart to the world this intelligence. Parameshwara invited His two sons, Vinaayaka and Subrahmanya, to go round the world and said that whoever completed the trip first would get a fruit immediately. Subrahmanya mounted his peacock and set out on the race with zest.

Ganesha's claim for completing the trip round the world

Ganapathi, who was cast in a big mould and had as his vehicle a mouse, was apparently no match for his younger brother. How could he hope to go round the world? Seeing Ganesha complacently sitting there, without joining the race, the 'Divine parents asked him why he had not yet started on his trip. They urged him to get busy. But Ganapathi continued to enjoy what he was eating and seemed to be in no hurry to make a start.

A little while later, seeing that Subrahmanya was approaching the place, Ganapathi circumambulated his parents and sitting before them claimed that he had gone round the world. Paarvathi asked him: "Without going round the world, how can you claim you have done so merely by going round us?" Ganesha replied: "Oh, Mother, the whole earth is permeated by both of you. If I go round you, is it not equal to going round the whole world? What is the purport of statements such as: *Eeshaavaasyam Idham Sarvam* (All this is inhabited by the Lord), *Vaasudhevas-sarvam idham* (Vaasudheva is everything)? You are Omnipresent and to go round you is equivalent to circling the Universe," he said. Parameshwara presented a fruit to Vinaayaka and said: "Because you have a keen intellect, you shall be the master of all the spirits." It is for this reason that Vighneshwara is worshipped by one and all before performing any auspicious function, whether it is entering a new house or performing a marriage ceremony or any other religious function.

It must also be noted that the Lord's family is an ideal one, maintaining harmony and peace in spite of the antagonistic elements present amongst them. The vehicles of *Shiva* (the bull), *Paarvathi* (the lion), *Ganesha* (the mouse) and *Subrahmanya* (the peacock) are in their natural state inimical to each other. But living in the presence of the Lord they shed their enmity and live at peace. Harmony in the Divine family shows that where there is Divinity there is peace and amity. Hatred and jealousy arise when the Omnipresence of the Divine is forgotten or ignored.

Holy days like Vinaayaka Chaturthi should be celebrated only to remind ourselves of such sacred truths and to sanctify our minds and lives accordingly. They should not be treated as holidays for feasting and merry making. Ganapathi should be worshipped so that all the *Ganas* (spirits) become friendly and helpful to us. Thyaagaraaja sang that if he has the *dhaivaanugraham* (Lord's grace) all the *grahas* (planets) will be in his grasp.

We must purify our hearts so that the Lord may shower His grace on us. All education, all mastery of the scriptures and all kinds of worship will be of no avail if the heart is not filled with qualities like love, compassion and forbearance.

Mandhir, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 10 September, 1984

Dharmakshethras and Kurukshethra (field of virtue and of action) are not to be looked for near Delhi or Hasthinaapur, on the map or on the ground. Nor are the Paandavas and Kauravas merely princely clans figuring in the tale. The human body is named Kshethra, and so Dharmakshethra is in every one. When the owner of the body discards all desires, all passions, all impulses and all propulsions, then the body becomes Dharma-kshethra!

A child has in its heart only Dharmakshethra, for, it has not yet developed sensual desires. It accepts whatever is offered. Its ego is not yet ramified into the objective worm of multiplicity.

But, later, when it grows branches and foliage, the Dharmakshethra takes the shape of Kurukshethra--the battlefield where the mind struggles between hope and despair, and is compelled to consume the diverse fruits, sweet and bitter, of one's acts.

Sri Sathya Sai

23. Charioteer of the heart

SRI KRISHNA has explained in the Geetha that sorrow is the fruit of *Rajo guna* (quality of passionate activity). He has also shown that only the person who recognises this truth and removes *Rajo guna* and *Thamo guna* (quality of sloth and inertia) from his heart, can be happy. As man has all the three *gunas* (qualities) in his heart, he is bound.

The entire world is a manifestation of the three *gunas*. Of these three, *Rajo and Thamo gunas are the source of trouble*. For all sorrows, grief, trouble and problems, these two *gunas* are responsible. There are six attributes for *Thamo guna* sleep, drowsiness, fear, anger, laziness and inertia.

A farmer who wants to raise a crop in the field has to remove, at the outset, the weeds from his field. If different types of weeds grow, the crop will be affected adversely. Removing the weeds is an essential pre-condition for getting a good crop. In the same way, a *saadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) who wants to realise '*Aathmaanandha*' (the joy of *Aathma*), has to remove from his heart the various manifestations of *Rajo and Thamo gunas* in the form of malice, desire, greed, anger, hatred and jealousy. These six types of enemies of man are the children of *Rajo and Thamo gunas*. We won't be able to experience the joy of *Aathma* (individual soul) as long as these weeds are there. Therefore Krishna asked Arjuna to remove the *Rajo and Thamo gunas* from his heart.

Take every effort to remove dirt from your heart

If we invite some great man, such as a saint or a learned person to our house, some preparations will have to be made at home, to make it presentable. We have to clean the house and the surroundings before the guest comes to our house. A house which is not clean lacks sacredness and great people would not go to such places. In the same way, if we invited a minister or governor to our village, we would clean the road and decorate the path and keep everything fit and proper for receiving the eminent visitor. If we take so much care and precaution when we invite a person who has only a temporary position, how much more clean should we keep our heart when we invite the very Creator and protector of the world Himself to enter! It is only when we purify our heart that God will be able to enter it.

Krishna said: "Arjuna, you are taking Me as the charioteer of your chariot. Take Me as the charioteer of your life. The seat on which I am seated in this chariot is very dean and well decorated. Think how clean and how grand your heart should be to make it a seat for Me if I become the charioteer of your heart. As long as *Rajo and Thamo gunas* are there, the heart is not pure. These two *gunas* will go on polluting and dirtying the heart. Therefore, to begin with, remove the *Thamo and Rajo gunas*. Make every effort to remove the dirt from your heart."

Vairaagya removes all the dirt from the heart

To take another example: These days when one goes on a picnic, one takes a mirror, a comb and a handkerchief. Why do they take these things? On the way, the wind may blow their hair out of place, and they may need a mirror and comb to tidy it. When they get hot and tired, there may be some sweat on the face, so they take a handkerchief to wipe it off. These three things help one to maintain one's looks. In the same way, if you want to correct the disturbed beauty of the mind, you have to take certain things.

Whether our hair is dishevelled or not, is shown by the mirror. To find out whether our mind is disturbed or not, devotion acts as the mirror. This mirror also must be clean. If the mirror is clean, it will be easy to see whether there is impurity in the mind or not. When we recognise that the mind is disturbed, we have to correct it; for this purpose, we need the comb of wisdom. The cloth with which we wipe the dirt from our heart is *Vairaagyam* (detachment). This removes all the dirt. In the journey of life, wherever we go, we need to have devotion, wisdom and detachment.

We must try to understand the different 'characteristics of *Rajo guna*. A person who is full of *Rajo guna* will always be in a hurry. In everything, he exhibits undue haste. He has a lot of anger in him and develops unlimited desires. He cannot keep still even for a moment. These are the features of *Rajo guna*. If you go to the zoo and watch the animals--be it a tiger, a fox or any other animal---you will find that they do not keep still for a moment. They are continually moving. The reason is that they have *Rajo guna*. If *Rajo guna* enters the heart of man, it makes him move all the time. It doesn't merely make the person restless but makes him deluded as well. Not merely does he become deluded, but he goes on desiring objects, desiring everything in the world, and thereby becoming more and more deluded and restless. So, restlessness, desire and delusion are the three important features of *Rajo guna*.

Transcend the three *gunas* to experience bliss

The three *gunas* are represented in the Raamaayana by the three brothers in Raavana's family. The embodiment of *Thamo guna* is Kumbhakarna, of *Rajo guna* is Raavana, and of *Sathwa guna* is Vibheeshana. These three *gunas* are brothers, but if you allow the first two into your heart, they will cause a lot of harm. When you enter the Kingdom of Liberation, you will have to remove *Sathwa guna* also. *Vedhaantha* (concluding essence of the *Vedhas*) teaches that we must transcend these three *gunas*. If a thorn were to prick your foot, to remove it you do not need a knife; another thorn would be enough to help you remove it. Once you have removed the thorn, you could throw away both the thorns. In the same way, with the help of *Rajo guna*, you have to remove *thamo guna* and with the help of *sathwa guna*, you must remove *rajo guna*.

Before you can enter the mansion of *Brahmaanandha* (the bliss of oneness with *Brahman*) you have to cast off all these three *gunas*. As long as you have *gunas*, you won't be able to experience bliss. That is why Krishna commanded Arjuna to transcend all three *gunas*.

The most important cause for the three *gunas* is the mind. It is impossible to rise above our human nature and realise our divine nature until, the mind is transformed. We have to offer our mind to the Lord. Once we surrender our mind to God completely, He will take care of us in every way.

One must give up the mind to attain *Brahman*

Once upon a time, King Janaka sent round a message inviting scholars, sages and *yogis* to teach him the knowledge of *Aathma*. He announced: "In the time it takes me to climb on to my horse, one should be able to give me full *Brahma jnaana* (knowledge of the Absolute)." The sages and scholars were worried, as they felt "This is going to be a severe test for our scholarship and learning." No one dared come and offer to satisfy the King's demand.

Meanwhile, a sage by name Ashthaavakra entered the kingdom. While he was nearing the capital he saw the scholars and *rishis* assembled there. They were looking worried and despondent. He asked them, "What is the cause of all your worries?" They explained their situation and he said,

"Why should you be scared about such a small thing? I can solve this problem." So saying, he entered the court of King Janaka. He said to the King, "King, I am ready to teach you the knowledge of *Aathma*, but it cannot be taught in this palace which is full of *rajo* and *thamo* gunas. First I must take you to a *Sathwa area*."

They took a few horses and soldiers and left the palace. On reaching a lonely spot, Ashthaavakra told the king, "I am now going to teach you the knowledge of *Aathma*. I am the preceptor and you are the disciple. Are you ready to accept this relationship? If you agree to this, then you have to make the offering the *shishya* has to give to the *Guru* (preceptor). Only after you have made your offering will I start my teaching." King Janaka told Ashthaavakra, "I want to attain *Brahman* and I am therefore prepared to give you anything you want." Then the *Guru* told the King: "I don't want anything except your mind." King Janaka answered: "I offer it to you; from now on, it is yours."

Then the *Guru* brought a horse, made it stand, and asked the King to sit down on the ground in the middle of the road of his kingdom. He left the king there and retired into the forest to sit quietly under a tree.

King Janaka completely submits himself to the *Guru*

The soldiers waited for a long time for the return of the king but neither the king nor Ashthaavakra came. They wanted to know what had happened to them, and one by one, they went to find out. They found their king sitting in the middle of the road with a horse standing nearby. The king had closed his eyes and was absolutely still. Ashthaavakra was nowhere to be found. They were rather afraid that this Ashthaavakra had cast some magic spell over the king, making him lose his consciousness. They went to the prime minister and brought him to the king. The prime minister called the king, "Mahaaraaja, Mahaaraaja, Mahaaraaja," but the king did not open his eyes or respond in any way. The prime minister and all other courtiers were alarmed as they could not rouse the king or give him any food or drink. They were wondering what to do. Left with no alternative, the prime minister sent the chariot to bring the queen, thinking that if she called the king, he would respond to her entreaties. The queen came and pleaded. But the king remained unmoved.

Meanwhile, the soldiers went in search of Ashthaavakra into the forest. They found him sitting under a tree in total peace. They took hold of him and brought him to the place where the king was sitting. Ashthaavakra said, "The king is saved, he is all right. You may see for yourself." The ministers, the queen and others told Ashthaavakra: "He has not opened his mouth or eyes." Ashthaavakra went close to the king and called him, saying, "Mahaaraaja." Immediately the king opened his eyes and replied, "Swaami." Ashthaavakra told the king, "The ministers and the queen have come; the soldiers and many others have come and all have tried to talk to you; why did you not answer them?"

Offer your mind to God to remove duality

The king replied, "Thoughts, words and deeds are associated with the mind. As I have offered my mind entirely to you, first I need your permission before uttering a word. What authority do I have over my mind? I have offered it to you; it is yours. I won't do anything without your permission and command." Then Ashthaavakra said, "You have reached the state of *Amanaskaa* (free from mental limitation) a" and he asked him to place his foot upon the stirrup to mount the

horse. By the time he had climbed the horse and placed his other leg over the horseback, he got the experience of *Aathmaanandha* (Bliss of Divine self).

Krishna told Arjuna, "Offer your everything to Me; offer all your *Dharmas* (righteousness) to Me and I will take care of you and give you liberation and deliverance. Be they physical, mental, spiritual or worldly, offer all your actions to *Me*."

Keep the body steady to control your mind

King Janaka was able to get liberation when he offered his entire mind and the three types of activity, thought, word and deed, to Ashthaavakra. The essential meaning of this episode is that one should become *Amanaskaa*, to realise unity with the Divine. As long as you have a mind, there is duality. Cold and heat, day and night, sorrow and joy, loss and profit--all these pairs of opposites come about only when you have a mind. If you want to learn to treat all these things equally, you have to offer your mind to God. That is why in *Vedhaantha* it has been said that it is the mind that is responsible for liberation or bondage. As long as you have the mind, *thamo* and *rajo guna* will not leave you alone. As long as you have these two *gunas*, there will be no stillness of the body. What is the reason for the restlessness of the mind? On account of the desires of the sense organs the mind becomes restless.

Here is a small example for this. When there is some water in a vessel, if the vessel moves, the water also moves. If the vessel is steady, the water also will be steady. In steady water, you are able to see your image, but in moving water, your image will also be moving. Therefore, if you want to enter into a state of meditation, you must keep your body still. The body is like the vessel, and the mind may be compared to the water inside it. If body moves, the mind inside will be agitated. Therefore, control your mind and make it steady by keeping your body steady.

For meditation, it is very important to keep the back straight. The Kundalini power travels from the *Moolaadhaara* (at the base of the spinal column) to the *Sahasraara* (thousand-petalled energy centre) in the crown of the head. Therefore, you must be steady. Head, neck and body have to be straight; there should be no bend. This is extremely essential for students and *saadhakas* engaged in meditation. That is why I tell the students often, "Why do you study? To become steady!" If fight from boyhood you can keep your body under control, it will be very useful in achieving many things in later life.

Krishna chose Arjuna as an ideal representative of mankind to set an example for humanity. He said to Arjuna, "I am using you as an instrument in order to make an example of you. Therefore, you must first become an ideal person."

The Mandhir, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 12-9-1984

The tongue is a tool, as I said. You can harm yourself and harm others with it. So, be very careful; use it only for your good and for the good of others. If you use it for talking kind words, for repeating the Name of God or singing His Glory, or praying to Him then, it is put to the best use.

Sri Sathya Sai

24. Purity of Heart: the path to Divinity

"Heaven and hell are not far away places.

They are related to one's actions.

It you sow a neem seed, will you get a wood-apple tree ?

Your birth is the result of your Karma."

KARMAANUBANDHEENI Manushya Loke (Man is bound by actions). *Brahma mayam Jagath* (The Cosmos is permeated by Supreme Reality). *Karmamayam Jagath* (The Cosmos is permeated by action). *Shrishti* (creation) is *Brahman* (Eternal Absolute). All action is impelled by the *Jeeva Shakthi* (Life Force). The vesture worn by this Life Force is the body. The body is the agency for the performance of *Karma*. It is also the product of karma (one's past actions). In a sense, the body and *karma* are one.

The actions performed by men are described as *karmas*. To reap the fruits of their actions, they take birth in bodies. Hence, man is represented as bound by karma. It is for experiencing the results of one's good and bad deeds that one takes birth.

Religious practices will not lead to God-realisation

We are familiar with the pairs of opposites like good and bad, sin and merit, truth and falsehood. The performance of *Vaidheeka Karmas* (prescribed religious rites) like *Yagnas*, *Yaagas* (sacrificial rites) charity and penance, is regarded as *Punya Karmas* (meritorious actions). While engaged in these acts, if a person is concerned with worldly gains, *Ahamkaara* (egotism) arises. There is the feeling, I am doing these sacred rites. On the other hand, indulging in evil deeds like fraud, cruelty and deceit, man forgets his higher nature and is oblivious to the consequences of his actions. Involvement in actions, whether good or bad, results in bondage.

The chains that bind may be made of gold or of iron, but they are chains all the same. Good deeds alone cannot be the means of liberation. The *Vedhas* (ancient spiritual scriptures), *the Upanishaths*, *the Geetha* and the *Brahma Suuthras* have declared that rituals and religious practices will not lead to God-realisation. As they are external acts, they are related only to the body. They are not conducive in any way to the development of the inner vision. Only when one is able to get rid of egotism and attachment can one develop the inner vision. *Saakshaathkaara* (realisation of Divinity) and *Brahma praapthi* (mergence in the *Brahman*) cannot be attained by rituals. "*Advaita Darshanam Jnaanam*"-- Perception of the Unity of the Divine is Wisdom. The sense of duality must be eradicated to realise the oneness of the Absolute.

Aathma Jnaana (knowledge of the true Self) dawns in man when he has *Chithashuddhi* (purity of the heart). This purity can be achieved only through *Karmas*. The body, the mind and the *Aathma*, all three are involved in the human entity. They are inextricably interdependent. When they become disparate, life loses its meaning. When the body is subject to the mind and the mind is controlled by the *Aathma*, life finds fulfilment. When the body alone is predominant, the human descends to the level of the animal. When the mind prevails over the body and the sensory organs, the human level is attained. When the *Aathma* prevails over the mind and the body, Divinity is realised.

Purification of the heart is the basic goal of life

Recognising this fact, the Geetha has indicated a three-stage path to divinity. Engaging the body in good deeds, using the mind to develop good thoughts and human qualities and to contemplate on God through *Upaasana* (worshipping the Divine) man reaches the stage when, like a river joining the ocean, he merges in the *Brahman*. This is the process by which the human becomes one with the Divine.

Whatever scriptures one may study, whatever *saadhanas* (spiritual efforts) one may practise or pilgrimages one may make, unless one succeeds in getting rid of the impurities in the heart, life will remain worthless and meaningless. Purification of the heart is the essence of all scriptural teachings and the basic goal of life.

In this context, the Geetha refers to *Swadharma* (duties that accord with one's nature) and *Paradharma* (duties prescribed for others) and says that *Swadharma* is conducive to the ennobling of the individual, while *Paradharma* is fraught with fearful consequences. *Swadharmo nidhaanam shreyah Paradharmo bhayaavaha*, "Adhering to one's *dharma* is commendable, while practising *Paradharma* is full of dangers." *Swadharma* does not mean the *dharma* (duty) relating to any caste, community, race or religion. *Swa* means *Aathma*. It is the *dharma* that is related to *Aathma*, that is *Swadharma* (Divine duty). *Paradharma* is *dharma* related to the body consciousness. All duties associated with the external world are comprised in *Paradharma*. These duties will inevitably involve one in the bonds of *Samsaara* (worldly life). Though they may confer temporary pleasures they are bound to result in fear and anxiety.

In performing good deeds do not develop ego

In performing *Yaagas*, *Yajnas* and other *Vedhic* rituals, there is the danger that they may become instruments of bondage. We must ensure that in performing these good deeds, we do not develop ego or attachment. "When anything is done with attachment or desire, it results in actions which lead to rebirth. *Yaagas and Yajnas* are expected to take one to *Swarga* (heaven). But how long can the stay in heaven last? When the fruits of the good deeds have been enjoyed, one has to be born again on earth. "*Ksheene punye marthya lokam vishanthi*" (When the accumulated merit is exhausted, one re-enters the mortal world).

One must therefore seek what is permanent and eternal. That can be realised only through *nishkaama karma* (desireless action). Every action done without ego leads to divinity. Ignoring this truth, man indulges in meaningless actions. People recite the Geetha, achieve proficiency in expounding it, but do not live up to the message. The Geetha is interpreted in many ways, according to one's whims and fancies. The Geetha and other scriptural texts are like the *Kalpavriksha* (the Wish-fulfilling Tree). They lend themselves to varied interpretations and meanings. But, what matters is not the manifold interpretation, but the understanding derived from actual experience. Without putting into practice the teachings of the Geetha, we cannot derive the bliss that can be got from it. Reciting the Geetha endlessly or listening to it will be of no avail if nothing is done to purify one's heart and get rid of evil qualities like ego, selfishness and pride. It is better to put into practice a single stanza of the Geetha than to get by heart all the 700 slokhas.

No spiritual study or *saadhana* can help to purify one's heart unless one makes the effort himself. And when the heart is purified, it becomes a worthy abode for the Divine.

Whatever you do you must regard it as a duty done without any motive of self-interest or selfish gain. It is only when all actions- whether they be *Yaagas* or *Yajus* or *Thapas* or any kind of *saadhana*--are done as offerings to the Divine, will they become sanctified and liberating. Through *Icchaashakthi* karmas (desire filled actions) we take birth, through *anaasakthi* karmas (desireless actions) we can attain freedom from re-birth.

Puurnachandra Auditorium, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 28 September, 1984

Go gives both protection and punishment; for how can 'He be the Lord, if he does not insist on strict accounting and strict obedience?

Sri Sathya Sai

25. Unique significance of *Omkaara*

MANTHRA is not a mere collection of words. It is a compounded set of words pregnant with enormous significance. It emanates from the inner power of man. Filled with such power, the *manthra* (sacred formula), when it is pronounced properly, brings out the Divine power in man. The vibrations produced by the utterance of the *manthra*, uniting with the Cosmic *naadha* (primal sound) in the Universe, become one with the Universal Consciousness. It is these Cosmic vibrations which assumed the form of the *Vedha* (sacred revelations of spiritual knowledge).

For all the *manthras*, the primary *manthra*, which enshrines the attributeless, Omniself, is the *Omkaara*. The *Omkaara* embodies in the form of sound the Supreme *Brahman*. For this sound, the presiding deity is Saraswathi. In common parlance Saraswathi is regarded as the consort of Brahma (Demi God of Creation). It is the union of Brahma and Saraswathi that accounts for all the knowledge in the world. Who is Brahma and who is Saraswathi? Saraswathi is commonly worshipped as the Goddess of Speech and as the deity who has to be propitiated for acquiring knowledge. She is also described as *Varadhe* (the giver of boons) and as *Kaamaruupini* (one capable of assuming any form). But Saraswathi is not one who conforms to these descriptions. Saraswathi is present in all beings as the Goddess of Speech.

***Omkaara* is the manifesting of *Brahman* as sound**

The body is regarded as Brahma and the tongue is regarded as Saraswati and the vibrations emanating from the heart find expression in sound through the union of the body and the tongue. Although there are many letters and words, the fundamental *aksharam* (letter), which has primacy of place, is the *Omkaara*. "*Om ithyekaaksharam Brahma* (the single letter OM is *Brahman* Itself) 'says the Geetha. All other letters and words are linguistic creations. They do not possess the unique sacredness and divine character of '*OM*.' The special significance of '*OM*' is not generally recognised or understood.

The Manthra Shaasthra (ancient scripture related to sacred formulas) has laid emphasis on the letter '*OM*'. *Omkaara* has no form. It is the manifestation of *Brahman* as sound. It is present in all creation. It is effulgent. It is in all speech. It is ever blissful. It is *Paraathparamyee* (embodiment of the Supreme). It is *Maayamayee* (the repository of illusory power). It is *Shreemayee* (embodiment of prosperity). The *Omkaara* is the only sound that has these 'eight divine attributes, according to the *Manthra Shaasthra*.

Only by elimination of ego can *Brahman* be realised

What is the difference between the *Omkaara* and all other sounds and words? The *Omkaara* has a unique, distinctive quality in the way it is pronounced and the goal it represents. When other letters are uttered, the lips, the tongue, the cheeks and the jaws are in action. But when the *Omkaara* is pronounced, none of these move at all. This is a unique characteristic of *Omkaara*. Hence '*OM*' alone can be regarded as *Aksharam* (imperishable). All the other sounds are expressions of different languages.

The *Omkaara* is the base for the *Vedha*. To grasp the full significance of *Omkaara*, which is all-pervasive, it is necessary to have the same kind of self-control which one has to exercise to bring the sensory organs under control.

In reciting any *manthra* the primacy to be accorded to OM should be recognised. The *manthra* ends with the word *Namah* (as for example, in *Om Keshavaaya Namah*: Prostrations to

Keshava). In the *manthras Keshavaaya namah, Govindhaaya namah, Naaraayanaaya namah*, the significance of *Namah* which occurs at the end of each *manthra* should be noted.

The worshipful attitude signified by the term *Namah* will be lost if the word *Om* is not used at the beginning of each *manthra*. It is only when *Om* is said at the beginning and *Namah* at the end that the full purport of the *manthra* will be brought out. The integral connection between *Om and namah* should be recognised. *Namah* represents *Prakrithi* (objective world). In ordinary parlance *Namah* is understood to mean *namaskaaram* (salutation). But it has a wider meaning. It means *Prakrithi* (the phenomenal world). *OM* connotes *Purusha* (Divinity). The purpose of the *manthra* is to reveal the connection between *Prakrithi and Purusha*. Based on the inner significance of this, the *Mahaavaakya* (great declaration) *Thath Thwam Asi* (That Thou Art) has to be understood. *Asi* is the link between "*Thath*" and *Thwam*. In *Aham Brahma asmi*, *Asmi* provides the link. In the *Mahaavaakya Prajnaanam Brahma, Asi* does not figure.

Only by elimination of ego can *Brahman* be realised

If in the *manthra Om Keshavaaya Namah* the word *Keshavaaga* is omitted, and *Om Namah* is uttered, the unity of *Shiva-Shakthi* (*Purusha and Prakrithi*) is established and the dualism implicit in the *manthra* is removed. The *manthra* states, "I am offering obeisance to Keshava," thereby positing two entities, besides the action of obeisance itself being a third element.

To eliminate this dualism, the *Manthra Shaasthra* laid down that if instead of *namah, na mama* (not for my sake) is employed, the identity of the worshipper and the worshipped will be established. "*Om Keshavaaga, na mama*" would mean "for Kesava, not for *me*." By this process, the ego is destroyed. And only by the elimination of the ego can the attributeless *Brahman* be realised.

Puurnachandra Auditorium, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 1 October, 1984

26. Divinity of *Avathaar*

EXHORTING Arjuna to see everything in the *Aathma* (Divine soul), Krishna revealed to him *His Vishwaruupa* (Cosmic Divine Form), all the forms seen in the Cosmos, wherefrom they have come. Krishna revealed that all of them were in Him. He told Arjuna: "I am in the tree that you see. I am in the ocean. I am in the earth. See Me in everything." Krishna revealed that all that is seen in the phenomenal Universe is within Him.

In this context, the difference between Divinity (as Universal Consciousness) and the *Avathaar* (the Divine in human form) should be understood. The *Para Brahman* (the Omniself) is not subject to change. The *Avathaar* has name and form and is liable to change by its own Will. The Omniself has no name or form. The difference between the two can be illustrated by the example of the Sun and the rays coming from the Sun. There is no difference in substance between the Sun and the Sun's rays. They are one. Whatever the situation in which the *Avathaar* appears, there is no limitation on the *Avathaar's Poornathwam* (Omnipotence). Name and form do not circumscribe the total fullness of the Divinity the *Avathaar* (divine incarnation) manifests. Name and form are the self-chosen attributes of the infinite, eternal, ever-pure, Universal Consciousness.

The Divine pervades the minutest and vastest

Asthi, Bhaathi, Priyam (existence, effulgence and bliss) are the characteristics of the Divine. They, in fact, are the Divine Itself. They are the basis of everything in the Universe. When they are associated with name and form, they acquire a five-fold character. Hence all things in creation are known as *Panchaka* (objects with five attributes). The world is described as *Prapancha* because it makes known these five attributes in creation. For the evolution of the Cosmos, the *pancha bhuthas* (the five elements, ether, air, fire, water and earth)--- e needed. To nourish the five elements, the *pancha koshas* (five sheaths) have to be developed. The sheaths have to be sustained by the *pancha praanas* (five vital airs). The five vital airs are contained in the *Avathaar* (Divine incarnation). They are: *Praana, Apaana, Vyaana, Udhaana and Samaana* (life breath, down-breath, side moving breath, upward breath and balanced breath). These five vital airs arise from the One that is their source. They originate by the Will of the Chaithanya (Omni-Self).

There is nothing in the Universe without this *Chaithanya* (Divine principle). From the minutest particle in its most subtle form to the vastest in its amplitude, the Divine pervades the Universe.

Water taken from the ocean, in however small a vessel, has the same quality as the ocean. Likewise, the *Avathaar*, regardless of Its name and form, has the plenitude of the Divine. In every respect, except that of name and form, It is identical with Divinity. When Krishna urged Arjuna, "Surrender to Me, worship Me, offer all your *Dharmas* to Me, I shall protect and liberate you," He was speaking with the full consciousness of His Divinity, His Omnipotence, Omniscience and Omnipresence. Only the Divine could have spoken with that assurance.

We must recognise the Infinite in the individual

In the Raamaayana, although in many situations Raama appears to act like an ordinary human being, sage Vasishta, who knew his *Aathmic* Reality, observed: "Raama! You are the very embodiment' of *Dharma* (right action). You are not this corporeal entity, made up of flesh and blood. You are the embodiment of all the sacred *manthras*. You are not of the earth. You are the

Eternal Spirit. The common folk may regard you as an ordinary mortal. But the *Yogis* (liberated persons) experience you as the Divine upholder of *Dharma*." **The** *Raama avathaar* is the very incarnation of *Dharma*. 'Raa' means "*purushathwam*" (the quality of manliness), "*mahaapurushathwam*" (super-human quality). "Maa" has also got several meanings. "*Raama*" symbolises **the** unity of *Prakrithi* (creation) and *Paramaathma* (the Omniself).

The Cosmos has no duality. Divinity is the union of *Prakrithi* and *Paramaathma*. The Divine manifests in man as an individual entity. We must recognise the Infinite in the individual. The individual multiplied by infinity is God. God must be seen in the infinity of the Cosmos-- in the Omnipresence of the Divine.

Puurnachandra Auditorium, Prashaanthi Nilayam,

1-10- 1984

How can a student be regarded as a success if, at the end of the course, he knocks at the door of every office exhibiting the diploma he has secured, and clamouring like a beggar asking for jobs? Education has been conferred on him this disgraceful role. Can it claim that it has done its duty?

No. The educated person must serve the people, through sweat and toil. Education has to inspire youth to offer service, to sacrifice and to help. It must not inspire youth to amass money as its goal, and to travel farther and farther to earn and more of it.

For, accumulated money brings arrogance and arrogance brings in its train many other vices.

Sri Sathya Sai

27. Service without distinctions

THROUGH right action one achieves purity of heart which leads to the acquisition of *jnaana* (the higher spiritual knowledge). When right action is coupled with *Jnaana*, there is true service. To feel that one should be the sole enjoyer of the results of one's actions is a sign of selfishness. It is naive to think that one alone is the doer of one's actions. All the things in the world are not intended for the exclusive enjoyment of any single person. They are to be shared by all.

It is only when attachment to the fruits of one's actions is discarded that the action becomes *yoga* (Divine communion). Members of the Seva Dhal should overcome the sense of 'mine' and 'thine.' When they embark on service activities, they should regard it as a privilege to serve others and look upon it as a form of worship of the Divine. They should look upon service to society as the means of finding self-fulfilment in life. They should face whatever problems may arise with faith and courage and carry on their service activities without fanfare in a spirit of humility and dedication.

Bhaarath should be made the land of *thyaaga*

In the Sai organisation there is no room for distinctions of race, religion, caste, class, or community. All should regard themselves as the children of one God. When they are united by this sense of divine kinship, they will act with Love towards all. They should shed all narrow and limited ideas and engage themselves in service with a heart full of love for all. True seva (selfless service) can come only out of a pure and loving heart.

There are any number of service organisations in the world. The uniqueness of the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation consists in the fact that it regards seva as a form of service to the Divinity that is in each being. The bliss that is derived from such service is incomparable. It is a spiritual experience.

You should not be content with what you have accomplished so far. You should do a great deal more to make this great country an exemplar to the world of the great ideals of its seers and sages. Bharath should be made the land of *thyaaga* (sacrifice) and not *bhoga* (indulgence in luxury). *Thyaaga* is *yoga*. *Bhoga* is *roga* (disease). To live up to the ideal of *thyaaga* is your duty today.

In the world today one does not see anywhere unity or love. Life appears to be a totally mechanical affair. Man does not mean merely the external appearance of a human being. We should have the conviction that he is a soul dwelling in a body. This may be an act of faith. But without such faith life has no meaning. Today we believe in things which should not be believed and have no belief in the things in which we ought to believe. We should have faith in ourselves. We should understand our true nature and rectify our failings. Discovering our true self, we should live up to its demands.

Puurnachandra Auditorium, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 18 November, 1984

The one effective way to conquer all sources of physical and mental disease and debility is awareness of one's Aathmic Reality. That will bring about an upsurge of Love and Light, for, when one recognises that he is the Aathma, he cognises the same Aathma it,

all, he shares the joy and grief of all, he partakes of the strength and weakness of all.

When one yearns for the happiness and prosperity of all mankind, one is blessed with the wisdom and strength to mark out the way and lead men towards it. In every one, the person sees his God. Every act of his will be as pure, as sincere and as sacred as an offering to God.

Sri Sathya Sai

28. Uphold Sai ideals

There exist Masters of Vedhaantha who can teach

Rishis of yore,

There exist Masters of art and sculpture who can

animate lifeless stones, and make them dance,

There exist valiant heroes who can play with the heads of

foes.

There exist all these in numbers large in the land of

Bhaarath today.

But of what avail are all these, O Students! If there is no one amongst them who ever hears the plaintive cries of the people around!

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine *Aathma* (Divine Self)! We can hear in *Shikshavalli* (in the *Thaithariya Upanishath*) the voice of the well-wishing teachers who imparted their last instructions to students who had studied under them in the *gurukulas* (hermitages) and were on the threshold of *grihastaashrama dharma* (duties prescribed for the householder).

Vidhya (learning), according to *Shikshavalli*, is not mere mastery of letters. *Vidhya* should blend harmoniously with life and lend meaning and purpose to it. It is said: '*Saa vidhya yaa Vimuktaye*' (Learning is that which liberates).

Link between the Sun and heart of the man

There are four *Samhithas* in *Shikshavalli*--*Loka Samhitha*, *Aloka Samhitha*, *Vijnaana Samhitha* and *Prajnaana Samhitha*. The *Loka Samhitha* describes earth, the three *lokas* (worlds) and the stellar galaxies. It is *Vaagu* (wind) that binds the earth and the stellar galaxies,, giving rise to the creation of *aakaasha* (space). The principle of mutual attraction governs the galaxies and the earth. There are seven kinds of winds that circulate between the earth and the three worlds. The *Shikshavalli* teaches that a harmonious bond between the three worlds and the earth is ensured by the presence of these seven winds. It is due to this intimate bond that the ocean swells and sways at the sight of the Moon and the clouds.

The second *Samhitha*, *Aloka Samhitha*, is also known as *Jyothi Samhitha*. This describes the presence of Fire and the Sun and the connecting bond between the two. Cosmic radiation establishes a link between Fire on the earth and the rays from the Sun, causing the creation of water in the process. The *Samhitha* testifies that one who understands the nature of water can cognise the nature of the Universe as well. The second teaching of this *Samhitha* is that there is a link between the Sun and the heart of man. The statements *Chandramaa manasojaatah*, *Chakshos-Suryo Ajaayata*, in the Vedha (ancient Sacred Divine revelations) bring out the connection between the Moon and the mind and the Sun and eye-sight.

Rights and duties are inseparably inter-related

The third *Samhitha*, the *Vijnaana Samhitha*, expounds the *Sandhi* (conjunction) between the teacher and the student, and the *vidhya* (learning) that arises therefrom. It stresses, the importance of spiritual education, in addition to secular education through the education of the heart. This *Samhitha* imparts also some essential teachings for one's conduct in life. The sacred injunctions contained in the *Samhitha* shine as beacon-lights to mankind afflicted with limitless desires and meaningless yearnings. These injunctions are: Speak *Sathya* (truth); Observe Dharma (code of righteousness); Foster knowledge with diligence; Abstain from vicious deeds; Perform worthy acts; Respect most meticulously the regulations laid down by society for leading a disciplined life in the community; Practise charity as a householder according to your capacity; Show reverence and obedience to elders; Exercise extreme vigilance with regard to your duties and relationship with your kith and kin and fellow- human beings.

After imparting these instructions, the *Samhitha* (beneficial Divine instructions) lays down that these teachings constitute the eternal commandments for the conduct of man. The *Samhitha* teaches that based on these commandments, the students should lead a life of exemplary excellence.

Unfortunately we do not find such thoughts and feelings in the hearts of the students of today, The educational system today makes an educated person selfish. It makes him a slave to the senses and as a consequence he forgets his own divine nature. Educated men are not prepared to take up service to the suffering people.

It is not only the educated who are to be blamed for this situation. The government, which has failed to encourage and enthuse the people, is also to be blamed for this. Students are not being taught to be self-reliant and self-supporting. Despite the possession of high degrees, the educated man is frantically after salaried jobs rather than seeking independent careers. The educated man fights for his rights, without regard to the duties to be discharged. The man who neglects his duties will lose his rights as well. Rights and duties are inseparably inter-related. Love is the connecting link between the two. The faithful ones in the spiritual realm crave for joy, peace and comfort without striving to realise how they can be obtained.

Our motives should be sublime, deeds righteous

We do not want God nor do we cultivate devotion. But we want God to shower *shaanthy and aanandha* (peace and divine bliss) on us. If we want peace, we should conduct our life on lines conducive to peace. How can a person, pursuing evil and unrighteous ways, ever obtain peace, truth and joy? Can we have the belch of a gourd by eating a mango? As are the deeds, so are the rewards. As the motives, so are the gifts of God. Hence our motives should be sublime and deeds should be righteous.

Students should try to develop the powers latent in them. The educated men of today believe in what they read in novels and newspapers, what they see in films, and even in the whimsical words of a passerby. But they have no faith in God. This is a great misfortune. Men who believe in the words of an astrologer or a *purohit*, will not trust the words of the Vedha *Maatha* (Divine *Vedhic* mother), who has taught the four great truths: "*Thath thwam asi, Prajnaanam Brahma, Aham Brahmaasmi, Ayam Aathma Brahma*" (Thou Art That, Consciousness is *Brahman*, I am Divine, This Self is the Omni-Self), which declare: "O son, you are *Brahman* (Absolute Truth) itself."

The educated man wastes his life by developing faith in petty mundane things and by refusing to develop faith in the wisdom to be gained by divine power and spiritual knowledge.

Sai Institutions impart ideal education

It is in order to impart true, ideal education, and mould the students as ideal citizens for the service of the country that the Sathya Sai Educational Institutions have been set up. Many people have the notion that the students of our educational institutions are capable of only performing *puujas and bhajans* (ritual offering and group singing of devotional songs) and such other spiritual activities. This is entirely wrong. Our students are ready to take up activities in the field of ethics, administration, politics, business and various other professions. Our students are achieving excellence not only in dance, drama, music and literature, but also in the arts and in physical culture. The gymnastic feats done by them bear ample testimony to this.

As our students are unassuming and humble, devoid of all show and pomp, you underestimate their excellence and underrate their abilities. Our students reject and resent all pomp and show. The students who love pomp and show are not students at all. Our students know the truth that egotism is the cause of disaster. Our educational institutions are making all effort to produce thousands of ideal students to help people lead ideal lives.

Dear students! When you go out into the world, you should maintain in your daily life the sacred feelings and habits that you have acquired here. Regard this as true education. Cherish the teachings and precepts that you have received in this convocation as your very life-breath and conduct yourselves as ideal men and enlighten the entire world by your precept and practice.

*Bhagavan's Discourse in Puurnachandra Auditorium at
the Convocation of S.S.I.H.L., Prashaanthi Nilayam,
22-11- 1984*

Do not serve for the sake of reward, attracting attention, or earning gratitude, or from a sense of pride at your own superiority in skill, wealth, status or authority. Serve because you are urged by love. When you succeed, ascribe the success to the Grace of God, who urged you on, as Love within you. When you fail, ascribe the failure to your own inadequacy, insincerity or ignorance. Examine the springs of action, disinfect them from all trace of ego. Do not throw the blame on the recipients of the Seva, or on your collaborators and co-workers, or on God.

Sri Sathya Sai

29. The real birthday

*When we delight as He keeps us close and near
He sows anxiety in the heart, of separation sad;
When we despair and feel His sport is our wail.
He grants us in plenty laughter to split our sides.
When we ride on the crest of the wave of His praise
He pricks our pride by well-timed jeers.
When we roam quite free at the boon, "Don't fear,"
He heaps trouble on trouble and passes "silently by.
We cannot turn away, nor forward proceed.
Thus He who is in Parthi holds the world in thrill;
Who at this time can solve r or us His Mystery?*

IN the cavity of the heart of man, in that sublime *Aakaasha* (space), God resides associated with the Self principle, as sunshine exists associated with shadow. Light and shade are twin birds. Shade is caused by Light; shade includes Light, for it declares the adjacence of Light. It needs the presence of Light. They are fundamentally inseparable. So too are the *Jeevi* (Individual Self) and the *Brahman* (Universal Self) related to each other as One Inseparable Entity. The *Jeevi* as the shadow exists in and through *Brahman* and partakes of the same Divine splendour. Every individual has to become aware of this identity.

The body is a chariot and the charioteer is *Buddhi*

For, the shadows are many and varied, though the light is One. When the One is reflected in the many, in the multitude of *Jeevis*, it appears as the Self in each, which watches unaffected as the Witness. The *Aathma* (Divine Self) is Eternal. The Self is Truth. However, since it is enclosed in .flesh, bone and skin, man deludes himself into believing that the outer covering and not the inner core is the source of bliss, The foremost duty of man to himself is, therefore, to penetrate through these sheaths and imbibe the higher bliss which his *Aathmic* core alone can confer. Everyone must, in his own best interests, strive to attain that unifying principle that is his inner treasure. Of all *Saadhanas* (spiritual exercises) this is the most pertinent--the process of achieving this closeness. For, *Saadhana* means the endeavour and the effort to gain the desired object.

Activities that are devoid of Truth do not deserve to be known as Saadhana. The Aathma is the Universal Eternal Truth and therefore, it cannot be gained by search in the particularised and the temporary world. The Divine shines in your heart and can be won only therein.

The body is a chariot. The charioteer is the principle of *Buddhi* (intelligence). The senses are the horses. The reins that regulate and restrain the horses are the *manas* (mind). When the mind wavers and wanders, not having stability of purpose, the horses run helter-skelter, endangering even the charioteer, *Buddhi* (Intellect).

Experience the unity of speech, wisdom and *Aathma*

Speech is an important function of the senses and it serves the whims of the mind. So, one has to control the mind and not pollute it with greed for sense pleasures. Nor should the mind be tossed about on the waves of 'Yes' and 'No', of acceptance and rejection, of resolutions and hesitations. The mind has to act as the associate of *Buddhi*. Speech subserving the mind and mind subserving the intellect--this is the way to bring about Prashaanthi, the Supreme Peace. And, note this further point: slowly and steadily, instruct the intellect to turn towards the *Aathma*. Speech with the mind, mind with intellect and intellect illumined by the *Aathma*—this ensures for you the genuine goal of man.

The *Aathma* is Eternal; It manifests Truth, which is Eternal, and beyond the limits of Space, Time and Causality. Truth is not affected by the passage of Time from the past through the present into the future. *Jnana* (Spiritual Wisdom) too is not modified or clarified by the passage of Time. In fact, Wisdom is Truth; Truth is Wisdom. So, you should 'direct your best effort to experience the unity of Speech, Wisdom and *Aathma*.

You have no need to run about in search of God, for, you are yourself God. God resides in your heart. "All this is enveloped by God." "All this is God." "All beings are God." He is the All-pervasive motive force. Have firm faith in this fact. Like fire in the matchstick, divinity is latent in man. The fire in the stick becomes manifest when it is struck against the side of the box. So too, when the *Jeevi* contacts *Dheva* (God), the flame of *Jnaana* sheds the Light of Wisdom. How can the man taste the experience of Wisdom? In what form does it emanate? The wise person does not hate any one: he does not belittle or blame or hurt any one. What is it that prompts you to love another? The urge to love and be loved is inherent in every one. So, when you deny love or when you hate, you are hurting not only the person but the Universal Principle, the Divine Nature itself.

Involve in acts that encourage detachment

Know that whatever you feel or do is an offering to God, flows towards God. So, be cautious. Do not offer bad thoughts, words and deeds which He does not accept. Offer instead the holy and the pure. That is your duty. That will ensure Self-satisfaction. Self-satisfaction paves the way to Self-sacrifice and Self-sacrifice brings about Self-realisation. The entire process rests upon faith; self-satisfaction, self-sacrifice and self-realisation--all these depend on faith. Faith decides the yearning; the yearning decides the fruit; the act decides the stage that is reachable. "For, the sincerity of the act promotes the purity of the path; the purity of the path determines the validity of the 'wisdom and true wisdom is Divinity itself. The act, the conduct, the way of life these have to be disciplined and elevated. How can a mind encumbered with desires ever rest content? How can it welcome sacrifice? Nevertheless, man has to involve himself only in acts that encourage detachment and renunciation.

A devotee once asked Brahma, the Creator: For whose sake did you raise Meru, the Mountain of Gold? The renunciant would have nothing to do with it; the person who desires gold can never be satisfied with one single Meru! Even a thousand such will only incite him to long for more!" That is the nature of desire; it grows on and on in a never-ending rate. Curbing desire is the only means to achieve mental peace.

Prema is the very breath and sole purpose of life

What exactly is Peace? It is the stage in which the senses are mastered and held in balance. "*Samathwam Yogah Uchyathe*"--*Equanimity* is, it is said, *Yoga*. Life should rest on the four pillars of *Sathya*, *Dharma*, *Shaanthi* and *Prema* (truth, righteousness, peace and love), which hold it firm against the turbulent waves of joy and grief. Of these four, *Prema* is the crucial support. For, it is the very breath, the sole purpose of life. Love God and acquire the strength to meet the upsets of life. Love liquidates the blows of fate. Love blends and binds the parents with the child. Love sanctifies and glorifies the body.

In truth, the subjective world and the objective world are not two; they are only aspects of the One. The joy one derives from the senses to whom does it belong, from whom did it originate? The body? Or the *Aathma*? The senses are but tools. They are operated, put to use by the mind. The mind is named *Indhra*, since it manipulates the *indhriyas* (senses). The mind has to act according to the orders decided by the *Buddhi* and not according to its own whims. The *Buddhi* is illumined when it turns to the *Aathma within*.

Embodiments of Love! Do not pay attention to the day" when the body was born and fulfil selfish ends by celebrating the event pompously. The day when you manifest pure feelings in your hearts, plant firm faith in the Divine Principle in your thoughts and cultivate unselfish enthusiasm to serve others, that day deserves to be celebrated as the Real Birthday. *Seva* can give you the experience of the Omnipresence of God, God as *Vishnu*.

In many States, people are suffering from the havoc wrought by floods and cyclones while in other States, thousands are struck by famine caused by prolonged drought. For example, in the Nellore District, many are caught in great misery and loss. Take up appropriate *Seva* (selfless service) activities there. Devotees from neighbouring districts must also join in this task. Why! Wherever the need, whenever the call, the urge for *Seva* must direct you to offer your *Seva* without stint.

Bhagavan's Discourse at Puurnachandra Auditorium,

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 23-11984

Dhritharaashtra was blind, because, as that name itself implies, he held on to the raashtra, held on to all things that were not 'he', the real 'He', that passes from birth to death, and again gets born only to die, unscathed. Everything that is not 'you' is an object; it is luggage for the journey; the less of it, the more comfortable the journey.

Sri Sathya Sai

30. Secure God's Love

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine *Aathma!* Forgetting his true nature man spends his life in the pursuit and enjoyment of meretricious and evanescent sensuous pleasures and mundane desires. Does man secure peace, however much he may succeed in indulging in worldly pleasures? No. Ultimately he ends his life in discontent and despair. Ignoring the pure, eternal, infinite Divine Truth in him, man fosters animal and demonic traits.

What is the reason for this betrayal of his true nature, which renders his life meaningless? It is because he neglects the code governing life based on restraints and righteousness. The old saying is: "Dharma (righteousness) is at the root of everything. It is the highest virtue." Morality is the corollary to *Dharma*. Morality does not merely mean the observance of certain rules in the work-a-day world. Morality means adherence to the straight and sacred path of fight conduct. Morality is the blossoming of good conduct. It is the royal road to the acme of human achievement. The honour of the community rests upon morality. Without morals a community decays. Morality alone makes or mars the community.

True love has no selfishness in it

Only in an individual who is morally strong does the human personality find its best expression. The term personality can be applied only to one who manifests the hidden unmanifested divinity within him by his conduct. Mere human form does not make one a human personality. It is the behaviour that counts. Only those who lead well-regulated lives can be regarded as real human beings manifesting their true divine nature. Such great historical personages as Manu, Nala, Raghu, Bali and Harischandra were examples of the highest expressions of human excellence. Jesus was also one such personality who manifested the perfection man is capable of. Prophet Mohammed was another historic figure who led a rigorous life of righteousness and spiritual endeavour.

Love is another name for Dhama. True Love is priceless. It has no trace of selfishness in it. It does not change. It is pure and unsullied. It always grows and never diminishes. It is spontaneous. The love of God is of -such a nature: it is spontaneous, free from selfishness, unwavering, and always full. Ordinary human love is motivated by selfish considerations. It is liable to change owing to changes in time and circumstance. For persons immersed in such love, it is difficult to comprehend or realise the greatness of Divine Love. The English philosopher Bacon has pointed out how the love of God is all-encompassing and unchanging and how it can grow into Universal love.

Sai's incomparable love to one and all

Love wears the mantle of Truth. And one wedded to Truth is ever young and vigorous. The *Upanishaths* have declared that the votary of truth will not know old age. The Bible also declares that the body gets fortified by adherence to truth. Truth should not be confined to speech. It must express itself in action. Only the one who is truthful in word and deed can be esteemed as a genuine human being, according to Prophet Mohammed. Buddhism also lays down that everyone, irrespective of sex or country, must live up to truth.

You may believe in it or not. I must tell you that total adherence to truth, absolute selflessness, universality and spontaneous outpouring of love are to be seen only in Sai and nowhere else. Sai has not an iota of self-interest. Sai is motiveless. Sai deals with *saadhaks* (spiritual aspirants)

according to their deserts. Sai will continue to love even those who revile Him. Sai will not forget anyone, even if he forgets Sai. But occasionally, Sai will appear to ignore those who may have forgotten Sai, acted against His injunctions, set at naught Sai ideals or traduced Sai. From this, some persons may imagine that Swaami is angry with some person or dissatisfied with some others. It is not without reason that Sai avoids meeting or talking to some persons. I do not wish to waste My words on persons, who do not respect Sai's directives or follow Sai's ideals. I do not wish to speak to those who have no regard for My words. That does not mean I have no love towards them.

Strive to understand the nature of God's Love

Love will not submit to the forces of envy or hatred however powerful they may be. Love will prevail over them. Once when Buddha was travelling, he was confronted by a demoness with a sword in hand. "Oh Buddha! Your Love must submit today to my envy. Your life will end today." Buddha answered her, with a smile: "I will not submit to envy or hatred. I am not affected by praise or blame or ridicule. I love even you who bear such illwill towards *Me*." When the demoness heard these words, she turned into a dove and vanished.

Those who hate others are ultimately consumed by their own hatred. Those filled with envy ultimately meet their end in it. Richard, a character in one of Shakespeare's plays was filled with envy and could not bear to see any one superior or better looking than himself. In the end, he was a victim of his own envy and died miserably. Similar examples-can be found in the Indian epics. Bhasmaasura, who got a boon from Shiva that any one on whom he placed his palm should be reduced to ashes, was himself reduced to ashes when he placed his palm over his head.

In the pursuit of the good and godly life, one may encounter many difficulties and disturbances. Many doubts and questions crop up. It is only when these difficulties are faced squarely and the troubles are borne with patience and fortitude that we can understand the true nature of Reality. You should not allow 'yourselves to be overwhelmed in any way by difficulties and sorrows, doubts and disappointments. You must have faith. Have confidence in yourself and strive to understand well the nature of God's love. To secure that love is the sacred goal of human life. The transforming power of Love is boundless. St.Paul, who was originally an inveterate critic of Jesus, was transformed by Christ's love into the greatest apostle of Jesus.

Man's evil actions bring discredit to human species

The animosity which some persons show towards good and godly people can be traced to one or other of three factors. In the first category are those who have no faith in God or goodness and hence oppose anything that is good or godly. In the second category are those who turn against God because their desires or ambitions have not been fulfilled. The third category are those who are envious by nature and cannot tolerate anything good. Other than these three types, there is a fourth type composed of persons who think of God or seek God's favour when they are in trouble or difficulties and who forget God immediately after their troubles are over or their desires have been fulfilled.

It is unfortunate that man, who is inherently Divine in his origin and in whom the Aathma resides as the indwelling witness, is caught up today in unrighteous and evil actions and is bringing discredit to the human species. In the Dark Ages, when men indulged in wicked and cruel actions and behaved like demons or wild beasts, there might be some excuse. But in the present age, when such great advances have been made in science and technology and when people call

themselves civilised, if inhuman practices are predominant and wickedness and ingratitude are the rule, one is compelled to ask whether these persons are human beings or demons!

The irony of the present situation is that, on the one side, governments are piling up monstrous lethal weapons, indulging in demonical actions and promoting conflicts among nations, while at international gatherings they proclaim their desire for peace. Is there any meaning in this? Why should those who crave for peace encourage conflicts? If they genuinely desire peace, they should pursue policies which will be conducive to the promotion of peace.

Everyone should realise that God is One

The foremost need today is for everyone to realise that God is One. This is what Jesus and Mahomed proclaimed. The word "*Allah*" really means the One Supreme which contains everything in the Universe. This is the primary message of the *Vedhas* (ancient sacred scriptures): "*Om ithyekaaksharam Brahma*"---the single letter Om is *Brahmam*.

The essential truth of all religions is that God is one. Jesus proclaimed the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. One can have only one father not two. When Jesus was born three wise men followed a star to reach his place of birth. Seeing the new-born babe they bowed to the divine child in their hearts. Before leaving, each of them spoke about the child as follows to the parents. One sage told Mary: "He loveth God." The second sage said: "God loveth him." The third man said: "He is God." What is the inner significance of these three pronouncements about Jesus? The first statement that "He loveth God" contains the implication that Jesus is a messenger of God. A messenger can love his master, but the master may not so easily love his messenger. The second statement declared that "God loves him (Jesus)."

Why? Because he is the son of God. The third statement "He is God" bears out what Jesus said: "I and my Father are One." It means that as the Son of God he is entitled to acquire his Father's place. The unity of Father and Son was proclaimed by the third sage.

All human beings are "messengers of God"

The inner meaning of all this is that every human being in the world is a messenger of God. What does this signify? What is the message that the human being is expected to convey? That he is a "messenger of God," not of the devil. A messenger of God must propagate the divine teachings of God to the world. You have no right to call yourselves messengers of God if your actions are bad, your thoughts are evil and you preach wrong ideas. Such persons can only be called agents of the Devil.

From today, "as messengers of *God*," you have to demonstrate to the world the purity, the Truth and the Love that the Divine symbolises. When you lead a life of purity and morality, you are entitled to regard yourselves as "Sons of God." God is the embodiment of Love and you should not do anything which is contrary to the love that God represents. You should develop those good qualities which can make you worthy "sons of God."

In the Bible it is recorded that Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. When they asked him why He was doing so, Jesus answered: "I am washing your feet as your servant, so that you may learn to serve the world." Every man is, to begin with, a messenger-of God. When he fulfills his duties as a messenger, he realises that he is a son of God and then achieves oneness with the Divine.

God's love is boundless and Universal, unlike human love, which is narrow and selfish. Swaami's love is "beyond reason." It is unlimited and unchanging. I am promoting love all around through

My love. Those of you who have been nourished by this love should not deprive yourselves of its beneficence. I do not seek anything. I impose no hardships on anyone. In such a situation, if you understand the real nature of Swaami's love and utilise that love to transform yourselves into embodiments of love, you will be setting an example to the world.

Bhagavan's Christmas Day discourse at Puurnachandra

Auditorium, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 25-12-1984

The heart of Jesus was pure and calm. Hence, it is honoured as sacred. We must make our hearts sacred so that either we merge in Jesus or Jesus merges in us. When we merge, it is called Bhakthi; to have Jesus awakened in us is the path of Jnaana. Jesus was a messenger of God; but note this also: all of you are messengers of God. Jesus was not the only Son of God; you are all His children. Jesus and His Father are one. You and God are also one and you can be aware on it.

Sri Sathya Sai

31. Be human : become human

MAN is an amalgam of body, mind and spirit. The senses of perception and action, which form the components of the body, are busy contacting the objective world. The mind--consciousness of the various levels, the faculty of reason and the ego--- examines, experiences and judges. It decides after discrimination, which word or deed will be beneficial, favourable, fruitful and felicitous. It attempts to separate the good from the bad, the *punya* (virtuous deed) from the *paapa* (sinful action), the true from the false, the permanent from the momentary. The Spirit or the Self or the *Aathma* is unaffected, stable and foundational. Its quality is *Sath* (is-ness) but it is ever aware, ever *chith* .(consciousness). And when the conscious is pure and unchanging, that state is undiluted felicity, delight or *Aanandha* (divine bliss).

What is the purpose of -life, for man? What has to be his highest achievement. Tennyson has extolled "Self-reverence, Self-knowledge, Self-control" ("these three alone lead man to sovereign power") as the ultimate goal.

Truth involves the coordination of thought, word and deed

The feeling 'I' has to be retained until it is submerged in the 'We' and finally in 'He' from whom it was projected at His Will.' This is an arduous process, which requires a long journey through compassion, renunciation, rectitude, fortitude and patience. These are the five vital airs which purposeful living needs. All these are subsumed under the word, '*dhama*' (control of senses), in the scriptures. The person endowed with '*dhama*' is named a '*dhaantha*,' indicating an adept in *Vedhaantha*! These five are the counterparts of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-Truth implies more than the correct reporting of what was seen. It involves the coordination of thought, word and deed and the recognition of the Eternal Witness of all three. The Witness is the Self, a sport of the Omniself. X may wear a brown shirt today, he might have worn a black one yesterday. "X in a brown shirt" is a true statement today; "X in a black *shirt*" was a true statement yesterday. This level of truth is known as 'truth for all practical worldly purposes' (*Vyavahaarika Sathyam*). The coats do change; the body of X does change, from day today. But the Witness, the Self, is free from change.

Dharma (right action) is the code of morals that upholds and uplifts man and society. It is the superstructure on Truth. It serves the needs of the time, the society and the goal and is therefore subject to modification. The Dharma of the 'student' is different from that of the 'master of the family' and from the Dharma of the renunciant and the monk. But, through all the stages of life, the Truth, the Unchanging Witness persists. Accept *Buddhi* (intellect) as the charioteer, then, the practice of Dharma will lead to success.

Dharma is Love in action

The fundamental human values all emanate from Dharma, based on Truth. If human behaviour has no such basis, it leads to disaster. Man has dehumanised himself systematically by neglect of the basic Unity. From slings to arrows, from cannon balls to bombs, from fusion to fission, man has progressed in the art of killing and entered the Darkest Age of history. The greed for wealth and power has overwhelmed the creed of compassion. The law of self-aggrandizement reigns; the law of self-abnegation has receded. When the son is acclaimed as a good fellow, the father congratulates himself; when he is ostracised as a bad fellow, the father condemns others for leading him astray!

A person who is unable to cope with the demands of worldly competition is labelled as a fool, an *A-jnaani*, one without *jnaana* (knowledge). But, he can well be an *A-jnaani*, in Akshara (not letters of the alphabet, but the imperishable) that which is not kshara. *Jnaani* (a liberated person) is a person who has mastered the knowledge of the indestructible Cosmic Core and so, he is established in the highest peace. *A-jnaani* is one who is not aware of this imperishable principle. The *Sath* alone exists; the *Chith* is its effulgence; *Aanandha* (divine bliss) is the consequence.

The enumeration of human values as five--Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence--is not correct. They are all facets of the foundational humanness. They grow together; they are inter-dependent, they are not separable. Dharma is Love in Action; Love thrives on inner peace, on the absence of inner conflicts. How can one have Peace when he revels in violence of speech and action?

You are entering upon the sacred task of guiding and training teachers who will inculcate human values in the hearts of the children. Do not treat 'Human Values' as a separate curricular assignment. Then, it will become dry and uninspiring. It must transform the way of life and should not stop with imparting information. It must be imparted more through example and practice rather than by books and formal teaching.

Humility promotes charity and purity

Emphasise the importance of physical cleanliness, simple *Saathwik* (pure) food and group activities involving mutual help. Service is Divine. Be examples of humility so that the children may learn its value and validity. Humility promotes charity and purity. Also, exert yourselves to implant in the children self-reliance by encouraging them to believe in themselves. Let them not develop a desire for imitating the vanity of others. Appreciate good thoughts, sweet speech and selfless deeds, and denounce bad thoughts, words and deeds as soon as they emerge.

Any beneficial, venture will have to overcome the obstacles of indifference, ridicule and opposition. But, you must consider this project as a spiritual *saadhana*, as an exercise in self-realisation, as a *thapas* (penance). Already, 25,000 persons now engaged, in teaching the children in Primary Schools have been trained in methods of cultivating human values. This is indeed a great achievement in the field of service. Do not give room for slackness. Continue the *seva* (selfless service) with full vigour. A few thousands more of teachers, are coming here in June for fulfilling their desire to become ideal teachers of fundamental values.

The world today is flooded by conflicting propaganda. Let the message of this educational revolution, insisting on the resurgence of the Divine in man, spread to every street and home.- You have My blessings in ample measure. You can receive My guidance and help always in the fulfilment of this task.

Bhagavan's Discourse in the Mandhir to the Bal Vikas

Gurus, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 31-12-1984

Never use foul words against another. Such words should not rise from your tongue, nor should they enter the ear of the others. Remember that there is God inside your heart, as well as in the hearts of all the rest. He hears and sees all things. Do you not say, "My head, my hands, my eye, my mind, my idea." Now, who is this

I, that owns the body, the mind, the brain? That I is the spark of God that is in you. That spark is in every one. So, when you use harsh, cruel, angry, foul words against another, the God in you and the God in the other person is hurt.

Sri Sathya Sai