

Be Ever Grateful To God Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Prasanthi Nilayam
17 August 1996

Editor's note. A condensed version of this discourse appears in the *Sathya Sai Speaks* series. This more complete version was published in *Sanathana Sarathi*, August 2013.

Today, there is no fear of sin.
Wicked deeds and acts of cruelty have become an everyday occurrence.
Their magnitude is beyond all description.
Devotion to the Lord has become extinct.
Oh man! Understand that you can attain peace and happiness only by chanting the divine Name.

(Telugu Poem)

Devotion alone elevates one to the supreme state and cures the disease of worldliness.

Devotion alone stirs the yearning for the Divine and leads one to liberation.

(Sanskrit verse)

Embodiments of Love!

Devotion to God is the royal road to liberation. It is the divine remedy for the disease of birth and death and all the worldly and physical worries. There is no better path than devotion that leads man to God-realisation.

Chant the divine Name constantly

The divine and sacred land Bharat (India) has been propagating the knowledge of *Vedanta* contained in the *Upanishads* to the entire world. If only Indians (*Bharatiyas*) would fill their hearts with total faith in *Upanishadic* statements like, "God permeates the entire universe (*Isavasyam idam sarvam*)," and "God permeates the entire world (*Isavasyam idam jagat*)," the entire country would be free of all problems.

God is all-pervasive. Any individual who has unwavering faith in the all-pervasiveness of God will be free of all worries. People should imbibe the truth contained in the four profound aphorisms of the *Upanishads*:

That thou Art (*Thathtwamasi*).

I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*).

Verily, all this is Brahman (*Sarvam khalvidam Brahma*).

This Self is Brahman (*Ayam Atma Brahma*).

The entire world is engulfed by the ever-expanding consciousness of Brahman.

Brahman is synonymous with *Omkar* (*Aum*, or *Om*). This was the profound incantation chanted by the ancient sages of India. Just as there are three letters in the word God, *Aum* consists of three letters. In the *Thretha Yuga*, Lord Rama's three brothers Lakshmana, Bharata, and Satrughna represented *A*, *U*, *M* respectively, and Rama Himself was the embodiment of *Omkar*. The *Atmic* principle represented by Rama signified the unity of these three letters. "One who pleases is Rama (*Ramayati iti Rama*)."

If one considers the word *nama* (name) from the point of view of numerology, a great truth is revealed. The word *nama* is the combination of three letters. According to numerology, the value of *na* is 0, that of *aa* is 2, and *ma* is 5. The numbers 0, 2 and 5 sum to 7. The

divine Name *Rama* similarly gives the number 7.

The number 7 has great importance because it signifies 7 musical notes, 7 colours, 7 oceans, and 7 great sages (*rishis*). That is why people conduct chanting of the divine Name for 7 days (*Nama Saptaha*).

Expression of gratitude is itself prayer

God is described as: The embodiment of sound, mobility and immobility, light, speech, eternal bliss, perfection, delusion, and wealth (*Sabda Brahmamayi, Characharamayi, Jyotirmayi, Vangmayi, Nityanandamayi, Paratparamayi, Mayamayi, and Sreemayi*).

Why does one need to chant the Name of God? Why should one pray to God? Isn't it our duty to express gratitude to God, who has created this vast world and all the living beings in it and provided them with food to eat, air to breathe, and water to drink? Not only that, He has provided everything for all living beings to carry on their life sojourn on earth.

If your handkerchief falls down and someone picks it up and gives it to you, you thank them. Even for a small help like this, you say thanks. Then isn't it your duty to express gratitude to God, who gave you so much?

Expression of gratitude is itself prayer. What does prayer do? It awakens the inner Divinity of a person, which is immeasurable, invisible, and transcendental.

In this regard, there is an exhortation in the *Upanishads*: "Oh people! Get up; be aware and awake! Go to noble people and learn from them the secret of attaining Divinity (*Uthishta jagrat prapya varannibodhat*)."

Thus, the *Upanishads* exhort one to arise and awake from the deep slumber of ignorance.

The offerings God accepts

People are always in search of happiness. In fact, their entire life is filled with happiness.

There is happiness everywhere, so where is the need to search for it? People search for happiness in the outside world because they have forgotten their true Self. This is sheer ignorance. The happiness that you seek is present within you. You can have happiness only when you love God wholeheartedly.

To love God wholeheartedly and to experience His Divinity is devotion. Prayer is essential to develop love for God. True prayer comes from the heart, not merely from lips.

Ravana repeated the *Siva panchakshari mantra*, "Om Namah Sivaya" continuously and performed intense penance. But there was no change in his demonic qualities. Why? Because his prayer did not come from his heart. His prayer was for a selfish motive, so how could he experience the love of God?

Only when you offer something to someone do you deserve to receive something in return. If you go to a shop to buy a handkerchief, the shopkeeper will give it to you only when you give him ten rupees. If you don't pay him ten rupees, he will not give you the handkerchief.

Similarly, you have to offer something to God. The Vice Chancellor talked in his speech about the teachings of the *Upanishads*. God does not expect any worldly things from you. What do you have to offer Him?

Rukmini prayed to Krishna thus:

*One may offer You a leaf or a flower or a
fruit or even water,
But if it is true that You offer Yourself to
one with devotion,
Oh Krishna! May You be weighed by this
tulasi leaf!*

(Telugu Poem)

Here, what does leaf mean? It is not the leaf of a basil plant or *bilva* tree. You don't need

to go in search of a *bilva* tree to offer its leaf to God.

Your *body* is the leaf that has to be offered to God. What flower do you have to offer to God? You have to offer the flower of your heart. Similarly, you have to offer the fruit of your mind, and not any other ordinary fruit.

What do you do when you offer flowers to God? You don't worship God with all types of flowers. Before offering the flower of your heart to God, you should purify it by removing the germs of desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and jealousy (*kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, and *matsarya*).

Similarly, what type of fruit should you offer to God? God does not expect you to offer fruits that grow on trees. You should offer Him the ripe fruit of your mind, which is filled with the sweetness of love.

Then what type of water should you offer to God? It is not tap water or Ganga (Ganges) water or water from any other river. Offer your tears of happiness to God.

You have seen people shedding tears when they are filled with extreme happiness. *Naara* in Sanskrit means water, and *nayana* means eyes. The *naara* (water) that comes from the *nayana* (eyes) should be offered only to Narayana (God).

Do not shed tears for the world. Shed tears only for God.

Think you are Brahman, and Brahman you become

Divinity permeates the entire humanity. That is the essence of two great aphorisms, *Aham Brahmasmi* and *Ayam Atma Brahma*, which mean "I am *Atma* and Brahman". When you constantly contemplate on the truth that you are Brahman, you become Brahman. "The knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman *Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati*."

This body is just a field (*kshetra*), and the Knower of the field (*Kshetrajna*) is within. There cannot be a field without a Knower of the field. Similarly, there cannot be a temple without the idol of God.

What is the point in having an electric wire without electricity, a school without a teacher, and a temple without the idol of God? Does anyone offer obeisance in a temple where there is no idol of God? Does anyone establish a school without a teacher?

God is within you. Offer to God your heart filled with the sweetness of love. That is the true prayer.

In the same way, devotional songs (*bhajans*) should be sung with heart full of love. *Bhajan* is not merely associated with pitch, rhythm, tune, and beat. When a *bhajan* is being sung, the next singer should not merely think of the pitch for their song. That is not correct. One gets real happiness only when one is totally immersed in the *bhajan*.

Happiness can be derived in two ways, one is through singing (*kirtan*), the other is through community singing (*sankirtan*).

There may be an element of selfishness in singing (*kirtan*). The singer may sing to earn appreciation, honour, and reputation. In such a case, the main consideration of the singer may be the pitch, rhythm, tune, and beat but not the feeling (*bhava*).

On the other hand, community singing gives happiness to one and all. How? Singing for fulfilment is community singing (*Samyak kirtanam iti sankirtanam*). In community singing, the focus is not only on the voice or the people who have come to participate. You should sing freely and wholeheartedly, with your heart filled with love for God. When you sing to please God, your song will automatically be pleasing to the ears.

The name of our country, Bharat (India), also signifies the harmony of feeling, tune, and

beat (*bhava*, *raga*, and *tala*). *Bha* means *Bhava*, *Ra* means *Raga*, and *Ta* means *Tala*.

Similarly, all your actions should reflect the unity of thought, word, and deed.

The singing should have connection with the heart. There is no purpose in merely repeating Ram Ram Ram like a tape recorder. The singing should be coupled with feeling from the heart. Only then can there be harmony between your speech and heart, which leads to unity of thought, word and deed (*trikarana suddhi*).

In fact, your thoughts, words, and actions should be in harmony in all endeavours of life. Only then will God's heart melt, and only then will He shower His grace on you. Always sing to earn the love and grace of God, not to earn the appreciation of others. Fill your mind with such noble thoughts.

The same Atma is present in all

The world is facing so many problems today. Wherever you look, you find restlessness, conflicts, and chaos. Why? Because people today have limitless selfishness. People have forgotten their humanness, have given up human values, and have not bothered whether their conduct befits their human birth. Therefore, they have lost their value. Today, everything has value, but people have no value. Nonetheless, humanity is the most valuable in the entire creation. Therefore, people should live like human beings.

Who accords value to precious diamonds and gold? Only people. Without humanity, gold and diamonds have no value. But humanity, who accords value to all these, has lost its own value.

People are more valuable than all the wealth of the world. Students should understand this truth and conduct themselves accordingly. Gold and diamonds acquire value only because of people.

In a city inhabited by a large number of people, the value of land per square metre is very high. On the other hand, you can buy many acres of land in a forest for the same price. Why? The reason is that human beings do not live in forests. The land acquires value only when people inhabited it.

Do not forget this truth. Always think that you are very valuable. You are not cheap, but you are the chief.

Always remember the great *Vedic* aphorism "I am Brahma (*Aham Brahmasmi*). But thinking that only you are God is also a sign of ego. Always think that the *Atma* present in you is present in all. Taking this truth into consideration, you should respect others.

The same truth was stated by Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* when He said, "I am the *Atma* present in you, and you are the *Atma* present in Me. There is no difference between your *Atma* and My *Atma*."

Suppose there are 100 earthen pots, 100 brass pots, and 100 bronze pots at a particular place, as also the pots of many other metals. You find the reflection of the sun in all of them. The value of vessels may vary, but the reflection that you find in all of them is one and the same.

Likewise, the *Atma* is reflected in the water of the mind contained in the vessel of the human body. When the mind wavers, it looks as though the reflection is also unsteady. But, in fact, the *Atma* is always steady. Only the mind wavers.

Because of the wavering nature of your mind, you think the *Atma* is also wavering. But the *Atma* is changeless. It is attributeless, unslid, the final abode, eternal, pure, enlightened, free, and the embodiment of sacredness (It is *nirgunam*, *niranjanam*, *sanathana nikitnam*, *nitya*, *suddha*, *buddha*, *mukta*, *nirmala swarupinam*). What an ignorance it is to attribute unsteadiness to such an *Atmic* principle!

The *Atmic* principle does not move, does not change, does not melt. It is sweet, pleasing, attractive, nectarine, and full of bliss. Since you are not able to understand the *Atmic* principle, you crave worldly and mundane things.

Keep your body pure and sacred

The human body is the basis to realise God. The body is like a car. You have to carry on your life journey with the help of this car. You are traveling in the car, but you are not the car. However, you identify yourself with the car, and that is a big mistake.

The driver inside the car exercises control over the steering, accelerator, and clutch. The four tyres of the car are *dharma*, wealth (*artha*), desire (*kama*), and liberation (*moksha*). Self-confidence is the air in the tyres. The mind is the steering, intellect is the switch, stomach is the engine, food is the petrol, and tiffin is the oil.

Whichever path you want to take, you have to turn the steering of your mind in that direction. Tyres are outside, but the steering wheel is in the hands of the driver. Only when the air of self-confidence is in the tyres can the car move smoothly.

Students!

The car of your body should not move on the road in an arbitrary manner while performing the journey of life. You should be aware of the ups and downs that you may encounter on the road.

Similarly, you should use your discrimination and enquire how you should conduct yourself in society in a given situation with regard to your age. You should know how to conduct yourself with humility before elders, how to respect your teachers, how to love your parents, how to discharge your duty with regard to your vocation, how to pray to God.

The car can travel along a highway without any danger only when you use your discrimination. Food is essential for the body to maintain good health. You should acquire the necessary strength and capability. Never neglect the body, because the journey of life has to be performed with the help of the body. The body is very sacred. You can realise God only with the help of the body.

The body is like a temple, a chariot, and a field. Lord Krishna declared, “Recognise Me as the Knower of the field (*Kshetrajnam chapimaamv viddhi ...*).”

Also, it is said, “The body is a temple, and the indweller is God (*Deho Devalaya proktho jivo Deva sanathana*).” Keep the temple of the body pure, clean, and sacred. As much as you keep your body pure and sacred, so much will you be closer to God. Offer your body to God.

Whatever work you do, consider it God’s work. Wherever you travel, think that you are traveling toward God. Why? “Lord Vishnu pervades the entire universe (*Viswam Vishnumayam*).” Everything in this world is the form of God.

There is no place where God does not exist; there is no form that is not His. That is why the *Bhagavad Gita* declares, “With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe (*Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham, sarvatah srutimalloke sarvamavru-thya Tishthati*). Everything is God.

Embodiments of Love!

As long as you observe the difference that you are an individual soul (*jiva*) and God is different from you, then the soul is the soul and God is God.

Instead, have the strong faith that soul is God. Do not observe any difference between the individual soul and God. You lose peace because you observe such differences. Have

firm faith in the feeling of oneness (*ekatma bhava*).

Perform all your worldly duties. There is nothing wrong in it. When you discharge your duties with divine feelings, there will be no scope for defects.

When you think that God is in you, you will never commit a mistake or resort to violence or hurt others. Why? “God is the embodiment of love (*Daivam premaswarupam*).” Where there is love, there can be no violence. Hatred enters a heart that has no love. It is hatred that leads you to the wicked path.

Become deserving of God’s grace

Students!

Treasure the feelings of unity, harmony, and love in your heart. When you have unity, there will be purity in your heart. When there is no unity in your heart, enmity will enter it. You should travel from unity to purity and from purity to divinity before enmity overpowers you.

But, unfortunately, there is no unity, no purity, no divinity today. You find enmity and hostility between communities in the country. How wicked enmity is!

Whomsoever you ridicule, it reaches God (*Sarva jiva tiraskaram Kesavam pratigachchhati*). Offer salutations to everyone because God is in all.

One can attain divinity only through a feeling of oneness (*ekatma bhava*). One becomes an animal when this is forgotten. Humanity has evolved from animals. Don’t go in the reverse direction and become animal again. Instead, move forward and become divine.

Lead a sacred life and become ideal students. Many in this world today have become slaves of money, power, ego, name, and fame. Our students should become slaves of ideals. They should become ideal boys. This is what they have to learn.

What types of ideals should they observe? Ideals that will make them pure and strong. They should help others and give them joy.

If you earn a good name by becoming ideal students, it is enough. Your parents will be happy, and society will be benefited. When individuals are good, society will also become good.

Students!

Right from this young age, you should develop moral, ethical, and spiritual strength and become ideal students. *Help Ever, Hurt Never*. This is the essence of all the *Puranas* (mythological texts). You can serve the world only when you observe this principle. You will not only bring credit to your family but demonstrate an ideal to the entire world also.

Consider the world as the manifestation of God. Try to know how you can become deserving of God’s love. “Oh God, save me” —this is not the prayer you should offer to God. You should pray for the love and grace of God.

You will have no dearth of anything when you have God’s love. That is why Thyagaraja said, “Rama, if I have Your Grace (*Anugraha*), what harm can the nine planets (*nava-grahas*) do to me?”

Tulsidas sang, “What are eyes that do not feast on the divine form of Lord Rama for?” He said, “I am a cripple.”

The Lord asked, “When you have hands, legs, and all other limbs, how can you say you are a cripple?”

Tulsidas replied, “I have hands, but I am not able to serve You. It is as good as not having hands. I have eyes, but I am not able to see You. Therefore, I am a blind person.”

Utilise each of your limb to do God’s work and experience divine bliss. Therein lies the significance, nobility, sublimity, and greatness of human birth. That is why even Thyagaraja sang:

Come to our house,
Oh valorous one of the Raghu clan, and oh
the tender one, I offer my salutations to
You.

Oh son of Dasaratha, come to my rescue, I
cannot bear separation from You any
longer.

Raara maa intidaaka
Raghuveera sukumara, neeku mrokkeda
Raara Dasaratha kumara nannelukora, ne
yaalalera.

(Telugu Song)

Thyagaraja addressed Rama in singular terms,
asking Him to come to his house, since he
considered Him his old friend. What is the in-
ner meaning of this?

On the spiritual path, you address God only in
singular terms and not in plural terms because
God is your old friend. When you address an
old friend, you use only singular terms such
as *raara* and *pora* (come here, go there).

But when a new friend comes to your house,
you observe courtesy and formality, saying,
please come, take your seat, etc. As long as
you observe such courtesy and formality, both
will remain new to each other. There will be
no intimacy between the two.

When you consider someone as your old
friend, you will be free with him without
observing any formalities. That is why it is
said,

The end of wisdom is freedom,
The end of culture is perfection,
The end of knowledge is love,
The end of education is character.

Consider God as your own. That is real
friendship. In fact, God is not different from
you and you are not different from God. Both
are one and the same. Truth is one, but the
wise refer to it by various names (*Ekam sath*
viprah bahudha vadanti).

There are millions of people in this world, but
all are one.

If you ask which of the two numbers 1 and 9
is greater, even an illiterate person will say
that 9 is greater than 1.

But in spiritual terminology, this is not cor-
rect. 1 is greater than 9. 1+1+1+1... becomes
9. Without the number 1, there can be no
number 9. One is hero, world is zero. Hero
becomes zero if he forgets God. Therefore,
become heroes, not zeros. Strive to experi-
ence God's love and become a hero.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the
bhajan, "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...*")

—From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kul-
want Hall on 17 August 1996.