

## Make Your Heart the Temple of God Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Prasanthi Nilayam  
21 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*, November 2013.

In the beginning, white ants may appear to be very small in number, but in no time they may multiply and eat away the entire root of the tree.

Similarly, however great one may be, if evil thoughts enter one's mind they will ruin life completely.

(Telugu poem)

Where there is smoke there must be fire.  
When there is a driver to run the train,  
And a person to control the traffic signals,  
Should there not be a Creator behind this world?

(Telugu poem)

This visible world consisting of sentient and insentient objects comprises five elements. The entire world is the reflection and manifestation of these five elements. All forms, with their various limbs, are nothing but different forms of God. That is why *Purusha Suktam* declares, "the Cosmic Being has thousands of heads, eyes, and feet (*Sahasra seersha Purusha sahasraksha sahasra pad*)."  
It is God who pervades the entire universe with His thousands of heads, hands, feet, and eyes.

### Make sacred use of the five elements

The universe is the effect, and God is the cause. The entire creation is the manifestation of cause and effect. The cause is in micro form and the effect is in macro form. Both the microcosm and macrocosm are the very forms of God.

Brahman is subtler than the subtlest, vaster than the vastest.

He is the eternal witness and pervades the entire universe in the form of *Atma*.

*Atma* is Brahman and Brahman is *Atma*.

(Telugu poem)

God is the smallest among the small and the biggest among the big. Small and big are only different in form, but they are one with respect to their innate infinite power. The microcosm and macrocosm are inseparable and are interdependent. Therefore, never consider nature different from God. Nature is God, God is nature.

The five elements present in nature are the forms of God. That is why our ancients worshipped earth, water, air, fire, and sky as *Bhu Devi*, *Ganga Devi*, *Vayu Deva*, *Agni Deva*, and *Sabda Brahman*.

But people today do not treat these five elements with reverence and instead make unsacred use of them. Showing disrespect to the five elements amounts to showing disrespect to God. Therefore, sanctify your life by making proper and sacred use of the five elements.

God is the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of everything that was in the past, that is in the present, and that will be in the future. He is the master of all three periods of time —past, present, and future.

According to the Telugu calendar, the name of the first year is *Prabhava*, because God is the *Prabhu* (Master) of time. Therefore, you

should have faith in the Master. Only then can you experience peace and happiness in this world.

The same *Atma* is present in all

### ***Students!***

This is not the first time I am telling this. I have told you on several occasions in the past also. In this world, there is a continuous conflict between good and bad, righteousness and unrighteousness. This is inescapable.

On the one hand, you have the Kauravas; on the other, the Pandavas; righteousness (*dharma*) on one side and unrighteousness (*adharma*) on the other. There is a constant conflict between the two.

The attitude and priorities of the Kauravas were just the opposite to those of the Pandavas. For the Kauravas, the priorities were first I (self), next the world, and last God. But the Pandavas gave first place to God, next to the world, and last to I.

Those who follow the path of *dharma* will always give first place to God. That is why, according to Indian culture, the first year of the Telugu calendar, *Prabhava*, connotes God. Not only that. All the years that follow are also named after God.

God is beyond any measure. That is why the sages extolled Him as Immeasurable (*Aprameya*). It means He cannot be comprehended by direct or indirect evidence or by any other inference.

None can describe God as this or that. He is a fool who says this is God and that is not God. Why? "I am present as the *Atma* in all beings (*Mamatma sarva bhutantaratma*)." The same *Atma* pervades all, just as the same current illumines all bulbs.

Jewels are many, gold is one.  
Cows are many, milk is one.  
Beings are many, breath is one.  
Flowers are many, worship is one.

Unable to understand this reality out of ignorance,

People have become victims of many troubles.

For the sake of their mundane existence,  
What else is to be conveyed

To this assembly of noble students?

(Telugu poem)

Is there any difference between worship performed with different flowers such as jasmine, rose, and marigold? Flowers are many, but worship is one.

Humanity has developed all these differences to lead a mundane life. To observe differences is the attribute of the outward (*pravritti*). But the true, eternal, and immortal goal of life is only one, and that is the *Atma*. Divinity is uniformly present in all. But people perceive it in different ways depending on the capacity of their intellect.

Our intellect may be compared to a mirror. Holding a small mirror in your hand, you can capture the reflection of the sun and stars, which are millions of miles away. The circumference of the sun runs into crores and crores of miles. Such a gigantic sun is reflected in a small mirror. That is why it is said, "The entire world is like a city seen in a mirror (*Viswam darpana drishyamana nagari tulyam*)."

The entire universe is reflected in the small mirror of our intellect. Therefore, this universe or world are not outside. They are within you. They are reflections of your inner being. What is present in you, you see the same thing outside.

In fact, there is nothing outside that is not present in you. Here, there, and everywhere, wherever you look, you find only one *Atma*. Why do you search here and there when the principle of *Atma* is everywhere? In fact, all five elements are one.

I explained to you the three principles of non-dualism (*advaita*) the other day: *padartha advaita*, *kriya advaita*, and *bhava advaita*.

You may wonder, since the very meaning of non-duality is oneness, how there can be three forms associated with it. In fact, you experience these three types of non-duality in your daily life.

What is *padartha advaita*? Here is a cloth. It is not a cloth but a bundle of threads; not even a bundle of threads, it is cotton. Therefore, cotton, threads, and cloth are one and the same. Their usage and their names and forms may appear to be different, but there can be no thread without cotton and no cloth without threads. Cotton, threads and cloth are different only in name and form. But the underlying substance is the same. Therefore, you cannot say they are different from each other. This is *padartha advaita*.

What is *kriya advaita*? You perform many types of service activities and various actions, but if you do all of them to please God then all your actions become one. “Do all actions to please God (*Sarva karma Bhagavad preetyartham*).”

You offer food and fruit to God. Before offering, they are merely food and fruit, but afterward, they become consecrated food (*prasadam*). You prepare sweet pudding, tamarind rice, curd rice, and various items. Before offering them to God, you may call them by their respective names. But after offering them to God, everything becomes *prasadam*. Therefore, all actions that are offered to God correspond to *kriya advaita*.

Here, there are no two entities. “Brahman is one without a second (*Ekameva adviteeyam Brahma*).” Not two, only one.

The third is *bhava advaita*. There are only five elements in this body, that body, and all other bodies. You may want a particular object from others if it is not already with you. When the desired object is with you, why do you want to acquire it from others? The five elements that are present in others are present in you also. Similarly, the *Atma* that is present

in you is present in all. Therefore, all are one. “The One willed to become many (*Ekoham bahusyam*).”

The same gold takes the form of various ornaments. Similarly, the five elements, which are manifestations of Divinity, are present in all. With regard to this, there is no difference whatsoever. This is *bhava advaita*.

One’s life can become meaningful only when one tries to understand and experience these three types of non-dualism. When you keep the feeling of duality in your mind and try to exhibit non-duality outwardly, you get only restlessness. Here is a small example.

### **Develop love for God**

Once, there was a very wealthy man who had nothing else to do other than ‘loading and unloading’. Because of his excessive eating and lack of physical work, he suffered from indigestion. He went to a specialist and asked him the remedy for it.

The doctor was an expert. He said, “You don’t need to spend even a naya paisa to cure indigestion. In fact, you yourself invited this trouble because of excessive eating. Don’t you know how much your stomach can hold? On account of your greed you are overloading it. Hence, the indigestion. Your power of digestion is less, but the food you consume is more. That is the cause of your indigestion. Therefore, I prescribe a very good remedy for this. Try to listen. Keep a small piece of salt in your mouth and suck its juice.”

Today, salt is available in the form of powder, but earlier it was available only in rock form. The wealthy man did accordingly and got cured of indigestion. It was the time of his birthday. Since he was cured, he wanted to distribute sweets to all and celebrate the occasion.

He went to a sweetmeat shop and wanted to taste the sweet before buying it. When he put a small piece of the sweet in his mouth, it

tasted salty. He told the owner of the shop that his sweet was not good and went to another shop. There, he had the similar experience. In this manner, he went to five sweetmeat shops. one after the other. but did not like the taste of the sweets in any of these.

The owner of the sixth shop understood his problem. Before the rich man could taste the sweet, the owner of the shop told him, “Look, there is a tap. Go there and rinse your mouth thoroughly and come back. Then only you should taste my laddu.”

The rich man accordingly rinsed his mouth thoroughly after throwing away the piece of salt that was in his mouth. Then the laddu tasted sweet. “Yes, this laddu is very tasty,” he said.

The shopkeeper said, “Oh mad fellow, when you have a piece of salt in your mouth, how can you appreciate the sweetness of any laddu? Every laddu will taste salty.”

Likewise, a person suffering from the disease of atheism, and having bitter substances like bad thoughts and bad feelings in his mind, cannot enjoy the sweetness of the divine Name. When someone tells him the sacredness of service and such other spiritual practices, they appear tasteless to him. Does the defect lie in the divine Name or spiritual practices? No, no. It is the result of their own disease of atheism.

Once, some people went to attend a marriage. In the marriage, many types of food items were served. When sweets like laddu and jilebi were being served, five or six of them refused them, saying, “We don’t want them.”

It is not because they did not like sweets. They did not want to take them because they were diabetic.

Likewise, there are theists, atheists, theistic-atheists, and atheistic-theists in this world. All spiritual practices taste sweet to theists, but to

those who have no love for God, the same spiritual practices appear tasteless.

Students, teachers, and all others fill their hearts with sacred feelings as long as they are here. Therefore, everything appears sweet and good to them.

But once they leave this place and enter the outside world, they become victims of worldly desires due to the influence of worldly surroundings. The moment the disease of worldly desires sets in, they become distant from spirituality. Not only that, they start developing doubts and misunderstandings regarding spirituality.

There may be a cure for cancer but not for the disease of hatred toward God and spirituality. Do they lack education? No. They lack sacred feelings.

Ravana was the master of 64 forms of knowledge. He was wealthy and powerful. He had everything at his disposal. But, since he became the slave of desire and anger (*kama* and *krodha*), all his knowledge, power, and wealth had no meaning.

### **God incarnates in human form to uplift humanity**

A person who is a slave to desires becomes a slave of the entire world. But one who conquers desires conquers the whole world. The world becomes subservient to a person who becomes a servant of God. Therefore, never forget God.

*Vedanta* teaches three important truths. They are like priceless gems. These three truths are: do not believe the world, do not forget God, and never be afraid of death because death is inevitable. Carefully treasure these truths in your heart.

Do not believe the world, because the world is subject to change every moment. Do not be afraid of death —can you avoid death by fear-

ing it? It does not spare anyone. Always keep in mind these three truths of *Vedanta*.

It is foolishness to confine God to a particular place and think that He is present only there. God is everywhere. There is no place where He is not present. There is no form that is not divine. He is present in both living and non-living entities.

Scientists say that the world is made up of atoms. This piece of wood, this speaker are also made up of atoms. Scientists call it *atom* but spiritualists call it as energy. The difference lies only in names, but the object is the same. Just like atom is everywhere, divinity pervades everything. Every atom has a form. There can be no atom without form.

Have firm faith that God is the indweller of your heart. Just as our body has various limbs such as hands, legs, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, all forms that you find in this world are different limbs of God.

There are rocks in the mountains, trees in the forest, water in the ocean, soil in the earth, and flesh in the body. But they are all made of five elements. These five elements are the very forms of God.

God has no separate form. God incarnates to demonstrate this truth to those who suffer from the blindness of ignorance.

God comes down only in human form and not in any other form. What is the reason? All living beings like birds and animals are following their *dharma* and leading a natural life. Only humanity forgets its *dharma*. Birds and animals have a reason and a season, but for humanity there is no reason and no season. That is why God comes in human form, in order to reform humanity.

“God is in the form of a human being (*Dai-vam manusha rupena*).” If God came in the form of an eagle and tried to correct humanity, people would throw stones at it. Likewise, if God came in the form of a he-buffalo and

tried to correct humanity, people would not care for it. Rather, they would beat it with a stick, saying, who are you to tell me anything. Therefore, God comes in human form and moves among human beings to uplift them.

### **Follow the easy path of devotion**

Here, you have to understand two principles of devotion (*bhakti*) and knowledge (*jnana*).

Once, two brothers Jnanadeva and Bhaktideva were traveling together. They felt thirsty after walking for some time. Bhaktideva asked Jnanadeva, “Oh brother, I’m thirsty, but I can’t find water anywhere in the vicinity.”

Jnanadeva said, “Let’s see if there is a well nearby.”

After walking some distance, they found an old well, which had a little water at the bottom. Immediately, Jnanadeva assumed the form of a bird, went inside the well, drank water, and came out. Jnanadeva had the ability to assume any form.

“Experience of non-dualism is wisdom (*Advaita darshanam jnanam*).” Since Jnanadeva did not observe any difference between one form and another, he could assume any form.

But Bhaktideva didn’t have the power to change his form. He couldn’t go into the well to drink water. Therefore, he sat there and started contemplating on God with love.

As he was contemplating on God, water started overflowing the well. When he felt something cold touching his feet, he opened his eyes and found that water had come up to quench his thirst.

Jnanadeva had to change his form, but there was no need for Bhaktideva to do this. As he turned his love toward God, whatever he wanted came running to him. There is nothing superior to devotion.

Once Bhaktideva sent a letter to Jnanadeva. What was written in it? Nothing. He folded a

piece of white paper, put it in an envelope, and sent it to Jnanadeva. When Jnanadeva opened the letter and looked, he didn't find anything in it. If it were a formal letter, one could read it from beginning to end, like "Dear Brother so and so... With salutations, your younger brother." But there was nothing written in the letter.

To give a reply to this letter, Jnanadeva kept on writing and writing. In spite of writing so much, there could be still some issues left in the letter to be answered. Therefore, he continues to write his reply even today. This signifies the principle of knowledge (*jnana*).

People who are endowed with knowledge are always engaged in research. They spend their entire life only in research. If you spend your whole life in research, when will you observe your inner reality? This is the fate of scientists today. They are always engaged in research and experiments, but they have no experience of reality.

What do you gain by experiments? What appears new today becomes old tomorrow. This process of new and old continues endlessly. This endless experimentation is meaningless.

The path of devotion is much easier than the path of knowledge. The path of knowledge is difficult and not within the reach of all. One can achieve everything through devotion by chanting the Name of God and by the power of love.

### **God resides in the temple of your heart**

#### ***Students!***

Focus your love on a path that is acceptable to your parents and society. Do not take to a wrong path. Regarding matters of Divinity, don't go by the opinion of others.

Mira always sang the glory of Giridhara Gopala (Krishna). Maharana did not like this. In spite of this, Mira never stopped chanting the

name of Krishna. She chanted it at all times, at all places, and under all circumstances.

Unable to control his anger, Maharana dragged Mira out of the temple and closed its door.

Mira was shocked. "Alas! Am I to leave You and go, oh Krishna! How is it possible? I can't live without You," she moaned. In this way, she underwent a lot of suffering.

Then she realised that God is all-pervasive and not confined to the temple. So, she said, "Oh Krishna! My heart is Your temple and this is the temple You Yourself have built. The temple built by Maharana is temporary, but the temple of my heart is permanent." She sang the song, "Oh mind! Go to the bank of Ganga and Yamuna (*Chalore man Ganga Yamuna teer*)".

There is no need to book a ticket or make advance reservations to go to Prayag, the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers. The left nerve channel in the spine is *ida*, the right nerve channel is *pingala*, and the central nerve channel is *sushumna*. The centre of the eyebrows is the place where *ida*, *pingala*, and *sushumna* meet. That is the real Prayag, where Krishna resides.

With His peacock crown, yellow robe, and shining earrings, Krishna looks resplendent.

Oh mind! Go to the banks of the Ganga and Yamuna.

(Mira Bhajan)

Ganga symbolises devotion (*bhakti*); Yamuna, action (*karma*); and Saraswati, knowledge (*jnana*). How are the waters of the Ganga and Yamuna? They are pure and serene. They bring coolness to the body.

Mira said, "Oh mind! Go to Prayag. Don't go anywhere else."

Where is Prayag? It is within you, not in the outside world. God resides in your heart. And,

when you manifest your innate Divinity and experience it, you get bliss.

When you read the names of sweets like Mysore Pak, Jilebi, and Burfi in a book, can you enjoy their taste? No. Only when you eat them can you experience their sweetness. Similarly, merely knowing that God is within you will not give you the taste of Divinity. Only when you realise your oneness with God can you experience bliss. This is why God incarnates on earth. He comes to give us the bliss of union with God.

There is no bliss greater than associating yourself with God at the physical, mental, and intellectual levels, This is the type of bliss the cowherd maidens (*gopikas*) aspired to.

Were You a tree growing upward,  
I would cling to You like a creeper;  
Were You a blossoming flower,  
I would hover over You like a bee;  
Were You the mountain Meru,  
I would cascade like a river;  
Were You the boundless sky, I would be in  
You like a star;  
Were You the bottomless deep,  
I would merge in You like a river.

(Telugu Poem)

They said, “Oh Krishna, there should be absolutely no separation between us. There should be eternal union.” Such inseparable union with God is the true principle of devotion.

There are four stages in the path of devotion: perception, proximity, identity, merger (*salokya*, *sameepya*, *sarupya*, and *sayujya*). Being in the contemplation of God is perception, being near God is proximity, identifying with God is identity, and merging with God is merger.

The four objectives of life are: righteousness, wealth, desire, liberation (*dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha*). Supreme devotion (*parama bhakti*) is the fifth objective of life. There is nothing greater than this in the world.

## Make your human birth meaningful

### *Students!*

Study well, acquire jobs, get married, and beget children. There is nothing wrong in this. But never forget God. If you forget God, your life becomes meaningless. However great one may be, even a prime minister or president, one should not forget God. Hero becomes zero if the hero forgets God.

Everything in this world is subject to change. Come what may, never leave the Supreme Being. Try to go closer to God as much as possible. This is the real spiritual practice one should undertake. Only then can this human birth become meaningful.

Of all living beings, human birth is the rarest (*Jantunam nara janma durlabham*). Why is it considered to be the rarest?

Is human life limited to eating, drinking, roaming, and sleeping? Don't birds and animals do that? Then what is the difference between you and animals?

What is the special significance and sacredness of human life? What is its purpose? Is it eating, drinking, sleeping and dying (*khana, peena, sona, marna*)? Even ants and mosquitoes do that. If you also do the same, in what way are you superior to them? What is the value of human life?

Having attained human birth, you should reach the supreme state of blessedness. You should become recipients of God's love and grace and experience divine bliss. There is no bliss greater than that.

*Oh Krishna, play Your sweet flute and sow  
the seeds of love in the desert of loveless  
hearts.*

*Let the rain of love fall on earth and make  
the rivers of love flow.*

(Telugu Song)

You should plant the sapling of love in your heart, —and not a thorny bush of hatred.

What does the flute symbolise? The flute is hollow. So, make your body hollow and pray to Krishna to breathe His divine music into it.

When the body is filled with desires, how can Krishna fill it with sweet melodies? First make your body hollow, giving up all desires and illusions. When the body becomes hollow, Krishna will call you near Him, saying hello. Then He will pick you up, place you on His lips, and fill you with divine music, which will immerse you and all others also in divine ecstasy.

One can aspire to become one of the two objects that are always with Krishna. One of these is a pair of sandals on His feet; the other is His flute. If you become His sandals, then you will have to bear all the pain due to stones, thorns, dust, scorpions, and snakes that you may find on the road. This is extremely difficult. It is much easier to become a flute in His hands.

If you continue to hold a handkerchief, your hand will feel pain after some time. It is easy to drop the handkerchief rather than to hold it. Likewise, it is easy to give up desires rather than cling to them and undergo suffering. This is called as detachment (*vairagya*). Develop this spirit of detachment to the extent possible.

However, it is not easy to do so when you lead a worldly life. You say, “my son, my daughter, my house”. First of all, give up the feeling of mine and thine. *Vedanta* speaks about the principle of “*Neti, neti, neti* (not this, not this, not this).” Everything is God.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the *bhajan*, “*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi...*”.)

—From Bhagavan’s Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall on 21 August 1996.