

1. The triple purity

Devotion alone bestows the supreme good;

Devotion alone is the destroyer of the disease of the cycle of birth and death;

Devotion alone is the means of recognizing Divinity;

Devotion alone is the means of Liberation.

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Only through devotion does man attain the supreme Truth. Through devotion alone does man get release from the disease of birth and death. Through devotion man seeks to realise God. Through devotion alone he achieves Liberation.

Esteeming *Bhakthi* (devotion) as the supreme end and the highest goal of life, Bhaaratheeyas have been pursuing the path of devotion from ancient times.

The term *Bhakthi* (devotion) has been interpreted in many ways. The word *Bhakthi* is derived from the root '*Bhaj.*' "*Bhaja Sevaayaam,*" declared Shankara. "Service is devotion," according to Shankaraachaarya. Whom do you serve? What is the form of service? Service to God is true form of service.

Viveka Chudaamani (of Shankaraachaarya) expounded the meaning of *Bhakthi* in a different way. "*Svasvaruupa dharshanam Bhakthi*" (The recognition of one's own true Self is *Bhakthi*).

Naaradha, who was a great exponent of devotion, declared: "*Bhaja Paramabhakthih.*" Naaradha defined *Bhakthi* as the ceaseless flow of devotion arising from dwelling on the Lord's name.

He also declared that one who is filled with *Paramabhakthi* (supreme devotion) is in a state of intoxication, forgetful of the body, totally immersed in the love of the Divine. This means that true devotion consists in obliviousness of the body and total absorption in the love of God.

Raadha and *Bhakthi*

Raamaanuja who is the exponent of the *Visishtaadhvaitha* philosophy, derived the meaning of *Bhakthi* from the name of Raadha and interpreted it as the continuous flow of love for God. The word 'Raadha' contains four syllables: *Ra, aa, dh,* and *aa*. If you read the word starting from *Ra*, you have Raadha. Starting from *aa*, you get the word *Aadhaara*. Starting from *Dh* you get the word, *Dhaaraa*. Starting from the second: *aa*, you get the word *Aaraadha*. *Aadhaara* means "basis." *Dhaaraa* means "continuous flow." *Aaraadha* means "worship." Thus Raadha signified for Raamaanuja the continuous stream of worship of the Divine.

Vallabhaaachaarya gave a different interpretation of devotion. He made a distinction between the continuous flow of devotion and devotion falling in drops. When a devotee's heart is completely filled with the love of God, he ceaselessly chants the name of God. This state of mind of the devotee was described thus, "*Sarvadhaa Sarvakaaleshu Sarvathra Harichinthanam*" (ceaselessly thinking of God at all times and at all places).

True devotion is to regard God as friend

Maadhvaachaarya described true devotion as regarding God as the only unfailing friend. All others may be friends for some time and turn inimical later. Thus all worldly friends may turn

into enemies some time or other. God is the only true friend. Maadhvaachaarya defined true devotion as the manifestation of the love for God, considering Him as the greatest friend.

The *Vedhas* have proclaimed a truth transcending all these interpretations. The *Vedhas* repeatedly harked upon two words: *Nithyam* and *Svagatha*. *Nithyam* is that which remains unchanged through all times. This has also been described as Truth which remains the same in all the 'three' categories of time past, present and future. *Svaagatha* refers to that illuminating power, which remaining alone spreads its effulgence all around.

This is illustrated by the sun, who is one entity that is unchanging and spreads his light all round. The permanence of the sun indicates the attribute of *Nithya* and the dispersal of his light indicates the quality of *Svaagatha*. Both the qualities are rooted in a single entity. The *smrithi* referred to this characteristic as *Svaruupa-Svabhaava* (the combination of form and quality).

The sun has two qualities: One is shedding light; the other is transmitting heat. Likewise, the *Aathma* has two qualities. One is: *Prabhaava* (effulgence). The other is spreading the light all around. You have the example of a lamp in your home. The lamp is one, but its light illumines the whole house.

Likewise, the *Aathma* (Spirit) is one only in its form. It is eternal and unchanging. The *Smrithi* described it as: *Sathyam, Jnaanam, Anantham Brahma* (The Supreme Self is truth, wisdom and infinite). It is the nature of the Self to spread *Jnaana* (spiritual wisdom) everywhere.

The *Smrithi* declared that the Self has the form of *Anu* (the atom). The implication of this is that there is nothing in the universe without atoms. All material objects are made up of atoms. The scripture declared that God is omnipresent as *Anusvaruupa*. God is present also as the macrocosm.

Dharmee and Dharma

The *Anusvaruupa* (micro-essence) of God is termed *Dharmee*. In this form, *Dharmee* is present in all objects in creation, but none of them is present in *Dharmee*. All objects in the universe appear as different from each other, but the Divine principle in all of them is one and the same. That Divine principle, which manifests the oneness underlying all objects, is called *Dharmee*. This means that *Dharmee* is what unifies all apparently manifold objects. *Dharma* demonstrates the diversity in the forms of objects. The underlying principle which reveals the oneness of all these objects is *Dharmee*. This *Dharmee* is described by the *Vedha* as *Muulaadhaara padhaartham*---the thing that is at the root of all things. This primal basic substance is the basis for everything else. Today the significance of this *Dharmee* is being forgotten. It is also forgotten that this *Dharmee* is all-pervading.

As the all-pervading *Dharmee* (divinity) is present in all objects as the subtle atom, man is regarded as *Dharma-Svaruupa*, the embodiment of *Dharma* (righteousness). What for has man been given a body? What for does he exist? The scriptures say: "*Shareeram aadhyam khalu dharma saadhanam*" (the body verily is primary tool for realising righteousness). The body has been given to man to practise *Dharma*.

Today men tend to forget the purpose for which they have come to existence. They ignore their duties. They go after meaningless fancies. Hence they are not able to understand their true nature.

Role of festivals

In order to make people understand their real divine nature, festivals were designed. Today is *Vaikuntha Ekaadashi*. What is Vaikuntha? The Lord's abode is described in various ways as Vaikuntha Kailaasa, Svarga etc. All these are fanciful names.

What is the abode of God? The Lord told Naaradha: "I reside wherever my devotees sing my glories." The Lord dwells in the hearts of devotees. This is His main address. All other places are "branch offices." Any message addressed to the Divine Indweller in the heart is bound to reach God. Vaikuntha as the abode of God means a place which is changeless. Many things may change in a man, but his heart is changeless. What is meant by *Ekaadhashi*? This should not be regarded as some special place or time. The form of *Ekaadhasha Rudhra* is made up of the five organs of perception, the five organs of action and the mind. *Rudhra* is a resident of the human body, which is full of numerous potencies. Men today are forgetful of these potencies and the Divinity. that dwells in the heart.

New year days come and go. Of what use are they? Samvathsara (the year) is one of the names of the Lord. Every moment is new. Why wait for a whole year to make the change in yourselves? As long as you are caught up in worldly celebrations of New year, *Vaikuntha Ekaadashi* and the like, God will elude you. You can realise God only when you forget the phenomenal world and the body-consciousness.

The three active agencies in man

Turn the love that arises in you towards God. Dedicate your body to the Divine. This is the true mark of devotion. There are three constituents in man: the mind, the power of speech and the body. These three are called *Thrikaranas*---the three active agencies in man. It is when all three are used for sacred purposes, man becomes sanctified.

Every human being needs to cultivate the spirit, irrespective of his beliefs. All need devotion. It is only spirituality that can purify the heart and mind of man. The second requirement is morality. Morality helps to purify *Vaak* (speech). The third is *Dhaarmikam*. All righteous deeds done by the body or hands sanctify a man. It is through spirituality, morality and righteousness that the three instruments get purified.

Only the one who has achieved this triple purity can realise the Divine, If any of these instruments are impure, he cannot realise the Divine.

To comprehend the Divine, man has to understand the subtle atomic principle that pervades the entire cosmos. The difficulty in comprehending the Divine was recognized by the Gopikas who declared: "How can we know you, oh Krishna! You are the subtlest among the subtle and vaster than the vastest among the 84 lakhs of species in the cosmos."

The three ornaments to cherish

With faith in the omnipresence of the Divine, man should engage himself in good deeds, cherish good thoughts and dedicate his life to good practices. His words should be words of truth. The ornaments he should cherish are truthfulness in speech, charity for the hands and listening to sacred lore for the ears.

Develop faith in your divinity. Then you will redeem your life. Follow your conscience. Make your heart pure.

You cannot realise the Divine by immersing yourself in worldly concerns. There are two kinds of knowledge: *Dharmee-bhuutha Jnaana* and *Dharma-bhuutha Jnaana*. *Dharmee-bhuutha Jnaana* is knowledge related to forms. *Dharma-bhuutha Jnaana* is related to names. There is no basic difference between the two kinds of knowledge. Name and form are interrelated. This truth has to be understood. The awareness that shines within all beings is the form and nature of the Divine. This oneness of form and name has to be properly understood. Every such concept has an external and an inner meaning. You have to grasp the inner meaning. For instance, the mike here rests on the table. The table is the base. The table stands on the earth. The earth is the base and the table is supported by the earth. The base is called *Aadhaara* and the object supported by the base is called *Aadheya*. Today people tend to forget the *Aadhaara* and think only of the *Aadheya*.

Anything can be accomplished with Divine support

Embodiments of Love! The New Year comes regularly year after year. But do you have any new thoughts? You do not shed your old, mistaken ideas. They should be given up, yielding place to new, sacred and sublime thoughts. Of what use is it to celebrate new year days if you do not change your old ways of thinking and behaving? Make proper use of time which is both precious and sacred. Do not indulge in useless gossip. Develop good qualities like compassion, love and sympathy. Act as your own monitor and correct yourself by self-punishment. By a simple method you can control your wandering mind or your anger. Moreover, place your reliance on God.

With the power of the Divine to sustain you there is nothing you cannot accomplish. Karna and Raavana are examples of powerful men who were destroyed because they did not have the power of the Divine behind them. The Paandavas were saved because of their faith in the Divine and their unity. Happenings in the world show how some families have prospered because of unity and how others have suffered because of divisions within the family.

Today the nation needs unity above everything else. It is through faith in God that unity can be promoted. Look at the diversity of people in this hall, the different creeds they profess, the different nationalities to which they belong. All are united in their common allegiance to Svaami. By this single feeling of faith in the Divine, unity can be achieved. It is the absence of this faith that is the cause of division.

All of you are embodiments of the Divine. All of you are embodiments of love and peace. You are the Divine in human form. Develop that conviction. Immerse yourselves in Divine love. Offer that love to the Divine. Thereby you will have love for all. It is only when you develop this love principle you will be realising the meaning of festivals like these. Stand up for your belief in God, even as you stand up for your father or mother.

Render service to society, without which you cannot exist. Your welfare is bound with that of society. Develop the feeling of oneness with all, loving all as members of one Divine family.

Discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 1-1-1996.

If you take one step towards Me, I take hundred steps towards you.

Baba

2. Learning a lesson from a child

The farmer has no fear of going without food;

One who chants the Lord's name has no fear of worries;

The silent man has no fear of discord;

The careful man has no fear of danger.

EMBODIMENTS of Love! The hard-working farmer has no fear of starvation. The one who chants the name of God has no fear of worldly worries. The man of few words will be free from enmity. Through excessive talk man falls a prey to quarrels. Everyone should cultivate moderation in speech. Restraint in speech is conducive to friendly feelings. The one who is careful in his behaviour, doing all actions after due deliberation, will have no fear of danger.

All these precepts are related to education. True education consists in knowing how to lead a peaceful life. This means that in embarking on one's educational career, one should aspire for world peace. The reason is, he is a part of the world community. His well-being is intimately bound up with the well-being of the world. He should give up all narrow feelings. Students have also got to acquire unity and fellowship.

All these qualities cannot be taught by teachers. For every individual, Nature is the best teacher. Nature is teaching all lessons to man all the time.

The supreme virtue in a man

What lends beauty to sports and games is the spirit of unity with which the participants play in them, eschewing feelings of envy and hatred. The supreme virtue in a man is to forget his individual differences with others and move with them in a spirit of equality and harmony.

Today people derive only physical fitness and strength from taking part in sports and games. But man is not the body alone. Fulfillment in life is not attained by physical health and strength alone. Even when the stomach is full, 'the mind must get satisfaction. Hence, efforts should be made to promote mental health also. Only when both the mind and the body are hale and well can one experience happiness. However, young people today are concerned only about physical appearance and fitness.

Man is endowed by Divine grace with physical, mental and spiritual potencies of many kinds. Unfortunately young people tend to misuse these powers and come to grief. They do not recognise the magnitude of their internal powers. The mind is the source of all powers. Only when the mind is subdued can man realise the Divine.

Use and abuse of energies present in man

For achieving anything, strong determination is necessary. Young people in particular should take note of the powers in them. It is comparable to a kind of electrical energy. This energy enables them to see things through the eye (which is like a bulb). You must ensure that your vision is pure, sacred and pleasing. Do not taint or pollute your sight by looking at undesirable objects. Do not look at anything with bad thoughts. The eyes are spoilt by misuse.

Then you have circulating in the entire body a magnetic energy. Although this energy is present throughout the body, its presence is conspicuous in the hand. Hence the hands should be employed for good purposes. They should not be used for doing harm to others or hurting them.

Moreover, there are in the body rays emitting light. The electrical energy in the body serves to transmit these rays throughout the body like radio waves. People do not use these energies for right purposes. The ears listen to gossip, slander and evil talk. The result is that the power of hearing gets polluted.

Then, you have the power of speech. This power finds expression in sound waves. This power has to be used with great care. The words one utters should be examined to see that they do not excite, irritate or anger others. Bad words come back to the speaker with double strength. Hence one's speech should be soft and sweet.

The major weakness of young people is the tendency to misuse their boundless potencies. This degrades them as human beings.

Young people, failing to exercise control over their actions, tend to become unruly and ungovernable. You may be great scholars or intellectual giants. There are many Nobel Laureates. How many remember them? But the great benefactors of mankind, the men of noble qualities, are cherished by all mankind. For instance, there is the example of a noble soul from Calcutta. Calcutta produced many great intellectuals. After a time they are not remembered at all. But if today Raamakrishna Paramahansa, an illiterate person, is enshrined in the hearts of millions all over the world, is education responsible for it? Likewise, if many noble persons are enshrined in the hearts of people, what is the reason? They have earned their good name by their faith in God, their character, magnanimity and spirit of sacrifice. God has been the prime factor in their lives.

A child's faith in God

The other day you witnessed in the sports festival a young child dancing as Krishna on the hood of a serpent. Owing to the firing of some crackers, the cloth on a platform where the child was dancing caught fire. As the flames rose, the police, the students and others rushed to the spot with buckets of water to put out the fire. There was great commotion. But the child Krishna went on with his dance, totally indifferent to what was happening all around. His entire concentration was on the role he was playing. The child went on with the dance with his concentration on Svaami. His eyes were centred on Svaami. When one's look is centred on the Lord, nothing untoward can happen. All around the child, the decorations had been prepared with paper. Behind the decorations five hundred children were seated. What disaster might have happened if the fire had spread towards them? But, even a mountain of danger will melt away like ice if one's thoughts are centred on God. This means that together with concern for worldly things, there should be devotion to God. Together with education *Samskaara* (refinement of character) is essential.

What is meant by *Samskaara*? "*Samyak Krithi ithi Samskaara*" (Refinement of action is culture). The true implication of the benediction, "*Lokaas-Samasthaas-Sukhino-Bhavanthu*" is not properly understood. "All should be happy." This is the assurance of the Divine.

Valmeeki, Vyaasa and Pothana

How did a highwayman like Rathnaakara become the immortal author of the great epic Raamaayana? By continuous chanting of the name of the lord, as taught to him by the *Saptharishis* (seven great sages), his face acquired a new effulgence and he could become the sage Valmeeki, who is immortalized as the author of the Raamaayana. He composed his work to please the Lord. He did everything in a spirit of dedication to the Lord.

Take the case of Sage Vyaasa. He was the author of eighteen *puraanas* (ancient spiritual epics). He wrote the Mahaabhaaratha and many other great works. But it was only when he was filled with divine fervour and wrote the Bhaagavatham that he became enshrined in the hearts of the people. Valmeeki and Vyaasa have become immortal through their devotion.

We have Pothana, the author of the Thelugu Bhaagavatham. He began writing his Bhagavatham with an invocation in which he declared: "What is being composed is Bhaagavatham. The one who inspires the writer is Raamachandhra. What is written by me will be redemptive. I shall write, as there is no greater story to tell." Pothana began composing his magnum opus with the feeling that everything he was doing was by the will of Shri Raama. So, when you think of Bhaagavatham, you are reminded of Pothana. By his great work he has installed himself in the hearts of the devout.

Mind should be directed towards God

Students should not end with mastery of books. The hearts should be filled with right knowledge. The students should see that the darkness which envelops the mind is dispelled. This was the prayer which the gopikas requested Uddhava to convey to Krishna: "Oh Krishna! Dispel the darkness in our-hearts and fill them with your effulgence. Pour your love on the parched fields of our hearts so that devotion may sprout from them."

The gopikas and gopalas prayed to Krishna that they could not live apart from Him that therefore they should be endowed with forms related to whatever forms He took so that they could stay with Him. Separation from God is the cause of men's wallowing in sensuous pleasures. The mind is the cause of man's pleasure and pain. It should be directed towards God to secure freedom from pleasure and pain.

God will not give up devotees

People today speak about God having forgotten man. This is not true. God can never give up the devotee. It is the devotee who gives up God. God can never forget the devotee. It is the devotee who forgets God. God is never away from you. Only the devotee is away from God. You think that God is moving away from you. Not at all. You forget God and declare that God has forgotten you. Your own feelings are reflected in your utterances. What is the result of education? You find that in any conference, the members criticize one another in unspeakable terms. The critics are invariably petty-minded persons. Many leaders today indulge in mutual mud slinging, which is totally unbecoming. Indulging in abuse of others is a grievous sin. Develop your own good qualities and share them with others. That is the right way. Try to correct yourself rather than to criticize others.

Most young people today indulge in slander, instead of cultivating qualities like devotion to God, service to society and sympathy for fellow-beings. They should realise that they have to lead exemplary lives and serve their fellowmen. Every individual should dedicate himself to social service.

The spirit of sportsmanship which you display in sports and games should be displayed in other fields also. The determination displayed in sports should also be shown in the game of life.

You young people have to learn many things. First and foremost, get rid of *Ahamkaara* (arrogance). Earn a good name as a scholar, a man of character, endowed with a spirit of sacrifice. Realise that if you please God, you can please the whole world. You saw the film about the saint Ghora Khumbhar. In his total absorption in God, he forgot the presence of his son and

unwittingly caused the child's death. When he realised what had happened, he did not mourn the death of the child. He declared that God took away what God had given him. Such was his total faith in God.

While pursuing your studies remember that you have also to strive for the well-being of the world *Loka hitharathah*.

Service should justify the salaries

Make use of your education for public welfare. You have no doubt to take up a job for earning a living. See that the work you do justifies the emoluments you get. It is treason to the nation to receive thousands by way of salary and do hardly a few hundred rupees worth of work. Today such disloyal employees are, increasing in numbers all over the world. High salaries and poor turnout are the rule today. This accounts for the deplorable condition of Bhaarath today. The public debt is growing alarmingly. Who is responsible? If public servants rendered service according to the salaries they received the country would not be in such a bad plight.

Discharge your duties according to your conscience. Our students should live up to this ideal. There is nothing wrong in receiving a high salary provided you do the work to deserve it. Now young people are concerned only about the pay packets and not the work they have to do in the service of society to deserve the pay. Think more about what you owe to society than what you can get from it. It is sheer selfishness to be concerned only about your earnings. The *Vedha* has declared that immortality can be attained only through sacrifice.

"Students are my only property"

Students! Boys and girls! Wherever you may go, wherever you may live, serve the elders at home, serve the society and bring a good name to the institutions which have educated you. Observe discipline all through your life. Do your duty.

It is not easy to bring back the glorious days of the past. You young people cannot be aware of the times when a bag of rice could be got for four rupees, when people could go about without any fear of attack and houses could be left unlocked. Today fear stalks the country. No one is safe. For all these evils the insatiable craving for money is responsible. The evil began in a sway in the *Dhvaapara Yuga*. Today it has reached frightful limits. The craving for wealth has led to many other evils like jealousy and pride.

The money that comes from the people should be given back to them in one way or other. This is Bhagavaan's will. People say that Sai Baba is spending crores of rupees on the drinking water project. There is not a single rupee of Sai Baba in all this. What has been received from the people is being given back to them. I do not own anything. I have only one property, my most valuable property. My students are my only property. It is enough for me if my students conduct themselves well.

I bless you all that you should carry on your lives in the same spirit in which you have distinguished yourselves in games and sports. Win prizes in the game of life, carry out the injunctions of God and stand forth as ideal citizens. Never forget the supremacy of love as the ruling principle in life.

Discourse in the Puurnachandhra Auditorium on 14-1-1996, after distribution of prizes to winners in sports and games.

It is enough if Prema is cultivated, the. Prema that knows no distinction between oneself and another, because all are but limbs of One corpus of God Almighty. Through Love alone can the Embodiment of Love be gained. Here, no scholarship is needed; in fact, scholarship will be an impediment, for it caters to egoism and it breeds doubts and the desire for disputation and laurel of victory over others preening themselves as learned.

Baba

3. Triple transformation : *Sankraanthi's call*

*The sun appeared cool and serene;
The day started getting shorter;
The chill wind blew fiercely;
The fields were filled with golden harvest.
The farmers rejoiced in singing at night
With the moon shining bright,
The buds of flowers blossomed
Like garlands of pearls
On the banks of rivers;
Farmers were bringing home
The newly harvested grain,
Hailing the advent of
The Joyous festival of Sankraanthi.*

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Bhaaratheeya festivals are full of inner significance, imparting bliss, and not ostentatious shows. Every festival has a unique significance of its own.

The sun moves into a house of the zodiac every month. In a year he goes round the twelve houses of the zodiac. Of these, the main houses are four. The first is *Makara Sankramana* (the zodiacal sign of Capricorn). The second is *Karkaataka* (Cancer). The third is *Thula* (Libra). The fourth is *Mesha* (Aries). Of these four, the most important is *Makara* (Capricorn). The entry of the sun into *Capricorn* has physical, ethical, social and moral significance.

The northward journey of the sun

From today the sun starts on his northward journey. What does the north signify? It is considered the direction leading to *Moksha* (Liberation). The sun is said to move towards Himaachala. Himaachala is made up of two words: Hima + Achala. '*Hima*' means that which is white as snow. '*Achala*' is that which is firm and unshakable. What is the place to which this description applies? It is the region of the heart. In a heart that is pure and steady, the sun of *Buddhi* (the intellect) enters. There is no need to undertake a journey in the external world. The *Uttharaayana* (or the Northward Journey) means turning the intellect inward., towards the heart. The bliss that is experienced within alone is true bliss for man. All other external and sensory pleasures are ephemeral. Only the *Aathmik* principle is pure, permanent and infinite. This has been termed the abode of *Moksha* (Liberation). The journey to *Moksha* is called the quest for liberation.

Sankramana is the time when the inward journey towards a pure and unsullied heart is made. Just as the sun embarks on his northward journey, *Sankraanthi* is the day on which the intellect should be turned towards the *Aathma* for Self-realisation.

The Vedha has declared the *Uttharaayana* as a sacred period. The great warrior Bheeshma, lying on a bed of arrows, waited for 56 days for the advent of *Uttharaayana* to end his life. The *puraanas* have stated that whoever passes away in *Uttharaayana* will attain liberation.

Inner meaning of festivals

In the movement of the sun from house to house in the Zodiac, the entry into Capricorn is most important. Capricorn is a sign of peace and contentment. According to the Gregorian calendar, *Sankraanthi* begins on January 13 or 14. This confers a kind of mental and physical peace.

In this period, farmers and others labouring on the soil enjoy a period of rest. The farmers are at ease enjoying the fruits of their labours. Their granaries are filled with grains of all kinds. Farmers have no other period of rest. During this month, farmers enjoy peace of mind and body.

Few people understand the true significance of festivals like *Sankraanthi*. Man cannot secure enduring bliss through physical pleasures. He has to discover that the source of this bliss is within himself. *Sankraanthi* enables man to make this discovery, like a man who carrying his spectacles on his forehead searches for it everywhere and discovers to his joy that it has been with him all along.

The Divine is not anywhere else. It is enshrined in one's heart. Hence, the man who seeks the Divine within his heart redeems himself. He then attains liberation. All external spiritual exercises are of temporary value. They should be internalized to experience lasting bliss. All mental exercises also leave the heart unaffected. In the nine paths of devotion, beginning with listening to sacred things and ending with *Aathma-nivedhanam* (total surrender of the self), the last is the most important. After *Aathmanivedhanam* there is no need for any other effort.

The feelings promoted by *Sankraanthi*

Sankraanthi gives the call for this total surrender. Subba Rao (in his speech prior to Svaami's discourse) said that *Sankraanthi* is a kind of family festival. Yes. This is so. But the whole world is one family *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. The festival relates to the entire world. It is not confined to one's kith and kin. *Sankraanthi* is related to the entire mankind. Whether people realise it or not, *Sankraanthi* promotes in one and all a feeling of happiness.

Sankraanthi promotes mental transformation. It illumines the minds of people. It induces the unfoldment of inner feelings. It beings about the manifestation of the invisible *Aathma* within everyone. *Sankraanthi* is pregnant with such immense significance. It influences not only the mind but also the powers of nature. Nature is a projection of the mind. "*Manomoolam idham Jagath*" (The world is rooted in the mind). When the mind is turned towards the heart and the heart is filled with the Divine, the mind will cease to be a source of trouble. The mind is the master of the senses. When the senses are controlled the mind is under control. Only the master of the mind can attain Maadhava (the Divine).

Young people should realise that the root cause of all their bad thoughts and bad actions is the food they consume. The nature of the food determines the state of the mind. Food does not mean merely what is eaten, but includes all that is received through the senses and stored in the mind. The mind, as Subba Rao said, has the power of attraction. It attracts impressions of all kinds from the external world. What do we find in every home today?'

Harm done by Television

There is a television set. T.V. sets are installed in every room in the houses of the rich. From the moment television made its appearance, the mind of man has been polluted.

Before the advent of T.V., men's minds were not so much polluted. Acts of violence were not so rampant previously. Today T.V. is installed in every hut. People watch the T.V. even while taking food. The result is that all the foul things seen on the T.V. are being consumed by the viewer. Concentration on the T.V. affects one's view of the world. The scenes, thoughts and actions displayed on the T.V. set fill the minds of the viewers. Unknowingly, agitations and ill-feelings enter their minds. In due course they take root and grow in the minds.

Hence while taking food, you should not discuss dreadful incidents. No room should be given to subjects which excite the mind. Silence should prevail during eating. Even sound waves enter into us and affect our minds. Hence people should avoid T.V. while taking food.

There is now what is called "Star TV." It is doing great harm to human life. The temporary satisfaction given by it is followed by lasting damage. It is like a sword coated with honey. As you lick the honey, the sword will cut your tongue.

Not Bhaarath alone, but the whole world is suffering from the consequences of T.V. The world is racked by disorder, discord and frustration.

Fill your life with holy thoughts

Men today are plagued by a whole battery of troubles from birth to death. How can they hope for happiness amidst this sea of troubles?

They have to change their vision, their thoughts, their words and their conduct. This is the meaning of Sankramana. Unless you purify yourself, what can any-number of *Sankraanthis* mean to you? You tasted sweet *prasaadham* this morning. After some time, its taste is gone. It is not sweet food that is important. You must fill your life with holy thoughts. That is the purpose of sacred festivals.

Young people ask why they should not enjoy freedom as the fish, birds and animals do. They should understand that each of these creatures are enjoying freedom in accordance with their own sphere of life. Similarly man should enjoy freedom related to his human condition. You cannot call yourself a human being and lead the life of an animal. Enjoy the freedom of a human being. To be free like an animal is to become an animal yourself. What is the freedom a man can enjoy? Man is governed by certain restraints. He has to adhere to truth. He has to follow righteousness. He has to cultivate love. He has to live in peace. He has to observe non-violence. Sticking to these five values, man can exercise his freedom. These five values are associated with the five elements which make up the cosmos. These five elements may be used in different ways, but they are the basic substances constituting the universe. Beyond these five, there is only one sixth element, that is, *the Anthahkarana*, the Inner Motivator, which is identical with the *Aathmik* principle.

To exercise freedom in its true sense, man has to respect the five basic values. It is in that freedom he will find true bliss.

Imitation has become a deadly disease

In exercising freedom you should not merely imitate others. Imitation has become a deadly disease among modern youth, in matters of dress or other behaviour. They should consult their conscience in all matters rather than copy others. Films and TV have totally demoralized the people. People have become completely oblivious to Divinity within them.

People today have lost the quality of forbearance. The sages in the past allowed even anthills to grow over them while they were immersed in penance. Today people cannot tolerate the slightest disturbance by a fly or a mosquito. Young people should cultivate forbearance and tolerance. Without peace of mind there can be no happiness. Peace can be got only through sacred thoughts.

Youth today have lost confidence in themselves. They are affected by criticism levelled against them. They should see that if the criticism is justified, they should correct themselves. If it is not justified, they should ignore it. Taking myself as an example, I may tell you if somebody somewhere says, "Sai Baba has a mop of hair," I accept it, as it is true. If someone were to say to my face, "Sai Baba is bald," I will ignore it, as it is not true. Why should I bother to quarrel with him? If you are criticized for a fault that is not in you, you can ignore it even if the whole world joins in the criticism.

When we pronounce "*Shaanthi, Shaanthy, Shaanthyhi*," three times, it is prayer for peace of body, mind and the spirit. Though people have been mouthing this prayer for thirty years, they have not found peace, because they have not enshrined peace in their hearts. They must learn to speak sweetly and softly.

Students must pledge to rid the world of its ills

Students! Apart from educational programmes, do not look at T.V. at all, especially while taking food. Concentrate on the work on hand, whether it be eating or anything else.

You are observing many things in the world today. You must see how you can make use of your knowledge to make the world better. Students-boys and girls---must pledge themselves to rid the world of its ills. Earning incomes is not a great thing. To ensure peace and prosperity in the world is the highest achievement. You have to strive for peace in the nation, starting with peace in the home.

Above all, unity is important. Young people should promote unity and serve the nation. They should be a power for peace wherever they go. Educated young men should be examples of discipline and good behaviour. Revere parents and elders, love the Motherland and uphold its greatness.

Sankraanthy should be hailed as the harbinger of unity and peace. This was the immemorial message of the *Vedhas*. "Let us live together in harmony and strive together."

Discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on 15-1-1996, Sankraanthy Day.

God draws the Individual towards Himself; it is the nature of birth to have this affinity, for they are the same. They are like the iron and the magnet. But if the iron is rusty and covered with layers of dirt, the magnet is unable to attract. Remove the impediment; that is all you have to do. Shine forth in your real nature and the Lord will draw you into His Bosom. Trials and tribulations are the means by which this cleansing is done. That is why Kunthi prayed to Krishna, "Give us always grief, so that we may never forget Thee."

Baba

4. Spiritual basis of human values

BORN as human beings, growing as human beings, men have forgotten the value of human existence. Developing religious differences, fostering demonic tendencies, they are destroying peace. What is the state of human life today? The foremost thing that should exist is respect for human values. However great an intellectual may be, however great one may be as a scholar or a man of learning, one has also to acquire humanness. Without humanness, scholarships and intellectual eminence are of no value.

It is only when men cultivate humanness that society will shine with radiance and the nation and the world will progress. Humanness can be promoted only through spirituality and not by any other means.

Just as a seed can sprout only when it is planted in the soil and watered, human values can grow only in a spiritual soil. If a man wants to cultivate human values he has to apply the manure of spirituality to his heart, water it with love so that human values will grow. Human society needs essentially fellow-feeling and unity. When these two are present, humanness will flourish.

The five principles of Yama (sense control)

Wherefrom are human values to be derived and how are they to be developed? Human values are born along with human birth. They exist in union. Unfortunately, man today separates himself from human values and yet wants to live as a human being. To recover human values, man has to take the spiritual path.

In spiritual *saadhana*, there are eight *Yogik* disciplines to be observed: *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Aasana*, *Pranaayaama*, *Prathyaahaara*, *Dhyaana*, *Dhaarana* and *Samaadhi* (sense restraint, observing rules, seating posture, breath-control, withdrawal of senses from objects, meditation and Super Conscious state). Of these, the first is *Yama*. It is enough if this single discipline is observed. All human values are comprised in it. Humanness is embedded in it. *Yama* includes the *Pancha Praanas* (five-breaths), *Pancha Bhuuthas* (five elements), *Pancha Koshas* (five sheaths), *Pancha Thathvas* (five basic principles), and *Pancha Ruupas* (five forms). The five forms are the form of Gaayathri. The five basic principles are: *Ahimsa*, *Sathya*, *Brahmacharya*, *Astheya* and *Aparigraha* (Non-violence, Truth, Celibacy, non-stealing and non-possessive qualities). These five constitute *Yama*. The first is *Ahimsa*. Buddha attached the great importance to *Ahimsa*. He considered it the foremost Dharma (duty). "*Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah*," declared Buddha.

Wider meaning of *Ahimsa*

What does *Ahimsa* signify? It is not merely refraining from causing harm or injury to others. It implies also refraining from causing harm to himself. One who harms himself cannot avoid harming others? Whoever desires to observe *Ahimsa* must see that he does not do violence to himself. How is this to be ensured? By constantly examining whether his conduct is right or wrong. For instance, in the matter of speech, he must examine whether his words are causing pain to others or not. He must see that his looks are not tainted by evil intentions or thoughts. He should not listen to evil talk. All these cause harm to the individual.

Hence, everyone should see that he gives no room for bad looks, bad hearing, bad speech, bad thoughts and bad actions. How do you determine what is bad? By consulting your conscience. Whenever you act against the dictates of your conscience, bad results follow. The conscience is the form of the Divine within everyone. Whatever you do, the conscience tells you whether it is

right or wrong. However, to ascertain the directive of the conscience you have to wait for some time. You should not be in a hurry. When you want to say something, you must consider for a moment whether it would be proper Or not and then speak. When you want to listen to something, you must examine whether it is good or bad to listen and then decide what is proper.

You should be careful not only with regard to how you react to the five elements, but also with regard to your food. Excessive eating does violence to the body. Moderation in food is conducive to happiness. *Ahimsa* (non-violence) is thus what confers happiness on you. That which hurts you is *himsa* (violence). Nor is that all. Even in drinking water, you should observe restraints. Likewise, one's entire life should be governed by the principle of non-violence. Many germs die when one takes a bath or walks or does any other action. Even in the process of breathing many germs die. Violence is present in all these activities. Therefore, to avoid the consequences of such involuntary violence to living creatures, one is advised to dedicate all actions to the Divine. But there is no meaning in dedicating to the Divine conscious acts of violence. The conscience will not approve of such conduct. In *Vedhaanthik* parlance, the conscience is called *chith*. It is also called Awareness. Awareness is total understanding. This total understanding is within the capacity of every human being. Everyone must strive to express this awareness. Thus, *Ahimsa* is the primary duty of man.

Adherence to truth

The second duty is *Sathya* (Truth). Truth is not merely telling the facts about what you see or hear or know. These are temporal truths. In its full sense truth can be applied only to what comes out of your heart in its pure and unsullied form as the voice of conscience. This *Sathya* (truth) is also called *Ritham*. It is true for all time--past, present and the future. It is not affected by changes in time or place. It is unchanging and cannot be suppressed. Truth is its own proof. It is the form of the Divine as declared in the *Vedhik* saying: *Sathyam, Jnaanam, Anantham Brahma* (Thath, the highest Wisdom and Infinite--that is the Absolute Self). Truth is thus the second human value.

The third is *Astheyam* (non-stealing). *Astheyam* means not stealing the properties of others. Property should not be confined to physical objects like a book. When you need anything, there is nothing wrong in your taking it with the permission of the owner. To take or use any object without such permission amounts to stealing. Even to criticize someone in a way that harms him also amounts to theft (of his good name). It is common among students to borrow a friend's camera and use it. When the camera is damaged, the responsibility for getting it repaired is that of the user. In this manner, you can understand how the concept of stealing applies to even trivial incidents in daily life. This is the third duty.

The true meaning of *Brahmacharya*

The next duty is *Brahmacharya*. *Brahmacharya* is interpreted in many ways. One meaning is remaining unmarried. This is not the correct meaning. The true meaning of the term is "Moving in Brahman." *Brahmacharya* means ceaseless contemplation of God. *Charya* means moving or treading. *Brahmacharya* means "moving in Brahman." Mere bachelorhood is not *Brahmacharya*. A married man is called *Girhastha* (house-holder). There is *Brahmacharya* even in a householder's life. This consists in his leading the conjugal life with the wife *alone--Ardhaangi*. If a married man leads a promiscuous life he is not observing *Brahmacharya*. Even in thoughts and looks, one should observe continence. *Brahmacharya* acquired its importance because of its strict observance by our ancient sages.

Unconsciously or otherwise men tend to waste their energies. All these are lapses from *Brahmacharya*. Sense control is vital in practising continence. It is easier to conquer Indhra (the Lord of gods) than to subdue the *Indhriyas* (senses). Control of senses is an important human value. It is because these vital disciplines were observed by the sages and others since ancient times, they continue to be cherished to this day. Bhaarath has passed through innumerable vicissitudes in its long history, including foreign invasion. Nevertheless, by and large, the people have managed to foster the human values.

Subtle implications of *Aparigraha*

The fifth discipline is *Aparigraha*. This means not accepting things from others. You have every right to receive gifts or other things from your parents. You are the product of your parents and hence you can accept from them whatever they give. *Aparigraha* has certain subtle implications. For instance, it is not proper to accept gifts even from one's uncles or in-laws or even from one's brothers. When any gifts are received from these relatives you have to requite them by equivalent presents. Today the *Aparigraha* role is blatantly violated.

For instance, boys when they get married after their education, receive dowries at the time of marriage. This is very wrong. It even amounts to a sin. A girl who has been brought up well is offered to a young man in marriage. That itself is a great gift. Why should one ask for money along with the bride? The parents of the girl may give her whatever they choose. But the bridegroom should not expect or accept anything.

This is the attitude one should have towards gifts from others. It is because many of these immemorial injunctions have been given the go-by that today Bhaarath is experiencing various troubles.

No limits to gifts from God

Gifts can be accepted from parents, the preceptor and God. These are the exceptions to the rule of *Aparigraha*. From these four, you can receive anything. But even from the parents you should not seek to get anything by compulsion or litigations. What is offered by the parents with love should be received with love. There are limits to what you can receive from the parents. But there is no limit to what you can receive from God. You can accept anything from God because He is the Lord of everything. He can free you from sin and redeem you from the consequences. God encompasses all relationships and hence one should identify one's self with God. "You and I are one." Attributing relationships like mother and father to God sets binding limits to the association between God and man. In the vast ocean of *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being-Awareness-Bliss), the myriad human beings, with different names and forms, are like waves. But as the waves are made up of the same water as the ocean, all human beings are sparks of the Divine.

Sath-Chith-Aanandha are present in every human being. People out of their ignorance go in quest of *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* elsewhere. *Ajnaana* (Ignorance) is the cause of *Aviveka* (stupidity). Stupidity is the cause of *Ahamkaara* (egoism). Egoism gives rise to attachment. Attachment leads to hatred. Hatred gives rise to Karma (action). Karma is the cause of birth. The original cause of the chain of processes leading to birth is ignorance.

What is ignorance? It is the state of *bhinnathvam* (divisiveness). To regard "That" as different from you is ignorance. To differentiate God from yourself is ignorance. All are fragments of the Divine, sparks from the same flame. When the sparks are near the fire, they retain their heat and

light. But when they are away, they turn into charcoal. Likewise, when one is near God, *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* will be in him. When he is remote from God, he will lose the attributes of the Divine. He will be immersed in ignorance. It is not mastery of books and scholarship which makes a person a *Jnaani* (a knower of the Supreme Truth). "*Advaitha dharshanam Jnaanam*" (To perceive the One without a second is Knowledge).

"Happiness is union with God"

It is only when you manifest the bliss that is in *your Sath-Chith-Aanandha--that* you can call yourself *Vyakthi*, the manifested individual. The term *Vyakthi* cannot be applied to all and sundry. He alone can be called *Vyakthi* who manifests the invisible divinity within him.

What is meant by *Sath-Chith-Aanandha*? *Sath* is "Being", that which is eternal and unchanging. Sugar has the quality of sweetness, which remains in whatever form it may be used. For purposes of analogy, sugar may be described as *Sath*. *Chith* may be compared to water. It has the quality of mobility. When sugar and water are mixed, you have neither sugar nor water as such, but a new product, syrup. When *Sath* and *Chith* come together, you have *Aanandha* (Divine Bliss). People imagine that this bliss is to be found in jobs, marriage, property or progeny. That is not the case. You hope for happiness in one thing after another: education, jobs, marriage, children and so on. But happiness eludes you. The only enduring happiness is got by oneness with the Divine.

The answer to the question, "Where is happiness?" is "Happiness is union with God." Students tend to forget this, in the pursuit of worldly pleasures. It is only through the ripeness of experience that this realisation can come. For instance, you see a barren field in the summer. After a night's rain, you find grass coming up. Wherefrom did it come? It is from the field. What was present in the form of seeds in the earth came up as grass after the rain. Likewise the bliss within you will sprout when you water your parched heart with the rain of divine love.

Do not underrate the powers in the atmosphere

Scientists today have made many astonishing discoveries. But they lack peace. They have failed to understand the *Vedhaantik* truth about their true nature. Hence they are unable to experience the bliss of the Spirit that is in them. People should not underrate the powers present in the atmosphere. For instance, it is filled with radio waves coming from different broadcasting centres. But the waves maintain their individual wave length and do not collide with the others. This electrical energy is divine. It is one of the secrets of creation. The body is like a radio set. When you do not tune in properly by concentration you will not get the right station. Concentration is essential for every kind of activity in life. Students should realise how much can be gained by reducing one's desires. They may experiment in a small way with reducing the consumption of coffee. They will find that their memory power increases. As desires are reduced, their will power will grow. This *Ichchaa-shakthi* (will power) is being undermined today. The result is their ability to act is also reduced. Consequently, even the *Jnaana-shakthi* (the power of wisdom), is also lost.

Place your faith in God

Students! Understand that there is no free will for individuals. They are constrained by various limitations. God alone has total free will. All others are bound in. one way or another.

Whatever one's efforts, the ultimate outcome lies with Providence. Therefore, place your faith in God and do your duty, wherever you may be. Do not cause any harm to others. Observe continence, avoid covetousness and lead a good, righteous life. A bad habit, which may seem trivial in the beginning, may develop into a menace in later life. Correct such faults in the initial stages. Pursue spiritual exercises with the same enthusiasm you have for sports and studies.

(Bhagavaan related at length the story of Ghora Kumbhar and his final mergence in the Lord of Pandharpur, Paanduranga. Bhagavaan pointed out how God's grace was needed for the *Rishis* to obtain a vision of the Divine, or get the opportunity to speak to God. The *Rishis* later took birth as monkeys to converse with God and again took birth as gopikas and gopaalas to have contact with God).

The purpose of the Sai *avathaar* is different from that of Raama and Krishna because the forces of good and evil are now present in every human being and the process of transformation has to be effected in a context very different from the previous yugas. In the *Kali Yuga*, the process of transformation has been individualized. Everyone has to correct himself. "Child! You have to save yourself. I am present within you as a witness." This is the Lord's message. Hence, everyone should try to reform himself. You have to decide what is right and what is wrong and give up what is bad.

The ways of God are inscrutable. You should not ascribe to God motives which are a reflection of your own feelings. Hence, self-enquiry is essential. Embark on the Divine path with sincerity. You will emerge as leaders in the world.

I have high expectations regarding your future. Revere your parents, serve society and protect the nation. It is to produce such students that I am devoting three-fourths of my time to them. Carry out Svaami's injunctions. Earn a good name. Uphold the prestige of the Sai educational institutions. That is the gratitude you can show to Svaami. Do not think of the pens and other gifts you received. Remember only that Svaami gave you good sense. Develop both goodness and godliness. Beyond these two, there is nothing greater which education can do for you.

Discourse in the Secondary School Hostel on 18-1-1996.

5. Spiritual significance of Shivaraathri

Moham hithvaa priyo bhavathi

Krodham hithvaa na sochathi

Kaamam hithvaa arthavaan bhavathi

Lobham hithvaa sukhee bhavathi.

EMBODIMENTS of Love! "Moham hithvaa priyo bhavathi" (As long as one is proud, men will not like him). Only when he suppresses his pride will he be liked by one and all. "Krodham hithvaa na sochathi" (The man filled with anger will have no happiness). He will be immersed in misery. When he subdues his anger, he will be free from grief. "Kaamam hithvaa arthavaan bhavathi" (When a man has insatiable desires he will never feel contented). When he controls his desires, he will be truly rich. "Lobhamhithvaasukhee bhavathi" (A miserly person will never feel happy). When he gives up greed he will realise happiness.

Embodiments of Love! Divinity is not easily perceived or realised. It is easy to talk about the Divine. It is easy to comment on the miracles and sports of the Divine. But to understand them in their fullness is very difficult. To look at something evil and shout about it like crows is not a good thing. It is better to sing like the cuckoo over something good. Tastes differ from person to person. One man's sweet is another man's poison. With such diverse tendencies, how can men recognise the Divine?

The ancient sages of Bharath carried out many spiritual investigations and through the study of the scriptures proclaimed their experience of the Divine. The Upanishaths declared: "*Raso vai saha.*" That is, the Divine is present in all things as their essence like sugar in sugarcane and butter in milk. God is present both in the good and the bad, in truth and untruth, in merit and sin. That being the case, how is one to determine what is false and what is unrighteous? The Geetha declares: "My Spirit is the indwelling spirit in all beings." The individual who realises this truth will experience *samathvam* (equal-mindedness).

Duality in life cannot be escaped

But, for people living in the mundane world and concerned with worldly affairs, right and wrong, truth and untruth and similar opposites are unavoidable. Hence, as long as one is involved in leading a worldly life one cannot escape from duality. One's peace and security have to be found in the context of pleasure and pain. One's joy is linked with suffering. Pleasure is an interval between two pains. Life is a combination of light and shadow. Without sorrow there can be no happiness. Only when you walk in the hot sun can you experience the pleasure of a shady place. In such a life, it is not possible to experience pleasure alone all the time.

The cosmic process

The entire cosmos is governed by three states: *srishti, sthithi and layam* (creation, sustenance and dissolutions). The truth of this is beyond dispute by anyone at any time. A Divine truth is conveyed by this concept. Srishti (creation) is the expression of the *Eeshvara Sankalpa* (Will of God). It is called *Prakrithi* (Nature). Every object in creation should have the characteristics of Nature. Man has come into existence to manifest the powers of Nature. The powers of Nature are not present in all in equal measure. The man who is conscious only of the physical has a perverted view of these powers. The spiritually-oriented person sees their benign nature.

Prakrithi (Nature) and *Chaithanya* (Spirit) are one. But in accordance with their varied feelings and attitudes, things appear good or bad to Loka is one of the names applied to the world. Loka is that which has the power of *aalochana* (thought). In this assembly there are a large number of persons. They are all gathered in one place. But each lives in a world of his own. What is the reason? One will be thinking about an educational problem. Another will be thinking about a job. Yet another may be worried about his business. Another may be concerned about agriculture. Others may be thinking about some scientific problem. All these different realms of thought are all exercises of the mind.

The trinity in man

Thus the cosmic process *shrishti* (creation), *sthithi* (sustenance) and *layam* (dissolution) goes on in every human being. *Srishti* is the outcome of *sankalpa* (thought). *Sthithi* is protection of creation. *Layam* is the merger of creation in its source. *Srishti*, *Sthithi* and *Layam* are also identified with the three qualities--*Sathva*, *Rajas* and *Thamas*. Man is the embodiment of the three *gunas*. The three *gunas* represent the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshvara). The Trinity represent the *Thrilokas* (three Worlds). The three worlds and the trinity are present in every human being. The three are to be regarded as one and worshipped as Shivam. What is Shivam? It is the embodiment of Auspiciousness. When man recognizes the unified form of the Trinity his humanness acquires auspiciousness.

In a government there are different departments like education, finance, etc. Likewise in the spiritual field also there are different departments. They are: *Srishti*, *Sthithi* and *Layam*. Each department has a head. Each head has to govern his department on right lines.. There is an overlord presiding over all departments. He is like the Prime Minister in a cabinet. He is God. He is called Allah. By attributing different names and forms to God, Divinity is fragmented in various ways. The one Divine is responsible for the threefold cosmic process. This three aspects of God can be seen in the English word GOD. G represents *Generation--Srishti*. O represents Organizations-----*Sthithi*. D represents Dissolution--*Layam*. GOD represents the unity of the three aspects.

There is a misunderstanding about these three. *Layam* is considered as destruction or dissolution. Its real meaning is mergence. O represents organization. It means protection. G stands for generation (creation). Brahma, Vishnu and Eeshvara are three potencies Immanent in man. To understand this it is essential to follow the spiritual path. Spirituality does not mean leading a lonely ascetic life. Spirituality means getting rid of attachment and hatred and looking upon the whole humanity as one. Every one should understand this inner meaning of spirituality.

Shivaraathri is an auspicious night

Man is endowed with infinite potencies. All that you experience by way of seeing, hearing and the like are reflections of the inner being. The significance of this experience has to be properly understood. For instance, today is Shivaraathri day. You experience the night every day. These are ordinary nights. They are nights of darkness. But Shivaraathri is an auspicious night. How is it auspicious? There are sixteen aspects for the mind. The moon is the presiding deity for the mind. Of the sixteen phases of the moon, today in the fourteenth day of *Maargasheersha* month, fifteen of the phases are absent. On this day it is possible to get full control of one's mental faculties. Hence it is considered an auspicious day. Auspiciousness consists in diverting the mind towards God. This calls for getting rid of the inherited animal tendencies in man. This is the occasion to recognise the omnipresence of the Divine in all beings and in all objects. It follows

that whomsoever you adore or condemn, you are adoring or condemning God. You must follow the injunction: Help ever, hurt never.

Every human being has sacred qualities, based on his *Shivathvam* (Divine essence). Hence man should realise his inherent divinity, though his body is made up of the five elements. Thereby humanness is transformed into divinity. The human birth is intended for the pursuit of *Dharma*. *Dharma* implies harmony in thought, word and deed. When every person realises his essential divine nature, the entire world will be transformed. The body and the mind are mere instruments. Man's reality is the *Aathma* (Self). Man should use the instruments given to him to perform his duties well and realise his oneness with God.

Unity in diversity

All the phenomena in Nature proclaim the glory of the Divine. Why foster religious differences? Let everyone carry out the dictates of the Divine, who governs the universe. (Svaami sang a poem in Telugu to convey this message). Everything that happens is by the Will of God.

The principle teaching of the *Vedhas* is that all men should strive together in harmony and share their joys together in amity. Through unity, humanity can achieve purity, leading to divinity. The three great enemies of man are lust, anger and greed. These have to be eliminated. The greatest quality in man is love. Love is God. Live in love.

Bhaarath has been hailed as the teacher for all lands. It is the country which regarded God as one and recognized the unity that underlies all diversity. God is one, the goal is one and all life is one. This unity underlies all diversity. This basic Divine unity is missed in the perception of diversity.

Use every opportunity to help others

Embodiments of Love! At the present moment, in the prevailing situation, what is most essential is the cultivation of love. Losing love, mankind has lost its humanness. Love is the supreme human value. Truth, righteousness, peace and non-violence are other human values. Knowing these values, men are foolishly leading valueless lives. What a pity that men in human form do not behave like human, beings. Rivers, trees and cows teach the lesson of living for the benefit of others. Man should also share the divinity in him with others. Men today are steeped in selfishness.

Whoever remembers the names of scholars and scientists? But millions adore the names of realised souls like Raamakrishna Paramahansa, Thukaaraam, Kabeer and Raamdhaas. Bear in mind four dicta to be observed: "Run away from bad company. Welcome association with good people. Do meritorious acts continually. Remember what is transient and what is permanent." Be with God, think with God, see with God and dedicate all actions to God. Consider all as members of one Divine family. Regard yourself as a trustee and use your wealth and talents for the good of others. Use every opportunity, to help others. Be compassionate at all times. Students in particular should always be ready to go to the help of people in distress.

God today is in search of good men. Every one should strive to be sincere in thought, word and deed. Then you need not go in search of God. God will discover you.

You have to develop fraternal feelings towards everyone. Here is an example from the Raamaayana. Once the four brothers as young lads were playing a game with a ball. After the game Raama ran to Kausalya and rested on her lap. He was full of joy. When Kausalya asked

him why he was feeling so happy, Raama said that Bharatha had won in the game that day and that made him so happy. Kausalya remarked that an elder brother rejoicing in the success of his younger brother is a great example for brotherly love. Shortly thereafter Bharatha came to Kausalya with a sad look. Kausalya asked him why he was feeling sad when he had won in the game. Bharatha said: "When I was about to lose the game, Raama managed to lose the game and made me the winner. I am feeling unhappy because of the defeat of my elder brother. Is it not sad that on my account my elder brother should lose the game?"

What an example of fraternal love! The elder brother should rejoice in the success of the younger, even by losing the game himself. This is the lesson taught by the Raamaayana. In those days the four brothers were in a supreme state of fraternal love. Today brothers go to the Supreme Court for settling their disputes! This is not proper. Brothers should be united and live in amity. The ideal of fraternal unity upheld in the Raamaayana should inspire the people today. *Students!* Strive for the welfare of society as a whole. Experience God through love.

Discourse in Puurnachandhra Auditorium on 17-2-1996.

6. Cherish the glorious heritage of Bhaarith

Sarve Bhavanthu Sukhinah;

Sarve santhu Niraamayaah;

Sarve Bhadhraani Pashyanthu;

Maa Kaschid-Dhuhkhino bhaveth.

EMBODIMENTS of love! The dictum of Bhaaritheeya Culture is that all people should enjoy happiness and prosperity. Bhaarith is the birth-place of spirituality and the qualities of charity and righteousness. It is known for its devotion to peace and security. The adherence to truth practises in Bhaarith could not be found in any other country. This land gave birth to the immortal Seven Sages. It is the birth-place of the first among poets, Valmeeki, (author of the epic Raamaayana), and the Sage Vyaasa, who codified the *Vedhas*.

Bhaarith is the land where Raama established the reign of Righteousness. Bhaarith is the sacred land where Krishna preached the Geetha. This is the land sanctified by the advent of Buddha. It has the glory of witnessing the many incarnations of the Lord.

Unfortunately Bhaaritheeyas are not recognizing the sacred greatness of their country. Bhaarith was the land where at one time there was no one who did not practise dhaana (charity) or Dharma (virtue). These two qualities constituted the main wealth of the nation. Bhaaritheeyas used to utter a prayer before embarking on any act, however trivial.

The young boys and girls of today are the inheritors of this sacred wealth. Bhaaritheeyas of today, both young and old, should strive to preserve this heritage. Since ancient times Bhaarith has been the leader of spirituality and holding forth the message of peace and prosperity to the rest of the world. Then and now the Bhaaritheeya ideal has been: "Let all the people of all countries be happy."

Fill your minds with thoughts of God

Bhaaritheeyas today are letting slip this great, sacred and precious heritage. They are pursuing purely mundane and material gains.

Bhaaritheeyas should realise that just as the body can be healthy only so long as the blood is pure, they can have real bliss, only as long as their minds are filled with thoughts of God. Bliss is not something apart. As long as sublime thoughts, noble feelings fill their hearts, they will experience bliss. Every thought arises from the heart. When the heart is filled with love, every thought and feeling becomes loving.

Hence, what Bhaaritheeyas should seek is love-filled hearts. Every act stemming from the heart should be filled with love. Every effort should be made to foster this ancient culture of Bhaarith.

In the chanting of the Lord's name there is no specific regimen to be followed. It is not governed by differences of creed, caste and religion or by any age restriction.

It is not associated with any particular language. It is like a boat that can be used by one and all. It is by the constant chanting of the Lord's name that Bhaarith has been protected through the ages. No other country can lay claim to the kind of spiritual wealth possessed by Bhaarith.

Truth is God

One of the earliest scientific investigators in the west declared that there is a base for all knowledge, all science and all wisdom. "This is the Supreme Truth. Bharath is the original home of this Truth." Truth is God. This Truth should never be forgotten.

Investigators elsewhere enquired into the source of all knowledge and wisdom and found that Bharath had found that Truth was the basis of all knowledge. Today people are not making such investigations. Crores of rupees are spent on trivial investigations and time and energy are wasted on them.

Divinity cannot be discovered by experiments. The different methods of devotion may not directly reveal God, but they show the path to God-realisation. For instance, the sourness in the neem fruit and the sweetness in the sugarcane indicate the presence of the Divine. The basis for all the varied phenomena in Nature--the twinkling of the stars, the revolutions of the planets, the fire from the sun--is the Divine. Nature proclaims the immanence of God. You look with awe at a mountain. You feel ecstatic at the torrent of a mighty river. The sight of a green forest lights you. All these are manifestations of the Divine mystery. All the beauties in Nature testify to the basic presence of the Divine in all things.

True meaning of "Know thyself"

What is the basis for man? It is the body. All the powers found outside are to be found in the human body. It was for this reason that the sages and the scriptures called upon man to discover his true nature.

What does "Knowing one's self mean? A man's real self is not known by finding his lineage, or his profession, his nationality or scholarship. These are all attributes employed in ordinary parlance to identify a person. All these are related to one's body. When a person declares that one is a Brahmin or a young man, or a woman, these terms relate to the body.

"Know thyself does not mean knowing all about the body. What is to be known is the *Shareeri* (indwelling Spirit). It is not enough to know about the *Kshethra* (the body). You must know the *Kshethrajna* (the Knower of the Field, the body). Krishna declared in the Geetha: "Know that I am the *abode--Kshethra* and the Knower of the *abode--Kshethrajna*." Humanness consists in the unity of the two. The body is essential for knowing the nature of the indwelling Spirit. It is only when the *Kshethra* (the body) is used properly that the nature of the *Kshethrajna* (the Indwelling Knower) can be understood.

How are the various divine potencies in man to be made known? What are the basic requirements for every person? A mind pure as butter, a heart cool and pleasing as the moon, speech sweet as honey---when these three qualities are developed, Divinity is experienced. When you examine the present state of things, you find the mind is polluted, the heart is filled with bitterness and the speech is marked by harshness. These are not the marks of true humanness. These are signs of a cruel nature.

Hence, everyone should cultivate nectarine sweetness of speech, a moon like pleasing heart and an unsullied butter-like mind. These are the characteristics of the Divinity latent in man.

Man is a combination of *yanthra*, *manthra* and *thanthra*

To realise this inherent divinity in man the royal path is spirituality. God can be realised by any path. The scriptures indicated the nine paths of devotion for God-realisation and showed that chanting the name of the Lord is the simplest. Whatever form of worship, penance or meditation one may adopt, the foundation is the Lord's name. The entire *Rig Vedha* is replete with the Lord's name. The *Yajur Vedha* is a compendium of *manthras* (sacred sound formulae). *Saama Vedha* is filled with melody. The human heart is combination of music, *manthra* and name (of the Lord). The ancients regarded the human being as a combination of *yanthra*, *manthra* and *thanthra*.

The body is a *yanthra* (a machine). The life-breath is a *manthra*. The heart is *thanthra*. What is the *manthra* contained in the life-breath? It is "*So-Ham*". The *manthra* "*So-Ham*" (I am He) is chanted by each breathing. 'So' (He) is the sound that arises when air is breathed in. '*Aham*...' (I am) is the sound that emanates when the air is breathed out. This sacred mantra is proclaimed by the heart with each breath. To pronounce this manthra the body is essential. If any minute part of the body is affected, the entire system will be affected, just as a defective bolt or nut can make a rocket functionless.

All organs in the human body should be kept functioning properly. Only then it would be possible to rise from the human to the divine level. How is this to be accomplished? By dedicating every action to the Lord. When every action is done with the consciousness that it is done for the pleasure of the Lord, life gets divinised. There is no need for anyone to give up any of his duties or actions in daily life. All that is needed is to perform everyone of them in a spirit of dedication to the Lord.

Devotion without faith is useless

Embodiments of love! For anything that you want to accomplish, faith or self-confidence is vital. Faith is as basic for spiritual progress as breathing is essential for life. Today what we witness is devotion without faith. There is a familiar saying that a bull without a yoke, a horse without curbs, a car without brakes and mind without sense-control are dangerous and useless.

Chanting the Lord's name is essential for crossing the turbulent ocean of life. It is a boat that can carry you across the deeper ocean. In chanting the Lord's name, one should be tranquil, utterly selfless and pure at heart. Ostentation and egoism should be eschewed.

One can follow any of the nine forms of devotion (from listening to total surrender) with purity of mind and in an unselfish spirit. In singing bhajans, there should be no spirit of competition and no cavilling of others. The entire concentration should be on the name and form in the present *Kali Yuga* the chanting of the Lord's name is the panacea. In *Kritha* was *Dhyaana* (meditation). In *Thretha Yuga* it was *Yajna* (ritual sacrifice). In *Dhvaapara Yuga* it was *Archana* (worship of icons). In the *Kali Yuga*, there is no other means needed for human redemption except the mere chanting of the name of Hari.

The Lord's name can be chanted while you are travelling or before you go to sleep, or while you are doing any of your daily chores. This easy, sacred path has been laid down for people in the *Kali Yuga*.

Spiritualize life

Today you have every kind of amenity. You have hospitals, schools and other institutions to serve you. The only thing people lack is faith in God. What is the use of having everything else? Develop faith in God.

It is the duty of students, boys and girls, to foster the ancient culture that has come down to us as a precious heritage. You are the inheritors of this culture. You must enter every walk of life in the world and infuse spirituality in it. Young people are sacrificing their lives in meaningless conflicts. Humanness is at a low level. Demonic tendencies have reared their heads. Young people should counter these forces and uphold the culture and human values of Bhaarath.

If you develop the sense of spiritual oneness of all mankind the conflicts of today will vanish. Discord has become ubiquitous. At the root of all this is the loss of faith in God. Get rid of jealousy and egoism. Then you will experience the Divine.

Sarva ruupadharam Shaantham

Sarva naamadharam Shivam

Sath-chith-aanandha ruupam Adhvaitham

Sathyam Shivam Sundharam.

All forms of the Lord are peaceful. By whatever name the Divine is cherished in one's heart, that is *Shivam--the* one without a second, whose form is Being-Awareness-Bliss. When the changeless *Sath* combines with *Chith* (total awareness), you have *Aanandha* (bliss). It is like the union of sugar and water which produces syrup.

The Geetha has declared that the one Divine is present in all beings as consciousness like the current that illumines a variety of bulbs. To be conscious of this oneness is the highest manifestation of love.

Max Mueller's wish

Embodiments of Love! You can have no idea of the greatness of Bhaarath as the land of wisdom, of yoga, of merit and noble deeds. Many foreigners desired to take birth and pass away in this sacred land. The great savant, Max Mueller, wished to be reborn in Bhaarath. He was such a great seeker that he was named

'Moksha Muula' (one who is rooted in liberation). He made a thorough study of the *Vedhas*. He regarded every clod of earth in Bhaarath as sacred. He regarded everything in Bhaarath as Divine. In Bhaarath unfortunately Bhaaratheeyas do not have the same feeling regarding their motherland. Foreigners are having this blissful experience and are undergoing a great transformation.

The process of change is going on continuously everywhere. A seed grows into a tree, an egg becomes a chicken. But man is failing to grow into the Divine. Instead he is falling into the demonic state.

Mankind should ascend to Divinity

This is not proper. Mankind should go forward from the human to the Divine. Evolving from the animal, becoming human, mankind should ascend to Divinity.

Embodiments of love! Whatever situation you may confront, never give room for religious differences. Whether it is Allah or Krishna or Jesus, God is one. The one Lord has a myriad names. The goal is one. Don't entertain the idea of "my religion" and "his religion." Consider ideas of creed and nationality. Foster the feeling of oneness of all mankind. This is what you should develop on the sacred occasion of Shivarathri.

Shivarathri comes once a year. But the auspicious qualities in you are always there. Constant repetition of the Lord's name at all times and at all places is the message of Shivarathri. I bless you all that you should realise God by devotion to God and by adherence to righteous thoughts and actions.

Discourse in the Puurnachandhra Auditorium on the morning of 18-2-1996.

7. Let everyone do his duty

Anaadhi nidhanam Vishnum

Sarvaloka Maheshvaram

Lokaadhyaksham Sthuvannithyam

Sarvadhuhkhajitho bhaveth

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Anaadhi nidhanam is a name attributed to God in relation to time. *Sarvaloka Maheshvaram* signifies that God is the illuminating overlord of all the worlds. *Lokaadhyaksham Sthuvannithyam*---He is the presiding ruler of the Cosmos. Who is He? He is the Sun. Time is marked by the Sun. Hence the Sun is the visible manifestation of God. He is the effulgence that is common to all nations, all creeds and all people. Hence Shankara hailed the Sun as "*Anaadhi nidhanam Vishnum*," the presiding deity for the *Samvathsara* (year) as the overlord of Time. *Samvathsara* is the appellation given to the *Kaalaathmaka* (Time-spirit). Because the Lord is the very soul of Time, Shankara described Him as "*Kaalaathmakaaya namah*" (Prostrations to the One who is the Spirit of Time).

Time is most precious in human life. More valuable than Time is *Praana* (life). Man aspires to achieve many things without concern for his life. However great his achievements are man is driven by the urge to achieve more. This discontent is itself a source of satisfaction for man.

All are embodiments of the Divine

Every man has a heart. Every heart is filled with compassion. However, how many choose to share this compassion with others? Sharing the compassion in one's heart with ten others has been characterised as *Bhakthi* (devotion). One who does not share his compassion with others cannot be called a human being. Today the human heart that should be full of compassion has become stone-hard. This is man's misfortune. What is the reason? It is because the heart is filled with the bitterness of differences of caste, creed and nationality that it has become stony. All human beings belong to one caste, one community, one nation. All are embodiments of the Divine. Krishna declared in the Geetha: "All beings in the world are a fragment of My Self." It is tragic that man should forget his divine essence and behave like a demon.

What is the significance of the advent of the new year? It is not necessary to wait for twelve months for the new year to appear for one to do what he wants to do. The year is made up of seconds, minutes, hours, days and months. Every second is a new moment in one's life. Why then wait for a year? Every one should strive to render help to the people every second of his life and lead a noble and ideal existence. It is necessary for man to understand the truth underlying this dictum. The eye sees different persons in different relationship to a person the mother, the daughter, the daughter-in-law and so on. Although the eye that sees is the same, the persons seen are different and one's behaviour is to be in accord with the varying relationships.

Distinction between the apparent and the real

The distinction between the apparent and the real (the true) should be properly understood. For instance, it is apparent that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. But the truth is, the sun is stationary and neither rises nor sets. It is the revolution of the earth round itself at a speed of 1000 miles an hour that is the cause of the phenomena of day and night and the apparent rising and setting of the sun.

The relevance of the distinction between truth, falsehood and apparent fact is not limited to natural phenomena alone. It is equally relevant in the spiritual sphere. The quest for truth in the spiritual field provides proofs for the existence of God. In every man, at every moment a divine effulgence is always shining. Man has not taken birth purely for a selfish purpose. He has to strive with others to lead an exemplary life.

In the world today there is unrest everywhere. What is the cause of this unrest? The advent of the new year is viewed by people with apprehensions as to what is in store for the world, what disasters and calamities. There is continual change taking place in almost every sphere, but the mind of man alone has undergone no transformation, pleasure and pain are not the products of time. The year is not responsible for joy or sorrow. People's actions alone are responsible for the good and bad things they experience. The year does not bring any evil with it. Many people imagine that the new year may bring calamities. The year is part of repetitive phenomenon of day and night. Hence Time does not bring in its wake any good or ill. Only human actions account for these reactions. Good acts produce good results and bad actions have bad consequences. As you sow, so shall you reap.

New year does not account for anything extraordinary

Good and bad occur in succession in the usual course. A new year does not account for anything extraordinary. However, the *Panchaangam* (almanac) indicates some changes as a result of the movements of the planets and the configuration of the constellations. The Hindu almanac refers to five factors the day of the week, the *thithi* (phase of the moon), the relevant constellation, the auspiciousness or otherwise of the particular day and the *Karanam* (astrological divisions). The predictions in the almanac have no relation to what may happen to any particular person. The *Siddhantis* (the almanac makers) give their own interpretations of the astrological configurations.

Above everything, if one has firm faith in God, one can face the future with confidence. There is no room for doubts as to who is God and where He is to be found. God is *Viraata-Svaruupa* (Cosmic Form). The whole universe is the manifestation of God. What does God teach? The lessons are given through *Prakrithi* (Nature) which conveys lessons to mankind. The earth, for instance, is revolving round itself at a speed of 1000 miles an hour. This is going on without rest. This revolution of earth produces night and day. This enables man to have a time for work and time for rest. In addition, the earth is going round the sun at a speed of 66,000 miles an hour. This motion of the earth is responsible for the changes in seasons. The changes in seasons cause rainfall, enable the cultivation of crops and help people to live in comfort.

The earth thus is a visible manifestation of God. The ancients hailed the earth as *Bhuumaatha* (Holy Mother Earth) for this reason. All the essential necessities of life come from the earth. The earth thus teaches man that he should do his duty even as the earth itself is performing its duties.

Dedicated action is necessary to reap the fruits

Man should be dedicated to action. Today he does not adhere to this principle. How, then, can he expect the fruits? Men must work. They must perform good deeds and realise good results. They must share the fruits of their labours with others. This is the foremost duty of man. If everyone does his-duty, there will be no room for conflict in the world. This is the lesson taught by the earth.

Karthavyam (duty) is most important. The lawyer should do his duty. The doctor, the farmer, the administrator, the businessman, each should discharge his respective duty. If this is done, the world will have no problems. Everyone should aim at excellence in the performance of one's duties. Then the nation will be prosperous and happy. Today very few discharge their duties properly. Instead of doing their work, they interfere in other people's work. They fail to do their work and spoil that of others.

The year is not responsible for the unrest in the world. Human actions alone are responsible. Every one should strive to work well and achieve good results. Every one has twenty-four hours at his disposal. If out of this, six hours are used up in sleep, six hours for one's own private concerns and six hours for one's job, still six hours remain. How does one spend them? One should utilize them for rendering social service. One must embark on divine activity. In the present state of the world, if people do not take to divine activity, the conditions will get worse.

Mastery over one's mind is the index of greatness

Today people have forgotten the spiritual, the moral and the ethical aspects of life. They are immersed in the worldly pursuits and in securing mundane benefits. There is no greatness in achieving these things. Once Shankaraachaarya asked his disciples what is the hall-mark of greatness. Each disciple gave his own answer. One disciple said that the man who won great victories in battle is a great man. Another disciple said that man who underwent many troubles and difficulties and amassed large wealth was great. Another said that a great man was one who accomplished by determined effort what he wanted to achieve. Planting one's flag over a territory or crossing a mighty ocean were mentioned as marks of greatness. Ultimately Shankara gave the answer that he alone is great who has mastery over his mind. All other achievements are of no avail. Every action is sanctified by making it an offering to-God. Shankaraachaarya declared that the one who is immersed in the contemplation of the Supreme Self, experiences the highest bliss, regardless of all other actions. (Svaami sang a stanza from the Bhaja Govindham hymn of Shankaraachaarya). Shankara exhorted the devotee to adore God in whatever situation he was placed, whether in a crowd, or while enjoying something or in any other state. This experience of the Divine is one's true wealth.

Thus, it is essential to perform every action as an offering to God. The impulse for every action comes from the heart, whether the action is good or bad. The heart is the abode of Lord. Hence, every thought arising from the heart and every action from it should be regarded as an offering to the Divine.

Give no room for differences

Today, because men's actions are motivated by concern for one's family and possessions, society is riven by conflicts and differences. People talk about unity but there is no unity. For instance, there are different States in the Country. It is natural for people to have special regard for their respective' States. Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Aandhra Pradesh and so on. But they should all consider themselves children of one God. All States should be happy. If this broad vision is developed, there will be no room for inter-State differences.

The name of the new year is "Dhaathru." This signifies the spirit of sacrifice. The scriptures have declared that sacrifice is the only means to attain immortality. People should develop the spirit of sacrifice. Thereby they will make the name of the new year meaningful.

Compassion is the hall-mark of *Bhakthi*

Giving up narrow idea and feelings, people should show compassion towards their fellow-beings. Compassion is the hall-mark of *Bhakthi* (devotion). No one can hope to please God without showing *dhaya* (compassion) towards his fellow-men. A loving heart is the temple of God. God cannot dwell in a heart without compassion.

God is one. The goal is one. People have to change their outlook. They have to develop love towards all. There is nothing greater in the world than this *Premadhrishti* (feeling of universal love). There are many eminent scholars and intellectuals in the world today who are adept in seeing the diversity in the world. But why don't they try to see the unity that underlies this diversity? They alone are good who see the unity in the apparent diversity. But those who see only the diversity in the One are mere clever intellectuals.

The uniqueness of every being is one of the marvels of creation. No two persons are entirely alike. There are differences even among twins. People differ in respect of talents. But it should be realised that all talents are derived from the Divine.

How are we to recognise unity in diversity? Birth and death are common to all beings. Whether one is a millionaire or a pauper, both are brought forth from their mothers wombs. Hunger and thirst are common to all. The kind of food that is eaten may vary, but hunger is the same for all. Likewise thirst is common to all. These basic common experiences point to the unity that underlies the diversity. The Upanishaths have emphasized the spiritual oneness of all beings. The life force is one and the same, in all. The *Aathma* is the same in all. How, then, it may be asked, there are differences in the bodies? These differences are the results of differences in the thoughts, feelings and actions of the individuals concerned. The indwelling spirit is the same in everyone.

Make every act holy

By developing attachment to persons and possessions men created causes for their sorrow. By reducing their attachments and developing love for God, they can reduce their misery and increase their happiness. The more they love God, the more the bliss they will experience. Men are plunged in misery because they hanker after the physical instead of yearning for God. If men convert their desire for material objects into the desire for the Supreme they will enjoy immense happiness. All that is necessary is for them, to see the Divine in everything in the phenomenal world. That will be true devotion. And work will be turned into worship. Make every act holy.

People need not be unduly worried about the portents of the .new year. There are, however, indications that some big changes may occur in the political sphere. Internal conflicts may increase. There will be no shortage of food. There may be floods in some parts of the country and cyclones in some areas. By developing faith in God, some of these calamities may be averted or their ravages mitigated. Men have to realise that they are sparks of the Divine. They have to develop sacred thoughts and lead ideal lives. They 'must seek to promote the welfare of society.

The power of prayer is incalculable

Pray for the welfare of all. The power of prayer is incalculable. Every one gathered here should pray every day for the welfare and happiness of all people everywhere. This is true spirituality. To render service to others to the limit of your capacity is real spirituality. The body has been given to man for serving others. If one has a compassionate heart, is truthful in speech, and uses his body for serving others, he needs nothing else to redeem his life.

Today the book, "Vision of India," written by Shri Shivraaj Patti, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, has been released. He has been coming to Svaami for many years. He knows Bhagavaan well and Bhagavaan knows him equally. He has a compassionate heart. He is calm and serene. All are aware of the kind of uproar and disorder that prevail in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Members have not hesitated even to shout at the Speaker. On such occasions as Chavan observed (in his speech earlier), it is natural to expect the blood-pressure of the Speaker to go up. But our Shivraj Patil spoke calmly to every member, giving suitable replies to everyone, and thereby winning the confidence of all sections of the House. He has earned the approbation of all parties. That good name is enough. Having been born, one should earn a good name. Good thoughts flow from his heart. In his book, he has related all his experiences, his aspirations and his hopes. His book covers all aspects of his life social, economic, spiritual and political.

It is not enough to speak about one's ideals. One must live upto them. Today everyone must develop a compassionate heart and be truthful in speech. Truth is the means to realise God. God is the very embodiment of Truth. Where there is Truth there is God.

Bhaarath in its ancient days of pristine glory achieved greatness by adhering to *Sathya* and *Dharma*. The Upanishaths have declared: "Speak the Truth. Follow Righteousness." Today in their life people must adhere to Truth. Whatever *Dhaarmik* acts you do should be done in a spirit of sacrifice. Charity is the best ornament for the hand, truth for throat and listening, to sacred things, for the ears. It is such sublime sentiments that constituted the priceless culture of Bhaarath. These eternal verities are being forgotten in the craze for ephemeral pleasures.

Regard every moment as new

Embodiments of love! The new year portends nothing to be feared by the common people. However, for those in high offices and for politicians there are indications of internecine conflicts of their own making. Those who discharge their duties in a spirit of dedication have nothing to fear.

Regard every moment as new Live in the present. Have good thoughts and do good deeds. Cultivate good company. Act according to the dictates of your conscience. The secret of happiness lies within you, not outside. Pray for the welfare of all. The speakers here requested to bring about peace and bliss in the world. In fact, you are all embodiments of peace, bliss and Divine. Everyone of you should make efforts to develop inner peace individually. Then the whole world will be peaceful. Don't yield to any fear or anxiety. Develop love. Hatred breeds disaster. Shed feelings of hatred. With love, the country and world will prosper.

Discourse in the Sai Ramesh Mandap, Brindhaavan, on 20-3-1996.

God incarnates for the revival of Dharma (Righteousness) which includes morality, truth, virtue, love and a host of other qualities that uphold the communities of man as well as the individual. The other purposes usually given, such as serving the devoted, destroying the wicked, re-establishing the sacred tradition, these are all secondary. For, he who is righteous will be guarded from harm by righteousness itself, he who is unrighteous will fall into disaster through the evil that he perpetrates. The one task includes all else.

Baba

8. Let Raama live in your hearts

Vedha-vedhye Pare Pumse

Jaathe Dasharathaathmaje

Vedhah Praachethas Aaseeth

Saakshaath Raamaayanaathmanaa

EMBODIMENTS of Love! When the Lord, the knower of the *Vedhas*, took birth as the son of Dhasharatha, Praachethas realised the Divine by writing the Raamaayana.

The story of Raama is the story of one who was filled with the sweetness of compassion. This story is the royal road to human progress and an ideal life.

The Raama-principle is a combination of the Divine in the human and the human in the Divine. The inspiring story of Raama presents the triple ethical code relating to the individual, the family and the society. If society is to progress properly the family should be happy, harmonious and united. For unity in the family, the individuals composing it must have a spirit of sacrifice. The Raama story exemplifies the ethical codes governing the individual, the family and society.

The Raama story holds forth many ideals. Children today pay little heed to the words of parents. Parents also show no great concern for rearing ideal children.

The preceptor does not command respect these days. The teachers show little affection for the students. Hatred and bitterness between people are growing. Today's friend becomes tomorrow's enemy. Kinship itself is robbed of its bonds of affection. Pollution has sullied every sphere of activity---business, education, agriculture, politics etc., and caused general degradation in society. In every sphere demeaning ideas and actions are rampant.

In such a situation, the Raamaayana provides the ideals and the examples for reforming society.

Invoke the divine in pursuing aims

The world is presided over by Naaraayana. Naaraayana is under the spell of His name. The name is under the control of the devotee. Hence every person should invoke the Divine in pursuing his aims.

The world today is in a strange predicament. Every step taken by man is tainted by unrighteousness. Falsehood is ubiquitous. Men have lost the vision of great things. All desires arise from selfishness and are insatiable. Control of the senses has become rare. The truth, in short, is humanness has vanished.

On the other, hand, another strange thing is also apparent. Large numbers of people gather to listen to spiritual discourses and speeches by learned in thousands, listen to the talks, enjoy them, but do not practise any of the teachings. The result is that, though there is an abundance of spiritual teaching, disorder and unrest prevail because few people practise what they learn. What crop can you grow on the dry bed of a lake? Though man has recognized the inherent divinity present in him, he does not live according to this belief. Precept without practice is valueless.

Triple Dharma of individual, family and society

Raama is the supreme example of one who observed in his life the triple *Dharma* relating to the individual, the family and society. When every person in the country observes this triple *Dharma*, there will be peace and prosperity in the nation.

The sun illumines the world during the day. The moon sheds light during night. But *Dharma* (Righteousness) illumines all the three worlds at all times. A good son, it is said, becomes a beacon for the whole clan. Everyone should strive to become a *Suputhra* (good son). It is not enough to have sons. They should be good and worthy sons. Such a son was Raamachandhra.

Even as a jasmine creeper fills an entire forest with its fragrance, a noble son glorifies not only his family but his entire clan. Essentially all human beings are *Suputhras* (good sons). But their behaviour turns them into bad men.

The author of the Raamaayana is called Praachethas. How did he acquire this name? Praachethas is the name of the Rain-God Varuna. Rathnaakara was the original name of the poet. After he was initiated, he began meditating on the Lord's name and completely lost all body consciousness. An anthill grew over his body. His body was not visible from outside. At this stage Varuna caused a heavy downpour. That heavy rain washed away the anthill, revealing the sage. Because Praachethas was responsible for bringing forth the sage, he got the name Praachethas (the offspring of Praachethas). He also got the appellation Valmeeki because he had come out of "Valmeeka," an anthill.

Praachethas became the sacred and immortal composer of the epic Raamaayana, which he gave to the world as a perennial source of inspiration to mankind. Any person today who can get rid from the mind, attachment and possessiveness enveloping him and who constantly meditates on God will become pure and sacred, like Valmeeki.

The Divine and the human

Every man is endowed with a mind. The mind is a mysterious thing. It can appear totally stationary and yet move faster than the speed of light. Whatever births a person may undergo and whatever changes in name and form may occur, the mind remains unchanged. It follows one from birth to birth. It is the mind's peculiar behaviour. In this context, how is one to manifest his humanness? Man must follow the example of the honey bee which sucks the sweet honey even from a bitter flower. Likewise one must seek the good even in what is apparently bad. There is something good in what is bad.

Valmeeki declared that he saw the divine in the human form of Raama. Raama, who was Divinity itself, was seen as a human being. "Maadhava is human. Man is Maadhava." God cannot be experienced unless He appears in human form. Incarnation as a human being is essential for recognizing God. That is why it is said that "*Dhaivam maanusha ruupena*" (God appears in human form).

Raama did not announce at any time that he was God. He declared that he was the son of Dhasharatha. In his speech, though there was humanness, there was also the illumination of Divinity.

God is not apart from the universe. The entire cosmos is the very form of God. But man, deluded by his physical vesture, forgets his divinity.

All are embodiments of the Divine

Raama and Krishna are regarded as *Avathaars*. This is not so. They are in their human form quite like other ordinary men. All of you are embodiments of the Divine. Recognise this fact and strengthen this feeling within you. The idea that God is different from you should be given up. You have to develop the feeling that God is not different from you.

On the occasion of Raamanavami, people hail the advent of Raama and recall his various achievements. But everyone should remember that he is an image of Raama. "*Ramayathi ithi Raamah*" (One who attracts others is Raama). In every person there is this power of attraction. Because of this magnetic power man is able to enjoy the world. He develops many worldly desires. But he is never satisfied. He derives satisfaction from discontent. That is a sign of the divine power of attraction. There is no limit to this power. Everyone can experience the divinity within him.

Difference between Raama and Raavana

See the difference between Raama and Raavana. Both were equally eminent intellectually and were great scholars. Raavana was a great man. Raama was a good man. The difference between greatness and goodness should be understood. Raavana, out of egoism and uncontrolled desire, misused his knowledge and brought about his ruin. Raama used his knowledge for the benefit of the people and made them happy. Raavana did not digest his knowledge properly and suffered from the consequences of indigestion. The difference between Raama and Raavana was that between *Dharma* (Righteousness) and *Adharma* (unrighteousness).

Raama and Raavana are present in each human being. When a person takes to unrighteous courses, he becomes a Raavana. When people pursue the path of truth and righteousness, they become Raamas.

Precept and practice should go together like medicine and diet control. Meditating on God one should engage oneself in godly activities. It is useless to study or listen to spiritual discourses without leading a spiritual life. Righteousness means living according to the dictates of one's conscience. Acting in violation of the conscience is wrong. To realise this there is no need to study books.

The truths propounded in the Raamaayana are relevant to all mankind. Raama represents the exalted state of the human heart. Raama is the treasure-house of compassion. Where can you find such truth, compassion and grace? All thoughts arise from the heart and lead to actions. Hence for all thoughts, words and deeds, the heart is the source. What should be the condition of the heart? It should be full of *Dhaya* (compassion). Today *Dharyam* (the devil) has installed itself in the heart. The devil in the heart accounts for all bad and for the absence of compassion.

Everyone is responsible for his condition

If men today suffer from restlessness and lack of peace, their own actions are responsible for this state. No *Guru* or any other person is to be blamed. Nor can the changes in the years be blamed. The year is not responsible for your happiness or misery. You alone are responsible for your happiness or misery. You alone are responsible for your condition and your experiences. Make your thoughts pure. Realise that you are human and that there is the Divine in the human.

Man has the option to pursue the *Pravritthi Maarga* (the path of external, worldly objects) or seek the bliss that is in *Nivritthi Maarga* (internal). Everyone is responsible for his condition. It

has become a bad habit to blame others for one's plight. One should recognise one's defects. There is no greater sin than accusing others. One should see the Divine in others. When this attitude grows the nation will prosper. Men have immense potentialities for good or ill. By their good thoughts and good deeds men can transform the state of the nation.

Despite all the myriad scientific and technological achievements of man, it should be realised that human life is impermanent. Death may overtake anyone at any time. Man has all the potencies in him. This truth should be realised by all. Man is the maker of his country or the cause of its ruin. Men promote the prosperity of their nation or bring about its degradation. When humanness is fostered the nation will be prosperous.

Men have achieved many things in various fields, from atom bombs to space travel. They have acquired great destructive power. But it is not realised that by its very nature the physical body is impermanent. The truth should be recognized while the body lasts. You have to have a sacred life.

Raama took birth ages ago. He adhered to Dharma Krishna came later. He propagated great truths. He led the Paandavas to victory. He taught the Geetha. Where are they now? What has happened to all the proud rulers of the past? How many have taken birth and passed away? Death is certain. But before the end comes, one should lead an exemplary life and serve the nation.

Role of *avathaars*

Everyone should realise that he is the embodiment of the Divine. We may talk about the *avathaars* of Raama and Krishna. But your present *avathaar* is no less significant. All those *avathaars* came to tell mankind that all human beings are *avathaars* (incarnations of the Divine). Having taken birth as human beings men should conduct themselves as embodiments of the Divine (as beings in whom the Divine spirit resides). Recognizing your spiritual reality you should live always in the *Aathma-thathva*.

Man who should progress upwards from day to day is going down the slope. This is not right learning. Every day you should make the ascent towards the Divine. "I am God. God is not different from me." This is the conviction with which men should live.

"All are deities"

Some people offer prayers saying, "*Sarva-dhevathaa Svaruupaaya namah*" (I offer my salutations to the one who embodies the forms of all deities). How many deities are there? Unless there were many deities, the prayer would be meaningless. The implication of the prayer is: "All are deities." Our ancients used to refer to three crores of deities. What does it signify? At that time there were three crores of human beings in Bhaarath. They considered all of them as Divine beings. Today we have hundred crores in Bhaarath. Hence, there are hundred crores (one billion) of Divine beings in Bhaarath. If you take the population of the world, there are 570 crores of people today (5700 million). All are divine beings.

That divinity is within you. What is the source of the life-force in you? Men today create robots which operate like human beings. But there is no life in them. There is a world of difference between the man-made artificial robots and real live human beings. Today people are attracted by the artificial creations and are not aware of the immense potentialities latent in human beings. You have to respect the potency of the human.

This was the lesson taught by Raama. He revered his parents. He carried out faithfully their injunctions. Without regard to the consequences, he carried out their commands with love. He had immense love for his brothers. They had unity and harmony amongst them.

Love that existed between Raama and Bharatha

After reaching the forest, Raama sent word through Sumanthra (who had driven the chariot) as follows: "My brother Bharatha would have returned to Ayodhya by now. Tell Bharatha that there should be complete unity in the family. He should love Kausalya and Sumithra in the same manner in which he would love his mother, Kaikeyi. He should not make any distinction between them. However unable to bear the pangs of separation from Raama, Bharatha used harsh words against his mother. He did not spare even the family preceptor Vashishtha. Vashishtha approached Bharatha and told him: "Raama has left for the forest. You must get ready for the coronation. As soon as you are ready I shall fix the auspicious moment for the ceremony." Bharatha lost for a moment the sense of respect he should have for the word of the preceptor. Raama was the very life-breath of Bharatha. He spoke to Vashishtha in great anguish: "Am I to rule over a kingdom which banished Raama and plunged the whole of Ayodhya in grief?. Do not mention the name of the kingdom that sent my Raama to the forest. I have no use for such a kingdom tarnished by a grievous wrong." This was the kind of love that existed between the brothers.

Once, when the brothers were children, Raama came to his mother Kausalya in great joy. Kausalya asked him what was the reason for his joy. Raama said: "I am immensely happy today because Bharatha won in the game we were playing." Raama rejoiced in the successes of his brothers. Meanwhile Bharatha came weeping to Kausalya. She asked him: "Bharatha! Why are you crying? Raama is so happy over your victory." Bharatha replied: "Mother! I am very sad because Raama deliberately chose to lose so that I may win." The elder brother rejoices over the younger brother's victor. The latter feels sad about his victory and the defeat of the elder brother. What mutual love prevailed among the brothers! Such was the pure and sacred unity that existed among the brothers at that time.

Raama is within you

Raama was always deeply concerned about the welfare of his subjects. He fostered unity among the people. This is the duty of every one at the individual level. Four qualities have to be developed by every individual: Equality, Integrity, Unity and Fraternity. The individual's personality blossoms when one has these four qualities. A family composed of individuals of this nature is an asset to the nation.

It is not enough if people merely observe Raama's birthday and glorify the Raamaayana on one day in a year. Each one should develop Raama's qualities within himself. You should experience Raama's divinity within yourself, irrespective of whatever name you may bear. From the *Aathmik* point of view, you are Raama or Krishna.

Do not base your life on the body, It is impermanent. The spirit within is immortal. The body is *Karmakshethra*, the field of action. The heart is *Dharmakshethra*, the abode of righteousness. The human state is a combination of *Karmakshethra* and *Dharmakshethra*.

Embodiments of Love! Recognise that there is Divinity in everyone. Man has all the potencies the power of *Aakarshana* (total attraction), *Prakarshana* (the capacity to transmit that power to others) and *Sankarshana* (the power of self-transformation). Krishna was considered the

embodiment of *Aakarshana* (the power of attraction) and Balaraama as the embodiment of *Sankarshana*. The combination of *Aakarshana* and *Sankarshana* brings about *Prakarshana*---the spread of the Divine power of attraction over the entire world. *Sankarshana* (which is one of the names of Balaraama) literally means transferring the foetus from the womb to another. The wider meaning of the term is the process of transformation of one thing into another.

What is the *Sankarshana* we need today? The transformation of the human to the Divine. We should be attracted (*Aakarshana*) to this process of transformation (*Sankarshana*). And then this should be spread everywhere (*Prakarshana*). This is the type of *saadhana* (spiritual exercise) to which, people must devote themselves and not be immersed in *Japa* and *dhyaana* (chanting the Lord's name and meditation).

Give up attachment to the body

Concentrate on developing the firm conviction that you are the Divine. With this conviction you can achieve anything. Give up the attachment to the body. Even scientists sometimes forget their body-consciousness while absorbed in their experiments. If that is the case, why should the spiritually-minded persons retain attachment to the body, which is made up of the five elements and is a container of all foul things.

Giving up the attachment to the body, the scriptures call men to surrender to God. What is meant by surrender? Forgetting the body and thinking of God, that is surrender. Surrender does not mean offering to God your worthless body and your perishable possessions. Such offerings have no meaning for the Divine. People going to Thirumala make all kinds of promises to God if their desires are fulfilled. Does God need any of their offerings? No. Why should God be commercialized? You should seek oneness with God. God will be pleased if you realise your true self. Your happiness is His bliss.

Mind is man's most precious possession

Develop, therefore, this sense of *Ekaathmabhaavam* (spiritual unity). It is the loss of this sense of unity that is at the root of all the differences and divisions in the world today. You have no need to search for God. God is truth. Adhere to truth; follow *Dharma*. What is *Dharma*? It is not charity or gifts of earthly goods that constitute *Dharma*. *Dharma* means purity and unity in thought, word and deed. Turn your mind towards God. All will be well with you. If you turn the mind towards the phenomenal world, you will experience only misery. The mind is man's most precious possession. Without it man ceases to be human.

The human birth has been given to man for practising *Dharma*. This was the truth demonstrated by Raama. He practised his *Dharma*. He told Bharatha that the latter should rule over the Kingdom given to him and leave Raama to do his duty in the forest. When Bharatha argued that the kingdom should be ruled by the eldest son, Raama replied that he also had been given a kingdom to rule over. "Dandakaaranya is my kingdom. I shall rule here. You reign over Ayodhya," said Raama. This means, that there is an Ayodhya in the Dandakaaranya and a forest in Ayodhya. "Realise the oneness of the two," said Raama. Such was the equal mindedness of Raama.

Let people understand the Raama-principle and live upto it. Restrain your desires. Experience the bliss of the Divine at all times. That is true humanness, which manifests itself when you think of God. Happiness is union with God. How much bliss can you experience if you see God in yourself and in everybody! Let all differences cease. Recognizing the divinity that is present in

all, you should foster the principle of love and develop compassion in the heart. Love is God. It transcends all human relationships based on attachment. Develop divine and selfless love which is enduring and infinite. A true lover of God will experience no sorrow. On this auspicious day, ponder over the sacred teachings and develop the spirit of oneness.

Discourse in the Sai Ramesh Mandap on 28-3-1996, Raama Navami Day.

You have to busy yourselves with activity in order to use time and skill to the best advantage. That is your Duty and Duty is God.

Baba

9. Make Swami's words your beacon-light

EMBODIMENTS of love! Through the power of speech man is able to conquer kingdoms. Through speech man loses all his wealth. Man acquires kinsmen and friends through speech and loses them also by his words. Through words, again, man loses his life. Words are the root cause of all these happenings. Speech is important for man whether for experiencing loss or gain, prosperity or adversity or pain and pleasure.

Life is extremely precious. Time is highly valuable. The heart is tender. The mind is a great possession. Though endowed with all these valuable things, man conducts himself as a mean, ignorant and miserable being. He is unable to recognise what a rare, sweet and blissful thing is human life. The reason is, man, forgetting his divine nature, is immersing himself in worldly pleasures and in mundane desires.

Man should realise that he is subject to Time and Time has no respect for wealth or position. Man is devoting all his time to worldly pursuits and the demands of the body. Not realising the significance of time, man leads an animal existence.

The heart, which is soft and compassionate by nature, has been hardened into stone by man. Humanness should manifest itself in a heart overflowing with compassion, but compassion has turned into hard-heartedness.

The mind is all-powerful. It can see without eyes, hear without ears, speak without the tongue and move about without legs. Man tries to control the mind, but he is subordinate to it. As long as he is subject to the mind, man cannot understand the true nature of the mind.

Scholarship alone does not make man a *Panditha*

Although Raavana was master of a larger number of *Vidhyas* (types of knowledge) than Raama, he could enjoy no peace or bliss because he did not practise in the right way what he had learnt. Raama, on the other hand, was always blissful because he had fully digested what he had learnt and put it to proper use.

Mere scholarship alone does not make a person a *Panditha* (a man of learning). "*Pandithaah sama-dharshinah*," says the Geetha. The true man of learning is the one who sees with an equal eye different beings. True knowledge should become an integral part of one's being, flowing in one blood in an endless stream. Ill-digested learning results in the diseases of egoism and pride, as in the case of Raavana.

Unfortunately education today has become a bookish affair, used only for passing examinations and forgotten immediately after quitting the examination hall. People who cannot make proper use of their knowledge for the nation's good, are traitors to the nation. They are a liability to the society and the country. Of what use is it to flaunt one's degrees if the only purpose of acquiring them is to earn a mess of pottage?

Mansur's saga

There was once in Northern India a Muslim called Mansur. From his childhood he was constantly meditating on God. Although he belonged to a poor family, his parents wanted him to have a good education. But Mansur had a pure unsullied heart filled with love and his only desire was to know his true self. When the parents wanted him to go to school, he asked what was the purpose of going to school. The parents said that he should get educated to be able to earn a

living. Mansur said: "Mother! Have I to study only for earning a living? Are not dogs, birds, ants and many other creatures able to get their food without any education? Am I to waste my divine life for the sake of filling my belly?" He walked out of his home. He was a young lad, but there was an effulgence in his face. He sought nothing from any one. People seeing the effulgence on his face offered him things of their own accord. One old lady offered him food. The purity of his heart secured for him the food. His pure love was feeding him.

Wherever he went, he was declaring: "*Anal Haq! Anal Haq!*" (I am God. I am God). This corresponds to the *Vedhaanthik* declarations, "*Aham Brahmaasmi*" (I am Brahman), *So-Ham* (I am He). This declaration was treated with ridicule by some persons. The elders reviled him and asked: "You little fellow! How do you claim you are God? How can you be God?" Foolish people ask such questions in this world out of their ignorance and lack of faith. Why should they undermine the faith of others?

Mansur's answer to them was: "I am uttering these words because I am God. There is divine energy in everyone. But some use it for good purposes and some others misuse it. I am using it for good purposes." He went on declaring "I am God. I am God."

Meanwhile all the *pandiths* (scholars) came together and observed: "We have studied all the *Vedhas* and Scriptures. We dare not make a declaration of this kind. How is it a young student goes about making such a claim? How did he dare to make such a claim?"

Do not allow your faith to be shaken

It is not scriptural knowledge that confers the courage to make such a declaration. It is the faith in the heart. Whatever others may say, one should not allow one's faith to be shaken. Students should have such firm faith.

The *pandiths* came together and went in a body to complain to the king. "Oh king! This boy is insulting our scholarship. In spite of all our knowledge, we are not able to declare that we are God. This illiterate fool goes about saying that he is God. How to account for this? Either he is a lunatic or an arrogant fellow." The *pandiths* somehow wanted to put an end to this. It is the nature of the evil-minded to cause harm even to those who are innocent and good. They make no distinction between the bad and the good, just as white ants make no distinction between an expensive sari and a tom piece-of cloth. People who criticize others are like these white ants.

Mansur's firm faith

When the *pandiths* complained to the king, the latter ordered the boy to be brought to him. When the King summoned Mansur, he declared: "I am God." The King drew the boy near him and tried to appeal to him in soft words. "Child! you are an ordinary human being. You are illiterate and ignorant. You should not boast that you are God." Mansur replied: "I will continue to do so. I am proclaiming the truth. I am God. You are God. All are God. The indweller in all is the one God. The Muslims say: 'Allah ho Akbar.' The Christians say: 'God is great.' The Hindhus say: 'So-Ham.' God is one. He is the *Brahma-Suthra*. He is the one thread running through all beings who are like beads in a rosary." Mansur went on arguing with the King in this manner. The King's words did not appeal to him. He said: "Oh King! You are seeking to divert me to a wrong path away from royal road. This is not proper on your part." Mansur continued to assert: "I am God."

The King got angry. "You are despising my words," he said. He summoned a doctor and ordered him to gouge the eyes of Mansur. "This will force him to remain in one place and he will not disturb others." The doctor took away the eyes of the boy. But he continued to shout in joy:

"*Anal Haq! Anal Haq!*" (I am God, I am God). The boy was free from body consciousness. The king then summoned a butcher and asked him to cut off the hands of the boy. Continuing to laugh, he exclaimed: "*Anal Haq! Anal Haq!*"

The people in the audience hall could not bear to see the gruesome sight. But there was no sign of grief on the face of the boy. He continued to laugh. His faith was unshakable. He was unaffected by what others said.

Of what use is education if there is no firm determination? Is the amassing of wealth and secreting money abroad, the purpose of education? No. Earning of money may be necessary, but it should be limited and the money earned should be used for good purposes.

Seeing the determination of Mansur, the King ordered that his legs should be cut off. After this maiming, Mansur died. But the blood flowing from his tortured limbs was proclaiming: "I am God. I am God." The dead body was cremated. But from its ashes rose the cry "I am God. I am God."

This happened three centuries ago in Northern India. The people were astonished at the phenomenon. The king felt repentant, but of what use is repentance after a grievous wrong had been committed?

You should not pay heed to the words of all and sundry, Students should use their power of discrimination and should be guided by the voice of conscience. They should imprint on their hearts, the words of wisdom of the great sages.

Students should realise that no one can escape the consequence of one's actions some time or other. But God's Grace can overcome a mountain of difficulties and sins. Why are you not taking the Sai medicine, which is the panacea for all ills?

Ingratitude is a grievous sin

You are the beneficiaries of totally free education in the Sai Institute. The gratitude you can show to the Institute is by your behaviour, as men of good character. Never be ungrateful to those who have been good to you. There is no greater sin than that. The sun, who is the presiding deity for the eye, punishes the ungrateful by denying them their eyesight. The consequences of one's actions may be felt instantaneously or after the lapse of some time. But they are bound to follow. I seek nothing from the students. All that I want is that the moment they see you, people should recognise you as the fine products of the Sai Institute. By your bad behaviour you should not bring a bad name to the Institute. More than a white uniform, you should have a white and pure heart. You must become ideal students.

The situation in the outside world is appalling. Even tenth standard students are taking to drinks and drugs. The parents are not restraining them. Nor are they setting a good example. When the parents exchange words, the children exchange blows. The parents give a free rein to the children instead of controlling them. The parents are to blame for three-fourths of their children's misbehaviour. A child who had stolen a mango was praised by his mother for his cleverness. He grew up into a criminal and was sentenced to death for murder. Before the hanging, the man asked for his mother to be brought near him and he started strangling her, saying that she was responsible for making him a criminal. (Svaami related the story so vividly that the entire audience was deeply moved).

When parents allow the children to go astray, some time or other they will suffer the consequences. It has become fashionable in this Kali Age to let the children have their own way. They fear that otherwise the children will run away or commit suicide. What does it matter what befalls such characterless children? Parents do not have today this kind of moral courage. They go on listening to bad reports about their children and end their lives in despair.

Bhagavaan's grace

Thanks to the Lord's Grace you young people have come to Svaami. You may not appreciate all that I have said at this age of yours. But you will realise the truth of Svaami's words in due course. You have been fortunate to secure something which few others have got. You are discarding it lightly. You are slighting Svaami's injunctions. You do not heed the words of Svaami.

*People do not listen to words of the wise,
but easily fall a prey to bad advice.*

*Such people, how can they
hope to understand Svaami?*

Of what use is all their education? (Telugu poem).

They will not listen to good advice. But they will listen to bad talk. with both ears! How can they expect to know Bhagavaan? Can an ant fathom the depths of the ocean? Likewise you cannot cognise the truth about Svaami? But you can make good use of the opportunity that has come your way. "Sai has come to you because of your great merit. Arise! Wake up!".

Earn a good name

You are returning to your homes for the holidays. Conduct yourselves well. Bring a good name to your parents. Earn a good name in society. If you have no other work, join in any service activities of the local Sai organizations. Let service be your motto. That should become your life's goal.

If all of you behave in this way how much will the country benefit and prosper. Promote the welfare of society. Do not succumb to some of the petty desires of your parents. "Oh boy! Get married soon. You will get a rich dowry of lakhs of rupees!" What a shame that parents should speak like this and that boys should give in to them! Should a son be sold for the sake of a girl? Whether it is ten lakhs or ten crores, do not sell yourselves. You must stand on your own legs. You must depend on your own strength. Do not be carried away by what others say. Do not become a slave. Be a master. Only then can you be a master over others.

Students! Put into practice at least a fraction of what you have studied. Plunge into society and engage yourselves in social service. Make society happy. Having taken birth in society, if you achieve this much, it is enough. Remember that nothing lasts--the body, the mind or senses. Only one's reputation survives him. This is what Svaami expects from you. If you achieve a good name and bring credit to the Institute where you have studied, you would have rendered great service to the nation.

Four claimants of wealth

Do not become Raavanas. Earn a good name like Raama. Do not aspire to become a Birla, a Kirloskar or a Tata. A name earned by merely amassing wealth is ephemeral. Do not sell yourself for money. Earn a good income and make proper use of it. Money earned by sinful means will not last. Either thieves will rob you or the Income-tax department will seize it.

For wealth there are four claimants: Number one *is Agni* (fire). Number two, thieves. Third, relatives. Fourth, enemies. These four are after one's wealth. Before any of them deprives of your wealth, you should make good use of it.

Our students should not hanker after money either in the matter of marriage or in regard to a job. Work, work, work. That should be your sole concern. Become votaries of work. Work binds men to the world. The body is given for carrying out righteous actions. It is not given for enjoying carnal pleasures.

Madhaalasa gave birth to four sons. When each son was born, she did not desire that they should study, go abroad, earn great wealth and acquire name and fame. From the time the child was in the cradle, she taught the child the ideal of *Vairaagya* (renunciation). She sang a lullaby for the child, treating *Pranava manthra* as the cradle, the *Mahaavaakya* "Thathvam-asi" (Thou art That) as the bed, Awareness as the cord drawing the cradle. The four *Vedhas* were the chains for the cradle. Rearing each child in this manner, she sent him to the forest telling him that he will find real rest there.

Janaka and Gaargi

King Janaka was similarly a seeker after *Brahmajnaana* (the Supreme Truth). He sought knowledge for the sake of Self-Realisation and not for the sake of creature comforts. He held an assembly of sages where he achieved fame. At the assembly Gaargi carried on a debate with the sage Yaajnavalkya. The debate was based on the scriptures. It was inconclusive. Then Gaargi put a question to King Janaka: "What is the mark of a *Sthithaprajna*?" (a person of steadfast Awareness). The King replied; "He is the one who realises, the Oneness of the Absolute. There is no second." Gaargi said: "If you have realised this state of Awareness, you will be conscious of Oneness alone. You are not in that state now. I wish to realise this Awareness."

Gaargi said: "Oh King! I have one desire. Will you fulfill it?" "Certainly," replied the king. She asked him to marry her. The king said: "I have only one wife, Sunethra (the one with good eyes). I don't wish to have any other wife." Gaargi said: "You are a great *Jnani*. You have good eyes and your queen is a good-eyed lady. May I ask what reward you are giving to the great Yaajnavalkya?" The king said: "I shall give him whatever he asks." Yaajnavalkya was no doubt a great scholar but he did-not have total sense control. Yaajnavalkya asked the king again: "Give this Gaargi to me in marriage. Celebrate our wedding." There was a-great uproar in the audience-hall. The great scholars present there asked: "What is the meaning of Yaajnavalkya's request?" Gaargi then asked Yaajnavalkya: "What is the purpose of a marriage?" Yaajnavalkya replied: "To have progeny." Gaargi said: "No. The wife is one-half of the *husbands---Ardhaangi*. This means that she should pursue *Dhya* together with the husband as a *Dharmapathni* (a righteous wife). Marriage is for the sake of pursuing *Dharma*. It is not for enjoying worldly pleasures. Our emperor enjoys carnal pleasures in his palace. The same pleasures are experienced by street dogs. Is that happiness?"

Wealth is not the source of real happiness

Thyaagaraaja asked: "Is wealth the source of happiness or serving the Lotus feet of Raama?" Students should ask themselves-"Does happiness consist in the acquiring of degrees or getting good jobs or attaining high positions? Real happiness consists in the acquisition of wisdom. However, till that wisdom is got, one should try to live in the world with morality and integrity. That should be the aim, while living in the world. Keep your vision on the Divine and lead your life in the world. This is the teaching of Sai. You need not renounce the world. You need not go after jobs like dogs hunting for crumbs. Stick to the job you have and take proper care of your family. Lead an ideal life. Always bear in mind the goal. Students should recognise this and conduct themselves properly. Therein lies true bliss.

In olden days, after the disciples had completed their education and before they entered the life of house-holders, they stood before the preceptor to receive words of advice from him. This was similar to the convocations held these days.

Today some of you are leaving for your homes after completing your studies and others are going for the vacation to return after the holidays. You must experience happiness whether you enter a new life or whether you come back. Do not get into bad company.

As one of the students speakers said, cultivate good company. Avoid bad company at any cost. Seek good company with all your life. Serve your parents. Help your mother when she goes out shopping. You must confer happiness on the mother who bore you for nine months in the womb. Do not cause any displeasure to the mother. Be ready to give a helping hand to your father. Don't waste your time in idleness. Engage yourselves in social service. Those who can sing should take part in *Bhajans*. Serve patients in hospitals by purchasing medicines or providing clothes, but do not give them money. If you give them money, they turn into beggars. If you render service in these ways, you will be redeeming your human birth.

Adore God: Abhor the world

Keep your minds always fixed on God. That is the true meaning of *Upavaasa*, not observance of a so-called fast, followed by a sumptuous feast. (Svaami sang a Kannada song to illustrate how fasting is observed by some people to enjoy a feast later).

Never forget God. Do not believe in the world, which is perpetually changing. Don't fear death. If you learn to observe these three maxims, you can accomplish anything. Svaami will take care of you. When students complain that Svaami is not talking to them, they should understand that Svaami does not want to talk to those who do not heed His words. If you are good, Svaami will talk to you of His own accord. If you act upto Svaami's words, Svaami will take good care of you. Avoid bad friends. Cultivate good friends. Above all, cherish faith in God. God is your sole protector. Do not trust anyone else. Today distrust of each other has become universal. Esteem God alone as your true friend. You forget God at your own peril.

I seek your love

Students! I had no intention to speak today. But the Warden appealed to me to say a few words to the students. I have spoken often enough. Even now I am saying the same thing. I seek nothing from anyone. I have not sought anything all these seventy years. My hand always gives. The only thing that I seek from you is Love. My love for you is pure, unchanging and selfless. What is your life worth if you cannot believe in such love? Believe in it. You place trust in double-dealers. Why don't you stand by the truth which you know? Receive my pure love with a pure

heart. Make yourself holy. Live in love. Love is God. Bear in mind what Svaami has said and regard Svaami's words as a beacon light for your lives. With the light of Svaami's advice in your hearts, you can proceed on life's journey for any length of time. Remember with love God, who is everything.

Discourse-in Sai Ramesh Mandap on 31-3-1996.

10. *Srishti and Dhrishti*

EMBODIMENTS of Love! In this world constituted by the three *gunas*----*Sathva, Rajas* and *Thamas* (the qualities of serenity, passion and ignorance)., the mixture of happiness and sorrow prevents man from recognizing his divinity. Human existence is enveloped in *Moham* (infatuation). When man flees himself from this infatuation, he will experience real happiness. This infatuation breeds *Ahamkaara* (egoism) and *Mamakaara* (possessiveness) which bring about the loss of one's name and fame. One who is filled with ego will be unable to experience love from others. It is essential therefore to get rid of this infatuation. "*Moham hithvaa priyam bhavathi*" (one becomes endearing to others by conquering infatuation).

"Krodham hithvaa nashochathi" (By conquering anger one is free from grief). As long as man is filled with anger, he can have no peace. To secure peace and happiness man has to subdue anger. An angry man may become the enemy of mankind.

A man filled with anger

will not be able to achieve anything.

He will commit many sins

and will be an object of derision.

He will forfeit all prosperity

and lose the respect of all persons.

Anger is the cause of total ruin. (Thelugu poem).

The first requisite for a person embarking on spiritual development is control of anger.

Discriminate between necessities and luxuries

"Kaamam hithvaa sukhee bhavathi" (Conquering desire, a man becomes happy). Life is a long journey. Desires are the luggage you carry. The less the luggage the greater the comfort during the journey. Man has to discriminate between necessities and luxuries and confine his desires to what is essential.

"Lobham hithvaa sukhee bhavathi" (Happiness is got by overcoming greed). Life is an ocean filled with waves of pleasure and pain. Man is happy when his desires are fulfilled and is sad when they are not. "Joys and sorrows are inseparable. Joy is not separate. It is the fruit of difficulties," says a Thelugu poem. Pain and pleasure are like the two parts of a seed or the two sides of a coin. People should learn to treat pleasure and pain alike. In fact, pain enhances the joy derived from the pleasure that follows. Pleasure and pain, loss and gain, fame and infamy are inextricably linked in the world. Man's divinity consists in overcoming these opposites. Unfortunately, man falls a prey to limitless desires and ends his life in misery and despair.

Examine your own faults and rectify them

Man needs God's grace to experience real happiness. But by his own thoughts, words and actions, man forfeits the Grace of God. "See no evil; see what is good." But men today look at only other people's faults and do not think of their own failings. Examine your own faults and rectify them.

Here is an example from the Mahaabhaaratha: The preceptor, Dhronacharya, asked the eldest of the Paandavas (Dharmaja) and the Kauravas (Dhuryodhana), to go round the kingdom and find out how many good persons and bad persons were there. Dharmaja came back and reported that he could not find a single bad person in the kingdom. Dhuryodhana told the *guru* that he could not find a single good person. Dhronacharya pondered over this divergent findings and realised that the outlook of each of them determined the nature, of their findings. Dharmaja, being a good man, found only what is good in everyone. Dhuryodhana, with his evil mind, could only see the bad side in every body. Everything thus depends on the outlook of the person concerned and not on the nature of the things he observes. If one looks at the world with a good mind everything will appear good.

The entire cosmos is *Vishnu-Svaruupa* (a manifestation of Divine). It is called *Srishti* (creation). *Prakrithi* (nature) is a synonym for *Srishti*. *Prakrithi* means creation of the Divine. The five basic elements, which constitute Nature, are in every individual human being. Hence, it is declared that the Lord dwells in every living being. When this truth is recognized, there should be no room for anger, hatred or envy. The oneness of the universe is the reality, though there are a myriad forms and names. The unity that underlies the apparent diversity should be understood.

Communion with the Divine is true *Yoga*

Embodiments of love! Recognise the supreme significance of the Love-Principle. Today, it is love of the Divine that should be fostered. This love transcends the mind. Various forms of meditation are purely mental exercises. But *Bhakthi* (devotion) which emanates from the heart transcends the mind. Communion with the Divine is true *Yoga*. All other *yogik* practices are merely physical exercises.

It is essential to limit one's desires and keep the senses under control. This is the only way to true happiness. The most important organ which has to be controlled is the tongue, which, unlike the other sense organs--the eyes, the ears and the nose--has a double function, speech and taste. The ancient sages practised silence for a variety of reasons. Silence serves to conserve energy, improve the memory and experience the Divine. Restraint in speech and avoidance of gossip and slander are commendable virtues. "Help ever, hurt never." This should be the motto of everyone.

"See no evil; see what is good" is the prescription for the eyes. Keechaka (in the Mahaabhaaratha) looked with an evil eye on Dhraupadhi (who was serving as the Queen's maid in the palace of the king of Viraata dhesa). His lustful vision brought about his death. His very name is abhorred by everyone. Likewise, one should not pay heed to bad or evil-minded words. Kaikeyi (in the Raamaayana) is the example of well-intentioned woman who allowed her mind to be poisoned by the evil counsel of Manthara and was responsible for the death of Dhasharatha and the bitter resentment of her son Bharatha. Kaikeyi and Manthara have passed into history as infamous characters.

How evil thoughts influence a person and bring about his ruin is illustrated by the story of Dhuryodhana in the Mahaabhaaratha. He always entertained evil designs against the Paandavas. What was the ultimate result? Not only did he ruin himself but he mined everyone in his clan. Likewise, Raavana, who was well-versed in all branches of knowledge, mined himself and his kinsfolk by his wicked actions. Innumerable examples of this nature can be found in the Indian Epics.

The three stages to reach Self-Realisation

Self-Realisation should be the Goal of human existence. It has to be reached through three stages: Self-confidence, self-satisfaction and self-sacrifice. Man should regard himself as the master of the body, the senses and the mind. He has to use the intellect to experience his oneness with the divine, the cosmic all-pervading consciousness. The *Prajnaana* (constant integrated awareness) which is in everyone is covered by the ash of worldly desires. When the ash is blown off, the fire of *Brahman* (Absolute Divinity) reveals itself.

To give another illustration. There is a tree on which thousands of birds are resting. Their droppings on the ground below the tree make it unusable. How to drive the birds away? When you shout "Raama, Krishna, Govindha" and clap your hands the birds will fly away. Our life is a tree on which have gathered a big flock of birds in the form of desires. The desires pollute the heart. To get rid of desires you have to perform *bhajans*.

Discourse in Sai Shruthi, Kodaikanal, on 12-4-1996.

The dull and the ignorant will hesitate to be active for fear of exhaustion or failure or loss. The emotional and passionate individuals will plunge headlong and rave for quick results and will be disappointed if they do not come in. The balanced persons will be active because it is their duty; they will not be agitated by anything--failure or success. The Godly will take up activity as a means of worshipping God and they leave the result to God. They know that they are but instruments in the hands of God.

Baba

11. The triple transformation

EMBODIMENTS of love! Bhaaratheeya culture declared from the outset that all people should be happy, that all should enjoy peace and prosperity and that all should lead sacred lives.

Mankind today has progressed immensely in the physical and social spheres. But in the field of morality and spirituality mankind is unable to give up narrowness and pettiness. What is the reason? It is because over many lives men have grown in selfishness. In every effort of man, in every aspiration, self-interest is the driving force. Man has become a plaything in the hands of selfishness. Whatever object he seeks, whomever he loves, it is out of selfishness and not for its own sake. No step is taken without regard for self interest. This intense selfishness has resulted in the total decay of human values. This monster of selfishness has pervaded every field of human activity... the physical, the social, the economic, political and moral fields.

Shed selfishness

Hence, the primary endeavour of man today should be to shed selfishness, develop spirituality and realise the Divine. Three basic changes should take place in man. That is the truth contained in the Sai principle. "S" stands for Spiritual change. "A" stands for "Associational" (or National) change. "I" stands for Individual change. By this triple change the nation will prosper. Without a change in the individual, society will not change. Without a social transformation, spiritual transformation cannot take place in the heart.

Because the individual's behaviour has gone astray, society has got polluted. Concern for social good should influence every individual's action. The individual should give up the preoccupation with the interests of his own kith and kin. He must give up this attachment to "my and mine" and aspire for the divine.

Obsessed with worldly desires and forgetting God, man is immersed in misery. Even devotion is tainted by selfishness. It does not stem wholly from the heart. It is only part-time devotion and hypocrisy. All should realise that the Divine is the basis of everything in the universe. Having evolved from the animal, man should aim at realising the Divine. Unfortunately, men today are descending to animality. As a result, peace and order are vanishing from every sphere of life.

What is the use of all the progress in science, if people have no control over their senses and are not aware of the all-pervading *Chaithanya* (cosmic consciousness)? Everyone should recognise the indwelling Divinity in his heart.

A minister becomes a devotee

In the Tamil land, many great saints have taken birth. Many great scholars were born in the Tamil land. One of the Tamil kings was very fond of horses and sent his Prime Minister to buy horses. During his journey the minister came across a holy man named Thirukannan. He was attracted by the teachings of the holy man. The sage said that all worldly pleasures were ephemeral and God was the only reality. Inspired by these teachings, the minister decided to give up his mission (of purchasing horses) and used the money given to him to build a temple for Shiva. Meanwhile, the king was worried about what had happened to his minister and why he had not come back. He came to know that the minister had used the money, given to him for purchasing horses, to build a Shiva temple. He had the minister arrested and put in prison. The minister was unaffected. He continued to chant the Lord's name in the prison.

Later the king realised his mistake. Recognizing that the minister was a great devotee, he summoned him to his presence and asked him What he had done with the king's money. He said: "Oh King! I used the money for God. What God had given, I gave it back to Him. Without the grace of God no one can have anything. Without the power of the Divine not a cell in the human can move, not a blade of grass will move. The whole universe exists by the will of God. Oh king! By a stroke of good fortune you have become a ruler. Because of my bad luck I became a minister."

That minister considered his becoming a minister as a misfortune. When one becomes a minister he should be prepared to use all his energies and powers in the service of the Divine. Only when Spirituality prevails, will humanness blossom. The lotus blooms when the Sun's rays fall on it. The lotus of the mind residing in the lake of the human heart will blossom when the light of Divinity illumines it.

Maanikka vaachakar's message

The mind should blossom and proclaim the glory of the Divine. The minister told the king: "It is out of a realisation of this truth that I offered the money, given to me for buying a horse, to the Divine." The king ordered the freeing of the minister and allowed him to lead a spiritual life after his own heart.

From that moment he started composing hymns in praise of God. He wrote many hymns. This work is known as "Thiruvaachakam." The author is known as "Maanikka vaachakar." His writings are spiritual aphorisms containing the sublimest spiritual truths.

This kind of transformation should take place in every person. Only then will Bhaarath become an exemplar 'for the world. Today men have become worshippers of Mammon. Such persons are not human at all. What use is there in endlessly seeking wealth without securing the peace of mind? Why don't you spend at least a few moments on thoughts of God?

*If one spends a small fraction of the time,
Devoted to numerous worldly affairs
And to family, property and possessions,
To thoughts on the Lotus feet of the Lord,
He will have no need to fear the messengers of death.(Shloka)*

How much bliss will you derive from devoting five minutes out of the twenty-four hours of a day, to worshipping God?

Prema and *Seva* (love and selfless service) are like a bird's two wings for a man. He can soar to any heights with those two wings. To cultivate these two qualities one has to achieve the triple purity in thought, word and deed. In addition one has to reduce one's desires. Today enormous money is wasted on useless luxuries while people grudge expenditure on incense and joss sticks. What folly is this!

Years come and go. What avails the passage of years if there is no change in the minds of men? Time is precious. It should be used in the service of the Divine. All actions should be dedicated to God. Only through renunciation can man realise the Divine. Today people have forgotten the meaning of sacrifice. Sacrifice is *Yoga*. Enjoyment is *Roga* (disease). Make your heart blossom every moment. That is the way to greet the new year. Realise your oneness with the Divine.

My life is love

Promote love in your hearts and share it with others. That is the best form of worship. Love is the only property of Sai. My life is love. That is what I offer to one and all. I go on giving, giving. But to what extent are you putting into practice Svaami's teachings? Practise silence for at least ten minutes in a day. Meditate on Svaami's teachings at that time. Realise that in this transient world the Eternal is immanent. Hold fast to God. Experience the bliss of union with the Divine. Make love your life-breath. With love of God in their hearts the ancient sages could transform - even the wild animals in the forests.

On the New Year's Day in Tamilnaadu people prepare a chutney made up of fruits, sweet, sour and bitter and take it as sign of their readiness to meet all situations in life with equanimity. Sorrow and happiness should be treated alike as gifts of God.

Discourse at Sai Shruthi, Kodaikanal, on 13-4-1996.

I am the embodiment of love; Love is my instrument. There is no creature without love; the lowest loves itself, at least and its "Self is God". So there are no atheists, though some might dislike Him or refuse Him, as malarial patients dislike sweets or diabetic patients refuse to have anything to do with sweet. Those who preen themselves as atheists will one day, when their illness is gone, relish God and revere Him.

Baba

12. The quest for truth

EMBODIMENTS of love! Trees bear fruits, rivers carry water, cows yield milk, not for their own sake but for the sake of others. Equally the body is given to man for helping others. (This is the purport of a Sanskrit shloka with which Svaami began His discourse)

We witness today humanity being racked by innumerable troubles and worries. No administration or authority can solve these problems. God alone can save mankind. Men have to develop *Aathma-Vishvaasa* (faith in the Self). Thereby they should acquire the grace of the Divine. Humanity as a whole is in need of God's grace. To receive this everyone has to fill his heart with love, render service to his fellowmen and thus redeem his life. Everyone has to embark perpetually on the quest for truth. In every thought, word and action this quest must go on. Truth is not merely what appears as a fact for the moment. It is changeless and beyond time. In uttering truth one should bear in mind that it should be pleasing and wholesome. It should not cause excitement. It should not cause harm to anyone. Truth that is practised in this way will transcend barriers of caste and creed. Rooted in the spiritual, it is valid universally.

How is the quest for Truth to be undertaken? A distinction should be made between truth, untruth and apparent fact. What is apparent at one moment is liable to change at another. Moreover, what is apparent may not be the real truth, as for instance, in the case of the Sun "rising in the East" and "setting in the West". The sun in fact does not rise or set at all. It is the revolution of the earth round itself which produces the apparent phenomenon of the sun rising and setting.

Change your vision

To cite another example. The same pair of eyes look at different persons--the mother, the wife, the child and so on. Though the eyes are the same, the feeling with which each person should be viewed has to be different. The mother should be looked with a feeling of reverence. The child should be looked at with affection. The wife should be seen with endearment. The quest for truth in this instance calls for understanding how each person should be viewed in the context of his or her specific relationship.

In looking at the world, man has to change his vision. There is nothing wrong in creation. It is man's vision that has to be rectified. The eyes look at good and bad things, the ears listen to sweet or harsh words. The sense organs are the same. It is the individual who has to discriminate between what is good and what is bad, in using the sense organs. The senses are misused when you look at bad things or listen to evil talk. The tongue is likewise misused when one indulges in bad speech instead of using it to chant the name of God. No one should indulge in abuse or criticism of others.

The search for truth should go in every sphere of life. There is no need to search for God. He is everywhere. He is the indweller in everyone. As the Isopanishath declares: "God is immanent in the entire cosmos.

All names and forms belong to God

God can be called by any name---Raama, Krishna, Allah or Jesus. The same God is adored under different names. The names and forms are countless. All names are His. There is no name or form that does not belong to Him.

"Sathyam, Jnaanam, Anantham, Brahma" says the scripture. Truth is infinite. Everything is

based on Truth. Today people have to adhere to Truth. Truth is God. The answer to the question, "Where is God?" is: "He is everywhere."

Today the world is filled with hatred and discord. What is the reason? It is the feeling of "mine" and "thine." Everyone must try to find out the nature of his true self. Everyone answers the question, "Who are you?", with the reply: "I am so-and-so." The "I" that is proclaimed by everyone is *Aham*, the appellation of God. The inherent Divinity of each person is turned into *Ahamkaara* (egoism), by identifying the Self with the body. The body is liable to change and decay. It should be regarded only as an instrument for realising the Divine. The breathing process which takes place as long as life remains in the body proclaims through 'the *manthra*, *So-Ham*, that the individual is one with God ("I am He"). This manthra emanates from the heart. People today recite *manthras* mechanically.

New year is a sacred day for purifying one's self

Today is New Year Day for Malayaalis. The day is usually observed as a festival occasion. But it should be regarded as a sacred day for purifying one's self. One should get rid of all bad thoughts and fill the mind with good feelings. Hatred should be banished. One should cultivate this spirit of equal-mindedness in facing the ups and downs of life. People should contemplate on God as the embodiment of infinite bliss, the bestower of all happiness, as the transcendental Lord, as the Eternal witness in the hearts of everyone, the One Absolute, immaculate Being, free from the three gunas and the pure embodiment of supreme wisdom. The Lord is described as the embodiment of *Brahmaanandham* (*Braahmik* Bliss). This bliss is far beyond the comprehension of human beings. It is infinite and unchanging bliss. The heart is the seat of all bliss. There is a basic difference between the mundane happiness and *Braahmik* bliss. The former is temporary and is purely physical. Bliss resides in the Spiritual heart of man, which is on the right, side. From this new year day cherish pure thoughts and cultivate good feelings.

Each should practise his own religion sincerely. A Christian should be a good Christian. A Hindhu should be a good Hindhu. A Muslim should be a good Muslim. Let each one be a true practitioner of his religion. No one should criticize or hate another's religion. Muslims should not hate Hindhus and Hindhus should not hate Muslims. "All are one. 13e alike to everyone," declared Jesus. The one God is common to all.

Embodiments of Love! Whatever you may do, never give up your faith in God. Do not place your trust in the transient things of the world. Regard all humanity as one family. Transcend the barriers of creed, language and nationality. The message of the *Vedhas* is universal, meant for all mankind. The message is one of unity and harmony. "Let us live together, strive together and rejoice together." Develop this spirit of oneness.

Discourse at Sai Shruthi, Kodaikanal, 14-4-1996.

Conquer anger by means of fortitude; conquer hatred by love. Do not feed anger with retaliation; do not feed hatred with fury. Meet hatred with your innate Prema; meet grief with innate joy; meet anger with shield of Shaanthy, Inner Peace. You are bound to win.

Baba

13. Heroic mothers and noble sons

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! For the benefit of others alone trees give fruits, rivers carry water and cows yield milk. Likewise the human body is given for rendering help to others. But not recognizing this truth, man uses his body for selfish purposes. Man today behaves in a more degraded manner than trees, rivers and cows.

Man is forgetting the purpose for which he has been endowed with a body.. From dawn to dusk, he is immersed ,wholly in selfish pursuits. He has no comprehension of what selflessness means. Man considers the phenomenal world as the only reality.

People mistake the unreal for the real

and the real for the unreal.

But the real is the only One

And there is nothing else in the universe.

This visible universe is made up of three *gunas* (*Sathva, Rajas and Thamas*). This is the reason for describing the cosmos as *Sthree*. The term *Sthree* has three components: "Sa", "Tha" and "Ra". "Sa" signifies *the Saathvik* quality. This comprises qualities like forbearance, compassion, and love. "Tha" signifies 'the *Thamo guna* which includes qualities like modesty, bashfulness, fear and patience. "Ra" signifies the *Rajo guna* represented by such qualities as courage, sacrifice and the adventurous spirit. Every being born in the world has only feminine qualities. Merely on the basis of the physical form, a distinction is made between men and women. The three qualities in the term *Sthree* are to be found both in men and women.

Role of the mother

The term *Sthree* should not be treated lightly. The Bhagavath Geetha lists seven attributes to the feminine principle' Fame, Wealth, Speech, Wisdom, Intelligence, Fortitude and Determination. The Mother principle, which embodies these seven potencies, is highly sacred. Wherever you turn, you will see manifestations of the feminine principle in Nature.' When any person goes abroad, the first question that is put is: "What is your Mother-tongue?" No one asks, "What is your Father-tongue?" This shows how much- importance is attached to the role of the mother. The mother, fosters the child in the womb and goes through all travails to protect the child. There is no greater love in the world than maternal love. Hence the ancients accorded the highest honour to the mother and declared: "*Maathru dhevo bhava*" (Esteem the Mother as Divine) and. "*Pithru dhevo bhava*" (Esteem the father as Divine). For every person the first preceptor is the mother. It is from the mother that a child learns its first words of speech, the first steps in movement and many other primary lessons in behaviour. Hence, the mother stands out as the reflected image of *Prakrithi* (Nature).

Heroic women in Indian history

Despite the evidences of recognition of the greatness of the feminine principle, women have been described as *abala* (the weaker vessel). This appellation is applied to women because of the secondary status accorded to women in the performance of *yagnas* (sacrifice) and other rituals, though participation together with men was permitted. Women could not perform sacrifices and rituals by themselves. Even charitable and religious acts could be performed by women only in

association with their spouses.

Though the term *abala* is applied to women in this specific context alone, women are not weak at all in terms of strength or ability. We have innumerable examples of the strength displayed by women in the world. As against three potencies attributed to men, women are said to have seven potencies (according to the Geetha). Can you call as weak Saavithri, who made the Lord of Death restore to life her dead husband? Can Anasuuya, who transformed the Divine Trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva into three babies and played with them, be called an *abala* (weak woman)? Sumathee was a great lady who stopped the sun from rising, because her husband was predestined to die the next morning. Could she be termed as *abala*? No. Was Dhraupadhi, who bore with fortitude for 14 years all the ordeals her husbands went through, a weak woman? Can Seetha, who shared with Raama all hardships of life in the forest and achieved ultimate victory, be called weak? Can Gaargi, who could carry on the debate with the *Raaja yogi* Janaka is a dauntless spirit, be called a weak woman?

There are any number of such heroic women in recorded history. Though physically women may appear weak, in reality they are full of strength. As the embodiment of the three gunas, women are endowed with exceptional strength. Even in the spiritual field women display their boundless capacity.

Gratitude to the mother

It is in her role as mother that there is the highest expression of a woman's strength. Every child that is born owes its existence to the mother. Hence everyone should be extremely grateful to one's mother.

The mother is the symbol of the Universal mother and father of the Dime Lord. There is a popular prayer in Sanskrit describing the Lord as everything:

*Oh Lord of Lords !
You are my mother and father,
My kinsman and friend,
My wealth and knowledge,
My everything.*

The mother is the first teacher of speech. The first words taught to the child are *Amma, Appa* (mother, father). Then the teaching of the alphabet starts. The first lessons are: "*Om Namah Shivaaya*" or "*Om Namo Naaraayanaaya*." The teaching of language begins with the teaching of names of the Divine - Shiva and Naaraayana. In ancient times, the mother occupied the place of the first preceptor for the child. Unfortunately, in the world today, what are the parents teaching to the child? They are teaching them "A, B, C, D." Nor is that all. They go on to teach the child some meaningless stuff like: "Baa Baa black sheep!" (laughter). The mothers imagine that they are teaching something wonderful to the children. This is wrong. Teaching of the alphabet should begin with learning the names of the Lord.

Ancient mothers taught Truth and Righteousness

This was the way the mothers in ancient Bhaarith taught their children. The ancient teachings exhorted the people "*Sathyam vadha, Dharmam chara*" (Speak the Truth, adhere to

Righteousness). No mother taught the child to speak untruth. No mother would think of asking the child to follow unrighteousness. Their sole desire was to see that their children secured happiness by leading worthy and meritorious lives. Hence, in the attitude towards parents, the children should give the primary place to the mother.

Today, we need to promote such ideal mothers. This is all the more necessary because the modern trends are disturbing. The tendency (among the affluent families) is to entrust the child from birth to a nurse or an *ayah*. The child does not get the love of the mother. The child has no knowledge of what a mother means.

In ancient times, Queen Madhaalasa was teaching the children from their infancy the greatness of *Vairaagya* (detachment). She used to sing a lullaby while putting the children to sleep:

*Placing you in the cradle of Omkaara
On the bed of the great saying 'Thath vam asi'
Swinging to the music of Awareness, dear child,
May the Gods lull you to sleep!*

*The four Vedhas are the
four chains of the cradle.
May your heart be filled with
the nine forms of devotion.*

Because the mothers in ancient times filled the child with devotion and detachment, Bhaarath stood out as a land of sacrifice, of wisdom, of yoga and contentment. Because today mothers do not bring up the child in this spirit, this sacred land is ceasing to be one of sacrifice and is becoming a pleasure-loving nation. The pleasures are turning into breeders of disease. Sacrifice in ancient times made this country the *Yogabhumi* (land of *yoga*). Our goal should be to become yogis, not *rogis* (victims of disease).

There may be bad sons but bad mothers are rare

Embodiments of Divine love! You must be prepared to make even the supreme sacrifice for showing your gratitude to the mothers. Even the *avathaars* Raama, Krishna and others, owed their advent to their mothers. Everyone should pray for sacred mothers who will bring forth good children. There may be bad sons in the world but bad mothers are rare. Most mothers today lament over the bad behaviour of their children. No son who has caused distress to his mother can come to anything good. The Thelugu saying is: "There can be no prosperity in a home where the mother sheds tears." Today we need sons who will please their mothers.

The mothers, for their part, should teach the children always to speak the truth. When a mother asks the son, "Where have you been?" he should not prevaricate. He must tell the truth and confess his mistakes if he has done anything wrong. Very few children tell the truth to their parents today. Of what use is education for such children?

Today's boys and girls are the future redeemers of the nation. Hence, the parents should bring them up on right, lines so that they may be ideal citizens.

Women in various places observe what is called Ladies' Day. The day should not be observed only by making speeches or holding bhajans. They should endeavour to help the poor and the destitute. Helpless women who have no means of livelihood should be taught some occupation like tailoring to enable them to earn an income. Slum dwellers should be helped to keep their huts dean. The environment also should be cleaned to help the children grow in a pure atmosphere. Proper housekeeping should also be taught to those people. Disease is caused mainly by unhygienic surroundings Moreover the air, the water, the mind, everything is polluted. This pollution is causing several, new types of diseases.

Example of Vidhyaasaagar

In the past, mothers used to play a big part in moulding their children. For instance, there is the example of Eeshvar Chandhra Vidhyaasaagar. He was a native of Calcutta. He justified his name by being a great scholar (Vidhyaasaagar means ocean of knowledge). He belonged to a very poor family. His mother brought up her son at the expense of her own food. Pursuing his studies under the most adverse circumstances, he completed his education and found a job on a salary of Rs. 50 per mensem. In due course, he rose to an eminent position by dint of hard work.

One day he approached his mother and said: "Mother, I have reached an eminent position thanks to your blessings and guidance. I am now able to fulfill any of your wishes." The mother said: "Not yet, my son. I have three desires but I shall tell them in due course." Reaching a still higher position after sometime, Eeshvar Chandhra renewed his appeal to his mother. The mother said: "Our village is poor and the village has no school. Please set up a school here so that the children will not have to go outside for their education. That school will be an ornament for me." The son carried out her wish.

Later, the mother revealed her second wish. She wanted Eeshvar Chandhra to set up a small hospital in the village to serve the villagers. She said this would be her second ornament she wanted from him. He set up a hospital as desired by his mother. In the following years, Vidhyaasaagar rose to greater eminence, but remained as humble and free from conceit as ever. He asked his mother what her third desire was. She said that he would build a small rest house (choultry) for travellers passing through the village to stay. Vidhyaasaagar built a small community hall in the village.

Today's educated persons get puffed up over their petty educational attainment. It was his mother's teachings which made Vidhyaasaagar practise humility.

Not penance, not rituals, not pilgrimages

Are of any avail in crossing

The ocean of human existence.

Only service to the good

Can take one across. (Sanskrit shloka).

Service is most important, It helps to promote humility and to further the oneness of mankind. No room should be given for ostentation. True devotion is free from exhibitionism.

Children should recognise the supremacy of maternal love, which is equal to Divine Love. Revere and love the mother. That is the meaning of Mother's Day. The parents are living

symbols of God. Children must make them happy.

Discourse in Sai Ramesh Mandap on 6-5-1996.

The most direct method of achieving spiritual success is Nishkaama karma, action without any attention or attachment to 'the fruit therefrom, action as duty, action as dedication, action as worship.

Baba

14. Message of the *Avathaars* and the Epics

EMBODIMENTS of Love! This vast cosmos, consisting of moving and unmoving objects, is permeated with Truth. All names and forms are founded on *Dharma* (Righteousness). *Dharma* is the form of God. The *Aathma* (Spirit) which is present in the subtlest of the subtle and vastest of the vast as a witness, is verily the *Brahman* (all-pervading Consciousness).

All the objects in the universe are made up of atoms. The atom is the embodiment of the *Aathma* (Spirit). Hence there is no place in the universe without the *Aathma* or *Brahman*.

Forgetting the spiritual basis of the universe man gets entangled in misery through his worldly attachments. It was out of a recognition of this truth that Buddha declared: "Everywhere there is sorrow. Everything is momentary and everything is perishable." To consider the worldly things as permanent is the cause of sorrow.

If man recognizes that the world is permeated by *the Brahman*, which is all bliss, he will free himself from the cause of sorrow. He fails to recognise the divinity that subsumes the whole of *Prakrithi* (Nature or the phenomenal Universe). Instead, he regards the Divine as a natural phenomenon and though the workings of the Divine can be seen in Nature, man in his folly falls to recognise the Divine. Nature in its myriad forms is the effect. God is the cause. The entire cosmos is a manifestation of cause and effect. Hence the universe is a manifestation of the Divine.

See the divine in every human being

Man should realise that the five basic elements which constitute the fundamental stuff of the universe are common to all mankind and should be enjoyed as such. He should see the divine in every human being. This was the purport of the prayer: *Buddham Sharanam Gachchaami* (I seek my refuge in the Buddha). The second prayer is: *Sangham Sharanam Gachchaami* (I seek refuge in the *Sangha*). The implication of this prayer is that, after getting enlightenment, one should enter society (to serve it).

The third prayer is: *Dharmam Sharanam Gachchaami* (I seek refuge in *Dharma*). The meaning of the prayer as a whole is that for the sake of upholding *Dharma* (Righteousness), one should use one's *Buddhi* (the enlightened intellect) and engage himself in social activity. Possessing intelligence, if a person does not do social service, how can he uphold *Dharma*? It has been said that man had been given a body essentially to pursue *Dharma*.

Non-violence is the first *dharana*

The observance of non-violence has been described as the highest form of *Dharma*. All the violence in the world today is due to the fact that people do not lead righteous lives. People do penance and perform various kinds of rituals, but they have secured no peace. Why? Because they have not sought to find out who they really are.

This enquiry should lead to the realisation that one is the Divine in human form and deeming the body as the basic reality, men are misusing the body and the talents and qualities given to them. They are failing to recognise how to use their endowments for redeeming their human birth.

Among the teachings of the Buddha to the world the foremost was *Ahimsa* (not causing harm to anyone). Non-violence is not merely refraining from inflicting injuries on others with one's limbs

or weapons. Non-violence has to be practised with *Thrikarana Shuddhi* (purity of mind, tongue and body). There should be no ill-feelings which is a form of violence. To cause harm to others through the body is also *Himsa* (violence). No one should be harmed even by speech. The speech should be sweet, pleasing and wholesome. All actions should be helpful to others.

"Buddha laid down three rules for all actions. All acts done by the hands should be good. The proper ornament for the *Kantham* (throat) is truth. For the ears the best ornament is listening to sacred lore. What other ornaments does anyone need?" (Sanskrit shloka).

What are people doing today? They are listening to what is undesirable. They are looking at ugly scenes. How, then, can they hope to get peace? Only by the harmony of the mind, the heart and the tongue. There should be unity in thought, word and deed.

Bhajans and Sathsang should make one purer

Despite all the teachings, no real transformation is taking place in the behaviour of man. Of what use are *Bhajans* and *Sath-sang* (the company of the good) if one does not become purer? Through the company of the good, one should cultivate good thoughts, which in due course will lead one to *Jeevan Mukthi* (Self-realisation in this very life).

Men should act according to the dictates of their conscience, which can discriminate between right and wrong. They should rise above animal tendencies and realise the glory of human birth. Men should lead ideal lives, manifesting their inner divinity. Everything they do, their speech and their manners, should be exemplary. Even the smallest act should cause no harm to others.

Men today get easily enraged. Where can we find the example for such anger? In the *Bhaagavatham*. Likewise where can we find an example for Desire or lust? In the *Raamaayana*. Where is the example for the evil quality of greed? It is in the *Mahaabhaaratha*.

How do these great works contain warnings against three grievous evils? In the *Raamaayana*, the all-powerful *Raavana*, a great scholar well versed in the 64 types of knowledge and one who had performed severe penances, was destroyed because of the one evil quality of *Kaama* (lust). All his other virtues were burnt up by the fire of sensuous desire. *Kaama* (lust) is destructive of all other good qualities in a man. *Raamaayana* demonstrates this truth.

In the *Bhaagavatham* we have the story of *Prahladha* and *Hiranyakashipu*. *Prahladha* was a great devotee of *Vishnu*. His father, *Hiranyakashipu*, hated *Vishnu*. In his uncontrollable hatred of the Lord, he did not hesitate to subject his young son to the most terrible ordeals. His *Krodha* (anger) was the cause of his destruction.

In the *Mahaabhaaratha*, *Dhuryodhana* stands out as the example for the evil quality of *lobha* (greed). He declared that he would not part with even a needle-point of land to the *Paandavas* (who were his cousins). His greed turned him into a totally wicked person.

Bounden duty of all to get rid of evil qualities

Raavana, *Hiranyakashipu* and *Dhuryodhana* were not men of common clay. They were all eminent in their own way. They were heroes by virtue of their accomplishments. But they proved zeroes in their lives because of their specific vices. What use is there in possessing great talents if one is subject to a grievous vice? *Raavana* had numerous abilities and had made *Lanka* veritable paradise. But of what avail were all these when he had no Control over the sense?

It is the bounden duty of every human being to get rid of his evil qualities and foster his good

qualities.

Avathaars and Dharma

The role of every *Avathaar* (incarnation of the Divine) is to establish the reign of Truth and Righteousness, banish all that is evil, false and unrighteous in the world, and help to manifest the divinity in mankind.

It was to establish the reign of righteousness *Dharma samsthaapana*--that the advent of the Raama *Avathaar* took place. No one should go back on his plighted word. There is no greater *Dharma* than Truth. In order to uphold the promises given by his father, Raama chose to go in exile to the forest.

Likewise, in the *Krishna Avathaar*, the Lord declared: "I incarnate from age to age to establish *Dharma*."

When you listen to these declarations, it will be clear that *Dharma* is the supreme ideal. What is *Dharma*? Any act that is done with purity in thought, word and deed is *Dharma*. But, how many act up to this dictum? Very few understand or live upto it. Practice is primary.

The history of Bharath is replete with stories of the great men who have upheld *Dharma*. Buddha also had to face criticisms from his contemporaries. These are the familiar experiences of all *Avathaars*. No incarnation was free from calumny. All good causes also suffer from criticisms. Peace and good result from the work of the, *Avathaars* in spite of these attacks and impediments.

The following is the fourfold formula for all people. Welcome good company. Eschew all association with the evil minded. Perform meritorious acts ceaselessly. Always discriminate between the transient and the everlasting.

Buddha's first teaching was, "give up bad company." In his wanderings Buddha used to take with him some young men. Some persons criticized Buddha, charging him with spoiling the young men. Buddha gave a free rein to his traducers. He listened quietly to their accusations and left without uttering a word in reply. When the disciples asked him why he chose not to reply to the criticisms Buddha said that unanswered criticisms return to the critics who made them.

By not getting excited over the angry words of a critic, one becomes superior to the critic. Otherwise, one descends to the same level as the critic. Bear no ill-will towards anyone. That is the golden rule indicated by the Geetha. Buddha carried on his mission in this spirit of equanimity and tolerance.

Animating principle of Avathaars is infinitely wide

It is the quality of great men to face obstacles and opposition with courage and calmness. It is not easy to understand the inner urges of great men or the motives and actions of *Avathaars*. The animating principle of *Avathaars* is infinitely wide. Compared to it, the capacity of the ordinary man is infinitesimal. How can the atom comprehend the infinite? Can an ant measure the depth of the ocean? Impossible, Likewise the nature of Divinity is beyond human comprehension. Even the great sages like Vasishta and Vaamadheva could have no full understanding of the divine.

Instead of trying to understand the Divine, it is better to practise what you have learnt. *Jnaathum, Dhrashtum, Praveshtum* (know, perceive and commune) are the three which draws the divine

towards them. The *bhajans* should be sung with complete obliviousness of the body. Devotional fervour is more important than musical skill. The ladies who took part in the *bhajans* in the morning sang the *bhajans* whole-heartedly. Their hearts were full of sweetness. Hence sweet music flowed from their hearts.

It is significant that a large number of devotees from Sri Lanka should celebrate their national festival of Buddha Jayanthi at Brindhaavan in the presence of Svaami. It is their good fortune that they have been able to have this celebration here despite all discomforts and inconveniences. Their *bhajans* have sustained them in these celebrations. They have been singing the *bhajans* at all places and as often as they could. They could find happiness and peace because of the *bhajans*.

Discourse in Sai Ramesh Mandap on 15-5-1996.

Sai is Sarvajana-priya and so any name which gives you joy, you can take up. Tastes differ according to temperament and the character one has earned by generations of activity as a living being in this world.

Baba

15. Bhagavaan Baba's exhortation to students

Brahma Vidhya is the means by which

One learns the way to achieve world peace

And live in harmony with all,

Eschewing narrow ideas, and cultivating unity.

EMBODIMENTS of love! Dear Students! Boys and Girls! The main aim of a student should be to mould himself in such a way that he leads a purposeful and useful life in society. Unfortunately in the educational system today, there is no strength of purpose, no unity and no love. Whether one learns anything or not, whether one leads a meaningful life or otherwise, one's span of life melts away like a block of ice. Students should recognise this truth. Students today are not aware of what is the primary goal of life. They do not seem even to be worried about this. One in a million seems to be concerned about knowing the primary purpose of life. This concern is the first step in the ascent towards the goal.

Most students and the common people in general think that food, clothes, shelter and sleep, having a wife and children and enjoying material comforts of various kinds constitute the goals of life. However, these are not the primary purpose of life. Without knowing this, life becomes a saga of misery. With the awareness of this purpose, man can get rid of that misery.

Transcend beyond negative impulses

In this context, it is necessary to know the proper meaning of *Vedha*. *Vedha* is described as higher *Vijnaana* (knowledge), as effulgence or knowledge of one's transcendental reality -- *Uniki*. It is only when these three are known that one can get rid of sorrow and experience the bliss of *Vedha*.

What is the effulgence that is meant here? Is it the effulgence of the sun or the moon or the light of a lamp? No. It is the effulgence of the heart that is implied.

What, again, is meant by the term *Vijnaana*? Is it the science of physics or worldly knowledge? No. *Vijnaana* refers to knowledge about the functioning of the heart.

What is meant by "*Uniki*?" It is recognition of one's true nature. Are you the body? Are you the mind? Are you the senses or any other substance? No. Man has to realise that he transcends all these physical characteristics which are negative in nature, How can he realise his true transcendental positive nature if he fills himself with negative tendencies? What he can experience will be confined to the reactions and reflections of these negative factors and not that which is beyond them.

The first requisite, therefore, is the eradication of the negative impulses. One should investigate the truth about the divinity inherent in humanness.

Need for gratitude

What is it that one should do in this mundane, transient phenomenal world? The students should realise what everyone owes by way of gratitude to every person that has helped him in one way or another. For instance, if a doctor has cured a patient of a serious ailment, he should not forget what he owes to the doctor by way of gratitude. He should not think that after all the doctor has

done his duty. Likewise, when a mother bears the child in the womb for nine months and rears the child with love and concern, the child when he grows up should not merely consider that the mother has simply, done her duty. He should be ever grateful for all the travails the mother has gone through and for all the love and care she has bestowed on the child.

You have to show towards the mother the same love and spirit of sacrifice with which she has brought you up. Similarly you have to be grateful to one who enables you to earn a living when you are without the means of livelihood.

In the love of a mother for the child or the affection of a preceptor to the pupil, there may be an element of self-interest. But there is no selfishness in the bounties which the divine showers on mankind. God has no self-interest or selfish purpose to be-achieved. He expects no return from anyone. God is conferring on mankind countless benefits which no human being can offer. Can all the man-made lamps in the world equal the light coming from the sun? Can all the pumps you may install produce the amount of water that came down in last night's downpour? 'Who has given you the life-giving air that pervades everywhere?

Various benefits conferred by God on mankind

Thus, innumerable superhuman benefits are conferred by God on mankind. Even electricity is an expression of the Divine. From magnetism to electricity, heat and light, all these various forms of energy are considered as different forms of matter. This is not so. God is the source of all energy. If this is not realised, we will be failing to appreciate the true source of the air we breathe, the light we enjoy and the heat that sustains life.

For the power we consume or the water we use, charges have to be paid for their supply. That being the case, do not we owe gratitude to the Divine who has provided the world with air, water and light free? As the beneficiaries of the benefits provided by the five basic elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth), we should show our gratitude to them as manifestations of the Divine. The five elements are the source of five qualities experienced by the five senses: Sound, Touch, Vision, Taste, and Smell. Man makes use of these five elements but shows no gratitude to them. Gratitude should be an essential quality in man.

Unfortunately this is not very evident in man today. Everything is treated lightly. The result is disorder and discontent in the nation.

Every action has its reaction

Students should understand the relationships between cause and effect. Every action has its reaction. Every word has its resound. Every thought has its reflection in one's conduct. No one can avoid the consequences of one's actions.

Man is a reservoir of all potencies. The eternal principle of divinity is present in man, but he is not able to recognise it as he is deluded by the external world. A man produces a brilliant diamond out of piece of rugged rock, but more value is given to the diamond than to the man who fashioned it.

The educational system today has failed to bring out the spiritual effulgence in man. This really means that man is oblivious to his own real nature. Students have not learnt to use their faculties in the right way. They rely on others for forming their opinions. This is a kind of blindness. Of what use can such persons be to the society? Students should equip themselves to serve society and to promote its well-being.

Students might know about some of the great intellectuals of Bengal like Bipin Chandhra Paal, Rabindhranaath Tagore, Aurobindo Ghosh and others. But very few remember them today except through books. But the name of an almost illiterate person like Svaami Raamakrishna Paramahansa is remembered and cherished by millions because of his spiritual eminence.

Education which is not based on ethics, morality and spirituality is utterly worthless. All education, all wealth, all ritualistic worship or penances are of no value without genuine devotion to God. Devotion can elevate the lowly to the highest level. Without faith in God, even an eminent person gets degraded.

The culture of Bhaarath lays stress upon ethics, righteousness and spirituality. True culture consists in the recognition of the unity that underlies the diversity in mankind. The basis of that culture is love, which is essentially divine. Love is a much abused word today. What is called love is only attachment of different kinds based on relationships.

Culture and spirituality are not different

Love of the Divine is the only pure, unsullied, unchanging, enduring love. It is free from the taint of selfishness and self-interest. This is the love that is glorified in Bhaaratheeya culture. There should be no unfair comparisons between different cultures. All of them essentially are one. What is important is people should learn to live and strive in harmony for achieving things in common and sharing their benefits equally. This is the attitude that should be promoted among students in educational institutions.

Students should also develop steadfast faith in God so that they can face with fortitude any of the vicissitudes of life. Prahlada is a supreme example of such faith. He bore with calmness and faith in the Lord all the persecutions to which he was subjected.

Culture and spirituality are not different from each other. *Ekaathma bhaava* (Oneness of spirit) is culture. Students should combine spiritual education with academic studies. Moreover, cultivation of good conduct is equally important.

Good behaviour should be maintained even after leaving college. Students of the Sai Institute should bear the stamp of morality and good behaviour wherever they go. They should act according to their conscience. Students should prove themselves exemplary citizens.

The Vice-Chancellor has requested that from this evening I should give discourses on the Raamaayana during this summer course. Every syllable in the Raamaayana is relevant for us today. It is pregnant with moral and spiritual teachings. Humanity will be redeemed when the lessons of the Raamaayana are learnt and put into practice.

Discourse to the Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality on the morning on 20-5-1996, in the Institute Auditorium, Brindhaavan Campus.

Develop Prema (Love) towards the Lord, the Parama-Prema (Highest Love) of which He is the embodiment. Never give room for doubts and hesitations, for questions, to test the Lord's Prema.

Baba

16. Infinite potency of the Raama principle

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Man is endowed with all potencies. Forgetting the divinity inherent in man, people behave as if the body, the physical instruments, is everything. The truth about man is taught as a secret in the Raamaayana. In the following discourse in this series you will learn more about Raama, Lakshmana, Bharatha, Kausalya, Seetha and other characters in the Raamaayana. Only then the true significance of the Raamaayana will be properly understood. The Spirit that is the indweller in all of them, is one and the same. Because they appear in different forms they are considered different.

Embodiments of Love! The Raama Principle is a mystery. There is nothing that cannot be accomplished in this world with faith in the *Raama-thatva* (Raama Principle). It is a mighty force. That is the reason why the Raama Principle has survived in the hearts of Bhaaratheeyas even after thousands of years. Despite the efforts of foreign conquerors, this faith in the Raama Principle has remained firm. It remains as fresh as ever. It is infinitely mysterious. It is present in everyone. It survives as the imperishable nectar though the form went out millennia ago. We should not go by name and form alone. The Raama principle has infinite potency. Its true form is beyond description. The Raama Principle continues to illumine and inspire the hearts of men. When students grasp this truth, they will understand what is meant by *maanavathvam* (humanness).

Do not mistake the cotton fruit for the mango

If you wish to lead an ideal human life, you have to follow the example of the *avathaars* (Divine advents). *Avathaars* can come in human form. But you should not be misled by this phenomenon. *Avathaars* may appear in human form, but you should not equate yourself with them. In physical form both may appear alike. But there is a fundamental difference. You should not mistake the cotton fruit for the mango.

God comes in human form because man has strayed away from the path of righteousness. To reform man and bring him back to *Dharma*, God has to take the human form. Birds, beasts and insects lead lives according to their specific nature. They do not need *avathaars*. Today, only man has given up all righteousness, forgotten his divine essence and degraded his humanness. To reform man in this state, God has to come in human form. The *avathaar* has to protect the good *parithraanaaya saadhuunaam* reform the erring and punish the wicked. The role of the *avathaar* will be explained in detail in the ensuing discourses.

Raamaayana has life-giving message for all

The Raamaayana should not be treated merely as the story of Raama. It has a life-giving message for every human being. People lead artificial lives today. When they understand the Raamaayana they will know how to lead true lives. The first requisite is to know what is right. Then it has to be practised. There is no meaning in merely repeating the name, "Raam, Raam, Raam." The Raama Principle has to be fully understood. And one has to live up to it. This is possible only if there is love. Through love, one realises the Raama Principle and is transformed into an image of Raama. All scholarship and religious observances are of no value without such a mental transformation. The mind should be divinised. Faith in the name of the Lord is the basis for this transformation.

Discourse in Sai Ramesh Mandap on the evening of 20-5-1996.

17. Greatness of Vibheeshana

THE lives of two noble, meritorious and righteous personalities stand out in the Raamaayana. One is Sugreeva. The other is Vibheeshana. The lives of these two are very sacred. Raama sought the association with Sugreeva. Vibheeshana came seeking Raama only. After securing the friendship of Raama, Sugreeva realised the greatness of Raama. But Vibheeshana realised the compassionate nature of Raama even before coming to him. Raama was supremely pleased that he had been able to secure such noble friends.

The Mahaabhaaratha war lasted 18 years, but the war in Lanka between Raama and Raavana lasted 75 days. These battles have become memorable. But even today in the heart of every individual the Kurukshethra battle is being fought between the forces of evil (as represented by the Kauravas) and the forces of God (as represented by Paandavas). Equally the battle between Raama and Raavana is going on symbolically in everyone. This means that the war between truth and falsehood, between good and evil, is a perennial one. In the battle in Lanka many died on both sides. I do not relish dilating on wars. What we should seek to understand is the nature of the forces ranged against each others, what forces stood for truth.

Even among Raakshasas there are good people

Even in Lanka (ruled by Raavana) there was no lack of good people. While the battle was going on, one Raakshasa woman was running along, carrying a child in her arms. Hit by an arrow released by Lakshmana the child fell from her arms. Abandoning the child to its fate the woman continued to run. Seeing this Lakshmana remarked to Raama: "Brother! look at the callousness of these Raakshasas. Without caring for the fate of her infant child, the Raakshasa woman is running away to save herself." The all knowing divine Raama told Lakshmana: "Lakshmana! you are making a mistake. That woman is not selfish. She is full of devotion." Immediately Lakshmana sent a monkey to fetch the woman. He asked her: "How is it you went on running, caring only for your own safety, without bothering about the fate of the child that fell from your arms?" The woman replied: "I was not running for the sake of saving myself. It is not as if I had no love for my child. I am clinging to my life with the sole desire 'to serve Raama if he takes us to Ayodhya after the destruction of Raavana. I pray for the advent of Raamaraajya. I want to serve Raama." Then Raama remarked: "Do you see, Lakshmana, how mistaken you were? Even among Raakshasas there are good people. Vibheeshana is the supreme example. Such persons do not need any protector. They are protected by their own Righteousness."

The next day, the battle started in the morning. Both sides blew their trumpets. That day Raavana's son Indhrajith used all his magical powers to inflict injuries on the monkey hordes. Vibheeshana knew well the wizardry of the Raakshasas. He shattered all the special missiles used by Indhrajith and infused courage among the monkeys. Noticing this, Raama observed: "When Vibheeshana came to me seeking asylum, all kinds of objections were raised against our accepting him as one of us. Do you see how helpful he is to us now?"

Indhrajith and Vibheeshana in the battlefield

Indhrajith began performing a *yajna* to destroy Raama, and Lakshmana. Earlier, in the battle between Indhrajith and Lakshmana, the latter had fallen unconscious after being hit by Indhrajith's *Asthra* (missile). Lakshmana regained consciousness after the application of a herb from the Sanjivini mountain brought by Hanumaan from the Himaalayas. Lakshmana resumed the battle with Indhrajith, carrying himself on the shoulders of Hanumaan. Vibheeshana took

both of them to the place where Indhrajith was performing his *Yajna*. Indhrajith was offering many human beings as sacrifice at the *Yajna* that was being performed at the foot of a blackberry tree. So long as Indhrajith remained under that tree he could wield extraordinary powers. Vibheeshana told Hanumaan and Lakshmana to see that Indhrajith was kept away from that tree as much as possible. Hearing this, Indhrajith got very angry. He burst out: "Oh Vibheeshana! Are you betraying my secrets and the secrets of Lanka to the enemy? You are a traitor to your race." He went on berating Vibheeshana in this manner.

Vibheeshana makes Indhrajith understand the Truth

Vibheeshana retorted indignantly: "Indhrajith! It is natural for Raakshasas to be abusive as they like. But, remember that Raama is the very embodiment of peace. He is pure of heart, utterly free from selfishness. It is not possible for Raakshasas to understand the truth about such a Divine Being. Raama has entered Lanka for rescuing Seetha and not for seizing the country. How can one who gave up Ayodhya itself voluntarily covet Lanka? Raama has no desire for anything. For a long time I had been warning Raavana that is a grievous sin to kidnap another, man's wife and appealed to him to restore Seetha to Raama. However, Raavana, paid a deaf ear to my word. He is destroying by his own hands his kingdom and his clan. Who is to be blamed for this? Is it me or your father?"

Indhrajith asked, "If my father did not listen to your words, you should have remained silent and not allied yourself with our enemies. Is this kind of treachery justified?"

Vibheeshana gave a fitting reply: "Indhrajith! You are an ignorant fool who knows nothing about truth and untruth, right and wrong. I am one who is well aware of the rules of right conduct. It is unworthy for a person to remain silent in the face of wickedness. Such inaction can destroy an entire society."

A comparison of Bheeshma and Vibheeshana

In this context, it is interesting to study the conduct of Bheeshma and Vibheeshana in similar situations. It is clear Vibheeshana is a greater person than Bheeshma. Why? Knowing that the Kauravas were committing a grievous wrong, Bheeshma remained silent without condemning them. Moreover, he accepted the role of Commander-in-chief of the Kaurava armies in the Kurukshethra battle. Vibheeshana acted differently. He roundly condemned the wrong action of his brother. He advised Raavana to return Seetha to Raama. Ultimately he renounced everything and sought surrender at the Feet of Raama.

Lanka had many such high-minded persons besides Vibheeshana. But cowed down by the wickedness of the Raakshasa, they were unable to protest against the bad persons.

When Hanumaan entered Lanka he noticed Vibheeshana. Vibheeshana told Hanumaan: "Hanumaan! I am living in the midst of the wicked Raakshasa like the tongue surrounded by sharp teeth, How long am I to live like this? How will I secure the grace of Raama? When will I be blessed with the bliss of being in His Divine presence? I have long been waiting for that great moment." Vibheeshana lamented in this manner.

Hanumaan gave a significant message to Vibheeshana then, "Vibheeshana! Do not think that you are alone in being subject to these ordeals. There are many great souls who experience similar troubles.

The Raakshasas constantly harass the Sages, the *Avathaars* and all good men. However, take note of one fact. The tongue came first and the teeth emerged later. The teeth which emerged in the middle drop away in due course! Likewise these Raakshasas also will fall away soon. Do not have any doubt on this score.

Hanumaan then went on: "Vibheeshana! You have been attracted to the Lotus Feet of Raama. Cling to them firmly. Either He should bless you because of your perseverance, or you should merge in Him in course of time. There is no other way. It is wrong to give up the Lord in the middle. This is not the mark of a true devotee. What is devotion? It is not mere repetition of Raama's name endlessly. While contemplating on Raama, you must take part in service to Raama."

Vibheeshana desired only to promote the prosperity of Lanka and the welfare of the Raakshasas. He was not interested in getting the crown. Raavana and Indhrajith derided such a high-minded noble person.

The three boons granted by Brahma

Once Raavana, Kumbhakarna and Vibheeshana performed a severe penance to invoke the presence of Brahma. Brahma appeared before them and asked them what they wanted. He said he would grant them whatever boon they wanted. Kumbhakarna wanted to ask that he should be never at anyone's mercy--*nirdhaya*. But by a slip of the tongue he asked for *nidhra* (sleep). Brahma declared: "So be it." Raavana asked freedom from death at the hands of all deities, but did not ask for freedom from death by humans because he considered them trivial beings. Vishnu then decided to come in human form to put an end to Raavana. What did Vibheeshana pray for? "Oh Lord! Fill my heart with compassion and make me lead a righteous life." Because of this boon, Vibheeshana remained totally unaffected in spite of all the raillery and abuse by Raavana and his sons. Vibheeshana always remained compassionate, never yielding to hatred or anger. Because his heart was full of compassion, he secured God's grace and proximity to the Divine. One without compassion is a demon and not a human being.

Discourse in Brindhaavan on 26-5-1996.

Scriptures are endless; Saadhanas are countless; opportunities are few; time is already overstocked. But you can easily win the battle of life, in spite of these handicaps, provided you arm yourself with Love, which is the essential teaching of all Scriptures, the goal of all varieties of Saadhana, the best use to which all opportunities can be put and the most profitable way of utilising the precious capital time.

Baba

18. The greatness of *Raama-Raajya*

*That day alone is a true day
When all good devotees gather
to pray to the Lord;
When people serve the poor and the needy
in a spirit of brotherliness;
When a feast is offered to the servants
of the Lord who sing His glories;
When holy men visit our homes and relate
the exploits of the Lord;
All other days are days of mourning.*

IT WAS the great day of Shree Raama's Coronation. The City of Ayodhya was *en fete*, with the people rejoicing in the festive celebrations. The crown that was first worn by Manu, had been worn by successive emperors according to hallowed tradition. That day the sages Vasishta, Vaamadheva and Jaabali earned the crown for the coronation of Shree Raamachandhra.

To participate in the historic ceremony several kings, chieftains and lesser rulers were entering the Durbar Hall, along with many sages. At the main entrance gate, a gigantic message was blazoned across the gate in a novel manner. The message read in Sanskrith: "*Sathya-Dharmaabhih yukthaanaam naasthi mrithyu bhayam*" (Those who adhere to Truth and Righteousness will have no fear of death). The message declared that for the one who adhered to Truth and Righteousness there was no fear of rebirth. This means that such a one need have no fear of death again after this life because he will have no re-birth. Without birth there can be no death.

Adherence to *Sathya* and *Dharma* in *Raama-Raajya*

The Raamaayana brought home to one and all this significance of Truth and Righteousness. The glorious story of Raama spread the name and fame of Bhaarath to all countries. In the *Raama-Raajya* (reign of Raama) the two words, *Sathya* and *Dharma*, (Truth and Righteousness) reverberated everywhere in the Kingdom. *Dharma* prevailed everywhere and young and old, men and women, scholars and illiterates, one and all adhered to these two principles.

As is the ruler, so are the ministers. As are the ministers, so are the administrators. As are the administrators, so are the common people. The ministers strictly adhered to Truth and Righteousness. Lakshmana, Bharatha and Shathrughna were assigned the duty of enforcing Shree Raama's orders in all parts of the Kingdom. They kept a close watch over what was happening in every nook and corner of the realm, how far the people were adhering to truth and righteousness and how they were getting on in dally life. For this purpose a large body of officials were employed to go round the country. These messengers gathered all information everyday about the difficulties experienced by the people and their conduct. This system prevailed as long as Raama reigned over the Kingdom.

Raama performed a hundred *Ashvamedha yaagas* (horse sacrifices) and many other sacrifices. Together with these sacrifices Raama propagated among the people the qualities of truth and right conduct.

The golden days of *Raama-Raajya*

In Raama's reign, all married women were *Sumangalis* (whose husbands were alive). Widowhood was unknown. It is natural for parents to die before their children. But it is unnatural for children to die earlier than their parents. In *Raama-Raajya* there was not a single case of premature death. Death of young people was not known. There were none suffering from disease. There was no sign of poverty. The rains came in the right seasons. The harvests were bountiful. There was no shortage of food. Unrest was unknown. All people were happy and peaceful.

Comparing those days with the present times, we realise what apathetic plight is ours. Bhaarath will enjoy Raama-Raajya only when it has rulers like Raama, ministers like Sumanthra, saintly advisers like Vasishta and Vaamadheva and brothers like Lakshmana, Bharatha and Shathrughna. During Raama's reign there was no conflict anywhere. People did not indulge in mutual recrimination. Everyone in the Kingdom was grateful for any act of help and was eager to repay the act of kindness.

Raama expresses gratitude to all who helped Him

The first pronouncement which Raama made on the occasion of the coronation is remarkable. He said: "Who is it that is primarily responsible for making today's celebration possible? Hanumaan was solely responsible for the successful search of the whereabouts of Seetha and helping me to recover her. Hence, at the outset I express my deep gratitude to Hanumaan."

Raama then expressed his gratitude to Jataayu, who sacrificed his life in fighting against Raavana while he was carrying away Seetha.

Next, Raama expressed his gratitude to Sugreeva, who had helped him in organising the search for Seetha and in providing the hordes for the war on Raavana. He next expressed his gratitude to Vibheeshana, who had come over to him, despite the suspicions of Raama's companions, and who had revealed to Raama many of the secrets of the enemy.

Above all, there were the huge hordes of monkeys, who had no direct connection with Raama or Seetha, who endured many hardships and even laid down their lives for his sake and he expressed his gratitude to all of them. In this manner, Raama expressed his gratitude to one and all who had helped him in the epic Raama-Raavana battle.

The supreme lesson to be learnt from the Raamaayana is that one should be grateful all his life to anyone who has helped him in a crisis. Only the man who shows such gratitude can be termed a human being. The ungrateful man is a demon. The human and the demonic are not different in external appearance. It is by his actions that one is called human, demonic or divine. All those who indulge in bad thoughts, bad speeches and wicked acts are described as demons. Equally, those who do harm to those who have helped them were regarded as demons. So also, those who renounce Truth and Righteousness and cherish falsehood and wickedness as their life-breath were treated as demons.

Every substance has its inherent quality

Today men have a fascination for untruth. Ignorant of what is meant by Righteousness they practise unrighteousness. Our *Vedhas* teach: "Speak the truth: follow righteousness." Men today are not qualified even to utter these words, much less to practise them.

Every substance has its *Dharma* (inherent quality). This quality is independent of one's belief. It is its inherent nature. For instance, that which has the quality of burning has been called *Agni* (fire). The natural quality of fire is to burn. This quality is not based on anyone's faith or opinion. Whether you are aware of this quality or not, when you touch fire it will cause a burn. Likewise, the quality of ice is coldness. This, again, is independent of anyone's belief. If coldness is absent, it is no longer ice. It has forfeited its nature. Similarly, the sun's nature is to shed light. One may fail to see the sun because it is covered by clouds or one is blind. But that does not detract from the sun's *dharma* of shedding light.

Likewise man has a *dharma*. This *dharma* (natural trait) is to perform all actions with *Thrikarana Suddhi* (purity in thought, word and deed). Man's natural function is to behave with harmony in thought, word and deed (unity of body, speech and mind). Where there is divergence between thought, word and deed, the resulting action is unrighteousness. It is because today there is no harmony between thought, word and deed in the conduct of human beings, unrighteousness is rampant. This triune unity is not prevalent among the educated or the illiterate.

One who lacks faith, but acts as if he has faith, is bound to face ruin. He is of a demonic nature.

Today Truth and Righteousness have declined alarmingly. The first task is to produce young men and women who are wedded to Truth and Righteousness. Only a nation where the men and women adhere to these two principles will be prosperous and happy. When Bharath has such men and women it will achieve great prosperity.

Rulers are to be blamed for today's troubles

Bharatheeya culture gave to the world spirituality and proclaimed the message: "May all people everywhere be happy!" In ancient times, the rulers, the sages, the householders all strove to practise Truth and Righteousness. The rulers set the example and all others followed them. Today we see that as are the rulers, so are the people. The people are not to be blamed at all. The faults lie entirely with the rulers.

Because of the lapses of the rulers, the people are subject to all troubles. Each one pursues his own self-interest and selfish gain. Each is after power and pelf. There are no leaders who are concerned about the people's needs and their well-being. If the nation's progress is to be promoted, the rulers must follow the advice of high-minded leaders in society.

Bharath's survival even in its present condition is due to the fact that in the past the rulers accepted the guidance of great sages. The sages had no personal interest of their own. Why did sage Vasishtha come to Emperor Dhasharatha? He was not interested in wealth or pomp. He wanted to be there when the Lord incarnated as Raama. Seetha esteemed Hanumaan in the same manner. She said that even if she were to offer him lordship of the three worlds, she would not be discharging her debt to him. "You are the embodiment of sacrifice. You exemplify pure devotion. Because of these two qualities, you are entitled to move freely in all the three worlds. All the three worlds will experience prosperity through your presence."

Restoration of *Sathya* and *Dharma* is the primary need

What we need today is the restoration of the supremacy of Truth and Righteousness. There are some who cavil at the use of these two terms. If they do not know what Truth and Righteousness are, they cannot be deemed human beings at all. Truth and Righteousness are the inherent natural qualities of human beings. Human life is based on Truth and Righteousness. What folly is it to declare that one does not know what they are?

Truth is utterance of what you think. Righteousness is acting according to your words. The unity of thought, word and action is essential. Truth and Righteousness are not qualities to be acquired, as was suggested by Narasimha Murthy (in his speech prior to Svaami's discourse). They are inherent in man, born with him even as his limbs and his life-breath. There is no need to search for them elsewhere. They emanate from one's heart. They dwell in everyone. What is necessary is to see that these inherent qualities are not lost. No one is entitled to live in this world if he does not practise truth and righteousness.

Treat ups and downs of life with equanimity

It has been declared that for the practise of these two qualities, *Vairaagya* (renunciation) is essential. Renunciation does not mean giving up hearth and home. True renunciation consists in treating happiness and sorrow alike. One must have the spirit of equanimity in facing pleasure and pain, profit and loss. Do not get elated over 'happiness or depressed by sadness. Treat praise and censure alike. This is true renunciation or detachment. Treat the ups and downs of life with equanimity.

Consider the example of Seetha. She was a prisoner in the Ashokavana of Raavana. He had enhanced its beauty in many ways to make it alluring to Seetha. But Seetha had no interest in these allurements at all. But she was deeply moved when a small monkey sang in praise of Raama from the top of the tree under which Seetha was sitting (Svaami sang the song of Hanumaan in praise of Raama).

Seetha found more beauty in the monkey than in all the flowers in Ashokavana. It was the chanting of Raama's name which lent beauty to the monkey's face. She was full of bliss at that moment. The name was alike nectar to her. Bliss without beauty is sterile. Raamaayana taught the integral relationship between beauty and bliss.

Wherein lay the bliss of Seetha and Raama? It was in the well-being and happiness of the people. They sought nothing from the people. They were interested only in giving and giving what was good for the people. This applies to all *Avathaars* from Raama to the present day. What is it that I am asking from you? I do not ask even for a small shell. Free education is given to the students. Free treatment is offered in hospitals. All that is offered by Svaami is free. The students bear only their mess charges. Where can you see such free provision of education and medical aid? Nowhere else. I do not ask for anything from anybody. This is the bliss I shall experience if you lead good lives and stand forth as noble citizens.

The mistaken attitude of people

In the world today you find that only when students pay a heavy price for education, they show greater interest in studies. People have greater confidence in hospitals where they pay heavily. In private hospitals you are asked to deposit in advances Rs. 2 lakhs for a heart operation. The patients feel that they will get high-class treatment because of the heavy charges they pay. This is sheer folly. Little attention is paid to the patients after the operation is over.

In the Sai Super-Speciality Hospital everything is done free, the best facilities are provided and loving concern is shown for the patients. All this is taken for granted because no fees are paid to the doctors. This is a totally mistaken attitude. No doubt the value of what is offered free will be realised in due course. But I am sorry that such wrong impressions should exist. If even students feel in this way, what is the benefit they derive from their education in Sai institutions? Is it for merely earning a livelihood that you are pursuing your studies? Earning money is no great thing. Even dacoits make money. Even beggars are known to have amassed large sums by beggary. Education should be sought only for the acquisition of *Vijnaana* (wisdom), not for acquiring wealth. The one who is interested only in money will never be able to foster good qualities. All our Institute students should be concerned only with fostering virtues. Many Kings have enjoyed wealth and passed on. Where are they now?. Only their wicked deeds are remembered.

Character matters more than riches and affluence

During the past ten days you must have heard a great deal about Raavana. There was no limit to his riches. Kubera (the god of wealth) was his cousin. His fort and city were paved with gold. What was the use of all his riches and affluence? He had no character. Ultimately he lost everything.

Hence, promote your character. Acquisition of good qualities is the mark of true education. What matters how much wealth a man has if he has no morals? A rich man hardly enjoys peace of mind.

No doubt money is necessary for carrying on one's life. But excessive money is harmful. You owe a duty to your family. For that purpose you have to earn an income. Excessive wealth is the cause of all bad thoughts and feelings. You can see that in most cases it is the children of the rich who go astray.

People should always remember that the ultimate end may come at anytime. One should reform one's life well before the end comes. Greatness consists not in wealth but in virtue. A true human being is one who recognizes the Divine within him. He should lead a godly life. Everyone should strive to recognise the Indwelling Spirit within, which is the master of the body and the senses. The highest education is *Aathma-Vidhya* (Self-Knowledge). The Spirit is invisible like the roots of a tree. But it is the basis of real bliss, just as the fruits of a tree are derived from the roots. The external pleasures you enjoy are based on the power of the Spirit within. The air you breathe, the light you see, the water you drink are all derived from the Divine.

Stand by your plighted word

Students should recognise the Divine power that sustains everything in the universe. It was the faith in the Divine that sustained Seetha during the ten months she lived alone as a prisoner in the Ashokavana. The divine power that sustained Seetha in her captivity is in everyone. Rely on that power. All that you have to do is to turn your vision inward. Follow the dictates of your conscience. Education should teach you good qualities, right thinking, right conduct, discipline and devotion to duty.

Students should develop unwavering faith in truth and Righteousness. Stand by your plighted word. That is the message of Raama's life. "One word, one wife, one arrow." Raama exemplifies these three signs. You must experience the Raama Principle residing in your heart.

Raama is not the remote son of an emperor. He is the Eternal Spirit in one's heart. Live upto your conscience and you will please God.

Every human being has to develop faith in *Sathya* and *Dharma*, practise them in daily life and lead worthy lives.

Students! Boys and girls! You are likely to assume positions of leadership in the nation in future years. The nation's future depends on how you conduct yourselves. Go forward to serve the nation, whatever trials you may have to face, do so with faith in God. Follow the divine injunctions. It will contribute to your welfare and the welfare of the nation and the world.

Discourse in Sai Ramesh Mandap on 29-5-1996.

See in Me yourself, for I see Myself in you all. You are My life, My breath, my soul. You are My Forms all; when I love you. I love Myself, when you love yourselves, you love Me! I have separated Myself from Myself so that I may love Myself. My beloved ones, You are my own Self.

Baba

19. Render unto God what is His

Without Sathya, Dharma, Shaanthi and Prema

all knowledge is useless;

Without these four, all charity and righteous

acts are of no use;

Without these four, the value of

all good deeds is zero;

Without these four, the exercise

of power is profitless.

For the edifice of the Ancient Dharma

these four qualities are the main walls.

What else can I convey to you,

virtuous and noble minded students?

STUDENTS! Wherever you turn, you see in the world only unrest and disorder. There is little trace of unity, harmony and brotherliness.

Unrest and confusion prevail at every level from the individual to the nation as a whole. There is discord between man and man, from family to family, village to village, district to district and province to province. These conflicts are due to the craze for power, insatiable desires and intense selfishness. Moreover, the growth of unrest and chaos in society is also due to the weakness of government, the decline of truth and righteousness and the failure of people in the mass to discharge their respective duties.

Everyone talks about the presence of the Divine, who is the embodiment of Truth and Righteousness. People speak about the omnipresence and omniscience of God. But few care to understand what this means, to experience it and to live according to it. A few drops of nectar on the tongue will work wonders, but of what use are barrels of nectar which remain untouched?

To preach without practice is repugnant to spirituality

Many lectures are given today about the Divine as the embodiment of Truth and Righteousness. How many have direct experience of this? How many practise Righteousness? Have they tried to practise even a small fragment of this teaching? Have they made the slightest attempt to secure a vision of this Truth? To preach without practice is repugnant to spirituality.

Devotees like Potharaaju, Thyaagaraaju and Goparaaju (Raamdhas) experienced bliss by their spiritual austerities. They sought no positions of power. They were content to seek the grace of the Divine. Their sole objective was to earn the love of God.

Owing to the influence of the *Kali* age today, even spiritual seekers are eager to earn wealth and positions, forget the Divine and lead unworthy lives. People should not pray to God for any position. In the pursuit of pleasure men today spend any amount of money. But they hardly try to spend even a fraction of this money on charity, good deeds and service to the Divine. Many people grudge to give even small amounts of money to the women in the house for the

performance of worship with joss-sticks, flowers and fruits. They even question the usefulness of such offerings. It may well be asked what benefit such persons derive from their lavish expenditure on their pleasure and comforts. These sensual pleasures confer fleeting happiness. But acts of charity, goodness and sacrifice confer divine benefits.

Pleasure and pain contribute to the beauty of life

Man should learn to treat pain and pleasure alike because both contribute to the beauty of life like the variety of flowers in a garland. People should also learn not to sneer at the traditional practices of the common people who do many simple acts out of reverence for what they regard as sacred. A young man travelling in a train ridiculed the act of a simple village woman who piously offered a few coins to the Krishna river when the train was going over the bridge. The woman asked him of what use was the money he was spending on smoking, which was ruining his health. She said that the few coins she had thrown in the river was an offering to Krishna. It happened once in a way. "But how much are you wasting everyday on your smoking? What will you gain from it except lung cancer or T.B? Without realising the grievous mistake you are committing, you are ridiculing my simple action," she said.

Pothana's dedication to God

The life of Pothana, the immortal author of the Telugu Bhaagavatham, shows the difference between the God-oriented poet and a poet who seeks the favours of rulers and wealthy patrons.

Once, Pothana's brother-in-law, the poet Shreenaatha, told Pothana that if, instead of relying on Shree Raama, he dedicated his Bhaagavatham to a local chieftain, the latter would offer him gifts of land and properties which would relieve his poverty. Pothana declared: "Brother-in-law! You are making a serious mistake. Our real protector is Raama and not any *Raaja* (ruler). How many have been helped by these rulers and for how long?. I revere my mother Earth. My life will be redeemed by my trust in mother Earth and by my faith in Shree Raama." (Bhagavaan recited a poem of Pothana in which the poet firmly declared that he would prefer to live on what he got from the soil rather than offer his sacred work to unrighteous rulers for the sake of a mess of pottage). Pothana told Shreenaatha, "My poem is the very embodiment of the Goddess of Wisdom, Sarasvathi. Such a work should be offered to Brahma and none else. How can I offer such a sacred work to wicked rulers?"

Shreenaatha was displeased with Pothana's attitude. He conveyed Pothana's sentiments to the local ruler, who also felt slighted. In his bitterness, he sent his minions to set fire to Pothana's house. The entire house was burnt down except the shrine where Pothana worshipped Raama and kept his Bhaagavatham. While the flames were burning, Pothana prayed to Raama as the Lord of everything. When a person believes whole-heartedly, in God, he will not come to grief. With their interests primarily in worldly benefits and material gains, men pray to God with their lips and not their hearts. Rather than pray with lips, it is better to serve with the hands. This was the lesson which Hanumaan taught to Vibheeshana, when the latter was disappointed that he had no vision of Raama.

Men are engaged in the pursuit of wealth and position, but not in the quest of the Divine. They forget that lasting happiness and peace cannot be got by wealth, scholarship or position. Only good qualities can confer happiness because a good man finds a place in the Lord's heart.

Sacrifice is the essence of Raama Principle

The ancient sages and savants offered all their knowledge and scholarship as an offering to God. They did not regard knowledge as a means of acquiring wealth. In the days of Raama everyone was filled with a spirit of sacrifice. Raama set the example by His readiness to sacrifice the kingdom for life in the forest as an exile. Before leaving for the forest, Raama gave away all his personal possessions as gifts. Sacrifice is the essence of the Raama Principle. To develop the spirit of sacrifice the first requisite is firm faith in God.

Students should realise that their only true friend at all times is God. He will be with them wherever they go. No others will accompany them like God. Hence, they should cultivate love for God. There is nothing greater than that love.

Discourse in the Sai Ramesh Mandap on 30-5-1996.

There is no living being without the spark of love; even a mad man loves something or somebody intensely. But, you must recognise this love as but a reflection of the Prema Svaruupa (the Embodiment of Love), that is your reality, of the God who is residing in your heart. Without that spring of Love that bubbles in your heart, you will not be prompted to love at all. Recognise that spring, rely on it more and more, develop its possibilities, try to irrigate the whole world with it, discard all touch of self from it, do not seek anything in return for it from those to whom you extend it.

Baba

20. The four beacons

Pradoshe deepakas-chandhrah

Prabhathe deepako Ravih

Thriloke deepako Dharmah

Suputhrah Kuladeepakah

PRADOSHE deepakas-chandhrah (At night the moon illumines the world). *Prabhathe deepako Ravih* (At daybreak the sun is the illuminator). *Thriloke deepako Dharmaha* (For the three worlds Dharma is the beacon-light). *Suputhrah Kula Deepakah* (A virtuous son is a beacon for the whole family).

The difference between Amaavaasya (New Moon light) and Purnima (full moon light) is between darkness and light. During Amaavaasya, the night is pitch dark. People do not relish this darkness in any way. Darkness invokes fear. It also breeds evil thoughts and provides opportunities for evil deeds.

Darkness is welcomed only by evil minded persons. No good-intentioned persons will welcome darkness. Darkness is a valuable ally for thieves and rogues. Hence only the evil-minded will hail the advent of darkness. The good-intentioned and righteous persons will welcome the advent of the full-moon. The hearts of good persons .filled with good feelings, are cool like the moon. Children delight in the sight of the moon. Poets are inspired to pour forth the joy in their hearts at the sight of the moon. On the day of the *Purnima* (full-moon) man's heart is also pure and bright. People should recognise the relationship between the fullmoon and the mind. The *Vedhas* declare that the moon emerged from the mind of the *Viraat-Purusha* (Cosmic Person) and the sun emerged from his eye. The human mind is a reflection of the moon and when there is the full moon the mind blossoms effulgently. Moonlight dispels the darkness of ignorance, drives away fear and confers peace and joy.

Reasons for the worship of sun

During the day, the sun affords light to the world. Without the sun, the world will cease to exist. The sun is the visible deity for the world. Without the sun there can be no life on earth. Crops cannot grow. There will be no air, no food and no means of sustenance for living creatures. It is only because of the sun that rivers flow, crops are grown, life is sustained and there is happiness and comfort. It is the power of the sun that helps to purify the heart. Hence, for the planet earth the sun is the visible manifestation of God. The earth receives its life-sustaining oxygen from the sun.

Thriloke deepako Dharmah (The light that illumines the three worlds is Righteousness). What is this *Dharma*? "*Dhaarayathe ithi Dharmah*" (*Dharma* is that which upholds everything). This means that without *Dharma* the Cosmos cannot exist. *Dharma* is the lifebreath of all actions. There can be no life without the sustaining power of *Dharma*. Every object in the universe is governed by its *Dharma* (the law of its being). For instance, there is fire. What is its *Dharma*? The capacity to burn is the basic trait of fire. When the burning power is lost, it ceases to be fire. It becomes mere charcoal. Likewise, the *Dharma* of ice is coldness. When ice loses its coldness, it ceases to be ice. For man, the *Dharma* is Righteousness.

Righteousness implies harmony in thought, word and deed. The unity of body, speech and mind promotes purity and sacredness in man. This triune purity constitutes humanness. All actions should be pure and according to the dictates of the conscience. The tongue is sacred organ endowed on man to chant the glories of the Lord. But today it is being misused to utter untruth. The *dharma* of man is to speak the truth and adhere to righteousness.

Three maxims for primary obligations of man

Three words describe the primary obligations of man: *Preethi*, *Bheethi* and *Neethi*. *Preethi* pertains to the *Dhaiva Preethi* (love of God). *Bheethi* is related to the *Paapabheethi* (fear of sin). *Neethi* is related to *Sanghaneethi* (morality in society). If these three are observed, there will be peace and non-violence. *Dhaiva Preethi* (love of God) is the basis for all human values. This love is inherent in all human beings. It is the index of man's divinity as proclaimed by the scriptures.

How is God to be experienced? God is present in everyone like butter in milk. Your heart is the container. Love is the milk present in the heart. When this love is offered to the Lord, it acts as the churning process for getting butter. There is then the direct experience of the Divine.

Some devotees fall asleep during the discourses or brood over some extraneous matters without listening to the discourses. Raamakrishna Paramahansa once chided Raani Raasmani for thinking about her court cases while appearing to listen to his talk. Persons who are not interested in the discourses should keep away from the meeting.

Man's *dharma* is threefold. It relates to his body, his mind and his *Aathma*. Good deeds, good thoughts and Godly experience of bliss are the expressions of this triple *Dharma*. The reference to the light that illumines the three worlds should be understood in this way.

Who is a good son?

"Suputhrah Kula deepakah" (A good son is a beacon for the family). Who is a good son? He is a good son, who is always immersed in the contemplation of God, in sacred activities and leads a godly life. A good son is one who reveres his parents, pleases them by rendering service, and is grateful for all that he has received from them. Nor is that all. A good son earns a good name in society. A good son sheds greatness on the family like the fragrance of a jasmine creeper in a forest.

Nowadays, parents distribute sweets on the birth of a son. But it is not the birth that is the right occasion for celebration. The right moment for celebration is when the son earns a good name in society.

"The father will not rejoice on the day a son is born.

He will rejoice when he hears the praise of the virtues

Of his sort by others," says a Telugu poem.

God also will be happy when a son earns such a good name. A son should be called a good man by one and all. Such a *Suputhra* (good son) is a beacon-light for the entire family.

The four illuminators

There are three kinds of light. The lamp in a house illumines only the house. The moon at night gives his light to the world, although it is a dim light. But the sun who illumines the day sheds

his effulgence everywhere. The light that burns inside a home is comparable to *svartham* (self-interest). The light coming from the moon may be compared to *Parartham* (for the benefit of others). The light of the sun is *Yathartham*, the effulgence of Truth. Truth is God. The sun who illumines everything is verily God. For this reason, from early times Bhaaratheeyas were worshippers of the Sun-God. They offered *Suurya-namaskaar* (salutations to the Sun). They regarded the Sun as the visible manifestation of God.

Thus, what people need today are moonlight at night, sun-light during the day, and the light of Dharma which illumines all the three worlds, and a good son who is the beacon-light for the family.

Education alone does not make one a good son. One should be good in his actions and behaviour. The marks of a good son are good behaviour, good manners, good discipline and good devotion. These are the most important things. If there is devotion all other things will come easily.

Three sects, but one truth

Today there are three schools of philosophy prevalent in Bhaarith. *Dhvaita*, *Visisht-adhvaita* and *Adhvaita* (Dualism, qualifies Non-dualism and Non-dualism). In the *Dhvaita* philosophy, there is dualism, separation between *jeeva*, the individual self and Supreme Omni Self. There is no great difference between *Visisht-Adhvaita* and *Adhvaita*.

Whatever the creed, whatever the country or nationality, Truth is one. "*Ekam eva Advitheeyam Brahma*" (The Omni Self is one only, without a second).

The variations between the three systems of philosophy can be explained by an example. You have sugarcane, with a number of knots. Whatever the shape of the sugarcane, the juice in all of them is the same. *Adhvaita* (non-dualism) may be compared to the juice which is one and the same irrespective of the cane from which it is extracted. The juice drawn from any cane has the same sweetness. There is no other taste.

Raamaanuja (founder of the *Visisht Adhvaita* system) conducted his own enquiries and came to the conclusion that the sugar cane juice cannot be preserved indefinitely and therefore it should be converted to sugar. The sugar can then be used, any day at any time. This is qualified non-dualism.

Madhvaachaarya was the exponent of Dualism. Madhvaachaarya viewed the problem in this way. He declared: "Oh Lord! I do not want either sugarcane juice or sugar. I wish to be born as an ant that relishes the juice or the sugar. The sugar does not know its own sweetness. Only the one who consumes sugar can know its sweetness. O Lord! You are the very embodiment of love. I do not wish to be mere love. I want to be one who enjoys love. You should remain as God and I should remain as *Jeevi* (individual soul). It is only when the individual is separate from God that he can enjoy the Divine." This is the essence of dualism----the distinction between God and the individual self. When the individual self starts enjoying sugar (the Divine), in due course he becomes the Divine itself. "The knower of the Divine becomes the Divine."

Common truth proclaimed by all philosophies

Magnifying the differences between the three systems of philosophy, Bhaaratheeyas are wasting their time. All the three are essentially one. *Adhvaita* is like the sugarcane juice. *Visisht-Adhvaita* is sugar. The consumer of sugar is a *Dhvaitin* (dualist).

The truth is that sweetness is common to all, though the names and forms may vary. Similarly, in the world the different nations and countries have diverse forms and names. But the Divine in all of them is one and the same. The Indwelling Spirit is the same in all beings. The Divine energy is common to all, like the current which activates all bulbs, fans etc. God is present equally in everyone. The differences among human beings are the result of the differences in their capacities. When one is immersed in thoughts of God, his capacity will grow.

Develop greater love in your heart. As your love grows, the Spirit in you will shine brighter. Spiritual growth calls for restraint on desires. In addition, you have also to get rid of bad qualities like attachment and aversion. The three great enemies of man are *kaama* (desire), *krodha* (anger) and *lobha* (greed). Desire destroys devotion, anger annihilates wisdom and greed poisons every action. These three vices are destructive of *Sath-Karma* (good deeds), *Upaasana* (devotion) and *Jnaana* (spiritual wisdom). All the three have to be totally given up. The only cure for them is to burn them in *Premaagni* (the fire of Divine Love).

Example of Raama for being a good son

Good qualities can be acquired only by practice. The practice may be difficult, like moving an object uphill. But the effort has to be made. The *saadhana* (spiritual practice) must be done with full faith and no doubts. God is omnipresent. To experience God certain disciplines are required. This is the significance of the term *Suputhrah* (a good son). To realise God you have to be good. This means that one has to cultivate good qualities like reverence for parents, humility, respect for teachers and elders.

How did Raama achieve such greatness? By carrying out the injunctions of his father. Raama also exemplified friendliness and brotherliness. He moved among the people with a sense of endearment. He identified the people's welfare with his own well-being.

When you utter the prayer "*Lokaas-samasthaas-sukhino Bhavanthu!*" (May all people in all the world be happy), you should pray whole-heartedly with the conviction that the same Divine dwells in everyone.

Cultivate love for God. There is nothing greater than that. That is the message of Thulasidas and Meerabai. Realise God through Love.

Discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on 18-6-1996.

It is on account of the mutual help, the collaboration that the Gopis of Brindhaavan were able to attain Moksha; their Bhakthi towards Lord Krishna endowed them with the Highest Jnaana also. Now the essence of Bhakthi as well as Jnaana is Shaanthy. The highest type of Shaanthy, Prashaanthy. Prashaanthy leads one on to Prakaanthy, the Glory of Spiritual Effulgence, and thence to Paramjyothi, the Super-effulgence, of the Highest Revelation.

Baba

21. Importance of discipline

While uneducated birds and beasts

Know how to lead regulated lives,

Alas! Man endowed with intelligence

Does not lead a disciplined life.

EMBODIMENTS of love! Discipline is vital to every living being. For man it is even more important like the spinal column. Without discipline mankind will be ruined.

Discipline means the observance of certain well-defined rules. Without such regulation it is not possible to maintain humanness. Such regulation contributes to the glory of human existence.

Discipline cannot be acquired from books. Nor can it be learnt from teachers. It has to be as natural component of one's daily life in the discharge of one's duties. Discipline is essential from the moment of waking to the time of going to sleep.

Discipline is essential in everyday life

Discipline is essential for every group, for every society and for every political institution. Without discipline there can be no society or Government. No nation can exist without discipline. It is discipline that unites man to man, and one society to another. Hence discipline is one of the basic insignia of social life.

Discipline has to be observed in speech, in sport and in every kind of relationship. For instance, during bhajans, all those singing in chorus have to maintain the same tune. Discordant singing will jar on the ears. Singing in unison in bhajans is a form of discipline.

In games, you have an umpire to enforce the rules of the game. Every player has to observe the rules strictly. Sometimes while playing, in their enthusiasm, the players fall to observe the rules. The umpire, however, sees to it that the rules are enforced and the players have to obey him implicitly. Any player who does not obey will be violating the rules of the game.

Today it is because people do not observe the rules, whether in sports or elsewhere, life has become intolerable. Some persons hold positions of authority in business, in administration or in other institutions. Here also discipline is essential, just because one holds an office, he cannot behave as he likes. He cannot be free with his tongue. In his words and his writings he should observe restraint. In the use of words, whether in speech or writing, care should be observed regarding their future implications. Your discipline will protect you in whatever you do. Even in a simple matter like walking on the road, many do not observe the rules. They choose to walk on the middle of the road instead of using the pavement. Jaywalking on the road is not only harmful to oneself but is a hindrance to others. Your motto in life should be: Help ever; hurt never.

Discipline must start from the early years, But it is needed not only by students but by elders and all persons in authority.

Students should learn the right way of doing things even in ordinary actions like sitting or reading. They should sit erect and keep the spinal column straight. This enables the *Kundalini shakthi* (coiled energy) to move up from the base of the *spine--Muulaadhaara--* to the top of the head. *Sahasraara---through* the vertebral column. This movement takes place during *the yogic*

exercise known as *Praanaayaama* (breath control). This exercise is also useful for improving one's memory and powers of concentration.

Important elements of discipline

One of the important elements of discipline is physical purity. This does not merely mean keeping the body clean by a good bath. Real bodily purity calls for involvement in good actions. Good actions and good thoughts lead to purity of mind and the intellect.

Another important aspect of discipline is keeping one's plighted word. The importance of this is illustrated by an incident in the life of Shirdi Baba. There was a *sheristadhaar* by name Tharkad. His wife and 16-year-old son were ardent devotees of Shirdi Baba. Tharkad did not object to their worship of Baba. One day when they wanted to go to Shirdi, he gave them his consent. But Tharkad himself did not go to any shrine as he was a *Brahmo Samajist*. He did not go to Shirdi despite many appeals from his wife.

Tharkad's son told his father that he would not go to Shirdi because he was performing regular worship to Shirdi Baba in their house. This worship would be affected if he went to Shirdi. The lad told his father that every day he was making an offering of sugar candy to Baba and he was partaking part of the candy as *prasaadh* (blessed offering) out of the conviction that Baba was receiving the candy. He declared: "I do not want any break in this practice. Hence I do not want to go to Shirdi." The father had great affection for the son. He told the son: "Babu, I shall perform that duty. You better go to Shirdi." The boy wanted an assurance from the father that he would carry out the promise. "Will you offer worship to Baba as I have been doing? Will you offer candy to him and later eat part of it as *prasaadh*?" The father was moved by his son's determination and gave him the promise to carry on the worship during his absence. The mother and son left for Shirdi.

The father's lapse

The father kept the word given to his son and performed the worship in the manner of the son for a few days. Offering candy to Baba, he took a part of it after the worship before taking his meal. On a Thursday, Tharkad had some urgent business in the court and left the house in a hurry after performing *puuja* (worship). Returning for his meal, he asked the cook to bring the *prasaadh*. The cook informed him that he had not offered any offering of candy that day. Tharkad felt very sad over his lapse in failing to keep the promise he had given to his son. He was sorry that he had failed to make the offering to Baba.

At Shirdi, when the mother and son went to see Baba on the following Friday, Baba told the son: "Babu, yesterday I had been to Bangra, but no one gave me any food. Even the candy which you used to offer daily was not available. I have come back very hungry. Will you give me something to eat?" The boy was shocked on listening to Baba's words. He returned home and wept over his mother's lap. "Father gave me a promise, but he has not kept it and Baba was disappointed. I cannot stay here any longer. I must adhere to my daily routine. I shall go back to our place." At that time, Baba sent a chit to the boy through one dog. In his message, Baba said: "There is no need for you to go now. Your father failed to keep his word, but you have not failed in your duty. You have all my Grace. You can stay here as long as you wish." The boy stayed on for a few more days feeling very depressed and frustrated.

Truth is one. You must adhere to Truth

When the boy returned home, the father rushed towards him and begged his pardon. He said, "You are young and I am old. But I am seeking your pardon because I failed to keep my promise." The boy said: "You must seek pardon not from me but from Baba. Whatever the Samaaj (society) to which you may belong, whatever your beliefs, the promised word must be kept. Truth is one. You must adhere to truth. This is your duty as a lawyer. You have studied the law. You know very well how Emperor Manu upheld *Dharma*. If you do not adhere to Truth, you are violating the law."

If discipline is observed in this manner, one can experience the Divine directly. The first requisite is purity of the body.

*What is it you gain, oh man,
From waking to sleeping
If you seek only bodily comforts,
Forgetting God? (Telugu poem)*

Restraint has to be observed even with regard to eating. Excessive eating is the cause of many ailments. One fourth of the stomach should remain empty.

Discipline should govern every action of yours all through the day. Then it becomes *Karma Yoga--the Yoga of Action*. You must be the master of *Karma* and act according to Divine commands. This is the way to make education fruitful.

Discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on 19-6-1996.

Be silent yourself; that will induce silence in others. Do not fall into the habit of shouting, talking long and loud. Reduce contacts to the minimum. Carry with you an atmosphere of quiet contemplation, wherever you happen to be.

Baba

22. Selfless love and firm faith

A heart without love is lifeless;

Can you call that life

Merely because there is

Breath in the body?

It is just a pair of bellows.

EMBODIMENTS of Love! The hall-mark of love is *thyaaga* (selfless sacrifice). Love seeks nothing from anyone. It bears no ill-will towards anyone. It is utterly selfless and pure.

Failing to understand the true nature of love, man yearns for it in various ways. Love has to be cherished with feelings of selflessness and sacrifice. In what is deemed as love in the world--whether it be maternal love, brotherly love, or friendship---there is an element of selfishness. Only God's love is totally free from the taint of selfishness. Divine love reaches out even to the remotest being. It brings together those who are separate. It raises man from animality to divinity. It transforms gradually all forms of worldly love to Divine love. To experience this Divine love, men must be prepared to give up selfishness and self-interest. They must develop purity and steadfastness. With firm faith in the Divine, they must foster the love of God regardless of all obstacles and ordeals.

However, even the feeling of universal brotherliness is not the same as the experience of *Ekathvam* (oneness). Even in such a fraternal feeling there is an element of self-interest. Those who really wish to promote universal brotherhood should develop the consciousness of the one Spirit dwelling in all beings. Even brothers are often found engaged in mutual bickerings and hatred. What is described as fraternity may not be real and unsullied love. True love should express itself in the awareness of the presence of the Divine in one and all. Names and forms may differ but the indwelling Spirit is the same in all.

One filled with Divine Love will be fearless

Fill your hearts with love. One will be betraying himself if he entertains evil thoughts, but pretends outwardly to be full of love. No one having Divine love will ever fail to manifest it anywhere at any time. Students, who behave well during their stay in the Institute, should maintain the same behaviour wherever they may live or work after leaving the Institute. There should be no room for any outside association or circumstances to change their conduct. Love should be firmly implanted in their hearts. One filled with Divine Love will be fearless, will seek nothing from others, and will be spontaneous and selfless in expressing his love. There is no need to pray for gifts from God. God will give of His own accord what is good for any devotee. Did not Shabari and Jataayu get the grace of Raama even without their asking for it? God will decide what to give, when to give, and where. Hence, all actions should be dedicated to God and He should decide what the devotee is fit to receive. When everything is left to God out of pure love and total faith, God will take care of the devotee. People today lack such firm faith. In the path of devotion many ordeals have to be overcome. Great devotees in the past faced such ordeals with faith and fortitude. Ultimately they secured the grace of the Divine and experienced bliss.

Dhruva's example

For example, take the case of Dhruva. He was a five-year old boy, who knew little about the affairs of the World. He acted upon the advice of Naaradha and through severe penance was able to have a direct vision of God. His faith enabled him to secure this experience. But, when Vishnu appeared before him and asked him what he wanted, Dhruva said: "Lord! You came to me, knowing where I was doing my penance. Is it conceivable that you could not know what I want?" The Lord said: "I know what for you performed the penance.. When you set out from your home you took a resolve that you will perform penance and secure a boon from the Lord that you should be enabled to sit on the lap of your father. I want to know whether your words and actions are in harmony." Dhruva said: "It is true that I came to perform penance for a small favour, a piece of valueless glass as it were. But, experience of your Form is like a diamond to me. What good fortune is mine that while seeking a glass bead I had found a brilliant diamond. I have no use for that glass piece." The Lord saw the contradiction between Dhruva's original resolution, his penance and his present desire. The Lord told him that he should stick to his original wish for which he had performed the penance and therefore return to the kingdom with the Lord's Blessings. This emphasizes the need for unity in thought, word and deed.

Recognise the Divine in the entire cosmos

For achieving anything in life, two things are essential: firm faith and pure love. People should not think that pleasure and pain are caused by some external forces. It is not so. They are the result of one's own thoughts. There is no meaning in blaming others. If you develop love of God, that love will banish all sorrow and evil tendencies like attachment, anger and envy. Students should pursue both spiritual education and secular studies.

You have to realise that Nature is also a manifestation of God. Hence, Nature should not be ignored. Nature is the effect and God is the cause. Hence you should recognise the imminence of the Divine in the entire cosmos.

Discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 20-6-1996.

23. As you sow, so shall you reap

ALL the pains and pleasures man experiences are the results of his own actions and not due to any act of the Divine. God is only a witness. God is like a postman. He delivers to you whatever letter is addressed to you. The grief or joy you derive from the contents of the letter are your own. Likewise the suffering or happiness one experiences are the results of one's own bad or good deeds and are not derived from God.

However, there is the operation of special grace on certain occasions. When you pray to God with a pure heart, without a trace of selfishness and with sacred feelings, God confers special favour. Moreover, when a person has done some unique act of sacrifice in a previous life or at any time in the past, the Divine confers an appropriate reward for it at the proper time.

Krishna came to the rescue of Dhraupadi when Dhuryodhana attempted to disrobe her, by making her sari endless, in return for the readiness with which Draupadi tore off a piece from her sari to bind the bleeding finger of Krishna.

The spontaneous magnanimity of Karna

Even a noble and large-hearted hero like Karna became an accomplice of the wicked Kauravas because of his association with them. Students should avoid bad company. To illustrate the spontaneous magnanimity of Karna I would relate an episode where Krishna had contrived to bring home to Arjuna the extent to which Karna was prepared to sacrifice himself to satisfy any one who came to him for help. Krishna assumed the form of a *Brahmana* and came to Karna on the battlefield asking for some gold. As the only way he could satisfy the *Brahmana* was to pull out his two golden teeth to give them to him, Karna did not hesitate to do so. He got them washed in Ganga water aiming an arrow at the ground and making the river spout forth. Arjuna, who had a high opinion of his own prowess and devotion to Krishna, felt humbled at the sight of Karna's boundless generosity.

The ways of the Divine should be properly understood. God exists not for one nation or one community. God incarnates on earth for the benefit of all mankind. Each one gets the reward according to his deserts, As are his actions, so are the fruits thereof. Hence before doing anything, one should consider whether it is right or wrong. One should see that no harm occurs to anyone on account of one's actions. This is not easy for one who is attached to the pleasures of the body. All sorrow is related to the body and worldly desires. You experience desires in the waking state. In the *sushupti* (deep sleep) state one is totally unaware of even the body and of the phenomenal world. Hence there is no sorrow in that state.

Rely primarily on the power of the Divine

By constant contemplation on God the mind should be turned away from mundane desires That is the way to get rid of both pain and pleasure. Man has to make up from the sleep of ignorance and realise his divine essence *Sath-Chith-Aanandha*. To the extent worldly desires are reduced, to the same extent bliss will be experienced. Simultaneously with the control of desires men should also get rid of Ahamkaara (egoism).

Men today are filled with fear because they have no confidence in themselves. A bird can brave a storm because it has faith in its wings. But man succumbs to the slightest reverses of fortune because he does not rely on the power of the Spirit. People must rely primarily on the power of

the Divine. With confidence in the Self, they should devote themselves to good deeds. This is the purpose of life. Every step you take must bring you nearer to God.

Discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on 30-6-1996.

24. Not salaries but service

EMBODIMENTS of Love! The educational system today prepares students for pursuing worldly gains and comforts, but makes no attempt to cultivate in them the qualities of righteousness, love of peace and promotion of social welfare. Both students and educationists are mainly concerned about using education for getting jobs and earning large incomes. What kind of life do they lead in their earning, career? After a so-called hard day's work, they spend their evenings in clubs, imagining that they get peace and rest there. If they wanted real peace they should have it in their homes. In the clubs they spend their time playing cards and having "bottles." Is this commendable? Does this benefit persons calling themselves educated? Far from it. Not only do they ruin themselves this way, but also ruin their families.

Instead of falling a prey to such pernicious habits, the educated should use their knowledge for the improvement of society and thereby redeem their lives. Addiction to drink makes a man ultimately a slave of the bottle.

Man's debt to God

Man is the beneficiary of innumerable gratuitous gifts of God: wind, rain, sunlight and so on. What gratitude is man showing to God for all these, while he is paying a big price for every small benefit he derives from services like water supply and electric power? God is the provider of all that is essential for life. What recompense is man making to God? On the contrary he goes on praying for more benefits. This insatiable desire is the cause of all man's evil qualities. The truly human qualities are calmness, forbearance and compassion. Man should lead a contented life.

God has given to man a wonderfully beautiful world, with mountains, forests, rivers and the glorious moon. Above all, God has endowed man with a compassionate heart. But he is polluting it. What is it that man owes to God for all his gifts? The ancient sages called it *bali* (sacrificial offering). The term *bali* has been misunderstood as the offer of an animal as sacrifice. The right meaning of *bali* is tax.

Many such terms are often given wrong meanings in common usage. For instance, the term *Shikhandi* is interpreted as referring to a hermaphrodite (one who is neither a man nor a woman). The true meaning, however, is "one who wears a peacock feather." The term is applied to Krishna.

What is the *bali* (tax) to be paid to God? Only the expression of our gratitude by a heartfelt prayer. That prayer is an expression of one's joy and thankfulness. The hands should be lifted in prayer and the words should come out full-throated. It is unfortunate that even those who are gifted with good voices do not sing aloud in *bhajans*. Man has been endowed with a tongue to sing the praise of God. If he fails to do so, he remains indebted to God.

The right attitude of the devotee should be one of total surrender. As one devotee declared: "I am offering to you the heart which you gave me. I have nothing I can call my own. All are yours. I offer to you what is yours. What else can I do?" This was the spirit in which Lakshmana served Raama. As long as this spirit of total surrender is not developed, man will have to be born again and again. One should offer one's heart to the Divine, and not be content with offerings like flowers, and fruits.

You should offer your knowledge for the benefit of the people. You should set an example to your fellowmen. Cultivate the spirit of oneness of all mankind. It is to teach this message that the Sai advent has taken place. Sai has come to indicate the omnipresence of God. The *Avathaar* has come down to declare that God is present everywhere. This is as necessary as the need for some one to light a lamp even if you have a lamp holder, oil and wick. The *Avathaar* comes not only to proclaim the eternal virtues but also to shower His love on all mankind. But each one will get the benefit according to the size of the vessel he holds.

Discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on 1-7-1996.

25. Adherence to truth

THERE is an eternal Truth which transcends the categories of time and space and is beyond the three *gunas*--*Sathva*, *Rajas* and *Thamas*. This Truth is God. All creation has emanated from this Truth and merges in it. The phenomena perceived by the senses are by their very nature transient and ever changing. The Spiritual reality is unchanging. The three letters in the term *Sathyam* represents Praana (life), *Annam* (food) and the Sun, who is the sustainer of all life. All the three represent the *Brahmam*. Another meaning of *Sathya* is control of the outward and inner senses. When there is such sense control combined with purity in thought, word and deed, one experiences the Divine.

Dharma is based on *Sathya*. The Upanishathik saying is: "*Sathyam vadha; Dharmam chara*" (Speak the Truth and practise righteousness). Today the number of persons adhering to truth is one in a thousand or so. Most of one's life is spent in untruth. A true being should lead a life based wholly on truth. Man is in desperate search of bliss in the external world, forgetting that the source of bliss is within him. Ignorance of his inherent Divinity makes a man miserable. When the ignorance goes, his blissful nature reveals itself. Man has to realise this basic truth.

Overcome difficulties by adherence to Truth

Students! You should realise that whatever difficulties you may encounter in life, you can overcome them by steadfast adherence to truth. You must carry out your promise at any cost. You have the example of Emperor Bali, who honoured his pledge to Vaamana even at the cost of his kingdom and against the warning of his preceptor. Bali declared that there is no greater sin than going back on one's plighted word.

Even ten persons who adhere firmly to truth can save the world. How many today are prepared to sacrifice all theirs for truth? People listen to endless discourses, meet noble personalities and read all the scriptures. Of what use is all that when there is no practice of the teachings?

Man has evolved from the animal to the human and he must progress towards the Divine. Unfortunately today he tends to revert to animality. Man should realise the infinite preciousness of human birth.

Discourse on 2.7.1996.

26. Bhagavaan deplores devotees' lapses

Without giving up Thaamasik tendencies

How can the truth be realised?

Without giving up Raajasik qualities

Bhakthi cannot be promoted.

The practice of Bhakthi

Is the Saathvik quality.

Hearken! Oh valiant son of Bhaarath!

THIS entire phenomenal universe is an expression of three qualities--Sathva, Rajas and Thamas. Every human being is an embodiment of these three qualities. How can such a being transcend the three qualities? It is only when man recognizes these qualities that he can go beyond them. For all ordinary persons, all the three qualities are essential. Man cannot live without sleep. Man cannot perform any action without prior enquiry. Thought must precede any action. Sleep, enquiry and mentation are *Thaamasik* qualities.

Man cannot carry on his normal daily life without *Raajasik* activities. All desires arise from the *Raajasik* quality. Even the yearning for God is a *Raajasik* quality. There is a Telugu saying: "No one can have the desire for liberation without experiencing other desires." Desires may be diverse, but their essential nature is the same. Qualities like anger, jealousy, hatred, pride and pompousness are *Raajasik* in nature. Even in the *Raajasik* quality there is an element of the *Saathvik* quality. Like the river Sarasvathi which is said to flow unseen between the rivers Ganga and Yamuna, the *Saathvik* quality is also present in a subtle form as the undercurrent between the *Thaamasik* and *Raajasik* qualities. As one examines each of these qualities individually, it will be found that there is a substratum of the *Saathvik* quality in the other two.

To develop the *Saathvik* quality, the *Thaamasik* quality is an accessory and the *Raajasik* quality is a necessary stage. When one goes beyond these two, the full nature of the *Saathvik* quality manifests itself.

From highway man to sage

How does one get over the *Thaamasik* quality? There is the example of Rathnaakara, who was originally a highway robber harassing and plundering wayfarers. Absence of compassion and consideration for others is the mark of *Thaamasik* nature. Such a person was transformed into a great sage by the contact and teaching of the Seven Sages (Vasishta and others). Not only did he become a sage, he also became an immortal poet, the author of the Raamaayana, the epic story of the *Raama Avathar*. The term *Kavi* (poet) signifies one who has a vision of the past, the present and the future. The so called poets of today can hardly be called poets in the ancient sense of the term.

Vaalmeeki and Vyaasa, by their penance, transcended the three qualities, experienced the Divine and acquired the capacity to envision the three categories of time--the past, the present and the future---thereby they became immortal poets. The company of the good was responsible for the transformation of a totally *Thaamasik* person like Rathnaakara into the totally *Saathvik* sage, Vaalmeeki. This shows that no one need feel that a *Thaamasik* person cannot become a *Saathvik*

person. For every transformation Divine Grace is the cause. It is possible at one jump to proceed from the *Thaamasik* to the *Saathvik* nature by Divine Grace and association with Godly persons.

From emperor to *Brahmarishi*

Coming to the *Raajasik* quality; it is characteristic of persons belonging to the *Kshathriya* (warrior) caste. Hatred, jealousy, ostentation, egoistic pride, are some of the traits associated with the *Raajasik* quality. The sage who exemplifies the transformation from the *Raajasik* to *Saathvik* quality is Vishvaamithra. Vishvaamithra, who was steeped in *Raajasik* tendencies, became a great *Raajarishi* and later a *Brahmarishi*. His antipathy to sage Vasishtha went to the extent of even contemplating the destruction of the sage. Vishvaamithra was hovering near the *aashram* when he overheard a conversation between Vasishtha and his spouse, Arundhathi. Arundhathi expressed her admiration for the beautiful unblemished light the fullmoon was shedding that night. Immediately Vasishtha observed: "Tonight's fullmoon is shining untainted like the pure penance of Vishvaamithra."

On hearing these words, Vishvaamithra realised how mistaken he was regarding Vasishtha and rushed into the *aashram*, fell at the feet of Vasishtha and prayed to him to forgive him. Vasishtha lifted Vishvaamithra and hailed him as *Brahmarishi* (a sage who has realised the Supreme Self). Vasishtha, who had previously described Vishvaamithra as a *Raajarishi* (a royal sage), spontaneously hailed him as a *Brahmarishi*. Vishvaamithra could not contain himself and asked Vasishtha on what grounds he was calling Vishvaamithra a *Brahmarishi*. Vasishtha said: "Vishvaamithra! Hitherto you were filled with self-conceit. You are born with ego, grew with ego, and never bowed your head to any one. Today you put an end to your ego and fell at my feet. This is the significance of egolessness. A *Brahmarishi* is one who is free from egoism, acquisitiveness, pride and arrogance.

A true rishi is one who is free from evil tendencies

A rishi is not one who is a great scholar or a ritualist, but one who is free from evil tendencies.

The transformation of Rathnaakara from a highwayman to a sage, who could compose the *Raamaayana*, was possible because of his association with great *rishis*. But association alone was not enough. He practised wholeheartedly what the sages taught him. He lost his body consciousness in the contemplation of the name of Raama to such an extent that an ant-hill rose over him from which vibration of Raama's name could be heard.

A similar transformation occurred in the case of Vishvaamithra also. From a *Raajasik* King he became a *Brahmarishi* by sacrificing all earthly pleasures and performing severe penance.

Coming to the *Saathvik* quality, it should be noted that its main characteristic is a perennial state of peace. Other traits related to *Sathva* are forbearance, compassion, truth and similar virtues. The *Saathvik* quality gives no room for vices like lust, anger, greed and envy. The *Saathvik* person converts any action of anger into an act of love. If one cannot effect such a change, all his austerities are useless.

Devotees' failures to practise love

Now, I wish to refer to a matter which you should consider without any misunderstanding. I have been propagating the message of love for many years. In every discourse *Prema* (Love) is repeatedly mentioned. How many of you are comprehending this love or practising it? If any comes to you with a query, can't you give a loving answer? I have not seen a single individual

giving a loving reply. Either in the *Mandhir*, or in the canteen or in the Book Stall, or in the Accommodation Office or in the Hospital or in any other establishment there is not a hint of the word '*Prema*.' Why, then, should you listen to these discourses? If any newcomer asks about how to have *dharshan* of Svaami he is rudely brushed aside with a "get away!" Cannot you tell somebody calmly what you know? If educated persons are approached, they dismiss the seeker of information with a curt: "No, this is not my duty." Should answering a question be prescribed as a duty? What does anyone lose if he gives a calm and loving answer?

Whether it be women or men devotees who have been staying here for over two decades, no one has a loving heart. They profess to perform *saadhana*, or *japa* or *meditation*, but what for are they doing all this? What has happened to the love in them? They seem to be stifling it. They are developing ill-feelings. If you are really serious about listening to Svaami's teachings, why don't you put them into practice? People live in the *aashram*, but their practices are unbecoming.

Is anyone doing any duty assigned to him with dedication? Are they uttering truth? Are they speaking pleasantly? I have neither seen nor heard such things.

If anyone wants to talk to you, you can excuse yourself if you want to avoid any talk. You can explain sweetly: "Svaami disapproves of excessive talk. I have to adhere to His injunctions."

Open your hearts for God's love

I do not find any teachers or students, doctors or nurses talking lovingly. There should be some benefit from your listening to the discourses. But there is nothing of the kind. During *bhajans* the women are engaged in mutual recrimination. They quarrel over seats. "This seat is mine. That is yours." They compete for front seats. Cannot they experience Bhagavaan wherever they are? You have plenty of time and are receiving plenty of love. But you don't avail yourself of it. If you keep your pots topsy turvy, how can you collect any water even if there is a downpour? Today those who listen to the discourses are keeping the pots of their hearts upside down. Hence not a drop of love gets into your hearts. Why, should you come here? Cannot you live elsewhere? What is the use of your coming here? What are you achieving from your stay? What bliss are you deriving? Nothing at all. It is sheer waste of time.

Treat patients with love

At least from now on, reply with love to anyone who comes to you. Those functioning in the Accommodation Office or Public Relations or other places in *the aashram* should not behave like bull-dogs or Alsatian hounds. We are spending crores of rupees on the hospitals. Why should not the patients be treated with love? Many patients will get well merely by kind and sweet words. But many of them are turned away rudely. This is totally unbecoming of persons claiming to be devotees. If they have come to serve Svaami, they should cultivate love as the first quality. Svaami is the embodiment of love from head to foot. I offer love. You accept it, but do not make good use of it.

Embodiments of love! I continue to call you as such though you are lacking in love! You need not cultivate anything but love. That will be equal to any amount of penance you can possibly do.

When new devotees come to the *aashram* you must welcome them as the air-hostesses do on a plane. In the Institute also, freshers who join in the new year should be welcomed and treated

with special regard and affection. They should be made to forget the separation from their parents. In outside colleges, new entrants are subjected to ragging by the old students.

This conduct is demonic. Is this the way to treat the new entrants, who should be made to feel happy and comfortable? Likewise new entrants to the hostel should be welcomed with love and helped to adjust themselves to their new life. It is only when you show them due consideration that you would have really understood Svaami's *Prema-thathva* (Love Principle).

Stony devotion

Learn to respect all. Only then will you earn the grace of the Divine who is the Indweller in all beings. Harming living beings and worshipping inanimate idols, what kind of devotion is this? Bullocks which work night and day are whipped, but a stone idol of Nandhi is adored by going round it. This is stony devotion! Not devotion from the heart.

At least from now on, make your hearts pure. Fill it with genuine compassion instead of talking about compassion *ad nauseam*.

You have been in this *aashram* for many years. *Ashram* means a place where there is no stress or strain. Many devotees feel that they are being driven about like street dogs outside the *aashram* and pray for at least a few quiet moments in the interview room. But, how many can be taken into the interview room? It is not possible to give an interview for all at one time. Hence, this open interview for all! All are being treated alike. Develop love. From tomorrow you must speak to one another lovingly. Get rid of your animal qualities. Love all. This is the true *Saathvik* quality.

Manifest your humanness and progress towards the Divine. Get rid of animality and demonic qualities. To acquire Svaami's grace the path of love is the only royal road.

Discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 3-7-1996.

Youth is the stage in life when the slightest turn towards wrong will spell disaster. Thoughts shape the career You plan to earn much wealth, because you imagine that rich people are very happy. The rich have plenty to eat, but they have no appetite. The rich wield power over others but they are held down by disease. The rich can have many servants but they cannot live in peace. So, plan to be rich in virtue, in devotion and dedication to good causes. Be rich in sovereign character.

Baba

27. The human adventure

*Through meritorious deeds And acts of sacrifice,
Developing love in the heart,
Suppressing demonic traits,
Fostering devotion to God,
Lead your daily life, Oh Man!*

*In boyhood man is immersed in sport;
In youth he is lost in sensual pleasures;
In old age, unaware of the Divine Lord,
He pursues one thing or another;
Unable to give up evil tendencies.
Incapable of taking to the path of Devotion
He wallows in the cesspool of Karma
And makes human life a clod of earth. (Telugu Poem)*

Man intelligent being, but does not know how to utilise his intelligence. Some persons, even though they know how to use it, pursue wrong paths. If they are asked, why they behave like this, they glibly answer that the whole thing is *Maaya*, an illusion. *Maaya* is only called by the name illusion, but it has no existence in reality. People imagine that it is *Maaya* which produces the phenomenal world and makes it appear as real in all its varied forms. Scholars have described *Maaya* as a *Narthaki* (dancer). This *Maaya* is said to make every man dance. How is *Maaya* to be controlled? Read the word *Narthaki* in reverse and you have the answer *Keerthana*. This is proclaimed as the path of devotion.

Misconceptions about *Saadhana*

There are several misconceptions about *Saadhana* (spiritual exercise) for Self Realisation. For instance, some women devotees feel sad when they are unable to attend Bhagavaan's discourses because of their preoccupation with domestic duties and attending to their spouses and children. What is the service they render by taking part in a *Sathsang* or a discourse? To attend to one's household duties, look after the children and attend to the needs of the husband and others at home constitute the right type of *saadhana*. Even the preparation of meals in the home is a great *saadhana*. To remove the stones from the rice before it is cooked is one kind of *yoga---gunathraya vibhaaga* yoga--the *yoga* of division of the three qualities. Every stage in the cooking of vegetables may be deemed a spiritual exercise. Likewise every household chore can be sanctified without a sense of regret that you are missing a bhajan or a discourse. Even the sweeping of the house may be considered as a process of purifying the heart. All such thoughts are spiritually exalting. Such actions are better than listening indifferently to a discourse and forgetting the teachings thereafter. Doing one's duty is the highest spiritual endeavour.

Giving up bad qualities is true renunciation

There are many ochre-robed persons going about flaunting their so called renunciation while they are full of pride and possessiveness. During an encounter between a renunciant and Ubhaya-bhaarathi, wife of the scholar Mandana Mishra, she made the renunciant realise how he was filled with attachment and egoism in spite of his having renounced everything. The ascetic fell at the feet of Ubhayabhaarathi and sought her forgiveness. He assured her that thereafter he would practise renunciation in the true sense of the term.

Thyaaga (Renunciation) does not mean giving up hearth and home but giving up bad qualities. That alone is true sacrifice and real *yoga*. It is enough if man gives up *raaga* (attachment) and *dhvesha* (hatred). If everyone adheres to his *Aashrama-Dharma* (the code of conduct pertaining to one's stage in life), devotes his time to meditation on God, he will be redeeming his life.

There is no need to go in search of Divinity elsewhere. The Divine is the Indweller in every heart like sugar at the bottom of a tumbler filled with water. If the water is stirred with the spoon of *Buddhi* (the intellect), Divinity will be experienced in the heart.

Have the conviction that God is within you and in every being. Hence bear no ill-will towards any-body. Show your love and esteem for everyone.

Sai is the Mother for the motherless

Let me refer to something, which I am not anxious to reveal. A young boy who gave his word to me years ago continues to stand by it to this day. The student who spoke first this afternoon is a boy from Shimla. I am seeing him today. Ten years ago he came as a small boy. He was studying in the primary school. A younger brother of his (who was in the Mandap) is also studying in the primary school. Their mother was brought in a stretcher from Himaachal Pradesh to Brindhaavan. I drew both the boys close to me and told the mother: "They are my children. Don't worry about them. Have no worry on their account." The mother gave her word to Svaami. "I am entrusting my children to you, Sai Maatha!" Uttering these words, she closed her eyes.

I brought the two boys from Brindhaavan to Prashaanthi Nilayam. They were very young at the time. The elder boy said at that time: "My mother is Mother Sai". The father also affirmed the son's words.

From that moment these two boys have not shed a single tear. These children at that tender age held fast to their words. In life once a promise has been made to the Lord there will be no room for grief. That is the meaning of *Sharanaagathi* (surrender to the Lord).

The mother was no more. Even the father appeared rarely. The children were left totally in the care of Svaami. Morning and evening I used to speak to the boys and enquire about their welfare. Their tender hearts were filled with total faith in Bhagavaan. Today the elder boy spoke well about faith. He is full of that faith. They did not feel at any time the loss of their mother.

One day the warden brought the boy to me from the primary school, saying that he was feeling the absence of his mother. She told Svaami that the boy is not taking food and is weeping incessantly. He was five years old at that time. He was in the first standard. I took him inside the interview room, gave him a ring and spoke pleasantly to him and made him forget his loss. From that moment he has always been smiling and laughing.

What is needed is total faith

The hearts of the children are so pure. Today elders are unable to understand such pure love. Love is so sacred. It confers limitless courage and forbearance. What would have been the plight of these children in any other place? They could get on here because they were with Svaami. Svaami takes care of them with the love of a thousand mothers. This truth is not being understood even by many renunciants. They perform *Japa* and sit in meditation. But to what end? They are immersed in their egoism and attachment.

What is needed is total faith; in a simple word: Love. Abide by it and lead a worthy life. Love will confer every kind of strength you need to sustain you in life. If you recognise the Divine in all, you will be blessed with everything.

Svaami's boundless love

Students should understand that I take interest in the welfare of every child. I constantly enquire about all of them with the warden. Students who are not aware of Bhagavaan's boundless love, feel depressed when they think Svaami does not speak to them. But I am having my eyes on all of them. The boy who spoke earlier said that he had lost one mother but found a thousand mothers. How many will make such a declaration? He began his speech with an appeal to Mother Sai. It is this faith which is sustaining them and making them overcome all problems.

Hence, develop this Love Principle. Moreover, you have also got to develop discipline. In recent months, there appears to be a falling off in discipline in Prashaanthi Nilayam. As soon as the bhats are over, the devotees get up and make a lot of noise. Similarly, when the people called for interview, go into the interview room, the people in the *Mandhir* verandah and outside get up after the door is closed and indulge in noisy talk as in a market-place. After Bhagavaan's discourse is over, devotees should ruminate over *Svaami's* speech and not indulge in idle talk. It is all one cacophony from both the men's and women's wings of the Mandap. There should be no such talking, not only in Prashaanthi Nilayam but outside also, in the bazaars. Discipline is like a shadow. It should follow you wherever you may go. Bhagavaan desires from all of you only discipline. Hence, when the discourse is over or when the *bhajans* end, you should go out in silence. When you get back to your apartments you may discuss your private affairs. But as a rule observe restraint in speech everywhere. It helps to conserve energy. Excessive talk affects the nerves. You are liable to forget what you have heard.

Moreover, elders set a bad example to students by talking in front of them. You should realise that the voice of the Divine is heard in the depths of silence.

Restraint in speech also calls for the avoidance of harsh words. Speaking lovingly and ever thinking of God, you will be oblivious to all worldly things.

Discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 4-7-1996.

The very first lesson of the Primer of the spiritual text is Control of Speech. The speech is the armament of man; other animals have fleetness of foot, sharpness of clam, fang, horn, tusk, beak and talon. But man has sweetness of speech which can disarm opposition and defeat all the designs of hatred. Sweetness makes

*you Pashupathi -- Divine; harshness makes you Pashu bestial.
Mere outward politeness or sweetness is hypocrisy; sincere speech
must flow from real sweetness of heart, a heart full of love.*

Baba

28. Saadhana and sense control

*Of what use is all Saadhana
without sense control?*

*Of what avail is practice of yoga
without forbearance?*

*Of what use is japa without
Peace of mind?*

It is like ploughing a barren field.

STUDENTS! "By diligent efforts success can be achieved, says the adage. An ant can cover miles by continuous movement. But even Garuda (the celestial eagle) cannot soar two feet if it has no will to fly. Likewise, without good thoughts and good deeds based on them, a man cannot accomplish anything good. The child Dhruva could achieve what he desired because of his firm determination and the spiritual austerities he observed, despite the ordeals he had to go through. By his sublime thoughts, he achieved the status of a star in the sky. Likewise, any man irrespective of age or abilities, who has faith and determination, can accomplish what he wants. You are aware of the stories of many sages who embarked on severe penances but failed to complete them because of lack of faith and determination. Vishvaamithra was repeatedly foiled in this way by either loss of self-control or succumbing to temptation.

In every field Saadhana (steadfast performance) is essential. For instance, the participants in the bhajans have improved their singing by constant practice. The sage Dhurvaasa, despite all his penances, could have no peace because he could not control his temper.

Together with peace, the quality of Kshama (forgiveness) is also essential.

Forgiveness is truth, it is Dharma,

It is the essence of the Vedha,

It is non-violence and it Yajna,

It is the source of joy and everything else

says a Telugu Poem. *Kshama* (forbearance) is for every man a third eye.

Entire life is a dream

For all these, the primary quality that is necessary is love. Without love there can be no life. A student who spoke earlier said: "Life is a dream, realise it." What is a dream? Entire life is a dream. During the day you sit here and listen to Svaami's discourse. This is not a dream. You see with your eyes, listen with your ears, absorb with your mind and chasten your heart. All these are apparently proofs of *Prathyaksha Pramaanam* (direct perception). But how far is this real? When you go to sleep at night, all this direct perception vanishes. In your night dreams you experience joy and sorrow. How long do they last? Till you wake up. Then all the dreams become unreal. In the waking state, the dream world has no existence. In the dream state the waking world does not exist. So, what we have are a day-dream and a night dream distinct from each other. But you are present in both the states. Hence you are omnipresent. When both the waking and sleeping states

are experienced as dreams life itself becomes a dream. Realise it. That means, you must realise the true nature of these states.

The student said: "Life is love, enjoy it." Verily love is God. Purandhara-dhaasa sang about the glory of the devotee's love for God. "Even as a lotus adorns a lake, the moon adorns the sky and waves are the adornment for the ocean, for your devotees. Oh Lord! love is the greatest adornment." Nothing lends greater beauty to a devotee than his love for the Divine.

Love is like mariner's compass

Hence love is Divine. Have love for all. Impart your love even to those who lack love. Love is like mariner's compass. Wherever you may keep it, it points the way to God. In every action in daily life manifest your love. Divinity will emerge from that love. This is the easiest path to God-realisation. But, why are not people taking to it? This is because they are obsessed with misconception relating to the means of experiencing God. They regard God as some remote entity attainable only by arduous spiritual practices. God is everywhere. There is no need to search for God. All that you see is a manifestation of the Divine. All the human beings you see are forms of the Divine. Correct your defective vision and you will experience God in all things.

Love for Svaami has brought you here

Develop the sense of the spiritual oneness of all beings. The power of love is immeasurable. So many of you have assembled here. What has brought you all here? Love alone is the primary reason. You have gathered here in such large numbers because of your love for Svaami and Svaami's love for you. You have all come of your own accord. The binding factor is love.

Speak lovingly, act lovingly, think with love and do every action with a love-filled heart. There is no need for counting beads or sitting in meditation, while your mind is preoccupied with worldly matters. The *japa* you have to perform is constantly to remind yourself of the Divine within you. This is the supreme message of the *Vedhas*.

Realise that the path of divine love is the easiest, the sweetest and surest path to God.

Discourse on 5- 7-1996.

Whatever I do, it is for you, not for Me. For what is it that can be called Mine ? Only you.

Baba

29. Love for the divine transcends all kin

Happiness emerges from total love;

Truth and renunciation lead to peace;

Without love there is no well-being;

Hearken! oh valiant son of Bhaarath!

STUDENTS! There can be no human being who is unaware of love. The universe is permeated with love. Love is beyond description. It is beyond the grasp of the mind and speech. Naaradha declared: "Love is beyond the scope of words."

How can an ordinary man, living in this phenomenal world, understand such love? This love is an expression of Divinity. Like the mariners compass, it always points to the Dime wherever it may be present. As oil makes a lamp burn, love illumines life itself.

What is termed love in ordinary worldly life is not real love at all. It is only one or other form of attachment based on human relationships in the family or in society.

True love is pure, selfless, free from pride, and is full of bliss. Such love can be got only through love. All worldly attachments are not real love at all. They are transient. The everlasting, pure love arises from the heart. In fact, it is ever-existing and all-pervading. How is it that man is unable to recognise such all-pervading love? It is because man's heart today has become barren and is polluted. The heart is filled with all kinds of desires and there is no room in it for pure, unsullied love to enter. It is only when the worldly attachments are expelled from the heart that there will be room for real love to abide in it and to grow.

Quality of true love is to give and not to receive

As a man grows from childhood to manhood, his attachments change from the mother to friends, to wife and children, and then to the acquisition of wealth. In the ups and downs involved in the pursuit of wealth, he begins to feel the need for God. This perpetual alternation of attachment and separation cannot be called real love which is spiritual and enduring.

The quality of true love is to give and not to receive. How many are to be found today in the world who love to give? Even a father hesitates to part with his property to his children. Only God can be the infinite giver. Hence love is a divine quality. Although inherently love is present in every cell of the human being it does not manifest itself because of the pollution of the heart. A man without love in his heart is as good as dead.

Make the preceptor's message part of your being

Once a preceptor summoned all his disciples and told them that he was going to give them something extremely sweet which they should protect from insects and rodent. The disciples resorted to various devices to safeguard the guru's gift. However, one of them ate the sweet, digested it and derived considerable strength and energy from it.

What is the lesson to be drawn from this story? It means that the teachings learnt from the preceptor are not to be merely preserved in safety. The nectarine message of the preceptor should be enshrined in the heart. It should be made part of one's being. Then the recipient acquires vigour and strength.

In the same manner, whatever you see or hear or read should be taken to heart and then put into practice. Only then you have the full satisfaction of benefiting from the teachings. Hearing is not enough. You must take in and digest what you have listened to. It must be put into practice in daily life. This was the prayer which the gopikas addressed to Krishna that the nectarine music flowing from His flute should fill their dry hearts with divine love. A pure heart is essential for progress in the spiritual or other fields.

Divine love is all-compassing and the whole cosmos is contained within it. Hence it is essential for man to comprehend the nature of this love. Today, the world is riddled with disorder, violence and unrest.. Injustice, exploitation, corruption and immorality are 'ubiquitous. All these are the very antithesis of love. Only through the divine love can the world be transformed.

Aathmik love (Spiritual love) has to be distinguished from love or attachment related to the body, the mind or the intellect. These latter attachments are related to the world and they are the source of sorrow.

Four types of love

Love of the Divine is of four kinds. One is *Svaartha-Prema* (love based on self-interest). The second is *Samanjasa-Prema*, the third is *Paraartha-Prema*, and the fourth is *Yathaartha-Prema*.

Svaartha-Prema is like a lamp kept in a room. The lamp illumines only the room. This kind of selfish love is confined to a limited group and does not extend to others.

Samanjasa-Prema may be compared to the light from the moon. This moonlight is visible both outside and inside. It is, however, not very effulgent. The light is dim. This kind of love extends to a wider group but is not very intense.

The third is *Paraartha-Prema*. It is like sun-light. It illumines both inside and outside with brilliance. But it is not continuous in the sense that the sun is not visible at night. But this is not a permanent absence, because the sun rises again. Actually, the sun is always there. Likewise, this selfless love may appear to be absent some times, but it will appear again.

The fourth one is *Yathaartha-Prema* or *Aathma-Prema* This love is present always, inside and outside, in all places and at all times, in all circumstances. This is Divine Love. It is imperishable. It is eternal. It is immanent in everyone. When this love is manifested by a person, he achieves the peace that passeth understanding.

Supreme example of Vibheeshana

How the love of the Divine manifests itself in a devotee is illustrated by the example of Vibheeshana, the younger brother of Raavana. Vibheeshana submitted himself to many indignities at the hands of Raavana out of the love he had for Raama. In the battle against the Raakshasas in Lanka, Raama and Lakshmana destroyed many of the great Raakshasa warriors on the first two days. On the third day a formidable warrior stood before them. Vibheeshana told Raama: "If you conquer this warrior, the whole of Lanka will be yours. He is a greater warrior than even Raavana." Raama fought with this mighty Raakshasa the whole day, but could not vanquish him. Raama was on the point of giving up the battle for the day. At this stage-, Vibheeshana, who was behind Raama, said: "This is not the time to give up the fight. You must rally all your strength and destroy the enemy. You should not miss this chance. I am telling this out of my love for you." Egged on by Vibheeshana, Raama continued the fight and destroyed his opponent.

The formidable warrior fell on the battlefield. The moment he learned that the warrior was dead, Vibheeshana also collapsed on the ground. Recovering himself after chanting the name of Raama, Vibheeshana got up and confessed to Raama: "Svaami! This is a mark of weakness on my part. I should not have succumbed to such weakness. Having filled myself with your love, how could I succumb to such weakness?" Raama observed: "That's all right. But why did you collapse so suddenly?" Vibheeshana replied: "Svaami! This happened because of bodily attachment. It was due to parental affection. That mighty warrior was my son."

He was Vibheeshana's son! See what Vibheeshana did. To ensure the victory of the Lord, Vibheeshana did not hesitate to get even his son killed in battle.

God is greater than son

Raama asked Vibheeshana: "Why did you do this? Is it not wrong on your part? Why did you not tell me at the beginning itself that he was your son?" Vibheeshana replied: "When you are facing an enemy, you should not worry about any kind of relationship on the battlefield. In this war there is no room for considerations of relationship. When anyone takes up arms against you, he ceases to be a relation. Whether it is mother, father, son or anybody else, when he figures as an enemy especially against God, there can be no question of relationship. I have completely surrendered to you. I am your servant. I must be primarily be concerned about your victory and not about any temporary kinship. The only truth for me is your will."

It is this abounding love of Vibheeshana for Raama, which contributed to Raama's victory. Love for the Divine should be inextricable bond. All other worldly attachments are impermanent. *Thaamasik* bonds are like iron chains. *Raajasik* bonds are copper chains. *Saathvik* bonds are like chains of gold. But, whether the chains are of iron, copper or gold, they are chains all the same. The nature of the metals may vary, but the chains are shackles nevertheless. Vibheeshana declared: "I have no use for any of these bonds. I am content with the pure love of Raama."

It is to demonstrate to the world the supreme quality of total love for the Divine that Vibheeshana acted in this manner.

Vibheeshana is a *saathvik* (Supremely sacred) friend of Raama. Despite his long intimacy with Raama, Lakshmana was not in the same category. He was a *saathvik* brother, not a *saathvik* friend. Sugriva was a *Raajasik* friend. Jaambhavan was a *thaamasik* friend. Vibheeshana, though he belonged to the Raakshasa brood, stands out as a *saathvik* friend (pure and selfless). It is in this unalloyed purity that love shines. It is utterly invaluable.

Divine Love as glorified by the *Vedhas*

About Divine love the *Shruthi (Vedha)* declares: "It did not originate from the firmament. It did not grow from the earth. It has no birth and death. It is all-pervading. It emerges from the heart when the knots of ignorance are broken." This is how the *Vedhas* glorified Divine Love. Even Naaradha, the author of the *Bhakthi Suthras*, could not describe the nature of Divine Love. He described in various terms the state of mind of the devotees filled with love of the Lord, but he could not describe *prema* (love) itself. He compared *Prema* to a priceless gem. Likewise Tulasidas also referred to Raama's name as a precious gem.

Where is this love to be found? It can be got only from Bhagavaan Himself, who is the very embodiment of love. Do not treat lightly this infinitely valuable love, which is eternal, pure, sacred and powerful beyond words.

Do not miss this opportunity given to you by Sai.

It is only devotion to His feet that will redeem you.

Do not be swayed by anyone's words.

Come all of you! Come!

Come along and bask in this blissful love!

Discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 27- 7-1996.

My desire, if I can put it that way, is this: More and more should yearn for me. That desire can be realized only if I assume this form and come among you. Those of you who have been following the unfolding of my story will have discovered this by now ... My purpose can be understood in a general way only by earnestly and vigilantly watching, trying to get to the meaning of every word and action with patient attention.

Baba

30. Seek *the guru* within you

All the stars are Brahman;

The Sun is also Brahman;

The Moon is Brahman; Water is Brahman;

Svarga is Brahman; Vaikunttha is Brahman;

Speech is Brahman; the individual is Brahman;

Birth is Brahman; Sustenance is Brahman;

Death is Brahman;

All actions are Brahman; the body is Brahman;

The whole of nature is Brahman;

Life is Brahman. This assembly is Brahman.

The Sai proclaiming this Truth is Brahman.

The tree growing out of the soil returns to the soil;

The individual arising from Brahman

returns to Brahman;

This truth is not easily perceived

That is the mystery of this marvellous creation.

EMBODIMENTS of Brahman! When a seed is sown in the earth, it sprouts as a sapling and grows in due course into a big tree. In the tree, the branches, the leaves, the flowers and the fruits all appear as distinct from each other. Moreover, each of them is used for a specific purpose. But all of them are different forms of the mud from which they have originated.

Seeing a rope at a distance, suspecting that it may be a snake, a man develops fear. Soon another person arrives and assures him that it is not a snake but a rope. The moment he realises that what he feared was a snake, was only a rope, he gets rid of his fear. During all the stages, the rope was only a rope.

Likewise, the ignorant man mistakes the phenomenal world for the *Brahman*, till a *jnaani* reveals to him that what he thought was Nature is in reality *Brahman*. All that one sees in the entire universe is a manifestation of the *Brahman*. Some people declare: "Where is *Brahman* and what are we, petty human beings? How can we be equal to the all encompassing *Brahman*?" This is not correct. You are that omnipotent, all-pervading *Brahman*. Because of your worldly attitude, you are not recognising the Reality. You are separating yourself from the Divine. All that you see is *Brahman*. To search for God as something different from you is a delusion. But this truth is not easily recognised by man.

When you look at the ocean, its endless series of waves and the foam from the waves, they all appear separate from each other. But the truth is they are all one. The water in the waves and in the foam comes from the same ocean and has the same qualities.

Likewise, from the infinite ocean of *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being-Awareness-Bliss), innumerable living creatures emerge like waves. While the Divine is in the state of *Sathyam-Jnaanam-Anantham* (Truth-Wisdom-Infinity) man is in the state of *Sath-Chith-Aanandha*.

Fill your vision with love

Embodiments of Divine Aathma! When you fill your vision with love, the whole creation will appear divine to you.

The cosmos appears to you as a manifestation of diversity, but in reality there is no diversity. No one makes any effort to discover the unity that underlies the diversity.

In every human being, both Divinity and the *Maaya* principle are immanent. How is this to be comprehended? *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* represent the Divine in man. The names and forms which man perceives are expressions of the *Maaya* principle.

On the ocean, the wind is the cause of waves, on the ocean of *Sath-Chith-Aanandha*, the wind of *Maaya* gives rise to the innumerable living creatures. Therefore, the individuals who have emerged from the ocean of *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* are manifestations of the Divine. Divinity is everywhere. But because of man's ignorance, man is a prey to numerous troubles. Here is an example:

Today is described as *Guru Puurnima* day. This is not quite correct. The day got its name because of some *gurus* who wanted to have an occasion for receiving offerings from their disciples. The right name for this day is *Vyaasa Puurnima*.

Vyaasa was born on this full-moon day. He completed the codification of the writing of the eighteen *pure has* on this day. Owing to the passage of time *Vyaasa Puurnima* came to be called *Guru Puurnima*.

The Trinity and the three gunas

The true meaning of *Guru* is "one who dispels the darkness of ignorance". Another meaning of the word is "one who is beyond attributes and forms, namely, the Supreme Self (The *Brahman*)". When this Self is within you where is the need to search for someone to teach you? A teacher who teaches others has had a teacher himself. The one who has no *Guru* above him is the true *guru*. The *Sanskrit* stanza which hails the *guru* as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara and as Parabrahman is misinterpreted. The right approach is to consider Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara as the *guru*. These three are symbolised by the three *gunas*: Brahma is *Rajas*, Vishnu is *Sathva* and Shiva is *Thamas*. The whole cosmos is constituted by the three *gunas*. The three *gunas* are present in man. The Trinity are present in the form of the three *gunas* in every human heart.

Hence, you are your own *guru*. You need not seek him elsewhere. The so-called *gurus* of today seek to impart some *manthras* and receive fee-offerings as *Guru-Dhakshina* on *Gum-Puurnima* day. The *manthra* is whispered in the ear and the palm is stretched for an offering. This is what happens today. It is not the proper sign of a *guru*.

You are a *guru* unto yourself. All potencies are within you. This is indicated by the *Gaayathri Manthra*.

You have to feel at all times your inherent divinity, which is also present in everyone. When you help or feed someone you must feel that the Divine in you is feeding the Divine in others.

Follow Svaami to get the powers

Embodiments of Divine Aathma! For many years you have been pursuing wrong paths because of the feeling of separateness. The truth is you are part of *the Samashti* (collective). This collective is a part of *Srishti* (creation). Beyond creation is *Pushti* (the cosmic energy).. Transcending that energy is *Parameshthi* (the Supreme Omni Self). You are all these as an embodiment of the Divine. You have to proceed from the individual to a realisation of the Omni Self.

All are manifestations of the Divine. You may ask whether you can ever acquire the powers possessed by Svaami. Follow me. You are bound to get that power. That power is latent in you. But you are not aware of it. You want to experience bliss. If you truly follow Svaami, you will discover that bliss within you. Nor is that all. You will find that bliss all around you, wherever you go. You cannot find that bliss in the physical world. It is wholly within you. Consider yourself as *Brahman* (Divine) at all times and in all situations. You will thereby become one with the Divine.

Turn your mind Godward and you will experience the bliss of the Divine. It is for this reason that Svaami gives you advice from time to time as to what you should do and what you should avoid. All this is not for my sake but for your own good, to make you take to the path of God Realisation, to teach you the Supreme truth about the Brahman and to make your sacred life an ideal one.

Every man should strive to become an ideal human being. This means that every one should testify to his Divinity. Imagine how happy everyone would be if the entire world was filled with this pure, sublime and sacred ideal.

Recognise that God is your preceptor. He is the preceptor of preceptors. When you have such an all-pervading guru, why should you hanker after gurus of lesser breed?

Names vary but the Lord is One

All are children of God. All are embodiments of the Divine, as declared in the Geetha. Vishnu is described as the Lord carrying in His four hands the conch, the discus, the mace and the lotus. These four represent the cosmic power of sound, the wheel of Time, the puissance of the Lord and the heart in which the Lord dwells.

There is a certain naivety about the way in which Vaishnavites and Shaivites adore the same deity, Venkateshvara. Vaishnavites hail Him as "Venkataramana," while Shaivites hail Him as "Venkateshvara." The votaries of each sect derive some special satisfaction from using a particular name, though the Lord they worship is one and the same. The names vary but the Lord is one.

Shiva is called Pashupathi (the Lord of cattle). Krishna is worshipped as Gopala (the Lord of cows). The emblems of Shiva and Vishnu have common characteristics. Sectarian differences are out of place in the worship of the Divine.

Students should learn a lesson from a musical instrument like the Veena. It has different strings producing different vibrations. But if the vibrations are discordant the music jars on the ears. Just as there should be harmony in playing on the Veena, there should be harmony among people in a country professing different faiths.

Shraddha and Bhakthi

Shirdi Baba used to ask for two rupees from devotees who came to him. The two rupees symbolised *Shraddha* (earnestness) and *Bhakthi* (devotion). These are the two qualities he expected from the devotees. The combination of the two is essential for spiritual progress. Only then bliss will emerge like a plant from a seed.

From this day onwards, give up all differences and concentrate on realisation of the *Brahman* (the Omni Self). All are embodiments *of Brahman*. In due course all will realise this truth by eschewing narrow-minded differences. Develop the sense of spiritual oneness by continuous practice. This sense is bound to grow if you act upto Svaami's injunctions. The primary requisite is love for God.

Discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on 30-7-1996.

31. The message of *Vedhaantha*

*One may master the scriptures,
Or be a great composer of poems,
But without purity of heart
These accomplishments are valueless.*

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Aathma! From ancient times Bhaarath has been famous for its exposition of the four *Purushaarthas* (the four goals of life--Dharma, *Artha*, *Kaama* and *Moksha*) and the teachings of the *Vedhas* and *Vedhaangas*. The *Vedhas* embody the sublime truths experienced by the sages and the seers.

Vedha is derived from the root '*vidh.*' It means knowledge. The *Vedha* proclaims the truths, which are valid for all time, for all the three worlds, relating to the well-being of mankind and the divinisation of human life. The *Vedhas* taught the principles of daily life and how people should order their lives. Their approach is dualistic, being concerned about how men should achieve the four goals of life in the world.

The *Vedhas*, which originally constituted a single body of hymns, were later divided into three sections: *Rig-Vedha* *Yajur-Vedha* and *Saama-Vedha*. The *Yajur-Vedha* later got subdivided into *Shukla* and *Krishna Yajur-Vedha*. Then came *Atharvana-Vedha*.

The nine *Vedhas*

The *Vedhas* are known by nine names. The first is *Shruthi--that* is, what is learnt by listening. This was necessary in ancient times when printing of books was unknown. The others are: *Anushravana*, *Aamnaaya*, *Samaamnaaya*, *Chandhas*, *Adhyaasa*, *Gamana*, *Nigama*, *Aagama*. *Nigama* and *Aagama* refer to the breathing process of the Divine.

All the *Vedhas* relate to the affairs of the phenomenal world. Each *Vedha* has a *Samhitha* (collection) made up of *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas* and *Upanishaths*. All these lay down the practices that should be observed in the stages of *Grihastha* (householder) and *Vaanaprastha* (hermit leading an ascetic life). The practices were intended to control the mind. They are not designed to enable one to have direct experience of God.

It is *Vedhaantha* that deals with the question of Self-Realisation. For the spiritual journey, it is the guide-post and the destination.

There are three essential things to be understood regarding *Vedhaantha*. First is *Thaarakam*. Second is *Saankhya*. Third is *Amanaskam*.

Thaarakam calls for the understanding of four, principles: *Kesari*, *Dhesari*, *Madhyama* and *Bhagavathi*. *Thaarakam* calls for the investigation of five *mudhras* (ritualistic hand gestures) and after realising their spiritual insignificance, concentrate on *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* and merge the mind in the bliss of that experience.

Saankhya envisages twenty five entities made up of the five sense organs, the five sheaths, the five life-breaths, the five elements, the mind, the body, the intellect, the inner motivator and the individual soul. This system of *yoga* calls, for an enquiry into the reality of each of these entities leading to the discovery that the Reality, *Sath-Chith-Aanandha*, is beyond all these and to

recognise one's identity with this transcendental *Aathma*. This calls for an exploring of both the external world and the internal world of mind and spirit.

Amanaskam means the realisation that the entire universe is nothing but *Brahman*, which is the only Reality. When there is this realisation of *Brahman* the one without a second--even the mind ceases to exist. It is only the operations of the mind that result in the perception of diversity in the universe. When oneness is experienced, there is no mind at all. All is *Brahman* in that state of consciousness. There is room only for *Prema* (Love) in this state. That love is Truth.

Power of love experienced in the state of oneness

The power of that love is illustrated by an episode in Bhaagavatham. Once Yashodha went in search of Krishna and could not find him anywhere. She met Raadha and asked her whether she had seen Krishna. Raadha closed her eyes and meditated intensely on Krishna. That very moment Krishna appeared there. Yashodha realised that the love of a devotee like Raadha for Krishna was infinitely greater than her own maternal love for him.

This is how the Divine reveals Himself to devotees. Krishna appeared instantaneously before Raadha because of her pure, selfless love. If the heart is polluted or filled with pride, God cannot be experienced even if one tries for endless years.

Yashodha confessed to Raadha that her devotion had removed the veil of ignorance and pride clouding her vision all along. She admitted that there were many who loved Krishna more than she did and requested Raadha to teach her how to love Krishna. Raadha told Yashodha that this love cannot be taught by others. Each one has to develop it by one's own pure and total devotion.

After Krishna came home, Yashodha chided him for going to others houses to steal butter while refusing to eat what was available in plenty at home. The lesson to be drawn from Krishna's action is that He preferred to enjoy the devotion and love of His devotees rather than the maternal solicitude of Yashodha.

How to realise the presence of Divine within

This means that if you have pure, sacred, selfless love for God, the Divine will appear at that very instant.

How do you realise the presence of the Divine within you? Your body is made up of physical constituents like iron, water, phosphorus and lead, the value of all of which totals barely a few rupees. And yet within the body there is a power which can make millions. Wherefrom does that power come? Does it come from the mother who gave birth to the child? No. Till the child in the womb is four months and nine days old, the foetus is just a round mass of jelly. Then a force of vibration enters the embryo. Wherefrom does that vibration come? That is the *Brahma-Thatthva* (Brahman principle). That is the *Praana-Thatthva* (Life Principle). From that moment the child in the womb starts moving. Simultaneously the Brahman Principle enters the foetus. The combination of the two in the body is *Thaarakam*. This is one of the secret doctrines of *Vedhaantha*. This process is treated as a human phenomenon. It is not something human. It is a manifestation of *Brahman*.

When I speak through the mike you are able to hear me. But without the current the mike cannot function. The mike is matter. The current is energy. Their combination enables my voice to reach all of you.

Likewise, the coming together of *Brahman* and *Maaya* results in emergence of the *Brihath-Svaruupa* (the cosmic form of the Lord). *Brihath-Svaruupa* is the all-pervading energy.

How to realise the Self

You must realise that whatever scriptures one may master or whatever power and wealth one may acquire, without love one cannot achieve liberation. All of you are looking at the external world. Turn your vision inward. The external vision is useless. It is when you look inward that you will recognise your true form. The master of a house throws out all the useless things but safeguards what is most valuable inside an iron safe in the house. Each of you should realise what is most precious within you. The three processes of *Thaarakam*, *Saankhya* and *Amanaska* are extremely precious spiritual gems. They are within you, but you are not aware of their existence, because you have not related yourself to the owner, the Master within you. That owner is the *Paramaathma* (Supreme self). How to relate yourself to the owner and cultivate his friendship? To enable the students to understand this I am explaining this truth of *Vedhaantha* in simple terms.

Neutralise *Maaya* to reach the *Paramaathma*

The master resides in the upper floor of the house. You are outside the gate, guarded by a mastiff called *Maaya*. How, then, are you to approach the master, *the Paramaathma*? You shout His name. He comes down, recognises you and takes you inside. *Maaya* does not trouble you.

To neutralise *Maaya*, you have to prove your oneness with the Divine. This has been proclaimed in the Upanishathik saying: "*Adhvaitha dharshanam Jnaanam*" (The Supreme knowledge is the perception of the non-dual unity). This is the path of knowledge. The other path is that of devotion. The Lord comes down to help you when you chant His name at all times. You may ask how this can be done when one has to attend to many other things everyday, including study of books etc. There is no room for this doubt. Consider every act of yours as an offering to God. Do what is appropriate for each action. All this is necessary till you secure God's grace. Thereafter, they are unnecessary.

Awareness consists in the conscious remembrance of God on all occasions.

In the presence of evil actions, the Godly man should not remain a silent spectator. He has to stand up for truth. Because of their failure to do so when the Kauravas were attempting to disrobe Dhraupadhi, Krishna accused Bheeshma, Dhrona and other Aachaaryas of being accomplices in Dhuryodhana's sinful act. Because of this grievous lapse on their part all these preceptors came to a sad end.

Lord's name should be remembered with total faith

Vedhaantha declares that three kinds of attachment--attachment to wealth, wife and children--are the cause of a great deal of sinful deeds. Hence, Krishna enjoined Arjuna to remember the Lord always and fight the battle. That will ensure his victory.

However, the Lord's name should be remembered with total faith. This is what the students should bear in mind. Krishna sought to instill such faith in Arjuna through the Geetha. Whoever it may be, if he carries out Svaami's commands with total, unwavering faith, he will have direct vision of the Divine in a moment. This principle is taught by *Saankhya Yoga*.

Vedhaantha in its essence is extremely simple. It is easier to grasp than butter. God is softer and sweeter than butter. To experience God you have to apply the heat of *Jnaana-Agni* (the fire of spiritual knowledge) to the heart filled with love. You must come near to God and become dear to Him through your love. When that happens desires disappear.

Vedhaantha is replete with such profound truths expressed in short aphorisms. Dr. Jumsai (who had spoken earlier) said that all are children of God. In fact all are the Divine itself. Instead of being a lover, whose love is confined to a few, become love itself so that you can love all. This is the supreme truth proclaimed by *Vedhaantha* (*Vedhic* metaphysics).

Discourse on 31 - 7-1996, in the Sai Kulwant Mandap.

What exactly is the aim and purpose of all the sastras, the Bhaagavatam, the Puraanas, these discourses and the harikathas? It is to tell man the truth about himself. There is no plot to mislead you. That is not the desire of the Sages who wrote down these annals and their own experiences. You know only the present and what is happening before your eyes. You do not know that the present is related to the past and is preparing the course for the future. It is like the head-lines and titles of a film on the screen; as the letters gleam one after the other, you read them and pass on to the next that comes to view. Each new letter or word wipes out the one already before your eye, just as each birth wipes out the memory of the one already experienced.

Baba

32. Man's true kith and kin

Truth is the mother;

Wisdom is the father;

Right conduct is the brother;

Compassion is the friend;

Peace is the spouse;

Forgiveness is the son;

These six alone are the Real relations for everyone.

IN THIS vast phenomenal universe, we consider the body as the mother. But the body is perishable by the very name given to it--Shareeram---that which decays. The bodies of the mother and the son are both impermanent. Hence for every human being the real mother is *Truth--Sathyam Maathaa*. Truth is that which remains unchanged for all time. Truth is eternal and changeless. Hence from ancient times the sages esteemed Truth as Divine. Truth, therefore, should be considered one's real mother.

Pithaa jnaanam (Wisdom is the father). Is the one who fosters and protects your body the father? He is only a guardian. The true father is wisdom, which is Divine. The Upanishaths hailed Truth and Wisdom as Divine.

Dharmo bhraatha (Righteousness is the brother). The uterine brothers who are elder or younger than one are not one's real brothers. From the worldly point of view they are one's brothers. But one's true brother is *Dharma* (Righteousness), which is Divine.

Compassion is one's true friend

Dhayaa Sakhaa (Compassion is the friend). People look upon associates with bodies as friends. This is not correct. One's true friend is Compassion.

Shaantham Pathni (Peace is the spouse). One's true spouse is peace, without which no existence is possible. Peace is a shining ornament for man. It is Divine.

Kshama puthrah (Forgiveness is the son). This is not obtained easily by everyone. Today, because of the influence of the *Kali* age, sons are more keen on getting at the properties of their parents than on rendering them service or looking after them. Shri Raama was a son who had such supreme regard for the honour and good name of the father that he willingly chose to go into exile to the forest and face all difficulties. Hence Raama is hailed as the very embodiment of *Dharma Raamo vighrahaan Dharmah*. Such a son is verily the Divine. To have *Kshama* (forgiveness) as one's son is to possess the Divine.

These six qualities are the right relations for every man. Human birth has been conferred on humanity to acquire these relationships.

Today these basic human values have been forgotten. People remember what happened yesterday or today, but do not remember the great truths inherited from the past. With the result that man is plunged in misery and worry perpetually.

Men have forgotten their ancient culture. They are lost in the transient values of modernism. Remembering this, you students should pledge yourselves to uphold human values.

You should become "Lovers of the *Aathma*"

What you should seek to acquire today are not scholarship and wealth. You must acquire the supreme quality of *prema* (love). The Vice-chancellor (in his speech earlier) said that you should prepare yourselves to become soldiers. You should become not "soldiers" but seekers of "soul-dears." You should become lovers Of the spirit. The term soldiers has a political tinge. But you should become "Lovers of the *Aathma*" Cultivate human values. Remember that you are born in Bhaarath, breathe the pure air of Bhaarath, live in Bhaarath and grow in Bhaarath. The denizens of Bhaarath have been described as Hindus. What is the meaning of Hindu? Anti Kumar said (in his speech earlier) that Hindus are those who have abjured *himsa* (harming others). This is not correct. Hindu stands for the five following qualities. "H" for Humanity. "I" for Individuality. "N" for Nationality. "D" for Divinity and "U" for Unity. These embody the Hindu tradition.

These five qualities are the *Pancha-praanaas* (five life-breaths). They are the *Pancha-Thatthvas* (five vital principles). The ancient Bhaaratheeyas, who have drawn sustenance from these five values, have esteemed them as the *Samskrithi* (essence of their culture).

Samskrithi means that which has been refined. To make a silver tumbler you have to subject a piece of silver to the process of melting, processing and shaping it into a tumbler. Only after the metal goes through all these processes can it become a tumbler. This applies to every object of utility. The raw material has to be processed before it can become a useful object.

The four goals of human existence

Men should consider, however, of what use is their ceaseless pursuit of material objects, forgetting God? All day long men everywhere are pursued by endless desires and worries. Only a proper culture can convert these desires and worries into purposeful actions.

It is for this reason that the ancient sages placed before Bhaaratheeyas the four goals of human existence. *Dharma* (Right Conduct), *Artha* (the acquisition of material things), *Kaama* (satisfaction of desires) and *Moksha* (Liberation).

Today, people have given up the first and last of these four goals--*Dharma* and *Moksha*--and are immersed only in the pursuit of *Artha* (wealth) and *Kaama* (sensory pleasures). What is necessary is to infuse *Dharma* (Righteousness) into the pursuit of *Artha* and *Kaama*. The acquisition of wealth and the enjoyment of sensory pleasures should be based on *Dharma*. The entire life should be founded on Righteousness. Only then wealth acquires real value.

Human life is related to both *Artha* (material) and *Parama-artha* (spiritual) wealth. The combination of material wealth for daily life and spiritual wealth for achieving supreme bliss constitutes the meaning and goal of human life.

These basic human values have been forgotten today and human life has been devalued. Today the price of everything has gone up inordinately. Even a broomstick is very costly. But the value of man has depreciated, because men no longer possess the qualities which a human being should have.

Learn to speak sweetly and avoid excessive talk

Human values are essential for man. They are the hall-mark of his humanness. These values should be manifested in daily life. Your words should demonstrate their sacredness. Your actions should sanctify these values.

Oh Students! Pay heed to my words!

Eschew harshness in speech.

Excessive talk is harmful.

Idle strolling is a bad habit.

Let your light shine;

Become lamps for others.

The first thing students should learn is to speak sweetly and avoid excessive talk. They should avoid going from room to room like rats and cats. This is part of the culture they have to imbibe.

In the culture of Bhaarath, there are three basic elements: *Naithikam* (Morality), *Dhaarmikam* (Righteousness) and *Aadhyaathmikam* (Spirituality). These are the threefold aspects of man.

First, *Naithikam* (Morality). This is based on pure thoughts. When there is purity in thoughts, there is righteousness in speech. Out of righteousness ensues spirituality. There should be unity in thought, word and deed.

Love is the force that binds person to person

Whatever you may learn or do, the fundamental requisite for right living is love. Love promotes truth in speech. That speech should be both pleasing and wholesome as indicated in the Geetha "*Sathyam Hitham preethikaram.* "

There is love in *Jnaanam* (wisdom). Without love wisdom is like bagasse after the sweet juice has been taken out of the sugarcane.

The *dharma* should be rooted in love. Of what use is charity or an act of goodness without love in it? There is love in peace and in all other qualities. It is the undercurrent flowing through truth and other qualities. Without love, there can be no genuine relationship between different beings. Love alone can foster unity. Hence love and unity are essential for mankind. Unfortunately men have become morally blind without the two eyes of love and unity.

Love is the force that binds person to person. Unfortunately today, though Bhaarath has achieved freedom, she is far from achieving unity. Let us have a look at the past. You know about Emperor Ashoka. The top of the Ashoka Pillar, with figures of four lions looking in the four directions, is independent India's national emblem.

A lesson from Emperor Ashoka

Emperor Ashoka had established a certain custom of giving presents to his feudatory Kings on the occasion of his birthday. Today is India's fiftieth Independence Day. On the occasion of Ashoka's fiftieth birthday, all the feudatory rulers had assembled in the capital.

A ruler from the east submitted to the Emperor the following message: "Your Majesty! I have collected this time three, times as much revenue as in previous years and I am offering it to the Emperor's treasury." The Emperor appeared pleased with the offering and accepted it.

Then came a ruler from the western region. He said: "Your Majesty! I have cut down as much as possible the public expenditure in my kingdom, reduced the salaries of public servants and have brought six times as much tribute as I used to give in earlier years." The Emperor requested the King to resume his seat.

A ruler from the northern region made the following submission. "Oh Lord! I have been unable to bring any offering to your Majesty because of the failure of rains in my kingdom. Owing to the poor harvests I could not make any collections from my subjects." The Emperor expressed his approval and requested the king to resume his seat.

Next came a ruler from the south. He informed the Emperor: "Your majesty! This year I have had to raise the taxes, reduce the expenditure and put down unrest in different parts of the Kingdom and round up all the troublesome elements. As a result peace has been established all over the kingdom. This is the offering I am making to the Emperor." The King requested him to resume his seat.

Then the ruler of Magadha rose from his seat and approached the Emperor: "Your Majesty! My sole concern is about the welfare of my people. I have used all the taxes collected from the people for establishing schools and hospitals for the people and to provide other amenities to them. I got wells dug for providing drinking water to the people. I got tanks to be dug for storing water. Without causing any hardship to the people, I spent all the money collected from them for their own benefit. All the people are happy. I did not reduce the emoluments of public officials. I allowed them to use the money collected from the people to be used for the benefit of the people, thereby encouraging them to discharge their responsibilities with zeal. Hence, I could bring to the Emperor only my love on this occasion. I offer the well-being of my kingdom to Your Majesty. My people are living in peace and plenty."

Emperor Ashoka was supremely pleased on hearing these words. He summoned his attendants and offered to the ruler of Magadha presents of the kind he had not offered to anyone before.

Duty of rulers

What is the significance of this episode? This means that rulers should be concerned solely with the well-being of their people. They should seek to provide what is essential for the people. The king built choultries, constructed roads, set up schools, built hospitals for daily life. When these are provided there will be no discontent among the people.

To ensure peace among the people, the sense of spiritual oneness should be developed, as declared in the Geetha: "*Mamaathmaa Sarvabhootha antharaathma*" (I am the Indwelling Spirit in all beings). When this feeling prevails, there can be no room for any kind of differences and strife. If one sees the same spirit that is within him in all the others, how can he hate the others? If one sees his image in a mirror, will he hate it? Everyone loves his own self.

What Svaami wrote as a boy

In this context, I may recall a poem I wrote at the age of seven. It was as follows.

To see your face in a mirror

do you need anybody's help?
Why do you need anyone's
friendship for this purpose?
To view the moon in the sky
do you need a lamp?
To look at the moon shining in the sky
do you require any other source of light?
To know your own Aathma
why do you need a guru?
The Aathma is your God,
your Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma.
One who has realised this,
why does he need any preceptor?

Therefore, everyone should realise that the same Universal Divine Spirit is the Indweller in every being. All are embodiments of the Divine. When this sacred feeling fills everyone there will be no room for conflict or chaos.

Today people have forgotten this sacred truth. Hatred alone is ubiquitous. Envy is rampant. Selfishness prevails everywhere. Self-interest is predominant. Because of these evil tendencies, pure human relations have been undermined.

The relationship which you should develop is that of spiritual oneness. "I and you are one." That is the truth you have to realise. Who is the "You"? It is also another "I." Everyone knows himself as "I." In the declaration, "I and you are one," "You" stands for God (who is in everyone). The first name of God is *Aham* ("I"). Then came '*Aum.*' Every person, in every reference to himself, describes himself as "I" (*Nenu* in Telugu).

When a man declares that "I am a man," the reference to man is finite and impermanent. The "I" is permanent, everlasting.

Brahman is infinite love

Hence, the scriptures declare: "*Sathyam Jnaanam Anantham Brahma.*" The *Brahman* is Truth, Wisdom and everlasting. The term *Aham* applies to *Brahman*. Hence the *Mahaavaakya*, "*Aham Brahmaasmi.*" *Brahma* here is not a four-headed deity depicted in the films, it refers to the Universal, all encompassing Spirit. *Brahman* is infinite love. It is all pervading in its expansiveness. This means that there is no place in the cosmos where love is not present.

This is illustrated by an incident in the *Bhaagavatham*. A *gopika* heard a knock at the door. She was in two minds whether she should open the door or not. Debating in her mind about this she realised that the one outside was the same as the one within her. "That being so, what does it matter whether the door is opened or closed?"

The *Brahman* is the same effulgence shining within you and within everybody else. The gopika experienced the Divine as a cosmic mansion which had no exits and entrances. "When the Lord of the Universe is with- in me, where is the need for a door or a welcome?" (Bhagavaan sang with feeling a song expressing the dilemma of the Gopika and the delight that fills her mind when she realises her oneness with God).

All is within us. The heart is the container of everything. It is the source of strength and of weakness. The pure-hearted man is full of courage. The man with a guilty heart is weak. Love is the source of strength. Get rid of all fear by developing love for God. Thereby the door of your heart opens and you experience Divine Bliss, which is symbolised by the term Kailash, the abode of God.

Students! Purify your hearts by the waters of love. Apply the cleansing powder of *Shraddha* (earnestness). The heart will shine like a star, "a diamond in the sky." Every student should be like a star, twinkling in the sky.

Develop love and cherish concern for the welfare of the people. Realise the goal of union with God. (Bhagavaan explained the significance of *Namaskaaram* and *how japa* should be done). Redeem your lives by loving all and serving all.

Discourse on 15-8-1996.

33. God is the sole refuge

*The form of love is Brahman;
Brahman is permeated with love;
Love is bound to love alone;
If one is filled with love
He is eligible for union with God.
Not from the heavens above,
Nor from the netherworld, nor from the earth,
But by the destruction of
The knot of ignorance in the heart:
One gets liberation, declares the Shruthi.*

EMBODIMENTS of love! Liberation will not drop from the sky. Nor can it come from the *paathaala* (nether world). Nor can it be found on the earth. Liberation can be attained only when ignorance is dispelled. In this vast universe every creature lives according to the law of its being. Man alone, who has the gift of this extremely precious human birth, is failing to realise the purpose of his existence and ignores his duties.

Immersed in sensual mundane pleasures, man forgets his spiritual destiny. All scholarship is valueless without Self-realisation. Raavana, Bhasmaasura and Kamsa were not lacking in scholarship or even religious practices. But all these were related to the *Pravritthi-maarga* (externals) and not to the *Nivritthi-maarga* (cultivation of the Spirit inside). Hence their basic demonic qualities did not change.

It is only when impure and unholy thoughts are expelled from the mind that sacred feelings will enter it. To experience lasting bliss the heart has to be sanctified by filling it with love. Through that love has to be secured *Jnaana* (the highest wisdom).

The goal for youth

The foremost goal modern youth should set before themselves is to sow the seeds of love, rear the plant of forbearance and distribute the fruits of peace to society through dedicated service.

The secret of peace is not in the external world but is within each individual. He should realise that the whole universe is permeated by the Divine. Today the world is filled with strife. It is not possible to make a distinction between a human being and a demon. Man, who evolved from the animal, instead of proceeding towards Divinity, is regressing to animality. Man's primary duty is to uphold the human values of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love. Man today is enveloped in attachment and hatred. The moment he casts them off, he will realise his divinity.

Students! You must realise that the spiritual path is easier than the academic studies you pursue. Education should serve to refine the heart, not fill the mind with useless lumber.

(Bhagavaan sang two poems deprecating the preoccupation with jobs for filling the belly, forgetting the Supreme Lord.)

The country today has lost all sense of ethical and spiritual values. The countryside is rampant with evil practices. Uncontrolled selfishness and insatiable desires are the root cause of the present evils. In the pursuit of worldly objects is there enduring happiness? Not at all. (Svaami sang stanzas from Bhaja Govindam to emphasize the point that youth, wealth and progeny are all ephemeral). Late in life, after going through all the experiences of family life, man even in his last years seeks a happiness that deludes him. Where is happiness to be found? The answer was given by Thyaagaraaja when he sang that happiness is not to be got through wealth but only through the worship of Shri Raama.

The glory of sacrifice

Worldly comforts cannot be adjured. But the spiritual goal should always be kept in mind. There should be a limit to the enjoyment of sensual pleasures. The money that is earned should be used for public good. Bhaaratheeya culture has always glorified the quality of renunciation. Immortality can be got only through sacrifice, declare the scriptures.

Students should realise that God's love alone is totally selfless and boundless. Even the love of parents, wife or children is tainted by a tinge of selfishness. Dedicate all your actions to God. Surrender to God all your bad qualities. God will offer you what is good for you.

How good are relations?

In this context I would relate the story of a student who used to go to a preceptor's hermitage in a forest for his studies.

The *guru* used to teach the student that there is no use in depending on one's mother, father, brothers, or relations or on wealth and property. All these are transient. Therefore he should be on his guard. *'Thasmaath Jaagratha! Jaagratha!'* He also used to teach him that life is full of sorrow upto the very end and hence he should be always on the alert. The boy told the *guru* that this teaching might be all right for recluses like the *guru*, but was irrelevant for ordinary persons like himself. He told the *guru*: "My parents are exceptional, my wife is good, without me she will not take her food. All of them love me. How can I disown them?"

The *guru* said, "I shall prove to you the truth of my teaching." He gave a pill to the student and said that after taking it he will become almost lifeless, but he will be conscious of what is happening around him though others will consider him dead. "Then you will know the truth."

The lad returned home, took the pill and dropped dead (as it were). The mother came, called the father and started wailing over the death of the son. The wife came out on hearing her cries and seeing the husband's body started crying. "I am my father's only daughter. If my husband goes, what will happen to me?" Everyone wailing over the body cried: "What is to happen to me?" Other relatives also gathered and lamented on the death of a young man who was virtuous and spiritually oriented.

At this stage, the preceptor came there. Everybody made way for him. The *guru* asked the mother, the father and the wife why they were wailing. They all mentioned the grievous loss of they had suffered in the death of the young man. "What will happen to me?" was the refrain of each of them. He asked the mother to fetch a glass of water. He dosed his eyes as if in prayer and then told them: "If anyone drinks this water, that person will die but the young man will be restored to life." He first offered the water to the wife as the one dearest to the young man. She said: "I am the only child of my parents. If I die they will collapse. Hence I cannot drink the

water." The guru said: "Your husband will live. Why don't you give up your life?" She replied: "The dead man is no more in any case. Why should I die?"

The guru next asked the mother. She said: "My daughter has come for confinement. She is helpless. And I have two more young daughters to be married. How can I leave them?" When the father was asked, he replied: "I am the head of the family. If I go only two ladies will be left in the house, my wife and my daughter-in-law. My wife will become a widow. With no male member in the house, they will be helpless. How can I give up my life?" All the three declined to drink the water. They went inside the house and drew up a master-plan. They came out and said: "Svaami! You are immensely compassionate. You have no other attachments. Please drink the water yourself and restore our son's life. We will build a samaadhi in marble for you."

At that moment, the guru sprinkled the water on the young man's body. He got up. The guru asked him, "What did your wife say? And your mother and father?" He replied: "They all said, let me die."

God's love alone is unselfish

The *guru* observed: "The world is impermanent. Birth is a misery, old age is a misery. There is trouble with the wife. Entire life is miserable. Therefore, be careful!" says a Sanskrit sloka.

As long as one is alive, all seem to love the body. This is also for purely selfish reasons. God alone is utterly selfless. Loving that God, you can lead your lives in the normal way. There is nothing wrong. Whatever you do, treat it as an offering to God. See God in everyone. Don't have ill will towards anyone. Do not have excessive attachment for anyone. Direct all attachments towards God. Love all. But do not rely on anyone except God. Realise the impermanence of the body and place your trust solely in God. Seek refuge in Him.

The faith is what is most needed today in this Kali Age. It is the loss of faith that is responsible for all the strife and chaos in the country.

Dear students! You are the victims of a purely secular education devoid of roots in spirituality. As often as possible, when you get the chance, meditate on God. That will ensure a good future for you. Earn the esteem of society by your service.

Discourse on 16-8-1996.

34. Man's debt to God

*Fear of Sin has vanished;
Wicked deeds have become common;
Devotion to the Lord is gone;
Indescribable misdeeds
Have enveloped the world.
Oh man! Only the contemplation
Of the name of Hari, which is
The refuge of all renunciants,
Will confer happiness on You. (Telugu Poem)*

*Devotion alone confers the Supreme gift;
Devotion alone destroys the disease of mundane existence;
Devotion alone stirs the yearning for the Divine;
Devotion alone is the means of Liberation. (Sanskrit Poem)*

EMBODIMENTS of Love! To realise the Supreme, the path of devotion is the only royal road. It is the panacea for all worldly ailments and for the disease of birth and death. Devotion is the most effective means for awakening the spiritual urge.

The Upanishaths are the great spiritual legacy of ancient Bhaarath. "*Ishaavaasyam idham sarvam*" (The entire cosmos is the dwelling place of the Lord) declares the Upanishath. If the full import of this one aphorism is understood and practised by Bhaaratheeyas, the country will be free from all difficulties. Any person who has true faith in this declaration will be free from all troubles.

The Upanishaths declared: "*Thath Thvam Asi*" (Thou art That). This truth should get implanted in the hearts of devotees. Equally, the great saying, "*Aham Brahmaasmi*" should get enshrined in the hearts of all human beings. "*Sarvam Khalu idham Brahma* (Verily all this is *Brahman*). The *Brahman* permeates everything in the cosmos.

Prayer is essential for developing love for God

Man has to realise how much he owes to God who has provided so many things for his life and comfort. Prayer is the expression of man's gratitude to God. It is also the means of awakening an awareness of the eternal Divine within him. The Upanishaths beckon man to realise the bliss within him. Prayer is essential for developing love for God.

The prayer should be heart-felt. Raavana worshipped Shiva but without giving up his demonic nature. Hence he could not get the grace of God.

What pleases the Lord

The Lord is pleased with even the simplest things offered with full devotion to Him. It is enough if the devotee offers his body, mind, heart and the joyous tears flowing from his eyes.

Students should realise the supreme value of human birth. The indwelling spirit in every one is the same Divinity. Forms may be different but the Spirit in all is the same. It is pure, unchanging and timeless. It is ever blissful. It is nectarine. Everyone should recognise this *Aathmik* Principle.

The body is like a chariot. It is essential for the journey of life. But you are the charioteer, not the chariot. The four Purusharthas (Goals of life) are the four wheels of the chariot.

Students! In driving the vehicle, you have to be mindful of the state of the road. You have to see how the body is used for various purposes in society according to the prevailing circumstances. You should know how to behave towards elders, teachers, parents and above all, how to love God. You should use your discrimination in the discharge of your duties. Only then you can make the journey of life smooth and safe.

Look upon the body as a shrine in which the Dime is installed. Dedicate all actions to God.

Today many are becoming slaves to wealth, power, position or name. Students should not become such slaves. They should be upholders of sacred ideals. "Help ever; hurt never." Let that be your motto.

Discourse on 1 7-8-1996.

35. The Gospel of hard work

SCIENCE and technology have advanced so much that man is able to explore space and dive into the deep ocean. But he has not learnt how to live like a human being on earth. It is more important for man to learn how to lead a good life on the earth than explore space. Man's life is based on the earth.

Man's primary aim should be to recognise the unity that underlies the diversity in the phenomenal world. To break up what is one into many pieces is easy. But it is difficult to bring them together into a meaningful unit. It is in the unifying process that the utility of things can be understood. The role of both diversity and unity in life has to be properly understood.

When a tailor has to stitch a bush coat out of a piece of cloth, he has first to cut it into various pieces and then stitch them together to make a bush coat. The scissors are used to cut the cloth. The needle is used to stitch the different pieces. Today human beings trend to behave like the scissors rather than as the needle. With the result that all man's intelligence is being used to divide society rather than unify it.

Beyond birth and death

There is a family of three, father, mother and the son. When the father brought home his earnings the mother felt happy. Whenever he came home empty-handed the mother used to get angry. The son watched the alternation of happiness and sorrow in the home. Unable to bear the troubles at home, the father went to a temple of Kaali. He prayed: "Oh Dhevi! I cannot bear these troubles. I cannot live with my wife. Please see that her life is ended soon." "Be it so!" declared the Goddess. The wife died.

Watching this, the son went to the Kaali temple. He prayed intensely to the Goddess. She appeared before him and asked what he wanted. "Please restore the life of my mother," he pleaded. "So be it!" declared the Goddess.

The father desired the death of the mother. The son desired her revival. Their prayers revolved around death and life. Have such prayers any meaning? How much more sensible would it have been if they had prayed for the gift of goodness. The father surely could have asked the Goddess, "Oh Dhevi! Confer good sense on my wife." The prayers of the father and son only brought about death and birth.

(Svaami sang the Bhaja Govindam song in which Aadhi Shankara deplors the human condition which is caught up in the cycle of birth and death and Govinda is the only redeemer).

What folly is it to be caught up in the endless cycle of birth and death? What is the purpose of life? It is to live for some ideals. The Vice-Chancellor (who had spoken earlier) said that there is the practice of performing annual ceremonies for one's departed ancestors. The Vice-Chancellor said that while performing these ceremonies the young people should remember the departed ones with gratitude and love. The children should show their gratitude first and foremost to their parents because they owe their life and all that they enjoy to their parents. The anniversary of their passing should be remembered with grateful tears.

Students should recognise the supreme importance of time. Most of them are wasting three-fourths of the time they have at their disposal. They indulge in useless gossip and scandal. Abusing others amounts to abusing God.

Why borrow from others?

Bhaarath would be a land of plenty if people worked hard instead of being lazy and idle. Bhaarath is well endowed with land, rivers and other natural resources. Bhaarath has become dependent on other nations because the people do not work hard enough. We are borrowing from so many countries. Why? Let us use our resources well. We can then easily feed our people. The people should work hard It is good for their health and happiness.

People today waste a lot of time and energy on meaningless arguments and controversies.

Students! Realise that what I think, say and do are in perfect harmony. Hence there is no loss of memory or weakness of any kind. Look at the young people in their teens. They have castor oil faces and look worn out. They should look happy and cheerful.

A lesson from history

Recall how a small nation like the British ruled over a vast country like India before we got our freedom. The British could do it because Indians betrayed the nation for selfish interests.

Every student should realise his potential strength. All of it is derived from the Divine. (Svaami sang songs from Thyagaraja to point out the power of devotion to achieve the impossible).

Students should cultivate moral values. It is the decline in moral values that is responsible for the deplorable state of the country. Three things are most essential today. Fear of sin, love of God and morality in society.

Discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 18-8-1996.

Egoism is a thorny bush, which when planted and fostered, makes us suffer. It makes enemies even of close friends and does not allow men to work together. Grief follows ego like a shadow.

Baba

36. Shirdi Baba's first miracle

SEEN physically Nature alone is perceived. But seen with the spiritual vision the entire universe is Bhagavaan alone. From the perspective of *Prema* (love) everything will appear Divine.

A young man who had studied Aadhi Shankara's Philosophy, came to me and said: "Svaami! Shankara says' *Brahma Sathyam: Jagath Mithya*. Please let me know what is the truth and what is unreal."

Svaami told him: "You simpleton! Leave it to Nature to demonstrate what is real and what is unreal. Concern yourself with knowing your own reality. There is no need for you to enquire into the nature of *Prakrithi* (the phenomenal universe). Do not argue." A man who is not aware of his own true nature, how is he competent to know about the reality or otherwise of the cosmos?

A man regards his visible body as real and the invisible Spirit as unreal. He does not realise that the invisible is the cause of his pleasure and pain. "Let no one imagine that beauty, youth and vitality will last for ever. Old age is looming ahead and will bring in its train all miseries."

Dheha and Dhehi

There are two entities in man: the *dheha* (body) and the *Dhehi* (the Indwelling spirit). The body is governed by three factors: *Vaatha* (wind), *Pittha* (bile) and *Kapha* (phlegm). The wind factor is responsible for 80 types of diseases. The bile accounts for 82 kinds of ailments, phlegm is the cause of 224 types of maladies. In all, the three account for 386 types of diseases. Recognising the multitude of disease to which the body is prone, the sages of yore sought to give up attachment to the body, while taking care of it for essential purposes.

Many of these diseases are insidious and hence may not be noticed in an apparently strong person. Disease lies hidden in almost every action of man from breathing to eating. The body by its nature is perishable. But the *Dhehi* (the Indwelling spirit) is undying. Through the impermanent body, the eternal spirit has to be experienced. Men are immersed in seeking the passing pleasures of the senses forgetting the lasting bliss to be derived from the spirit. People should realise that true happiness can be got only by union with God.

Some people imagine that God bestows excessive grace on a few, appears to be indifferent towards some others, and totally to ignore some others. All these are only the aberrations of the people having such thoughts. For God all are the same. You can see your true image only in a glass covered on the rear with the mercury of love. Everyone says he has not experienced God, it is not God's fault. The feeling that God favours some and not others is born of jealousy.

I would relate an episode from the boyhood years of Shirdi Baba.

Shirdi Baba and Venkuusa

When Shirdi Baba was about ten years of age, Patel took him to Venkuusa. Patel had a dream in which he was told: "Patel! You are not likely to live long. The boy whom you have brought up so far cannot be looked after by anyone. There is a person called Venkuusa in a certain place. You take the boy to him and leave him in his care."

Venkuusa was giving spiritual lessons to a number of boys. When the young lad was being brought to him, Venkuusa had a premonition of his coming. He called the lad: "Aaoji! Aaoji

(Come, Come). I have been waiting for you all these years." He spoke lovingly to the boy and asked him to go in and have his food.

From then onwards, Venkuusa developed great affection for the boy. Seeing this, the other students felt envious and started talking about him among themselves. "How is it that the teacher is showing so much love for the new boy? We have been here for years. He has not shown us such Love." This was the way some of them spoke. Some others said: "He is lucky to have such love." Some others remarked, "perhaps our teacher expects some money from Patel, who is a wealthy man."

Plan to kill Baba

The attachment between Venkuusa and the young Baba grew steadily from day to day. One day both of them were going to a forest called Sikhaara. After they had gone, the other boys drew up a plan to do away with the young Baba. "Then Venkuusa will have greater liking for us," they thought. They went to the forest and took rest behind a hut. One of the bigger boys, according to the plan they had already made, took a big brick and hurled it towards Baba. Venkuusa had great love for Baba. Immediately on noticing the brick, Venkuusa stood in front of Baba and let the brick hit him. What was aimed at Baba struck Venkuusa. Blood was streaming from Venkuusa's head.

Baba immediately tore a piece of cloth from his robe and bandaged Venkuusa's bleeding head. When Baba and Venkuusa were speaking about the wound caused to Venkuusa, some of the boys came rushing towards them bringing a dead body. That was the body of the boy who wanted to kill Baba. "Biter bit," says the proverb. (If you intend to harm others, you will be harming yourself).

The boys cried: "Guruji! Forgive us" and fell at his feet. Venkuusa told them: "Children! I have grown old. This young lad is carrying on all the work I was doing. Love alone can protect you. When there is no love no one can save you." On hearing these words, the boys fell at the feet of Baba and placed the dead body before him. Baba burst into laughter. Why did he laugh? Not because he felt that the boy who intended to kill him was dead. He knew that death could come at any time, in any place and in any situation. Even at the young age Baba had realised this truth relating to the body. Baba transcended time. Age did not matter to him. He was the Cosmic Person.

He told the boys: "Today this boy has died. Your turn may come tomorrow. No one is immortal."

The boys cried: "How can we explain this calamity to the parents?"

Baba told them: "Tell the parents what actually happened."

The boys realised that if they told the truth they would be put to shame. If they told what did not happen, they would be uttering falsehood. Recognising their dilemma, Baba asked them: "What is it you want now?"

"Please restore the life of this boy." Immediately Baba placed the head of the dead boy on his lap and passed his hand over it. The boy revived. This was Shirdi Baba's first miracle.

Dust unto dust

Students should realise that the body is made up of materials coming from the earth and will go back to the earth when life is extinct. The body is like a mud pot which serves its purpose for a

time and when it is broken, it becomes in the course of time one with the mud from which it was made. A seed sown in the ground grows into a tree with branches, flowers and fruits. All the things in the tree have come out of the earth. Likewise the body is made up of the five elements. It must be used properly.

The essence of *Vedhaantha* can be summed up in one sentence: "The *Aathma* in you is the same as the Divine." Only those who have this feeling can experience God.

Discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on 20-8-1996 when Bhagavaan narrated the circumstances in which Shirdi Baba, as a young lad of ten years, performed his first miracle by restoring to life a dead boy, who had intended to kill him.

One's duty is to act; act well, act in fear of God; act within the bounds of morality; act in love; continue acting; the consequences will naturally follow as the fruit flows the flower. One need not worry or exult. Act enthusiastically, with faith, success is yours.

Baba

37. Jnaana and Bhakthi

EVERYTHING in the cosmos is made up of the five basic elements, which are manifestations of the Divine. The Divine has no separate form. This truth is not realised by mankind. *Avathaars* come to dispel the ignorance of humanity.

Avathaars do not come in unique form. The reason is all the creatures in the world carry out their specific functions. Animals, birds, insects, ants and mosquitoes do not deviate from their respective roles in leading their lives. But, man alone has forgotten his duties. Birds obey "reason and season." Man alone behaves without regard to "reason and season." Hence *the Avathaar* has to come in human form to reform man who has gone astray. Thus it is declared that "*Dhaivam maannusharupena*" (God comes in human form). If God comes in any other form, say, a bird, it will be driven away. Man will take no notice of it. If the *Avathaar* comes in the form of a buffalo, it will be driven away with a stick.

There is nothing greater than devotion

In this context, two points have to be noted. There were two brothers, Jnaanadheva and Bhakthidheva. Both were going on a journey. On the way, they felt thirsty. Bhakthidheva asked Jnaanadheva, "I am thirsty but I cannot see water anywhere." Jnaanadheva said: "Let us see whether there is any well nearby." After going some distance, they noticed an old well with water deep at the bottom.

Jnaanadheva declared: "*Jnaanaath-eva-thu-kaivalyam*" (Through Wisdom anything can be accomplished).

He immediately assumed the form of a bird, flew down to the water in the well, quenched his thirst and came up. Jnaanadheva had the ability to assume any form because of the supreme knowledge of the Self.

Bhakthidheva could not get down into the well. He sat near the well and prayed to God with intense love. After sometime, the water in the well rose to the level of his feet. Noting the wetness of his feet, he opened his eyes and saw that the water in the well had overflowed.

Jnaana requires a change in one's form. *Bhakthi* needs no such change. Intense loving devotion will suffice. What the devotee needs will come running to him. There is nothing greater than devotion.

Bhakthidheva wrote a letter to Jnaanadheva. It was a blank piece of paper which he sent in a cover. When Jnaanadheva opened the letter, he found there was no writing on it. Jnaanadheva then started writing his reply in page after page. He could not come to the end of his writing. His entire life was spent on enquiry and investigation. There was no time for doing anything practical. The life of most scientists is spent this way: continuous experimentation, with no experience. This sort of endless pre-occupation with enquiry is of no use. Devotion is easier than *Jnaana* *maarga* (the path of Knowledge). Through devotion, constant chanting of the name and loving remembrance of God, anything can be accomplished.

Never forget God

Students! See that the love that is inherent in you is not diverted in wrong directions, in anti-social activities, or in ways opposed to the wishes of your parents. So far as love for God is concerned, you need not submit yourself to anyone.

When you love God with all your heart, the bliss you experience is unexcelled. This was the experience of the Gopikas. This has been described as the fifth *Purusha artha*, the experience of union with God *Paramab-hakthi*--*Supreme* devotion.

Students! Whatever you may do in life, never forget God. Whatever positions one may achieve, whether President or Prime Minister, if he forgets God he is nothing. Hero becomes zero if he forgets God. These officers come and go. You must never give up your faith in the supreme. That is the way to redeem human life.

Discourse on 21-8-1996.

38. The Lord and the devotee

Why do you search for God hither and thither?

Is He not present in your heart?

Offer service and receive the love of God.

This is the way to realise the Divine.

STUDENTS! Humility is the hall-mark of education. Humility calls for actions free from egoism and self-importance.

The inherent goodness in man is covered by the ashes of attachment and hatred. Remove the ashes and the goodness will manifest itself.

There are three ways of recognising the Self. One is to consider yourself as the *Dhehaathma*. This is the dualism. The second is: "I am *Jeevaathma*." This is *Vishishta-Adhvaitha* (Qualified non-dualism). *Aham Paramaathma* (I am the Supreme Self). This is *Adhvaitha* (non-dualism). It will be seen that in all the three concepts, the common entity is *Aathma*. The *Deham* (body), *Jeeva* (Individual) and *Param* (the Absolute) are separate. All the three are present in the same person as is clear from the *Gaayathri Manthra*. *Bhur-Bhuvas-Suvah* represent *Bhu* (the body), *Bhuvah* (the Life-Force) and *Suvah* (the *Aathma*). The body is inert matter. The Life-Force animates the body and is vibrant in every cell.

The power of the spirit is exemplified by the life of Kabeer. He was a poor weaver, who used to help the poor out of his earnings. While plying his loom, he constantly chanted the name of Raama. The clothes woven in such a devotional spirit were prized high. But he used to sell his cloth at fair prices and often gave it free to those who could not afford the cost.

Greek devotees: *Bhakthi*

In this context, I wish to refer to a current incident. Here are some 25 Greek devotees. They landed at Bangalore by plane. They strapped their baggage to their backs, carried water bottles in their hands and started walking all the way to Prashaanthi Nilayam. Such is their devotion! At every step they recited the manthra: "Om Shri Sathya Sai Baabaya Namah!" and reached Prashaanthi Nilayam. I went towards them and received them on arrival at the Mandhir. I asked them: "Do you feel pain in the legs?" They said: "Oh Lord! Not at all. We are ready to walk another ten miles if necessary, chanting all the way. If we had come by car, we could not have remembered the Lord's name.

Kabeer was in the habit of uttering "Raam! Raam!" at each step as he walked. The greatness of his devotion spread to all parts of the country. A ruler of that time also came to know about it. Realising Kabeer's poverty and helplessness, the king sent various presents to Kabeer in a palanquin. Kabeer saw the palanquin nearing his house while returning from a bath in the river. Astonished at the sight, Kabeer asked the four bearers of the palanquin: "What is all this? In our house, there are only two of us. For whose sake did four of you bring the palanquin? Both of us are quite hale." Kabeer hinted that only a dead body is carried on the bier by four persons. "Please inform the king that we are quite well," said Kabeer.

The planquin-bearers said: "We have brought in the palanquin clothes, provisions and other gifts from the king who sympathizes with your plight. The king has ordered us to offer them to you because he considers you *anaatha* (an orphan).

How Kabeer delved into the meaning of *Anaatha*

Kabeer said: "Oh! Did the king say so? But, I am not *anathaa*. Bhagavaan is my overlord. I am not without a protecting master. Raama is the only one who is an *anaatha*--there is no Lord above Him. You better offer all these things to Raama."

See how Kabeer has delved into the meaning of the word *anaatha*. No one in the world is an *anaatha* (without a master). God alone is *anaatha*, as there is no *naatha* (master) above Him. Everyone has a master. God alone has no one above Him.

Some people come to Svaami and say: "Svaami! Don't make us *anaatha*. I used to tell them: "It is not you who are *anaathas*. I am the *anaatha*(*Master-less*). Never consider yourself *anaatha* (helpless).

Many people feel miserable and forlorn because they do not understand the ways of God. To those who firmly believe in God, there can be nothing lacking.

First of all, you have to get rid of attachment and hatred. Develop love.

Bhagavaan's example for egolessness

Get rid of ego and possessiveness Here is a small example. Bhagavaan sets the best ideal for you. How? You are all seated where you are. I Myself walk towards you, bending my back, stretching my hand, to receive your letters. If I had chosen to sit and ask you to come and hand over the letters, what would be wrong? Still, with no sense of ego, I am going to each of you, to set an example. This is Sai's ideal.

So many who have come so far at such. expense, will they shrink from walking a few feet towards Svaami? But to demonstrate that I am free from ego, I am acting in this manner to teach a lesson to you. I have no feeling of attachment to any one to treat some as mine and others as not mine. All are mine and I am yours. Every student and devotee should recognise this truth. This is what the Geetha declares: "I am the indwelling spirit in all beings."

You may ask: "Why, then, is God not visible? Why are some near to God and others remote?" God is not to blame. People are immersed in worldly concerns.

Modern youth are all crazy over their games and pastimes. With the result that they sing ridiculous songs, indulge in silly games and revel in meaningless talk. They are not eager to take part in bhajans or interest themselves in devotional activities. Some listen to discourses with one ear and expel them out of the other. Very few listen and take to heart what they have learnt. Some merely repeat parrot-like what they have heard.

Treat sensuous pleasures with contempt

Unfortunately today there are no good teachers and very few earnestly interested speakers. Students must develop real interest in the teachings. They must convert all work into worship. (Svaami sang Thyaagaraaja's song to illustrate how the Lord should be worshipped as omnipresent). God does not judge anyone by his external appearance. This was the lesson which Ashtaavakra taught to the pandits at the court of king Janaka when they laughed on seeing the

crooked body of Ashtaavakra. The latter laughed at them and told them: "I thought you were great scholars. I find you are only a set of cobblers. You judge a person by the skin on his body."

Students should have firm faith in God and minimise their desires. You must treat with contempt sensuous pleasures. Whenever any worldly desires arise in the mind, treat them as garbage that should be thrown only. By this means, students will enter on the path of purity. Then the Divine will welcome you and fill you with bliss. There is no greater goal, no higher destiny.

Discourse on 22-8-1996.

39. The greatness of Bali and Prahlada

EMBODIMENTS of Love! In this phenomenal world, physical relationships like parents, brothers, sisters, wife and children are natural. But in the spiritual context, man should develop relations which are permanent, sacred and transcendental.

One's true relations are *Sathyam* (Truth) as mother, *Jnaanam* (Wisdom) as father, *Dharmam* (Righteousness) as brother, *Dhaya* (compassion) as friend, *Shaanthi* (Peace) as wife and *Kshama* (forgiveness) as son. The physical relations are temporary and bound to pass away. But the six great virtues are the true imperishable relations.

*The foremost duty of everyone is to make
love of God flow towards all in creation.*

*Every man lives not for his own sake
but to render service to society.*

*To forget concern for the body
is the way to realise self-realisation.*

*Of what use is human birth if you do not manifest
unsullied love towards all beings? (Telugu Poem.)*

Oneness with God

Man performs a variety of spiritual exercises to achieve self-realisation and the bliss of oneness with the Divine. These include the nine forms of devotion. In these forms of worship God is regarded as mother, father, friend or master. The highest form of worship is to regard God and the individual as one. "You are I and I am you." This attitude frees man from bondage.

Human beings are different in form and name. Oneness amongst them can be achieved only by a feeling of oneness in thought, by a recognition that the whole cosmos is permeated by the Divine.

God is the cause, the world is the effect. In this marvellous universe, why is man unable to recognise his true nature? Divinity is present in every atom of the cosmos. You have to realise that you are that Divinity.

This truth was declared by Prahlada long ago. Emperor Bali, whose return to the earth for one day in a year is celebrated today in the Onam festival, was the grandson of Prahlada. Bali belonged to a line of great renunciants. His father, Virochana was also known for his spirit of sacrifice. He regarded the welfare of his people as his own well-being.

Mr. Wellington (who had spoken earlier) said that service to humanity is service to God. This principle was observed by Virochana. Emperor Bali also followed the same rule.

Experiencing God by renouncing bad qualities

Once several persons gathered round Buddha and asked him to teach them something about God as he had been pursuing the spiritual path for a long time. The Buddha remained silent. No one is competent to engage in discussions about God. God is in "Yes" and in "No." He is *in Dharma* and *Adharma*, in Truth and untruth. How can you have an argument over one who is

omnipresent? It is a waste of time. (God is the very embodiment of Dharma, *of Sathya and of Ahimsa* (non-violence). Hence, *Vedhaantha* exhorted mankind: "Speak the Truth, follow Righteousness.

Some persons gathered round Raamakrishna Paramahansa and asked him: "Sir! Have you seen God?" Raamakrishna had a hearty laugh. He said: "Yes! I have seen God as I am seeing you. All are forms of God. However, your vision is different. You look at all persons as human beings. But all that you see is Divine. Why are you failing to see the Divine? You cry about your wife, your children, your wealth and your position. Have you ever cried for God in the same way? No. When you cry for God intensely, God will appear before you." Once you renounce your bad qualities you will experience God.

When the Lord as Vaamana, was approaching Emperor Bali's *yaaga*, the Emperor received him reverentially and asked him what he wanted. He said: "I want three feet of ground measured by my feet." Bali said: "Why come all the way to ask for just three feet of ground?" Vaamana declared: "That is all I want." The Emperor's preceptor, Shukraachaarya warned the Emperor against making the gift, as the seeker was no ordinary person. But the Emperor firmly declared that there is no greater sin than going back on one's promise. He kept his word.

Emperor Bali stands forth as the great upholder of the plighted word. That is the reason why the people of Kerala worship him to this day and celebrate the festival of Onam in his memory.

Love is the supreme value

What is that is adored today? It is Truth. Without truth nothing has any value. Without the values of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love, all education and other attainments are useless.

Love is the supreme value. It is not mundane love, but Divine love that is precious. That Divine love encompasses every other form of attachment to friends and others. Cultivate the enduring friendship of God.

Emperor Bali was prepared to offer everything, including himself, to God. That is his greatness. It is not the gift of mere three feet of land. He offered himself to the Lord. "I am offering all that is mine, my family and wealth, and myself, keeping nothing for myself. Save me, Oh lord, who has sought refuge in you," says a *Sanskrit shloka*. "The heart which you gave to me, I am offering to you. What else can I offer at your Lotus Feet?" says a Thelugu poem. This is the spirit in which Bali surrendered to the Lord.

Prahlaadha's gift of his character to Indhra

Many students do not know the full story of Prahlaadha (grandfather of Bali). If you have to name anyone for his highest character, it is Prahlaadha alone.

Once, Indhra conquered Prahlaadha and enjoyed *Swarga* (the realm of the gods). Later Prahlaadha overcame Indhra and deprived him *of Swarga*. Indhra was forlorn and sought the advice of his high-priest for winning back his kingdom. The priest told him that Prahlaadha was performing a great *yaaga* called Vishvajith and Indhra should assume the form of a *Brahmana* and seek a gift from Prahlaadha. Prahlaadha will give whatever one seeks from him. Indhra went to Prahlaadha in the guise of a poor *Brahmana*. Prahlaadha welcomed him and asked him what he wanted.

As advised earlier by his high-priest, he asked Prahlaadha to offer him Prahlaadha's *Sheelam* (character). Prahlaadha enquired of the *Brahmana* of what use was his character to the seeker.

The *Brahmana* replied that there was no need to go into all that. He had expressed what he wanted in response to Prahlaadha's offer to give whatever anyone asked at the Vishvajith sacrifice. "Are you prepared to give or not?" Prahlaadha immediately gave what the *Brahmana* asked with due ceremony.

Within a few minutes, an effulgent flame emerged from Prahlaadha. Seeing the effulgent form, he asked: "Who are you?" The effulgent figure prostrated before Prahlaadha and said: "I am your character. Hitherto I was in you. I fostered your name and fame. Now you have given me away as a gift. Hence I am leaving you."

When character is lost everything is lost

When character left Prahlaadha, shortly thereafter another beautiful effulgent form issued forth from Prahlaadha. Prahlaadha asked him: "Who are you, oh King?" The radiant figure replied "Prahlaadha! I am your *Keerthi* (Reputation). When character has left you, I have no place within you. Hitherto I was the servant of Character. When Character has left you, I have to follow suit."

Prahlaadha was puzzled. Then came another beautiful radiant female form from Prahlaadha. Prahlaadha respectfully asked her: "Mother! Who are you?" "Prahlaadha! After the departure of Character and Reputation, I, namely Rajyalakshmi, (the goddess of royal prosperity) have no place within you." Indhra, who had come in the form of a *Brahmana*, took all the three with him.

That very moment, Prahlaadha lost his kingdom. You can see from this how one's fame and prosperity are dependent on one's character. Character is a supremely Divine quality. Hence God is described as having six great attributes including Righteousness, infinite wealth, boundless prosperity, indescribable fame and unfathomable wisdom.

Prahlaadha was the embodiment of character. After Indhra had taken away his character from Prahlaadha, the latter got married and had a son by name Virochana.

You may realise from this episode what importance is attached to character in the spiritual process. This character should be offered only to God and none else. God is utterly selfless and therefore offering your character to God will mean no loss to you.

In the relationship between the devotee and God, no other relationship should be allowed to prevail. Ball ignored the warning of his preceptor in carrying out his promise to Vaamana. Bharatha condemned his mother's action which resulted in his separation from Raama. Prahlaadha did not submit to his father when it was a question of his devotion to Naaraayana. Meera did not allow her husband's conduct to come in the way of her devotion to Krishna.

Do not give up God

Whatever may happen you should not give up God. God is the only unfailing protector. Abhimanyu obtained his mother's blessings before going into battle at a time when Arjuna was away and Krishna was not available for advice. But her blessings were of no avail when God's strength was not available. Abhimanyu died in the battle valiantly like a hero.

All forms of strength, physical, material, manpower, etc., are of no use without Divine strength on your side.

Divine support and *Dharma* (Righteousness) are the two things essential for success. Whatever spiritual exercise one may practise, one should concentrate on achieving union with the Divine as the primary aim.

Discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 27-8-1996.

40. Krishna's life and message

Sweeter than sugar, tastier than curds,

Extremely sweeter than honey,

Is the chanting of the Divine Name.

Recite, oh mind, the Nectarine Name

Of Shri Krishna for ever.

EMBODIMENTS of love! It is easy to criticize or belittle the *leelas* or infinite potencies of God. But it is very difficult to comprehend the truth about the Divine. The omnipresent Divine is present both in Truth and untruth. He is present both in *Dharma* (righteousness) and *Adharma* (unrighteousness). He is present in good and evil. With regard to such an all-pervading Divine, how can anyone determine what is good and what is bad?

From the earliest times men have been proclaiming what is Divine. That the Divine has a form and possesses innumerable auspicious qualities was declared from their experiences.

The cosmos functions on the basis of three types of actions. Creation, sustenance and dissolution are the three processes. The truth of this phenomenon cannot be denied by anyone at any time or place, whether he is a *Vedhaanthin* or a scientist, an engineer or a man of the world. While this has enabled people to describe the Divine, it has not served to demonstrate God. But they were able to indicate the means by which one can experience God.

Experiencing the power of the Divine

A distant star like the *Dhruva nakshathra* (Pole Star) can be pointed to some one by reference to some nearby physical object like a tree. Likewise the *Vedhas* and Scriptures, while not demonstrating the Divine, have helped to indicate the path leading to the realisation of the Divine.

The spectacle of a dense forest confers delight. The sight of all tall mountain excites wonder. Seeing the torrent in a river one rejoices. All these are evidences of the power of the Divine.

The stars shine. The planets revolve. The sun blazes forth. The wind blows. All these are signs of the Divine at work. When you see the spark of a fire, you can infer the nature of fire. If you know the nature of a drop of water, you can understand the nature of Ganga. Likewise, if you understand the nature of the atom, you can understand the nature of the entire cosmos. Recognising this truth, the Upanishaths declared: "The Divine is subtler than the atom and vaster than the vastest."

The human is indeed a manifestation of the Divine with numerous potencies. It is the Divine that shines effulgently in every human being. But, because of his attachment to the body, he is unable to develop attachment to the *Aathma* (Spirit).

Recognising the omnipresence of the Divine in all things, the quest for Truth should be undertaken. What is the Truth? Where is it? How to search for that which is everywhere? A distinction must be made between an apparent fact and the unchanging Reality. In daily life the sun appears to "rise" and "set" everyday, but in reality these apparent phenomena are due to the movement of the earth round itself and round the sun. Likewise what is apparently true about

you, as is inferred from external observation, is not the real you. It is the effulgent Divine within you.

The spiritual quest involves the churning of the heart by meditation. The qualities like compassion emerge from the heart. The human heart, which should be an ocean of milk, has been turned into an ocean of brine now infested with creatures like hatred, lust and greed.

Krishna's leelas

The childhood episodes relating to Krishna have an esoteric meaning. For instance, when his mother, Yashodha, chided Krishna for eating mud (as alleged by Balarama), Krishna replied: "Mother am I a child, or a silly brat or a crazy fool to eat mud?" In this way Krishna, even though he was a child, was affirming His divinity indirectly. The Divine teaches profound lessons to mankind in this indirect manner. God's actions should be understood not by the external events but by their inner meaning. Moreover, many changes in the ordinary ways of living are necessary to understand the ways of God. Aadhi Shankara indicated in the Bhaja Govindam song how even a brief experience of the Divine by a devotee fills him with ecstasy. This bliss can be got only through the *Aathma*. The experiences of the gopikas and gopaalas of Brindhaavan during Krishna's early years at Gokulam have been misunderstood and misinterpreted. Krishna was in the village for five years only. It is absurd to suggest that a five-year child behaved in an objectionable manner. After going to Mathura Krishna did not return to Repalle.

Awareness of the Divine will confer bliss

To ascribe anything improper to the pure and Divine life of Krishna is sheer blasphemy. The true nature of the Divine has to be fully understood. Divinity is the all-pervading Cosmic Consciousness present in all. The nature of this consciousness should be understood. It is *chith*, which illumines every object in creation. *Chith* illumines what exists and thereby makes it cognisable. Existence is *sath*. Cognisability is *chith*. The combination of *sath and chith* confers *thrupthi* (satisfaction derived from enjoying the object). This *Aanandha* is thus the very nature of every being. The Divine pervades everything inside and outside. Awareness of the Divine will confer bliss. But few are able to realise this.

Once, an individual, unable to bear the difficulties in his family, left hearth and home. Later, after earning some money he set out to return to his house. A young son, who was in the house when the father left, was so grief-stricken over the father's absence that he died after sometime. Before reaching his village, he took shelter in a choultry during a storm. There he had a dream in which he saw himself as a king in a palace living with six princely sons. He was enjoying the dream. A peal of thunder woke him up. He wondered what had happened to all the beautiful things he had been enjoying so far. He realised that it was all a dream. There was no trace of the six sons.

The reality in both dream and waking states

He reached his home in the morning. On seeing the husband, the wife broke into tears. On the one hand she was happy over the husband's return. On the other, she was filled with sorrow over the passing of her son. The father asked her: "Where is our son?" She replied that he passed away, unable to bear the separation from the father. The man was stupefied. He did not feel sad or happy. He stood transfixed like a statue. The wife asked: "How is it you are not moved by the loss of the son whom you loved so much? What is the reason?"

He then related to his wife the remarkable dream he had experienced the previous night. In that dream his six sons had died. "Am I to grieve over the loss of those six sons or over the loss of this one son?. For whose sake should I weep? They were my children in the dream state. This son was my child in the waking state. What was present in both the state is the reality. All other things are transient." This realisation came to him.

If people today wish to achieve spiritual bliss, they have to follow three principles: First, they must know what has to be known. Second, they must give up what has to be renounced. Third, they must reach the goal that has to be attained. By observing these three, bliss can be realised. What is it that has to be known? What is this world? How long will I live? We see many passing away. Coming and going are continually happening. When the transient nature of the physical world is understood, bliss will be realised.

Next, what is it that you have to give up? The delusion under which what is unreal is considered real and what is real is treated as unreal. People consider that they are in the grip of Maaya and that they are caught up in misery. Misery has no limbs to hold you. It is you who are hugging misery. This is due to your ignorance. When you get rid of this ignorance you will experience bliss.

We have to go back to our source

What is the goal you have to reach? You have to go back to the source from which you came. You have come from the *Aathma* and you have to return to the Aathma. This is what the Upanishaths sought to convey when they declared: "*Asatho maa sadhgarnaya*" (Lead me from the unreal to the Real). Where there is truth, untruth exists as its shadow.

"*Thamaso maa jyothirgamaya*" (Lead me from darkness to light). What is darkness and what is light? Light alone exists. Darkness is only the absence of light. Discovering the light leads to the elimination of darkness.

"*Mrithyor-maa Amritham gamaya*" (Lead me from death to Immortality). Birth and death are incidental to the body alone. Your Self has neither birth nor death. What is born (the body) dies. Death relates to the body and not to the Aathma. The Aathma is eternal. It is the truth. You have to acquire this awareness to experience lasting bliss. To experience permanent bliss one has to develop firm faith in God.

The distinction between Krishna and Raama

Today we celebrate the birthday of Krishna. Where was he born? In a prison. What were his possessions? Nothing. Born in a prison, he was taken to the house of Nandha and then he went to Mathura. He owned nothing. But he became the greatest figure in the world. What does this show? Worldly possessions are not the secret of greatness. Krishna's greatness consisted in his permanent state of *Aanandha* (bliss).

If you recognise the distinction, between Krishna and Raama, you will appreciate better the nature of Krishna. Krishna always smiled at the outset and carried out his task later. For Raama, the deed came first and then the smile. Krishna made women cry. Raama wept for the sake of women. Raama went into the battle only after-having a strong cause for it. Krishna first provoked the conflict and then determined its outcome.

The Krishna principle revels in delight. The Raama principle is based on the concept of *baadhyatha* (obligation).

The Raamaayana is intended to promote the reign of Truth and Righteousness on earth. The Krishna *Avathaar* was intended to give a perennial message to the world. He sought nothing for himself. He kept nothing for himself. He gave away everything to the people. He slayed his maternal uncle, Kamsa. He installed on the throne Kamsa's father Ugrasena. He did not covet the Kingdom. He befriended the Paandavas, defeated the Kauravas and crowned Dharmaja as the emperor. He did not make himself king. He was a king without a crown. He was the king of kings. He had no kingdom of his own. But he ruled over the hearts of the millions. It is this profound truth that is proclaimed by the *Krishna-thathva* (Krishna principle).

If you enquire deeply, you will find that every *Avathaar* has incarnated to convey a special message and carry out a particular mission.

Krishna's divine power

The gopikas used to complain to Yashodha about Krishna's pranks. But whatever Krishna said in fun or did as a prank was based on truth. Krishna never indulged in untruth even by way of a joke. But those who could not understand the inner meaning of His statements used to accuse him of lying. This kind of misunderstanding has been a disease in all *yugas* (ages).

When a gopika complained to Yashodha that Krishna had entered the house of a cowherd at night and played some mischief, Krishna pleaded before his mother how he could have gone out anywhere when he was sleeping beside her. The truth was that Krishna was in both places because of His Divine power. Krishna displayed any number of such baffling miracles. (Bhagavaan sang a series of songs about the complaints of the gopikas to Yashodha against Krishna). Against each complaint Krishna had a convincing alibi. Indirectly Krishna was revealing His divinity. Krishna explained to His mother the ways of the Divine in a way she could understand.

Krishna used to visit the houses of the cowherds and drink curds and milk. The symbolic meaning of this action is Krishna's preference for *sathva*, represented by the pure white curds and milk.

Krishna explained to Yashodha the reason why he preferred the butter in their homes to the butter offered by Yashodha. The hearts of the gopikas were pure and filled with selfless devotion to Krishna. Their devotion was superior to the maternal affection of Yashodha, which bore a taint of selfishness. Krishna told Yashodha: "I am attracted to the hearts of those who are pure and selfless."

Follow the footsteps of the Lord

Krishna had always eluded the gopikas after playing his mischief. But once, out of compassion for them, he wanted to provide a clue by which they could trace him. One day they all lay in wait round their houses to catch Krishna. Krishna went into a house stealthily, broke a pot of milk and quietly hid himself. The gopikas found that he had broken the pot and tried to trace him. The milk white steps which he had left revealed to them his hide-out. Then, Krishna revealed to them the spiritual truth that if they cling to the feet of the Lord they realise Him. "Follow my footsteps and you shall find me," Krishna told the gopikas.

In the Bhaagavatham, the lessons you learn are according to the state of your mind. To understand the glories of the Lord as related in the Bhaagavatham, you have to enjoy the *leelas* (frolics) of Krishna and realise their inner meaning. For instance, the real meaning of the story about Krishna taking away the clothes of the gopikas while they were bathing is that to realise

the Lord they have to abandon the attachment to the body, which is the vesture of the Spirit. These stories should not be treated in a spirit of levity or profanity.

Krishna dedicated the flute to delight Raadha

In the case of Raadha, Krishna churned her heart and gave here the nectar of Divine bliss. Raadha had no attachment to any of her kith and kin. (Svaami sang sweetly a song of Raadha expressing her grief over separation from Him). Krishna appeared before Raadha before she gave up her life and blessed her. God will give anything for the devotee including Himself. No one can equal Him in the sacrifice He will make for the sake of the devotees. Krishna asked Raadha what she wanted at the last moment of her life. Raadha said: "I don't want anything except to listen to the music of your flute once before I pass on." "Sing, Oh Krishna, speak to me to fill my heart with bliss," sang Raadha. "Distill the essence of the *Vedhas* and make it flow into the eternal music of your flute, Oh Krishna." Krishna took out His flute and played on it and when Raadha closed her eyes, He threw it away. He never touched it again. He dedicated the flute to give delight to Raadha.

Thus, all the mysteries of Krishna served to relieve the distress of the devotees. Krishna used all His powers to serve the devotees. When the purport of the Bhaagavatha stories is properly understood, one can realise the pussiance of the Lord.

In the life of Meerabai, for instance, when the Raana's sister gave to Meera a cup of milk containing poison, Meera drank it as an offering to Krishna. The result was Krishna absorbed the poison and left the sweet milk alone for Meera.

By making an offering of all that you eat to God before taking it, the food gets purified and sanctified.

The gopikas were illiterate and totally innocent. But their love for Krishna was unalloyed and exclusive. Even while engaged in their daily activities, their thoughts were centred on Krishna. Hence they experienced indescribable joy.

Proclaim the message of unity

Devotees should cultivate unity, transcending all barriers of caste, creed and nationality. (Svaami then related the story of Suguna who was oblivious to her hand getting burnt because she saw the figure of Krishna in the flame of a lamp. Svaami sang a song expressing the delight of the gopikas on seeing Suguna in the state of Divine forgetfulness).

Krishna's mystery and miracles are beyond words. He was all things to all people. He is the indweller in the heart of everyone. There is no room for religious differences. Students should resolve themselves to restore the pristine glory of Bhaarath by leading ideal lives. Proclaim the message of unity to the whole world.

Before concluding My discourse, I would make an announcement to the students. In view of the ever-growing number of devotees coming to Prashaanthi Nilayam Svaami is not in a position to devote individual attention to students. Those who wish to get married and settle down in life, might happily do so and come to Bhagavaan for His blessings. Svaami will not perform any marriages in the Nilayam. But the Kalyana Mandapam can be used for marriages if they desired. Svaami will perform, however, mass marriages and mass Upanayanams. Svaami's grace and love will be available to you wherever you may be. You may get married, lead a worldly life as householders and serve the nation.

Today is Gokulaashtami, the day celebrated as Krishna's birthday. But it is not this celebration that is important. What is important is the adherence to Krishna's teachings. Krishna is not different from His teachings. The Geetha is Krishna and Krishna is Geetha.

Discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on 4-9-1996.

*Develop Prema (Love) towards the Lord, the Parama-Prema (Highest Love) of which He is the embodiment. Never give room for doubts and hesitations, for questions, to test the Lord's Prema.
Baba*

41. The power that draws devotees

The unwise man thinks about the external world;

The man of wisdom contemplates on Vishnu;

The former becomes a worldly man;

The other realises the Divine,

Hearken! Oh valiant sons of Bhaarath.

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Man, although he is inherently the embodiment of *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being-Awareness and Bliss), unaware of this truth, seeks this bliss in the phenomenal world. This is because he considers the physical world as the ultimate reality and forgets his own true Divine nature. This is a mark of his *Ajnaana* (ignorance). When one's vision is turned Godward, this ignorance disappears.

Many persons yearn for God, worship God or contemplate on God. God cannot be realised by any of these means. All these activities are based on separating themselves from God. What is needed is a sense of oneness. How is this to be obtained? When you cultivate the feeling: "I and you are one." This oneness is beyond the grasp of the mind and the senses. It is only the *Buddhi* (Intellect) that can experience what is beyond the senses.

The message of *Vedhaantha*

There is no need for penance or *japa* or other austerities to realise oneness with the Divine. Love alone is enough. This is the message of *Vedhaantha*.

When Aadhi Shankara set out on a tour of the country to propagate *Adhvaitha*, he met Mandana Mishra, a great *Vedhik* scholar. They wanted to have a philosophical debate. They had to choose a judge to declare who had won in the debate. Aadhi Shankara, who was a *thrikaalajnaani* (one who knew the past, present and the future), chose Mandana Mishra's wife, Ubhaya-bhaarathi, as the judge. She was a lady who could rise above personal attachments. The debate was held and Ubhaya-bhaarathi adjudged in favour of Shankara. She declared in unqualified terms that Mandana Mishra had lost in the debate. Immediately the verdict was declared, Mandana Mishra took to *sanyaasa*. Thereafter, Ubhaya-bhaarathi also, as Mandana Mishra's better half, followed suit and became a renunciant.

Ubhaya-bhaarathi established an *aashram* of her own to which only women were admitted as disciples. One day she was going with some of her disciples to the river Ganga for a bath. On the way she saw an ochre-robed *saadhu* resting under a tree with his head on a *Kamandalam* (a vessel used for keeping water). He was a renunciant only in external vesture but not a whole-hearted renunciant. He kept the gourd water container under his head lest some one should take it away when he fell asleep.

A lesson for the *saadhu*

To teach the *saadhu* a lesson in genuine renunciation, Ubhaya-bhaarathi spoke loudly to her disciples: "Ladies! Look at the man's renunciation! He has not given up his attachment to his worthless *Kamandalam* and is concerned about its safety." On hearing her words, the *byraagi* (renunciant) got angry. When Ubhaya-bhaarathi was returning from the river, he ostentatiously cast off the gourd-bottle. Ubhayabhaarathi then exclaimed: "What a pity? I thought the *saadhu*

was only a victim of *Abhimaana* (attachment). I find that he is also filled with *Ahamkaara* (egoism). If he was not so egoistic would he have thrown his *Kamandalam* at me?" She stood before the *saadhu*, and told him: "Your egoism is growing along with your attachment. This does not befit the robe you are wearing. You cannot be a real renunciant as long as you are filled with attachment and egoism. Give up attachment to the body and develop attachment to the *Aathma*" She taught this lesson in a quiet and convincing manner.

In the sphere of wisdom, there are no distinctions of sex, or creed. Hearing Ubhaya-bhaarathi's words, the *saadhu* came running, fell at her feet and sought her forgiveness. He said: "Oh Mother! Because I had no one to teach me the truth in this manner, I was leading this double life. From now on, you are my guru.

The Lord's grace

In human life, many pursue different forms of spiritual exercises.

Whatever ochre robe they may don,

Whatever sacred garland they may wear,

However fast they may roll the beads,

Finally they have to come to Baba.

His grace is essential

For anyone of any eminence.

Only His grace can redeem you. (Telugu poem)

So many are engaged in formal spiritual practices of various kinds. But of what use are they to win the grace of the Divine? Are you searching for the path that will help you to earn God's love? When you earnestly search within, you will get the answer.

Among the nine forms of devotion, the foremost is the cultivation of the *sakhya* (friendship) of God. Friendship is followed by total surrender to the Divine.

A great devotee once lamented that all his limbs and organs were utterly useless unless each of them was used to serve the Divine, to see the Divine or to listen to the glories of the Divine. The same feeling was expressed by saint Suurdhas when he said that the gift of eyesight was of no value if the eye did not see the beautiful form of the Divine. Those with ears who would not listen to the songs in praise of the Lord might as well be as deaf. (Svaami sang a number of songs which deplored the pitiable plight of those who did not use their God-given organs for experiencing the Divine). True humanness consists in using all one's senses and limbs for sacred purposes and not misusing them in various ways.

The man of faith need not worry about who will take care of him if he devotes all his time to thoughts of the Divine. The Lord who is the universal provider will take care of his devotees. This faith in the Lord was emphatically proclaimed by Purandharadhaasa in his songs.

Recognise the miraculous powers of the Divine

How many realise the wonders in God's creation? There is a chick inside the egg. A huge tree comes out of a small seed. A human being is born from a human being. Who is responsible for all this? Only the Divine will. Without recognising these miraculous powers of the Divine, people make much of human achievements.

Look at what is happening here. What is it that makes people from Australia, Argentina and other countries come here? What is the power that draws them here? Without the power of the Divine, will they come here? Thyaagaraaja glorified the power of Raama in a song in which he extolled how Raama's Divine power enables Hanumaan to leap over the ocean and how it induced Lakshmana and Bharatha to worship Him.

It is the same Divine magnetic power which is attracting people from all over the world to come to Bhagavaan.

Once Raama desired to install a linga of Shiva while He was going to the south for the recovery of Seetha. He had asked Hanumaan to bring a linga from the Himaalaayas within a stipulated time for performing the installation. As Hanumaan did not come in time, Raama created a linga and performed the *prathishta* ceremony. Hanumaan, who adored Raama more than any other deity, threw away the linga nonchalantly.

Later, while walking, Raama's foot hit against a stone in the ground. Raama appeared as if he had lost his balance. Lakshmana asked Raama what had happened. Raama said that it was a small stone. Hanumaan came forth and said that he would pull out the stone lest some one else should stumble on it. Raama was inwardly seeking to test Hanumaan and teach him a lesson.

He remarked: "Hanumaan! You are capable of carrying mountains. Why do you bother about this small pebble? I shall walk more carefully. It is no fault of the pebble." Hanumaan, however, was determined to remove the pebble. It was a mark of his simian nature. He tried to remove the pebble with his left hand. He could not remove it. Later he used all his strength, but the pebble could not be removed. He was surprised and asked Raama: "Lord! What is this mystery?" Raama remarked: "Oh! It's nothing." He stepped forth and lifted the pebble with a toe and flung it afar. That pebble was in fact the linga which Hanumaan had cast away.

An effulgence emerged from the linga and merged in Raama. And an effulgence from Raama entered the linga. Raama thereby wanted to demonstrate to Hanumaan that there was no difference between Him and Shiva. He taught that both Vishnu and Shiva should be adored alike.

Today people have their own preferences regarding the deities they adore: Raama, Krishna, Shiva, Sai and so on. Why cherish such differences? God is one. Names and forms differ according to differences in taste. But the Divine is one alone. When you develop the feeling of spiritual oneness of all beings, you become one with the Divine.

Students! Do not consider God as distant from you. Do not also entertain the crazy notion that if you worship Him, He will appear before you. Offer yourself to Him and in a moment you will experience Him within you. There is no need for any other severe penance.

Truth is God. Wisdom is God. Everything is God.

Discourse on 5-9-1996.

The Jnaani says, "Sarvam Brahma mayam" (God is All); another, a Yogi, says all is Energy; a third, who is a Bhaktha says all is the play of Bhagavaan. Each according to his taste and according to

*his progress in spiritual saadhana. Do not blame or ridicule them,
for they are all pilgrims trudging along the same road.*

Baba

42. Ways of the Divine : Advent of Shankara

LAY is one substance. But out of it a variety of products with different names and shapes can be made. Likewise, out of gold, a variety of ornaments can be made. The same white milk is got out of cows of different colours. The Supreme Self is one, but dwells in innumerable bodies, with different names and forms.

If you examine the cosmic scene, you will find that out of the same basic substance a variety of objects with different forms are produced. For instance, out of a single seed, comes a tree with various branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits. These different things vary in form, name and use. But they have all come from one seed.

"*Ekoham bahusyaam*" (The One chose to become the many).. There are three factors involved in this. For making a pot, a potter is the cause and the pot is the effect. The base for the production of the pot is clay. The pot may break but the clay remains as such. Out of the permanent substance, clay, the potter makes a pot. The fate of the pot does not affect the potter. The clay in the pot also remains as such.

The analogy applies equally to gold, the goldsmith, and the jewels made from gold.

On the same analogy, God is the changeless creator who creates the innumerable objects in creation which are subject to changes in names and forms. The relations between the three entities involved should be properly understood. The potter cannot make a pot without clay. No pot can be made if there is clay alone but no potter. Both potter and clay are necessary for making a pot.

Five forms of the Lord

The Creator is the *nimitha-kaarana* (instrumental cause of creation). The bodies are like the pots. They are used for various purposes and are a source of enjoyment. But, like the pots, the bodies are perishable. When their time is up, they fall away. But the Creator is permanent. The elements out of which the bodies were made remain. Only the bodies have gone. The bodies are capable of being put to good or bad uses.

Divinity has five names. The first is *Para-naamam*. Second, *Vyuha-naamam*. Third, *Vibhava-naamam*. Fourth, *Antharaathma-naamam* and fifth, *Archana-naamam* The Divine functions in the cosmos in these five names.

Para-naamam refers to the abode of the Supreme, Vaikunttha. Vaikunttha means that which is unchanging. There the Supreme Lord dwells under the name *Para-naamam*.

No one can enter that abode of the Lord. The Lord dwells there as an effulgence. He oversees everything. But He is not visible to anyone and no one can see His form.

The second is: *Vyuha-naamam*. This name refers to the Lord who reclines on a serpent on the ocean of milk. The Lord in this form can be seen only by *Dhevas* (the various deities).

Only those with special powers can see the Lord here. Ordinary beings cannot do so. But the Lord in His *Vyuha* form fulfils the desires of the: *Dhevas*. You are aware of the story of Hiranyakashipu. He was harassing the *Dhevas* in various ways. So, they went to the Lord's couch on the ocean of milk and prayed to Him. In answer to their prayers the Lord agreed to incarnate on earth.

Various human forms in which Lord incarnates

Third is: *Vibhava-naamam*. This refers to the various human forms in which the Lord incarnates on earth as *Avathaars* of Raama and Krishna to protect the good and punish the wicked and turn them to the righteous path. The incarnations that are adored as the ten *Avathaars* belong to this category of *Vibhava-naamam*. In this form, the Lord manifests the relationship between God and the devotees.

The fourth is: *Antharaathma-naamam*. In this form, the Lord pervades every part of a human being as an indwelling spirit. This indwelling spirit is Divine.

The fifth is: *Archana-naamam*. This refers to the form in which the Divine can be worshipped, praised and adored for securing His grace.

Man through the aeons

Avathaars of the Lord in these different forms have been manifesting themselves for aeons and aeons. This may be quite astonishing to children of today. For instance, when they hear about the state of things in the *Kritha Yuga* they will feel that they are amazing and incredible. Human beings in that age used to live for hundreds of years. Moreover, their bodies were not as small as in this age. They were gigantic figures, with arms as long as six feet. What kind of life did they lead? In the *Kritha Yuga*, life remained in the body as long as the bones were intact. All other parts of the body may disintegrate, but life remained in the skeleton.

In *Thretha Yuga*, the height of human beings was less. The longevity was also less. Life remained as long as muscles and flesh remained in the body.

In *Dhvaapara Yuga*, life remained as long as blood circulated in the body. As you may know, Bheeshma lay on a bed of arrows after he had been wounded in the Kurukshethra war. As long as blood remained in his body, he lived. His life lasted for 56 days.

In the present *Kali Yuga* life lasts as long as there is food in the body. Without food man cannot survive.

In *Kritha and Thretha Yugas*, men had intimate relationship with God. Food was not so important. In *Dhvaapara Yuga*, the head became important.

In the *Kritha and Thretha yugas*, *Dharma* was all-important. *Dharma muulam idham jagath* (The cosmos is based on *Dharma*). In *Dhvaapara Yuga*, the decline started and wealth became all important. *Dhana muulam idham jagath* (The world is founded on wealth). The war between the Kauravas and the Paandavas was over property rights.

In the *Kali Yuga*, neither *Dharma* nor *Dhana* (wealth) is as important as *Dhaya* (compassion). It is because of the absence of compassion that the world today is afflicted with so many troubles.

The advent of Shankara

In the early centuries of this *Kali Age*, Buddhism and Jainism were predominant religions. At that time, a young child was born in a village called Kaaladi in Kerala to a couple, Shivaguru and Aryaamba. In those days, there used to be frequent wars between Kings of different territories. These wars generated hatred between peoples of different regions. The feeling of national unity was lost. With the loss of unity, all kinds of bad practices developed. Untruth, injustice, dishonesty and disreputable conduct became the order of the day. Nor was that all. Even the learned *pandithhs*, scholars and intellectuals of the time started interpreting the *Vedhas* in

perverse ways. The very face of the scriptures was blackened. With the result that the people's faith in the *Vedhas* and scriptures was undermined.

At such times, God or a divinely inspired saint or messiah makes His advent on earth to reform the wicked and restore the reign of Dharma. Such incarnations are known as *Archana-naama* forms of the Divine. In this *Archana-naama* form, the manifestations are regarded as *Amsa-avthaars*--manifestations of aspects of the Divine.

The *Vibhava avathaars* (like Raama and Krishna) are *Puurna-avathaars* (total manifestations of the Divine). The *Archana-avathaars* are *Amsa-avathaars* (partial manifestations). Such *avathaars* incarnate from time to time, not only in India but in all countries.

Jesus declared at first that He was "a messenger of God." Who are these messengers? They are of two kinds: Yamadhuutha and Avadhuutha. Yamadhuuthas are messengers who inflict harm on people. Avadhuuthas are messengers who protect. Jesus belonged to the second category. In due course, he recognised his own inner divinity. Then he declared: "I am the Son of God." Thereby he proclaimed his right to a share in all the qualities of God. When he acquired all the qualities of the Divine, he announced: "I and my Father are one."

The same threefold progress can be seen in the pronouncements of Zoroaster. First, he declared: "I am in the light." Then he said: "The light is in me." Finally he declared: "I am the light." These declarations can be compared to the three systems of Indian philosophy Dualism, Qualified Non-dualism and Nondualism. In propagating the doctrine of Non-dualism, Shankara considered himself a servant of God.

Shankara and his *guru*

Shankara's father, Shivaguru, passed away when Shankara was barely three years old. In this context, it is interesting to note how the Divine operates. Ten days before his passing, Shivaguru had a vision of an effulgence. The effulgence conveyed a message to Shivaguru. "Perform the *upanayanam* of your son," was the message. Shivaguru hurriedly arranged to have the *upanayanam* performed for the three-year old child. The little boy started reciting the Gaayathri Manthra.

After the passing of Shivaguru, the grief-stricken mother devoted herself to bringing up the little boy. She took him to a *guru*, who taught the boy all kinds of scriptural knowledge. By the time he was 16, Shankara had completed study of the four *Vedhas* and the six systems of philosophy. Normally even 50 years would not have sufficed for such study. Shankara was a prodigy. He could grasp anything at the first mention of the subject. Even the *guru* was astonished at the boy's genius.

Meanwhile, the mother, was anxious to get the boy married and broached the subject with the *guru*. The boy was totally opposed to marriage. "I want to be a *sanyaasi* (renunciant)," he said. "I want to dedicate my body, mind and all else to God. They are all gifts of God. I have surrendered myself to God."

How Shankara obtained *sanyaasa*

The mother was in deep distress over the son's resolve. One day she was going to the river to fetch water. The young Shankara followed her earnestly pleading: "Mother! Permit me to take to *sanyaasa*." She did not agree. When she got into the river for her bath, Shankara jumped into the river and going down the river for a while, he raised one hand and shouted: "Mother, a crocodile

has caught hold of me. At least now permit me to become a *sanyaasi*." The mother said: "If you can be saved from the crocodile by taking to *sanyaasa*, you better do so, so that you may live." Shankara then came out of the river and told his mother: "In the ocean of *samsaara* I was about to be drowned by a crocodile in the form of a wife. When you let me become a *sanyaasi* I was free from the hold of the crocodile. No one could marry a *sanyaasi*."

Sanyaasa does not mean a mere change-in the colour of the robe. It is really a change in one's qualities.

Shankara prostrated before his mother and took her leave to embark on his career as ascetic. At that time, the mother made Shankara take a pledge that he should come and see her at her last moments.

Triumphal tour to all sacred shrines in the land

Shankara set out on his wanderings, visiting all the sacred shrines in the land. All travel had to be done by foot. He went to every assemblage of scholars and vanquished them in debates. He propagated the *Adhvaithik* doctrine. He declared: "The bodies are different, the forms are different, but the inner Self is one alone. The Divine is present in all like sugarcane juice which is the same, regardless of the cane from which it is got."

He had an encounter with Mandana Mishra, who was an upholder of the *Karma siddhaantha* (the doctrine of action). He defeated Mandana Mishra in the debate.

In this manner, Shankara went all over the country, from Kashmir to Kanyaakumari, several times. He convinced the scholars of the truth of Nondualism. "*Ekam eva Adhvitheeyam*" (The Self is one only; there is no second).

Aadhi Shankara was able to convince all the scholars about the truth of *Adhvaitha*. People are deluded by the multiplicity of names and forms. But the basis for all this diversity is the one Divine. Without the basis nothing can exist. This fact is recognised by all faiths. God is one and the goal is one. The doctrine of *Adhvaitha* is not easily understood. It has to be explained to the students in simple and intelligible terms.

Shankara passed away at the early age of 32. But he completed the mission for which he had come. Before his passing, he collected five lingas and installed them in five different centres: Puuri, Dhvaaraka, Shringeri, Benares and Kaanchi. At Kaanchi he installed the Yoga Linga. One of the pontiffs was Suresha, who was none other than Mandana Mishra before he took to *sanyaasa*.

By establishing these mutts and promoting the sense of spiritual oneness among the people, Aadhi Shankara promoted harmony in the country. Unfortunately some of his disciples started distorting Shankara's doctrines and attributing their own views to Shankara. Ultimately the disciples fell out and opposed each other's views.

Similarly, among Christ's eleven disciples differences developed and they fell apart. Only Mathew remained true to Jesus. He propagated the gospel. Peter was the first among Jesus's disciples. But he denied Christ when the authorities questioned him.

Raamaanuja who came after Shankara enunciated a modified version of Shankara's Non-dualism. Then came Madhvaachaarya, who propounded dualism. I would explain their doctrines in subsequent discourses.

Discourse on 7-9-1996.

43. The glorious saga of Shankara

*When the branch of a tree robs
against another branch incessantly,
Fire emerges from the branches.
When you repeatedly chum buttermilk
you get butter from which ghee is got.
By engaging one's self in a
continuous process of enquiry
One realises the Divinity within. (Telugu Poem).*

BY perseverance anything can be accomplished, says a Telugu proverb. The Geetha declares that by repeated practice one acquires the wisdom that ultimately leads to *Thyaaga* (renunciation). Every activity in life is based on practice. Likewise, to realise the Divine, constant practice is necessary. Mere repetition of the lord's name is not enough. Devotion should express itself in social service. Any service done with social well-being in mind will become service to God.

"The one Self dwells in a myriad bodies like butter in milk, oil in thil seeds, fragrance in a flower, sweet juice in a fruit and fire in a faggot," says a *Sanskrit sloka*. This is the truth proclaimed by *Vedhaantha*. Today, modern youth, not realising this truth, are wasting their lives in every way.

The doctrine of *Adhvaitha*

Aadhi Shankara demonstrated that underlying all forms, names and qualities, there is one basic reality which alone is real and changeless. This is the doctrine of *Adhvaitha* (Non-dualism). Out of a mango seed comes a tree with branches, leaves, flowers and fruit each with distinct forms and uses. But all the myriad things that have come from the seed owe their existence to the seed from which the tree arose. This truth was declared by Krishna in the Geetha when He said: "*Beejam maam sarvabhoothaanaam*" (I am the seed that is the origin of all beings). All things in the universe are manifestations of the One Divine.

Yesterday I related the story of how Aadhi Shankara took to *sanyaasa* at an early age and came to his *guru*, Govindha. The preceptor for Govindha was Gaudapaadha. Gaudapaadha distinguished the *Riks in Rig-Vedha* which proclaimed the oneness of the Divine. Shankara received this teaching from Govindha and mastered all the *Vedhas* and *Shaasthras* by his fourteenth year. Earnest pursuit of knowledge leads to total understanding (*Jnaana*).

Shankara's debate with preceptor

One day, to test Shankara's mastery of the scriptures Govindha engaged Shankara in a philosophical debate. It was a debate between the preceptor and the disciple. Shankara was full of humility and reverence for the *guru*. Hence, before entering on the debate he prostrated before the preceptor and prayed to him for permission to argue with him. With the *guru's* sanction he began his argument with amazing skill and demolished, with due scriptural authority, the propositions of the preceptor and presented his views in accordance with *Vedhik* authorities with

due regard to worldly understanding and showed how the *Nivritthi* (inward) path could be harmonized with the *Pravritthi* (external) path.

Shankara was deeply perturbed over the conduct of great *Vedhik* scholars of those times who were concerned about making a money out of their scriptural scholarship than to gain spiritual wisdom from it. They forgot that knowledge should not be used for commercial purposes. Even today many students consider education as a means for earning a living. This is utterly wrong. One should work for a living. But knowledge should be sought for acquiring wisdom. Shankara sought to bring about a change in the use of scriptural knowledge.

*Of what use is the acquisition
of all kinds of knowledge if
One does not think of God and use his hands
for the adoration of the Divine?
All such knowledge is a sheer waste,*
says a Telugu poem.

Shankara was deeply distressed over the conduct of the scholars. His preceptor Govindha observed Shankara's sadness. Govindha's guru, Gaudapaadha, also felt unhappy over this state of things. Both of them were elated at the sublime feelings of the young Shankara. They both realised that Shankara was best qualified to use the sacred teachings of the *Vedhas* to combat the prevailing unrighteous and immoral tendencies in the society. They summoned Shankara-and told him "Child! There is no need for you to stay here any longer. Leave for Kaasi tomorrow. You must meet the great *pandiths* in Kaasi and propagate the doctrine to the whole world. Nobody else can carry out this mission."

Students today should realise that they are the most powerful instruments for rectifying all the evils rampant in our society today.

Shankara's journey to Kaasi

With the permission of the two preceptors, Shankara set out for Kaasi. No modern means of transport were available in those days. Shankara had to walk all the way to Benares. The sixteen-year-old lad gathered his disciples and left for Kaasi. On the way he saw a *pandith* sitting under a tree and cramming the rules of grammar. At that moment, he began composing the famous hymn. "Bhaja Govindham." (Svaami recited the opening stanza from Bhaja Govindham). "You dull-witted fellow! Why do you immerse yourself in the rules of grammar? They will not save you when death knocks at the door. Instead, worship Govindha!" At the time of death nothing and nobody will follow the departing soul when it leaves the body. Only the remembrance of the name of the Lord will keep you company at all times. Shankara advised the *pandith* to chant the name of the Lord instead of conning the rules of grammar.

After teaching him this lesson, Shankara proceeded to Kaasi with his disciples. Shankara's teachings were spreading far and wide. The of Benares arranged for a grand assembly of scholars in the holy city.

Shankara and the scholars

Many scholars had gathered there in all their regalia. Nothing was lacking in terms of ostentation at that assembly. Shankara entered in a simple way, wearing a *dhoti* covering upto his knees and a towel over his shoulder. On seeing him, the *pandiths* seemed to feel that it was all a joke. Some *pandiths* remarked: "He does not even wear a *rudhraaksha maala* (a garland of beads). Apandith should have an imposing figure. What is it that this stripling can tell us?" They addressed him thus: "We have come to know that you are proficient in all the *Vedhas and Shaasthras*, an authority on grammar and logic and a great exponent of the *Adhvaitha* doctrine."

Shankara then sang the Bhaja Govindham songs, pointing out the transitory nature of material wealth and exhorting all to give up worldly desires. He declared that *pandiths* should be equal-minded and should give up the desire for wealth, which is the result of one's actions. "Give up this thirst for money. Develop the thirst for God," declared Shankara in strident terms. Then he gave a superb exposition of the metaphysics of *Adhvaitha*.

All the *pandiths* and their disciples were astonished at the performance of the young Shankara. They realised that here was one who was not only a great teacher but one who practised what he taught. This unity in thought, word and deed is the mark of greatness. Shankara was the very embodiment of unity and purity in thought, speech and action.

Many *pandiths* got up and plied Shankara with questions. He answered them all with perfect ease. He declared that *Adhvaitha* means oneness of the spirit and awareness of this oneness is true *Jnaana* (wisdom). Spiritual wisdom alone is true wisdom. *Pandiths* today, he declared, are not having this realisation.

Exposition of Adhvaitha

Shankara pointed out that though names and forms may be many, the Self is one only. That Self resides in everyone's heart. He exhorted the *pandiths* to purify their hearts and follow the dictates of the conscience. Shankara made it clear that creeds may vary but God is one.

Shankara called upon the *pandiths* to be content with moderate incomes and not hanker after riches. Vast knowledge and petty desires go ill together.

Students should realise how a young lad born in Kaaladi brought greatness to Kerala and Bhaarath.

Students should cultivate human values like love, compassion, righteousness and truth and become truly human. Every student should strive to lead an ideal life like Shankara.

In this context, I should like to mention that in Bhaja Govindham Shankara commends renunciation of all worldly attachments. People may feel that Svaami is telling the students these unworldly teachings. This does not worry me, because what I am saying is the Truth. Is renunciation acquired so easily?. No. People who have been listening for years have not changed to the slightest extent. To imagine that a single discourse is going to make a big change is fanciful. Only a fortunate few experience such transformation. If real renunciation is promoted in anyone, there can be no greater blessing than that.

Nearness to God will inspire the spirit of renunciation even without one being conscious of it. In that renunciation lies fulfillment. And one's life is redeemed.

Discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 7-9-1996.

*Steady adherence to Truth, Renunciation, Genuine Prema (Love),
Self-less service these are the essential components of character.
Follow the dictates of your conscience. You can never be wrong.*

Baba

44. Vedha and Vedhaantha

One may have mastered the Vedhas

Or be a versatile writer;

But, without purity of mind,

He will take to bad ways.

Hearken, oh son of Bhaarath!

To this good counsel.

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Shankara propagated the view that the *Vedhas* uphold *Dhvaitha* (dualism) and *Vedhaantha* teaches *Adhvaitha* (non-dualism) on the basis of citations from the scriptural texts. The difference between the *Vedhas* and *Vedhaantha* is like the differences between various organs in the same body. The eyes, the ears, the nose, the arms and the feet are different parts of the body. The individual is a limb of society. Society is a limb of humanity. Humanity is a part of Nature or the phenomenal world. Nature is a limb of the *Paramaathma* (Supreme Self). In Kaasi (Vaaranaasi), at the assembly of scholars, debates raged over many philosophical issues. Amused at this spectacle, Shankara remarked: "*Vaadhe Vaadhe Vardhathe Vairam*" (Enmity grows with controversy). Continuous disputation only results in increasing bitterness among the disputants. Argumentation is not the proper method for setting spiritual issues.

Dualism of the Vedhas

Man is obliged to resolve problems in life. In daily existence man will never be free from worry. From birth to death man is confronted continuously with worries. The only way out of them is for people to develop love for God. Love is the sovereign remedy for all ills.

The Vedhas, however, have not given sufficient importance to this love. Their emphasis is more on *aasayam* (aspiration) than on *anubhavam* (experience). There are innumerable *Vedhik* scholars who ceaselessly chant the *Vedhas*. All this is verbal and not concerned with active practice. This attitude was described by Shankara as *Dhvaitha* (dualism). All the *Vedhik manthras* were in the form of prayers for favours. (I want this, I want that). Desire is at the root of dualism. Desire arises because of the feeling that there is the "other." The one who desires and the object that is desired are two things apart from each other. True non-dualism is the extinction of this separation by the unification of the subject and the object. Dualism exists when the object that is desired, for instance, a kerchief, is distinct from the person who desires it.

Non-dualism can only be experienced

Non-dualism is a state of consciousness which can only be experienced and not described in words. In this regard, the *Adhvaithin* is like a dumb man who has enjoyed a delightful dinner but cannot describe the taste of the dishes he has consumed. There are two kinds of proof for the existence of anything. Prath *yaksham* (direct perception) and *Paroksham* (indirect proof). The bliss derived from the *Adhvaithik* consciousness is beyond words. It can only be experienced, but cannot be described or explained. In this matter, if indirect proof did not exist, direct perception would be out of the question. Unfortunately, today people attach value to direct perception alone

and have scant regard for indirect evidence. This is not the right attitude. For instance, one sees a block of ice. It appears solid, but it is entirely made up of water, which is a liquid. Thus water, whose presence is inferred indirectly, is the basis for the solid block of ice that is seen by direct perception. Thus it can be realised that what is indirect is the basis for what is perceived directly.

Likewise, for this visible phenomenal universe, the invisible is the Divine. Not recognising this truth, men go by the *Vedhik* conception of dualism instead of recognising the truth of the *Vedhaanthik* doctrine of non-dualism.

Man spends his life immersed in worldly affairs. To point out to mankind the more vital inward path, Shankara dedicated his life. His preceptor, Gaudapaadha, gave Shankara all help and encouragement. Despite being young in years, Shankara showed great determination and strength of conviction. At the age of 16 he could convince the venerable *pandiths* of Kaasi about the validity of the *Adhvaithik* doctrine.

What is *Adhvaitha*? The oneness of everything is *Adhvaitha*. The scriptures have declared that the cosmos is permeated by the Divine. It is the desire of devotees to worship the Divine under different forms and names that is the reason for the various creeds and sects.

The form and the substance

An affluent devotee, filled with dualistic feelings, adored the form of Krishna. He wished to offer worship regularly to an idol of Krishna. He got a gold idol of Krishna made by a goldsmith out of 20 coins. He got a golden cow made to match the idol. He got made a peacock and a golden cup to perform the *abhishekam* for the idol, both of the same weight as the idol.

Everyday he used to perform the *abhishekam* and enjoy the worship of Krishna. But the tide of time brought in its wake a decline in his fortunes and he found himself nearly destitute. He collected all his golden articles of worship and took them to another rich man to sell them. Each of the four items was weighed and valued at Rs. 60,000 each. The old devotee could not bear to learn that his revered Krishna idol was valued at the same price as the cow, the peacock and the cup. He said that more should be paid for the Krishna idol. The intending purchaser said: "Sir, for you the Krishna form is more precious than the other. But for me only the weight matters, not the form."

What is happening in the world today is that men are attaching value to the external forms and not to the Divine substance which is common to all of them. The five elements constituting every being are Divine. Apart from the five elements there is no sixth element. People imagine that there is a sixth element and go after it.

This crazy desire is the cause of much of man's misery. Desires are inescapable. But there should be a limit for them. In the story of Midaas, he prayed and got a boon that whatever he touched should turn into gold. He soon found that he could not even eat his food as it turned into gold at his touch. He prayed again to the good fairy to take back the boon she had given to him.

It is evident from this story what will be the grave consequences of insatiable desires. Those who act upto Divine injunctions will be happy and prosperous.

Shankara, therefore, warned mankind against the mad pursuit of wealth and exhorted everyone to reduce one's desires. (Svaami sang a Thelugu song. "One gets wealth according to his Kanna. Therefore be content what you get.").

Control your desires

Control your desires. Cultivate love of God. That love will confer on you everything according to your needs. There is no need for you to ask for anything from God. "Did He not give to Shabari what she needed without her asking? Did He not bless Jataayu with His grace?" Dhasharatha had prayed for so long that his son should perform the last rites for him. But he did not get it, while the bird Jataayu had the privilege of getting his last rites done at Raama's hands. Jataayu got liberation after receiving the saving drops of water from Raama. Shabari was eagerly waiting for the arrival of Raama and made all the arrangements to welcome him and offer him the sweetest fruit. Shabari's intense devotion to Raama got its reward.

God confers His grace according to each one's deserts. The Divine is marked by *Anugraha* (Grace) and not *Aagraha* (anger). But devotees tend to judge the ways of God according to their own predilections. A man standing before a mirror will see his moods reflected in the mirror.

It is impossible to escape from *karma*

No one can escape from the consequences of his actions whatever efforts he may make to run away from them. (Svaami sang a song with the refrain, "*Karma-dhaatha vasamaa, naanaa*"--Is it possible to escape from Karma, oh man?) As are your actions, so are the reactions.

In the cosmic context, nature is the mirror. God is the viewer. All that is reflected in nature is Divine. The One alone exists. The object and the image appear because of the presence of the mirror. When there is no mirror there is no image. This is the mystery relating to nature and the wonders of the Lord. The glories of the Lord are multifarious and marvellous beyond words.

God's arithmetic is different from man's. For instance, when a mirror is placed before you, you have three entities. Yourself, the mirror and your image. When you take away the mirror, according to ordinary arithmetic, three minus one should be two. But when the mirror is removed only you remain. Three minus one becomes one!

Many people think and many people say: "Money makes many many things." But I say: "Money makes many wrongs."

Only when the distinction between the worldly point of view and the Divine point of view is understood that people will learn to make proper use of money.

"You and I are one"

This is the distinctive significance of Shankara's non-dualism. Shankara related the experiences of daily life to the doctrine of *Ekathvam* (spiritual oneness). The Divine is one, but is adored under different names and forms: Allah, Jesus, Buddha, Zoroaster, Raama, Hari or Hara. All are the same. Shankara did not approve of God being described as mother, father, etc. The relationship between God and man is oneness. "You and I are one." This is the essence of the *Adhvaitik* doctrine. This awareness of oneness can give infinite joy, according to Shankara.

This experience does not come easily. One has to undertake intensive enquiry and also practise *samskaaras* (spiritual discipline). When the *samskaaras* lead to the refinement of the spirit, the experience of oneness with the Divine comes. How fortunate is the one who gets that experience! None can be more fortunate.

The one who gets this experience is the Lord of the universe. As the Master of the Self he is the Lord of the Cosmos. This *Aathma* is present in every cell of the human body. When this

nectarine truth is realised, man will not seek the ephemeral. Everyone should therefore seek the nectar, of enduring *Aathmik* bliss.

Shankara made all endeavours to propagate the *Adhvaithik message* to the entire country and to every person whether he was a king or a commoner, scholar or ignoramus.

Pledge to the mother

Shankara had given a pledge to his mother that he would, reach her in the last moments and perform the last rites for her. Being a pure and high-souled being, he was determined to keep his word. For the pure-hearted the plighted word is bound to be kept. Moreover, whatever they say will happen.

The Divine chooses the time and the situation for showering His grace and conveying His message. In the case of Arjuna, the Kurukshetra war was the right moment for Krishna to test Arjuna's total faith in Krishna and his deservedness for receiving the message of the Geetha.

Discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 8-9-1996.

The true strength can be acquired only through Love. All other efforts are of no avail. Thus we should seek from God only the strength of LOVE.

Baba

45. Shankara's call to youth

What does it matter

If the petty-minded

Slight noble souls?

Does mighty elephant lose

Its grandeur when dogs bark?

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Aathma! All objects in the world which you see display some kind of colour. We think that these colours are natural to those objects. It is not so. The colours are really a reflection of our own vision. The sky appears blue when we look at it. The ocean appears dark blue in colour. We say that the sky is blue, the ocean is blue. This is incorrect. Neither the sky nor the ocean is blue in colour. It is the vastness of space and the depths of the ocean which produce this impression of bluishness. When you take a handful of seawater and look at it you will find that it is colourless. It will not show the colour that you fancy.

Likewise, good and evil depend on one's thoughts and feelings. The true colour of any object is not perceivable. Equally, the true form is not apparent.

Electrical energy is generated from a hydroelectric power station. The electric current is not visible to us, though the different uses to which the energy is put are obvious. Likewise, all beings, all living creatures, emerge from the *Aathmik* Principle. But this Principle is not apparent. We can see the beings arising from this Principle and their behaviour, good and bad.

A promise fulfilled

After Shankara propagated his *Adhvaitik* doctrine from Kaasi, there was an assembly of great scholars in the holy city. Shankara, who was in that assembly, closed his eyes for a moment and experienced the vision of his mother in great distress. Immediately he dispersed the assembly and left for Kaaladi. He reached his mother in her last moments, as promised, administered *thulasi* water to her lips and discharged his duties to the mother.

At that time, the people of Kaaladi did not view with approval the actions of Shankara, because in their view, one who had taken to *sanyaasa*, should not revert to the activities of a householder and perform rituals. *Sanyaasa* means giving up all desires. The view of the *orthodox.pandiths* was that once a person had taken to *sanyaasa* he should not perform the last rites for a mother or a father which are the obligations of a householder.

To enable the students to understand the implications of this incident, I shall explain what *sanyaasa* means. Before one takes to *sanyaasa*, the *Viraja Homa* is performed which signifies that the person dies as it were and gives up all his previous worldly commitments and enters on a new life, assuming a new form and wearing a new robe. The old form is cast away and the former name is also given up. He gets a new name related to the ascetic order. The suffix *Aanandha* is tacked on the name, though few of them, experience *Aanandha!* After going through this ceremony, where is the place for mother or father?

Svaami's visit to Hrishikesh

In this context, I should like to recall an incident which happened when I was travelling with Burugula Raamakrishna Rao, the then Governor of Uttar Pradesh. He was a good devotee and

was proficient in a number of languages. He was a very intelligent person. He resolved to make the trip to Badhrinaath and Kedhaarnaath "in the company of the Lord Himself (Bhagavaan Baba)." On learning that Svaami was going to Badhrinaath, nearly 200 devotees joined Bhagavaan's group. The Raamakrishna Rao couple were very pure and pious people and every day they would take their food only after the 200 devotees with Svaami had taken their food. Such was their devotion! When the devotees sat for the meals, Raamakrishna Rao himself would serve water for all of them. He would not allow his A.D.C. or others to do this service. He used to declare-"I am a servant of Svaami, not a Governor."

Raamakrishna Rao was previously Chief Minister of Aandhra Pradesh at Hyderabad. When Svaami went there during that period, thousands of persons were lined up in a queue for dharshan of Svaami at Malakpet. The volunteers were hustling the devotees in the queue to save time.

I should like the students to realise what a tender heart Raamakrishna Rao had. He joined the queue. The Inspector General of Police approached Raamakrishna Rao and appealed to him to come separately and not join in the queue. Raamakrishna Rao told him: "Politically I may be Chief Minister. Spiritually I am a cheap devotee! I am not such a great devotee." Such was the devotional spirit of Raamakrishna Rao!

Svaami and Shivaanandha

All of us reached Hrishikesh. Raamakrishna Rao had arranged for the stay of the entire party in a big guest house and nearby cottages. At that time, Shivaanandha and a group of his devotees came to the guest house and requested Svaami to visit Svaami Shivaanandha's *aashram* the next day, which happened to be Shivaanandha's seventieth birthday. Svaami remarked: "It is not Shivaanandha's birthday but Kuppusvaami's birthday. Before he assumed the name. Shivaanandha, as a renunciant, his name was Kuppusvaami. He was a doctor. That Kuppusvaami ceased to exist with the taking of *Sanyaasa*. He then adopted the name Shivaanandha. That was 26 years ago. Hence the Svaami is only 26 years old as Shivaanandha. It is the 70th Birthday for Kuppusvaami and only the 26th Birthday for Shivaanandha!" Shivaanandha said: "Svaami! No one has told me this truth so far in this forceful manner."

This body is 70 years old. People recognise the physical, but do not recognise the basis that sustains it. This truth can be understood only by Divine personalities like *avathaars* and not by others. From the moment of birth till the end of this body it will bear one form and one name.

People who profess *Adhvaitha*, often remember their *pre-sanyaasa* life and continue to think of it while carrying on their life as renunciants.

Practice of cremation in the backyard in Kerala

Shankara was confronted with a difficult situation. No one in his village was willing to help him. He had to perform the obsequies for his mother. The local Nambuudhiri Brahmins declared that they could not touch the body. They felt that Shankara was going against scriptural injunctions.

Utterly helpless, Shankara carried the body himself to the backyard of the house and cremated it. What Shankara did then is practised even today in Kaaladi. When any elders pass away, their bodies are cremated in the backyard of their houses. There is no separate cremation ground for them.

When you go to Kerala you will find houses facing the street but the backyard will be open space. Anyone who goes there will have to take a purifactory bath. In this manner Shankara fulfilled the promise he gave to his mother.

Shankara then left for Kaasi. He was deeply pained at the attitude displayed towards him by the people of Kaaladi. Shankara was walking all the way to Kaasi, with just a stick in his hand and an oil torch to light his way at night.

Advice to the young

Looking at young men and women going about on his way, Shankara remarked to his disciples that young people were more keen about sensuous pleasures than to enquire about the *Aathma*. It is a pity that people are attached to the body which is a container of many filthy objects. They are carried away by the external physical attractions of the body. It is a crying shame! What a pity that people should be so attached to this impermanent body! How long can youthhood last? Shankara then and there taught the people about the transitoriness of carnal pleasures.

His message was a warning to youth to be very careful in the life they led. They should give up attachment to the body. In this context I would relate the story of a prince who wanted to marry a merchant's daughter for her beauty. The girl who was devoted to God and wished to remain single, devised a plan to rid the prince of his infatuations. She sent word that she would agree to marry the prince if he approved of her after a week. Meanwhile she took a series of purgatives, collected all the purgings in vessels and went to meet the prince. By that time she was so emaciated that all her youthful charm had gone. She told the prince that the beauty he saw in her was all contained in the vessels. The prince learnt the lesson and decided also to remain single and devote himself to serve God.

Shankara sought in this manner to turn the minds of the people away from sensual pleasures to thoughts of God. Shankara did not call upon all young men to take to sanyaasa. He exhorted them to do their duty and dedicate the body to the service of the Divine. He preached the truth, practised it and broadcast it to the world.

Young people today have become slaves of the senses and are behaving like the lower animals.

Shankara pointed out how worldly life is like the scenes on a screen. They come and go, but the screen remains. He declared: "*Brahma Sathyam. Jagath mithya*" (The Self is real. The world is illusory). Shankara also declared: "*Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagath*" (The Universe is permeated by God). When scholars pointed out the contradiction between the two statements, Shankara said: "Worldly life is illusory because it is continually coming and going." At the same time, this worldly life is lived like the moving scenes on a permanent screen. In this process the world and the Divine become one as it were like the oneness of the screen and the pictures on it. This is the basis for the statement: "*Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagath.*" Hence, the Upanishathik declaration that the whole cosmos is dwelt in by God.

Adhvaitha and worldly duties

This was the non-dualism preached by Shankara. Consider the Divine as the fundamental basis and lead your worldly life recognising its impermanence. Without the Divine the cosmos has no existence. Hence man must recognise the one Divine *Aathmik* Principle that is present in all beings. It may be called by different names. The Eternal Divine is birthless and nameless.

(Svaami described Shankara's successful debates with Mandana Mishra and his wife, Ubhaya-bhaarathi, both of whom took to *sanyaasa* thereafter. Shankara then went to Kashmir.)

Shankara's atonement in Kashmir

The ruler of Kashmir was a great patron of scholars. Shankara wanted to defeat them in debates. The moment Shankara entered Kashmir, the gates of the temple of Kanaka-dhurga closed. All the efforts to open them proved fruitless. All the *pandiths* went to the temple and prayed to the goddess. In answer to their prayers the Goddess spoke in an ethereal voice: "Shankara is a great Achaarya (preceptor). But he suffers from one taint. Only when the taint is removed will these doors open." Shankara then sang hymns in praise of Shiva. Shankara realised that he had committed a mistake in entering the dead body of the king of Kaasi to acquire the experience-of a householder for carrying on the debate with Ubhayabhaarathi, the wife of Mandana Mishra. To atone for this lapse he decided on a eleven days fast, without food or water, to perform a *thapas*. On the twelfth day, the doors of the temple opened of their own accord. This showed the power of Shankara's determination and penance.

Krishnamurthy and Sandipan Chatterjee (who had spoken earlier) referred to *Prema* and called upon the students to cultivate love. What is the kind of love they should develop? Shankara has given the answer. The love should arise from the *Aathma*. True prayer should stem from the soul and not the body. That love is God. Live in love.

Develop detachment

Shankara continuously preached the doctrine of detachment to young people because he realised that attachments developed over many lives cannot be shed by listening to one or two speeches. There was a businessman who feared that his son might develop aversion to the world if he listened to the discourse of a *pandith* who was expounding the greatness of renunciation. The *pandith* assured the merchant that one day's talk was not going to reform his son, when a series of talks had no effect on the father. When there was need for constant purity in daily life, the efforts at spiritual cleansing should be continuous. This was the way Shankara was preaching to the young the philosophy of renunciation and detachment. Students should hold fast to God as the only true friend and supporter. When you have firm faith, the Divine will manifest Himself to you. This is the truth, the truth and nothing but the Truth.

Today several *pandiths* expounded *Adhvaitha*, but few practise it. *Adhvaitha* should be lived, not merely repeated in words! Realise the truth: "*Sathyam, Jnaanam, Anantham Brahma!*"

Discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 9-9-1996.

46. The conquest of attachment

*With what ingenuity does the tongue
Manage to move about in the mouth
Without getting caught between the teeth!
Man also should behave likewise
To avoid the perils of life.
Forget not these good words, Oh man!*

SHANKARA looked upon man's existence in the world as that of an actor on the stage, who plays his part, by being born, growing and dying.

*Man's life is like a drop of water
Shimmering without rest on a lotus leaf.
It is filled with grief and sorrow.
Give up attachment to this life
And start worshipping Govindha,
Oh man! lacking in wisdom. (Telugu Poem).*

Human life is like a house filled with many rooms in the form of desires. Desires and disappointments are the order of the day. Doubts are rampant. Man is racked by fears. Fear haunts him wherever he goes or remains. He is caught up in a maze of troubles. How is he to escape from it? Even the happiness which he seems to derive from life is coupled with fear. There is no freedom from fear. How is it to be got? Where there is no attachment, there is no fear. How is this state to be got? By proximity to the Divine.

Shankara exhorted mankind to banish fear by cultivating *vairagya* (detachment) and journeying towards the *Aathma* (Self). It is through Self-Realisation that the true nature of fear is understood. Joy and sorrow, profit and loss, light and darkness are pairs of opposites in which the absence of one is the sign of its opposite. For both, the root cause is the *Aathma*. All things originate from the *Aathma*. Here is a flower. It has many petals. These petals appear distinct from each other. But all petals have emerged from the same single stem. The stem is the seat of the *Aathma*, from which the petals have emanated. But we view the flower as a single object. The flower is one, but the petals are many. The petals have come out of the one stem.

The ocean, waves and foam

The analogy is applicable to the endless number of waves arising on the ocean. The waves are many and distinct. But they are of the same stuff as the ocean. From the waves arises the foam, which has the same properties as the waves and the ocean though different in form and name. These three are based on the ocean. The three represent the three kinds of proofs in logic *Prathyaksha* (direct perception), *Paroksha* (indirect evidence) and *Anumaana* (inference). This is the logical basis for *Adhvaitha*. It is termed *Thriputhi*--the three-in-one--the *Aathmik* principle. In the human, this three-in-one is found in the unity of the body, mind and *Aathma*. The body

functions on the basis of the mind. The mind is based on the *Aathma*. The *Aathma* is the basis for everything. For humanness, the *Aathma* is the basis. This is the doctrine of Non-Dualism.

Ignoring this truth and pursuing the myriad ephemeral objects of the phenomenal world, people ultimately come to a realisation of the *Aathmik* Principle.

Siddhaatha's discovery

After a long period Shuddhodhana had a son, named Siddhaatha. The King kept Siddhaatha entirely within the palace so that the boy should have no knowledge of the sufferings in the world outside. Once Shuddhodhana introduced his son to a high-souled *pandith* who had come to the palace. The *pandith* was an oracle. He told the king: "Shuddhodhana! This lad will become a renunciant. Moreover he will become a great teacher of wisdom to the people." Shuddhodhana was alarmed on hearing this.

Apprehending that the prince might develop *Vairaagya* (total detachment) if he went out, he kept the prince from going out. The king got him married when he reached his eighteenth year and crowned him Heir-Apparent. After his coronation as Yuvaraaja, Siddhaatha desired to go round the kingdom. There was no meaning in a ruler confining himself to his palace. He should know how the people lived. Hence he wanted to go round the country. Despite his apprehensions, the king agreed to the prince's request because he was now married and was unlikely to break away.

Old age, disease and death

Siddhaatha got into his chariot and set out on a tour of the capital. He saw an old woman, bent with age, trudging, on the road with a stick. He asked the charioteer: "Who is this strange creature moving on the road?" "Lord! When one grows old, the back is bent and one becomes infirm. This is an old woman." The prince asked: "Does this happen to everyone as a result of old age?" He replied: "It is inescapable. It is a law of Nature."

The chariot went further. A sick man was sitting under a tree, coughing and wailing. The prince asked what the matter was with the man under the tree. The charioteer replied: "The human body is subject to a variety of ailments. That man is suffering from a severe ailment. No one can tell when anyone may be afflicted with disease." The prince took note of this.

The chariot proceeded further. A dead body was being carried by four persons on a bier. The prince asked what it was that the four men were carrying. He replied: "It is a dead body." "What is a dead body?" asked the prince. The charioteer replied: "A dead body is without life." "What about us?" asked the prince. "We are *Shivam* (alive)." The prince asked: "Does everyone lose his life?" "Yes. Death is unavoidable, sometime or other." The prince heard this. He dropped the sword in his hand and returned to the palace.

He did not eat that night. He went to bed, but could not sleep. By his side, his wife Yashodhara and his young son were sleeping. He looked at them intensely. The thought flashed in his mind: *Sarvam dukkham* (All is sorrow). Then he declared: "*Sarvam Bhayam, Bhayam, Bhayam*" (All is filled with fear). Next, he declared: "*Sarvam anithyam, anithyam, anithyam*" (Everything is transient, transient, transient). Then, he declared: "*Sarvam shuunyam, shuunyam, shuunyam*" (All is emptiness). Making these declarations, he left the palace.

What great renunciation is this! We see any number of ailing persons, old people and dead bodies. How many get the feeling of renunciation after seeing these scenes? Only Siddhaatha

got this feeling. To acquire such a control over the senses (as to give up all attachments) God's grace is necessary.

The Jithendhriya kingdom

Likewise, a prince went to a forest for hunting. Feeling tired and thirsty, he went to an *aashram* for rest and water to drink. The sage of the hermitage asked the prince who he was and what brought him to the *aashram*. He said: "My name is Jithendhriya. I have come from the kingdom of Jithendhriya. I need some water." The sage offered water and asked him to sit. The sage wanted to find out whether the stranger was one who lived upto his name. (Jithendhriya means one who has conquered his senses). There are many persons who have names like Dharmaraju, but who belie their names.

The sage asked the prince to hand over his royal clothes to him and wear an ascetic's robes himself. He took the prince's clothes, sprinkled some red powder on them and set out for the kingdom of Jithendhriya. At the palace gate, the sentry greeted the sage with reverence and asked him the object of his visit. The sage told them that the prince had been killed by a wild animal in the forest and that he had brought the prince's clothes. He asked them to convey this message to the king. The gatekeeper smiled and asked: "Who is free from death? Everyone that is born is bound to die. Birth and death go together." There is a practice in the railways to stamp on every railway wagon the date on which it has to be returned to the workshop for repair and repainting. Likewise everybody has a return date, though it is not visible.

Indifference to death

After hearing the sentry's words, the sage went in to meet the king himself. He told the king that his son had died and started crying. While the *Sanyaasi* was wailing, the king was having a laugh. The king said to him: "You are wearing the ochre robe. But your words are unbecoming of a renunciant. Why do you cry? This is no matter for grief or worry. At dusk hundreds of birds return to a tree for rest. The next morning they fly away. What is the relationship between the different birds? Likewise on the tree of my family, birds like wife and children rest for a while and depart. No one can tell when and where any of them will leave. There is no cause for grief over their departure. It is a law of nature." The sage felt that the king was a heartless man. He then went to the queen, thinking that as a mother she would grieve over the death of her son. He told her: "Mother! Your son is dead. Here are his clothes." She too laughed. "Oh Saadhu! You are one who has renounced everything in the world. How can you entertain any concern for the ephemeral? Life is like a choultry where wayfarers stay for a while and then pass on. Each has his own time of departure. There is no need to grieve when any one leaves the world."

Then the sage went to the prince's wife to find out whether she at least reacted differently. He broke the news about the death of her husband. She remarked: "When it rains, leaves fall away from a tree. When there is a flood, two pieces of wood come together for a while and separate again. In this ocean of life I am one such piece. The prince was another. We came together and we have gone apart. Why be surprised or lament over this? For all these, the cause is either attachment or possessiveness. The events themselves are not to be blamed. They are bound to happen. Why worry about them?"

True detachment

The sage realised that what the prince had said about the kingdom was all true. Yet, he wanted to test the prince himself. He returned to the hermitage and exclaimed before the prince: "Oh

prince! Your kingdom has been overrun by invaders and your father and mother are kept as prisoners. You must leave immediately to recover the kingdom and release your parents. Get ready for war."

The prince replied: "All that has happened is according to the Will of God. I did not bring that kingdom with me when I was born. Can I take it with me when I die? Why should I wage war to recover it?"

It is not my kingdom. My kingdom is the kingdom of the *Aathma* (Spirit). I am striving to realise it. That is the Kingdom of Heaven: That is what I seek to secure. It cannot be got by waging by war. It has to be won through love alone. I have no interest in other kingdoms."

Be true to your role

Then, the *sanyaasi* prostrated before the prince and confessed: "We don the robes of renunciants, but we have none of the qualities of true renunciants. How many householders are leading lives free from worldly attachments."

I would relate another story, to show that whatever role one has to play in life, he should, be true to it. Once an actor appeared before the court of a king in the guise of Shankaraachaarya, declaring in strident terms the unreality of all human relationships and the impermanence of worldly possessions. The actor gave such a powerful exposition of *Adhvaitha* that the king directed his minister to present the actor with a plate of gold coins. But the Shankaraachaarya firmly refused to accept the present, saying that it would be unworthy of him to receive it in his role as Shankaraachaarya. The next day the same actor appeared in the role of a beautiful dancer: and performed an excellent dance before the king. The king was so much impressed with the dance that he directed the minister to present a plate of gold coins to the dancer. This time, the dancer declined to accept what was offered as too small a reward for his performance. The minister who realised that the dancer was the same person who had come as Shankara the previous day, then asked the actor what was the reason for his refusal to accept the plate of gold coins the previous day and to ask for more that day. The actor explained that he declined the previous offer in keeping with his role as renunciant. But, in the role of a dancer he was free to ask for more as it was natural for dancers to make as much money as they could.

Shankara's call to humanity

Shankaraachaarya called upon mankind to realise that as human beings they should cherish human values and practise them. Otherwise they would be betraying their true role in life. Shankara went round the country exhorting people to lead spiritual lives, shedding their animal qualities. His disciples imbibed the essence of Shankara's doctrines and became proficient in expounding *Adhvaitha*. For a time the *Adhvaithic* doctrine held sway all over Bhaarath. In course of time, however, the doctrine lost its hold.

Students! I do not want you all to become *sanyaasins* and to give up everything. All that I want you to do is to carry on your duties, place your faith in God and realise that there is one fundamental Reality underlying all things. When you get this realisation, detachment will develop in you of its own accord. Detachment is not acquired by compulsion. As love of God grows, indifference to worldly things develops naturally.

Discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 10-9-1996.

47. The Vinaayaka Principle

EMBODIMENTS of Love! When you rub piece of sandalwood on the grindstone, the more you rub it, the greater the fragrance it emits. As you chew a piece of sugarcane, the more you chew the greater the sweet juice you get from it. As gold is heated more and more in the crucible, it acquires greater brilliance, getting rid of all impurities. A noble being displays his good qualities, however much he might be subjected to trials and tribulations. Thereby he stands out as an example to the world. (Svaami explained the purport of the opening *Sanskriith* stanza thus).

God is the embodiment of bliss. He is eternal. Every living being originates from bliss, grows on bliss and merges in bliss.

Among the myriad names of God, the foremost is *Sath-Chith-Aanandha*. *Sath* is that sacred thing which has no change in the three worlds and in the three categories of time (past, present and future). It is permanent. *Chith* means total awareness. When *Sath and Chith* become one, *Aanandha* (bliss) is realised. Hence, the Divine is described as *Sath-Chit-Aanandha* (Being-Awareness-Bliss). This principle is all-pervasive. It is present in all. The scriptures declare: "*Sarvam-Vishnumayam Jagath*" (The cosmos is permeated by the Divine).

Failing to recognise this truth and treating the body as the only reality, man distances himself from bliss. Men identify themselves in terms of their professions or nationality. But all these are acquired characteristics and not innate to the persons concerned. Essentially everyone is an embodiment of the *Aathma* (the Self). All the other aspects are transient. To identify yourself with the body is to mistake the dwelling for the indweller. When the truth is investigated in this manner, spirituality will become apparent.

***Aathmik* principle resides in everyone**

The basis of the *Adhvaithik* doctrine is the spiritual oneness of the entire cosmos. It is the Spirit that is common to all beings. The Spirit is the source of all beings and their ultimate destination.

The *Aathmik* principle resides in the heart of every being. Hence there is no need to go in search of God. You are the Divine.

Today the nation is racked by divisions of all kinds based on religion, language and region. People should strive to realise the underlying unity of all religions, languages and regions. God is called by different names by people of different faiths. But all names signify the same God. All of them stress the unity that underlies the apparent diversity.

Vedhaantha indicates the four stages in realisation of the Divine. *Saalokya* (perception of the Divine), *Saameepya* (proximity to the Divine), *Saaroopya* (experiencing the vision of the Divine) and *Saayujya* (merger in the Divine). The Divine as such has no form. Whatever the form in which the devotee worships the Divine, the Divine assumes that form for the devotee. However, all forms are His. "*Sathyam, Shivam, Sundharam.*" Truth is God. Beauty is God. The unity of Truth, Goodness and Beauty is *Sath-Chith-Aanandha*.

Emperor Janaka's transformation as a *Raja-Yogi* took place after he learnt from Yaajnavalkya that his present queen was in his previous birth his mother. This knowledge immediately made Janaka renounce everything and become a seeker of the Divine. While Yaajnavalkya hesitated to reply to the King's persistent query about his previous birth, once he revealed the truth, the king considered it a blessing and became a *yogi*.

Worship of Vinaayaka

Today we celebrate the birthday of Ganapathi. What is the significance of this term? *Ga* means *Buddhi* (the intellect). *Na* means *Vijnaana* (wisdom). *Pathi* means Master. Hence, Ganapathi is the master of the intellect and wisdom. Another meaning of the term is Master of the Ganas (the hosts of spirits). The name Vinaayaka means one who has no leader above him.

Before we commence any activity we offer prayers to Vinaayaka so that the action may be successful without any impediments. Vinaayaka is worshipped not only in Bhaarath but in many other countries. The worship of Vinaayaka has been prevailing from the times of the Rig-*Vedha*.

The Vinaayaka principle protects man from the various hurdles in life and ensures peace and security. Hence on every auspicious occasion Vinaayaka is worshipped.

The devout offer worship to Vinaayaka with the well-known prayer beginning with the words, *Shuklaambara-dharam* (The one who wears a white garment). Vighneshvara is described as one who is white like the moon, who has four arms (two for giving worldly protection and two for giving spiritual benediction), who has an ever-pleasing countenance and to whom obeisance is offered for removing all obstacles. While the pious used this prayer in a devout spirit, the impious misused the words to distort the meaning and make it a prayer to a quadruped which is employed for carrying washed clothes. It is by such misinterpretation that some people have sullied the great culture of Bhaarath and undermined faith in God.

Fill your hearts with love

Students! Instead of filling your minds with scriptural knowledge it is enough if you fill your hearts with love. One ounce of practice is worth tons of spiritual knowledge. Today men should show their humanness in action and not their physical features. Students should be filled with idealism and serve the Motherland in a sacred spirit, with firm faith in God.

The preciousness of human birth is indicated by the declaration in the Geetha that every human being is a spark of the Divine. Everyone should look Godward while attending to worldly duties. If you dedicate all actions to God there will be no obstacles. Good thoughts will lead to good actions which produce good results.

Students! You should seek to earn the love of God and His grace. All other acquisitions are worthless and impermanent.

Discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 16-9-1996.

Bhaarath has been blessed with many saints and sages and with many manifestations of Divinity in Human Form. A doubt may arise why such appearances take place in Bhaarath, more than in any other place, when the world is so big and we have humanity everywhere to be saved and guided. There is a reason for this, believe Me! Well, why should, in all India, Kolar alone have gold? Where there is a gold mine, there is the need for mining engineers and chemists who will extract it, separate it, purify it and distribute it to the various places where gold is in demand, is it not?

Baba

48. Who is dear to the Lord?

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Human life is precious, noble and virtuous. It is a pity human beings do not realise this. The whole purpose and goal of human life is to know one's true nature. Forgetting one's true nature, man is caught up in worldly concerns and plunged in misery. The ancient sages indicated the path to be pursued for the redemption of mankind.

They commended nine forms of worship any one of which could confer bliss and redeem a man's life.

To experience the proximity of the Divine the easiest path is *Naama-smarana*, remembering constantly the name of the Lord. Sage Vedha Vyaasa declared that in this *Kali Yuga* there is nothing greater than chanting the name of Hari for realising God. It is the easiest path for one and all, the scholar and illiterate, the rich and the poor.

In the Geetha, the Lord has indicated the qualities which a devotee should possess to enable him to earn the love of the Lord. Among these qualities, Krishna declared *Anapeksha* (desirelessness) as important. Today there are few without desires of one kind or other. All sensual pleasures are ephemeral. But most people are content with them. Greater than the sensual is the transcendental path, *Shreyo maarga*, which confers lasting bliss.

When one does any action as an offering to God, it gets sanctified. Such an act becomes *anapeksha* (desireless act). Every selfless act of devotion becomes an action free from the taint of desire.

The second quality is *Suchi* (purity). What is required is both internal and external purity. God cares only for *Chittha-shuddhi* (internal purity of the mind).

Faith and service

The third quality is *dhaksha*. This means that the devotee should be steadfast and unwavering in any situation. With his mind firmly rooted in God, he should engage himself in service to others and perform actions in a spirit of detachment. Only such a devotee is eligible for God's love. He is unaffected by pleasure or pain, gain or loss or what happens in the mundane world. The fourth quality is *Udhaaseenah* indifference to external happenings. The fifth quality is freedom from egoism and possessiveness. One should get rid of the idea of doership and ownership and surrender everything to God.

Today all spiritual exercises are ostensibly undertaken for realising God. But there is no need for undertaking them. Human birth itself is a mark of Divinity. What is essential is to recognise the indwelling Divinity and live on that basis.

Where is God? Not in temples or pilgrim centres or other places. He dwells in the heart of everyone. To experience the Divinity within, one has to see the Divine in all others and render them service in that spirit.

Worship of *paadhukas*

Today we are celebrating the worship of *paadhukas* (sandals sanctified by the touch of the Lord's feet). Worship of *paadhukas* is not of recent origin.

Even during the Kritha Yuga, the sages used to worship *paadhukas*, experience divine bliss and share it with others. By worshipping the Feet of the Lord, they achieved the goal of their penance.

In the worship of Dakshinaamurthy, adoration of the sandals of the Lord as *guru* (preceptor) is considered important. Even Shankaraachaarya resorted to the worship of the Lord's Feet as essential. In a famous hymn, he extolled the Lord in many ways and declared that he was taking refuge in the Lord's feet (Shambhu). He declared that Shiva's feet were enshrined in his heart and not elsewhere.

The glory of the Lord's feet is demonstrated by a significant episode in the Raamaayana. After Raama left for the forest, Bharatha came to him and pleaded earnestly with him to return to Ayodhya. Raama was equally determined not to return. Vasishta noticed the equal determination of the two brothers. The sage told Bharatha: "Raama has come to the forest to carry out the command of his father. It is not right on your part to ask him to change his mind. Let us take his *paadhukas* to Ayodhya. Those *paadhukas* will reign over the kingdom." Vasishta gave this timely advice and persuaded Bharatha to take Raama's sandals and install them on the throne in Ayodhya.

These incidents show that the worship of the Lord's feet and of the Lord's sandals has a long antiquity. The sacredness of this worship was propagated to the world by Bhaarath from ancient times as part of its spiritual message to mankind. Indians today have largely forgotten this ancient practice. In those days it was the practice of the disciples, after the completion of their education at the *guru's aashram*, to take with them *paadhukas* of the *guru* to worship them on their return to their homes. But even the worship of *paadhukas* is an external activity. True devotion calls for the installation of the *paadhukas* in the heart.

This means that starting with the external form of worship, we should in due course make it an internal exercise.

Karma, Bhakthi and Jnaana

All these are related to the *Karma Maarga* (path of Action). Beginning with the path of action, progressing towards the *Bhakthi Maarga* (path of devotion), one should ultimately *achieve-Kaivalya* (Self-realisation) by the *Jnaana Maarga* (the Path of Wisdom). "*Jnaanaath eva thu Kaivalyam*" (Realisation is only through Wisdom), declares the scripture.

The entire life should not be spent on only worldly duties. One must progress spiritually from stage to stage. *Karma-Upaasana-Jnaanam* (Action-Devotion-Wisdom)--these are the three steps in Self-Realisation.

Subramania Chettiar has been engaged in these devotional activities for a long time. Looking at his age, you can realise that physically he is not fit to undertake long journeys. But because of his intense devotion and strong faith in Bhagavaan he has been able to carry on this work. The Divine grace has been giving him all this abundant energy.

So far as the worship of the *paadhukas* is concerned you need not bother about what others think. Every man should take up such sacred activity to get nearer to God.

To get close to the Divine, you have to engage yourselves in activities which please the Divine. The supreme maxims of the Bhaaratheeya culture are: "Speak the Truth. Follow Righteousness." When you adhere to these two maxims, all your actions will be sacred.

The *Purusharthas*

Of the four goals of human life prescribed by the scriptures, the first is *Dharma* (Righteousness). It is the feet in the human body. The entire body rests on the feet. *Artha*, the second goal, rests on the feet. Hence, the acquisition of wealth should be based on righteous means. The third goal is *Kaama* (desires). For the fulfillment of desires you need the *Bhujabalam* (strength of the arms). Both *Kaama* and *Artha* are based on *Dharma*. *Moksha* is the culmination of a life based on *Dharma*.

Today people have forgotten *Dharma* and *Moksha* and are immersed only in *Artha* (acquisition of wealth) and *Kaama* (the pursuit of sensual desires). For the realisation of the goal of human existence, you have to rely on the feet, namely, *Dharma*, and the head, namely *Moksha* (Liberation). This is the meaning of the symbolic description of the Cosmic Person in the *Vedhas*. The face of the Cosmic Person symbolises the *Brahmik* Principle. The feet symbolise *Dharma*. Thus basing oneself on *Dharma*, one should pursue *Artha* and *Kaama* to attain *Moksha*.

People should seek the Divine in all possible ways. In the worship of the *paahukas*, devotees should offer worship with all their heart and not as a mechanical ritual.

How to recite *manthras*

For instance, when the chief priest was reciting the *manthras*, anyone would have been deeply moved by listening to them. *Our pandith* pronounced the words with extreme clarity. Let me not be misunderstood when I say that, whether in *Thamil Naadu*, *Kerala* or even in *Northern India*, *Sanskrit* words are not pronounced correctly. But *the pandith* pronounced all the words very clearly this morning. Every syllable was pronounced in such a way that it appealed to the heart. His assistants were also closely following him.

Governor *Burugula Raamakrishna Rao* took one group to *Badhrinaath*. The priest in the temple there was a *Nambuudhiri* and a *Sanskrit pandith*. Yet, when the *pandith* was reciting the *manthras*, *Raamakrishna Rao* closed his ears. *Raamakrishna Rao* exclaimed: "Oh *pandith!* Do not massacre our *Sanskrit!*" The *pandith* was saying: "*Jaanthaagaaram Bhujaga Jayanam Badmanaabham---*(laughter) instead of saying "*Shaanthaakaaram bhujagashayanam Padmanaabham* " What humiliation is inflicted on the *Sanskrit* language! It is praiseworthy that a *pandith* living in *Tamil Naadu* should pronounce *Sanskrit manthras* more clearly and correctly than even *Aandhras*.

It is because of the help of such *pandiths* that *Subrahmanya Chetty's* burdens are lightened.

A blissful experience

The spectacle you witnessed this morning was indeed a blissful experience for one and all. It looked as if all were in *Vaikunttha* (the Abode of the Supreme Lord) or *Svarga* (the abode of *Indhra*). It was not at all a command performance. Everyone silently performed the *puuja* (worship of the *paadhukas*) with his/her full heart in it. The *pandith* explained the meaning of every word in the *manthra*. It is rare to find *pandiths* who recite the *manthras* so clearly and explain their meaning intelligently. This has been the problem in *Bhaarath* for quite a long time. Very few are concerned about the well-being of society. People carry on their work, professing that duty is God. That was not the case with the *pandith* who officiated at the function today. It is thanks to such *pandiths* that we have devotees who practise the rituals sincerely.

Now, let me say a word about Dr. Gadhia (who has addressed the meeting earlier).. You know about him. His grandfather, Kaaka Dheexith, was in Shirdi. He has not seen the old man. But I have seen him. Kaaka Dheexith's son came to Bhagavaan and stayed with Svaami for 30 years in Brindhaavan. He showed to Svaami the diary written by Kaaka Dheexith. The Dheexith family had relations with Svaami which have continued to this day. Dheexith stayed with his wife in Svaami's *aashram*. He showed to Svaami Kaaka Dheexith's diary. In it he had written what Shirdi Baba told him: "Child! you will again be close to Baba. Whatever troubles may come, do not give up your faith." Then Gadhia came to Baba. I sent him to Manipal to study a course in Medicine. After completing his medical studies in Manipal he came to Bangalore. I told him that there was no point in his remaining in Bangalore and directed him to go to London.

In this manner, Gadhia and his ancestors have been associated with Sai! Like this, many devotees have been associated with Svaami over many lives. Without such association in the past it would not be possible for all of you to come here. You are not aware of this but I know it all. These sacred associations have been maintained over many life-times.

Association with Sai

Thus, many of you have from immemorial times had links with the *Aathmik* Self. This link is unbroken. It is eternal, infinite. Such sacred relationships should never be given up. All should return to the place wherefrom they came. That is the strident declaration in the Bhaagavatham: "It is natural for every living creature to go back to the source from which it came." You have come from the *Aathma* and you must merge in the *Aathma*. Till the goal is reached you must not treat lightly the sacred journey of life.

People forget the route by which they came and are searching for new paths. Many approach me and ask: "Svaami! show a way." I tell them: "There is need for me to show you a path. You go back by the route you came.

Wherefrom did you come? Not from your mother. Nor from any particular place. The body came from the mother, but the *Aathma* came from the *Aathma*. You are not the body or the senses or the mind. You are the *Aathma* alone. You are the son of immortality. Being an *Amritha-puthra* (son of immortality), why are you seeking this *anrutha* (untruth). What is the way to immortality? Removal of immorality is the only way to immortality. If you get rid of evil qualities like attachment, hatred and envy, you will realise immortality. These bad traits make you remote from God. When you get rid of them, God becomes close to you.

The Lord is with you

Hence, gradually: you have to give up the animal qualities and develop godly qualities such as truth, righteousness, justice and morality. By a process of self-enquiry you can get rid of your animal qualities like anger. How long are you going to remain in the same round of birth and death without realising the goal of human existence? All *puujas*, rituals and penances are performed for this realisation. You have secured an extremely precious gift by your present birth. Do not waste it. Utilize every available moment for a worthwhile purpose. Devotees are yearning to realise the Divine by worshipping the Lotus feet and offering their worship to the *paadhukas*. Have the conviction that when you have the sanctified *paadhukas* with you, the Lord is also with you. When you enter the *Mandhir* you leave your shoes outside. But the Lord's feet are present wherever His sandals are kept. Bear in mind this sacred idea. Live upto the conviction that the

eternal Divine is omnipresent. Maintain purity and harmony in thought, word and deed. That is the way to secure *Jnaana-shuddhi* (Divine Wisdom).

Thanks to many meritorious lives in the past, you have got this sacred opportunity. Of the hundreds of millions in Bhaarath, how many have got this opportunity? Many who wished to come here have been unable to do so for one reason or another. Make the best use of the rare and sacred opportunity that has come your way.

Spread the message of worship of *Paadhukas*

Dr. Gadhia observed that many significant events are likely to take place before 1998. Dr. Gadhia invited Svaami for a big *paadhuka* celebration to be held in Birmingham in 1998. In accordance with this desire, Subramania Chettiar should be blessed with the necessary health and strength. He is willing to take on any burden, but is physically weak. But his faith and determination will give him the strength he needs. Our *Shaasthri* (who officiated at the function in the Nilayam) should also take a resolve.

He should spread the message of the worship of the *paadhukas* among wider sections of the people and dispel the darkness of ignorance. Whoever carries on the divine mission, unaffected by success or failure, joy or sorrow, will be the recipient of God's grace. Krishna has declared that such a devotee is dear to Him. Such a devotee develops detachment towards all worldly concerns and is indifferent to the happenings in the phenomenal world. He is indifferent to praise or censure, pleasure or pain.

The next quality a devotee should have is giving up attachment to the fruits of one's actions. Even the egoistic sense of doership should be given up. Everything belongs to the Divine. Engage yourself in good acts and experience the Divine. (Bhagavaan then honoured the *Pandith* with a gold kankanam and fastened a gold wristlet on Subrahmanya Chettiar. The entire gathering broke into applause. Bhagavaan also presented shawls to the other *pandithhs* who had participated in the function).

Discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 3-1 O- 1996.

It is here in India that there is a mine of spiritual wisdom and spiritual treasure: the Dharshanas, Upanishaths and the Geetha and the Vedhas. This has to be distributed, pure and unsullied, guaranteed in value and quality, to eager aspirants everywhere and so, we have here a succession of sages and saints. On account of the teachings and the lives of these people, there is a vast field of spiritual virtue in this land, which needs only a little care to yield a rich harvest.

Baba

49. The devotee's ordeals and God's grace

YOU must acquire the friendship of God. Once you acquire that friendship you can achieve anything. All happiness can be derived therefrom.

You know how Kuchela was a friend of Krishna in their boyhood. Because of his prolific progeny. Kuchela was immersed in a sea of troubles. His wife reminded him that if he went to Krishna, who was his boyhood friend at the *guru's aashram* and who was now a ruler at Dhvaaraka, Krishna would relieve him of his poverty. While he had some apprehensions whether Krishna would remember him and receive him, he got over them and set out for Dhvaaraka. Though Kuchela was in tattered clothes, the moment Krishna learnt that his old friend had come, he rushed towards him and embraced him. He exclaimed: "How long ago is it since we last met? Where have you been all these years? How have you been faring?" Kuchela remembered the Lord only because of his troubles.

Another example may be found in the Mahaabhaaratha. After completing their years of exile, the Paandavas returned to their capital. Happy over the safe return of her sons, Kunthi went to Krishna to offer her salutations. Krishna said: "Dear aunt! Are you happy? Is there anything more you want? I shall fulfill your wishes." Kunthi said: "Krishna! I don't need anything. I have to enjoy your support, your guidance and your nearness at all times. I must be blessed with troubles always. It is because my children experienced innumerable troubles during our exile in the forest, living on roots and fruits, that we found you were always with us, beside us and behind us and you saved us so many times. If we are to enjoy your proximity we have to face troubles."

Experience of two students

In this context, let me reveal a significant episode in Sathya Sai's career which is not known to anyone. Every year summer courses used to be conducted in Brindhaavan. In view of the growth in number of students at Brindhaavan, we undertook to build a new hostel for them. That year I took all the students to Ooty during the summer. All the arrangements for the summer course were completed successfully. Svaami told the students a day before they were to leave Ooty: "Boys! You have had the chance to come to Ooty. You had better go on a sight-seeing trip and enjoy the grandeur and beauties of the Lord's creation." Svaami asked them to go out sight-seeing, but they insisted on Svaami also coming with them. The boys are a stubborn breed. Svaami told them that if He came with them, large crowds would gather wherever He went and they would not be able to see anything.

Modern boys have a stubbornness of their own. They said they would not leave unless Svaami also came with them. Svaami relented and made arrangements for all the students to leave by buses for Doddabetta, the highest point in the Neelgiris range (above 8000 feet altitude). They wanted to take photographs with Svaami on the top of the hill and Svaami agreed to follow them to take photographs with them. Svaami left half an hour later from Nandhavanam to Doddabetta. Two young men went to Nandhanayanam to see Bhagavaan. They were told that Svaami had left for Doddabetta. Immediately the two young men got up on their motorcycle and started driving at high speed to catch up with Bhagavaan's car on the road to Doddabetta. Their only anxiety was somehow to get a glimpse of Svaami.

Svaami noticed the boys and wanted to know who they were. Someone in the car remarked: "They might be some rowdies." Svaami remarked: "No, no. Without knowing the truth you

should not make such remarks. They might be boys eager for Svaami's *darshan*." When Svaami's car was taking a turning, the boys came at high speed near Svaami's car. At the turning the motorcycle fell on a side. Both the boys fell down from the vehicle. Immediately, I stopped my car, went near them, wiped the mud from their bodies and enquired of them: "Boys! Have you suffered any injuries! Why did you drive at such a high speed? You should not have done so. If you wanted to see me, you could have come to Nandhavanam." I sought to comfort them and gave them two Kamala oranges to eat.

The two boys, who were local college students, said: "Svaami! We came to have your *darshan*. Because of this mishap, we not only got Svaami's *darshan*, but also *sparshan*, *sambhashan* and *prasaadham*. If this accident had not happened, would Svaami have come near us, wiped our backs and spoken so endearing to us? Svaami! We yearned for your *darshan*. We earnestly sought you. We got all three *darshan*, *sparshan*, *sambhaashan* (see you touch you and speak with you). Any trouble is worth while if these three can be got. Please give us always such troubles."

There is no pleasure and pain for the Lord

Kunthi prayed likewise to Krishna. The benignity with which the Lord considers a devotee in the moment of his troubles, He is not likely to show at other items. Of course, the Lord thinks of the devotee even at happy occasions. For the Lord there is nothing like pleasure and pain.

When Kuchela was in Krishna's palace he forgot to ask Krishna what he had come to ask. But there is no need to ask the all-knowing Lord. After lavishing all the hospitality on him, Krishna sent Kuchela back in a palanquin. After going some distance Kuchela reflected on his folly. "I enjoyed all the sumptuous feast Krishna gave me, but I forgot all about the plight of my children. I forgot to ask Krishna what I had gone to ask him. What a fool I am!" But when he neared his old home, what he saw was a magnificent mansion. His wife was dressed in fine clothes and was shining with all ornaments. She came out to welcome Kuchela like a queen. Kuchela wondered whether she was some princess or his wife.

She approached Kuchela and asked him: "Lord! What did Krishna tell you?" Kuchela described how lovingly Krishna rushed to meet him and embraced him endearingly. "How can I describe his all-encompassing love? He is love itself. Is there anyone who could confer countless blessings in return for a handful of Kuchela's parched rice!" (Svaami sang a Telugu song). "What a fool I was not to realise the boundless grace of such a Lord!" Reflecting like this Kuchela went round the mansion, deeply moved by Krishna's love for him.

Believers will never suffer

Nothing will be lacking for those who believe in God. Many non-believers have suffered in life in various ways, but no one who had full faith in God has ever suffered. There are none such sufferers, none at all. Unfortunately many suffer because of lack of faith. Very often they suffer disastrous losses. On the other hand, the real believers are often carried from the depths of life to the Abode of the Lord! Hence, faith is supremely important. Faith is everything. This faith can be acquired and strengthened only through love.

During the past four days, innumerable devotees from all parts of Andhra Pradesh have come here and experienced the bliss of heaven on earth. All of them are utterly innocent people. Their hearts are pure and unsullied. They have firm faith in God. Bhaaratheeya culture today survives to some extent only in the villages.

No one can adequately describe the joy experienced by these innocent villagers. That is true devotion. All other devotees present in Prashaanthi Nilayam were deeply moved by the devotion of these Aandhra village folk. I bless all of them to be happy, to be ever blissful and lead sacred lives.

Discourse on 22-1 O- 1996.

Love for the Lord should not degenerate into fanaticism and hatred of other names and forms. This type of cancer is affecting even eminent men nowadays. But you must avoid-it. Believe that all who revere the Lord and walk in fear of sin are your brothers, your nearest kith and kin. Their outer dress or language or skin-colour, or even the methods they adopt to express their reverence and ear are not important at all.

Baba

50. The glory of Bhaarath's women

*Fear of sin has gone,
Evil deeds are rampant,
Devotion to God is wavering.
To fight these tendencies
Chanting the name of the Lord
Is the only remedy, oh man!
If women go out for jobs
Who will take care of the homes?
If husband and wife go to offices
Who will look after the children?
Earning money may solve some problems
But how will it resolve domestic problems?
Truly speaking, working women
Do not enjoy much happiness.*

LOVING Embodiments of the Divine Self!. It is not my view that women should not get educated. They should have education. You may also take up jobs. But you should live up to the obligations and glory of womanhood. The first title given to a woman is *GrihaLakshmi* (the goddess of Home). A woman is expected to confer all prosperity, honour and good name on the home and the family. She is characterized as *Grihalakshmi* and not *Office-Lakshmi*.

Another title for a woman is *Ardhaangi* (The better half. This means she is the better half of the husband and not a partner in his job).

The third title is *Illaalu* (the Mistress of the Home). She is the mistress in the house and not in the office.

Dharmapathni is the fourth title conferred on a married woman. This implies that the home is the dwelling for all righteousness. The home is the birth place of all the *Dharmas* (rules of right conduct) hallowed by usage from ancient times.

What we have to safeguard and protect today are Truth and Righteousness and not the nation. When Truth and Righteousness are protected, they will protect the nation. Hence righteousness should be fostered in the home. A home is no trivial place.

*The home is a veritable university teaching many subjects,
The home is centre of comfort and pleasure conferring joy;
The home is a stone that can make even the creator,
Brahma, sing and others dance.
The home with the husband*

Is a school for the wife. (Thelugu poem)

The home is the abode of Dharma, which protects and safeguards the country. The home is beacon which illumines the world and sustains it. Women should realise that, irrespective of their education or position, their foremost obligation is to protect the home. For lakhs of students and children who go to school, the mother is the first teacher. From the moment of birth, for every one the mother is the preceptor. If such a teacher leaves her home to teach other children, who will teach her children?

For Bhaaratheeya women, the first duty is to reform the home and run it along ideal lines.

The home and the family is the basic social institution everywhere in the world. When the home improved, the whole world will be better.

The home is a heaven itself

In this phenomenal world, whatever pleasures and satisfactions one may derive elsewhere, if there is no joy at home, it becomes a veritable hell. The home is heaven itself. It is the duty of women to maintain it as such.

There is a proverb in the Aandhra Country: "First care for the home and then think of other things." Since ancient times, Bhaarith's name and fame have rested on the greatness of women (Bhagavaan sang a song in Thelugu, praising the greatness of Saavithri, who made the Lord of Death restore the life of her husband, the power of Chandhramathi, who stood by her husband's determination to sacrifice everything for Truth, the chastity of Seetha who went through an ordeal by fire, and Damayanthi, who shared all her husband's troubles with fortitude. Bhaarith was noted for such heroic women whose chastity and courage are an example for all humanity). To be born as women in such a country where there were such heroic women, is indeed a privilege.

Should not the sacred river Ganga be worshipped as a mother? Is not Bhaarith the home of *Gomaatha*, *Bhuumatha* and *Vedhamaatha*--the land in which the *cow*, the earth and the *Vedhas* are worshipped as a mother? It must be realised *that it* is not proper for Bhaaratheeya women to forget their sacred vocation and engage themselves in outside activities contrary to their great heritage.

(Bhagavaan sang a song glorifying the quality of forbearance, which was the hall-mark of people in this sacred land, the love for mother and the Motherland, and the readiness even to sacrifice one's life to uphold one's honour). Unfortunately these values have been lost today. Bhaarith was the leader for the entire world in the realm of spirituality. Hindu tradition stood for the welfare of all mankind all through the ages. To uphold these ideals the kings and women in ancient Bhaarith made great sacrifices. Everyone must take a pledge to revive and uphold these great ideals.

Consequences of uncontrolled immoral desires

The great epics, the Raamaayana and the Mahaabhaaratha, and the supreme Puraana, the Bhaagavatha, have taught the great lesson for all mankind regarding the disastrous consequences of uncontrolled immoral desires. Raavana, who Was a great scholar and warrior, became victim of an evil passion. Hiranyakashipu met with his end because of his intense hatred for God, despite the fact that he was a master of all sciences and had acquired many powers by his

penance. Dhuryodhana was the victim of incurable jealousy and insatiable desire for power and property.

Many women have played a great role in the past in trying to restrain husbands from indulging in evil deeds. Mandodhari was a notable example of such a woman who tried to impress on Raavana the error of his ways. But Raavana paid no heed to her.

Women who are the embodiments of the Divine spirit! At least from now on you must strive to sanctify the home and turn the family towards the Divine path.

Mind can make one a demon or Divine

Women must realise the enormous power of the mind for good or evil and see that its power is used only for doing good. The mind can make a person a demon or Divine. The mind is under the control of the intellect. The intellect is governed by the *Aathma*. Self-realisation will bring about control over everything.

The dire conditions prevailing in the world are known to everyone. The root cause of all this is the failure of people to realise their inherent divinity. Excessive desires, fuelled by selfishness, are the cause of all troubles. The primary requisite is confidence in one's self. Without that confidence, nothing can be accomplished.

Men are in quest of peace. But how is it to be secured? Faith in God is essential. That faith has to be generated in the family. Then alone the children will develop sublime thoughts. They are the future citizens of the nation. Hence they have to be brought up well. Unfortunately today mothers in affluent families neglect their children. They leave the children in the care of nannies and the children have more love for the nannies than for their mothers.

In ancient times, children who were fed on their mothers milk developed into good persons. Today the children are fed not on mother's milk but on tin milk. With the result the children develop a "tin" mentality.

Only women can restore the glory of the land

If the mothers take care of the homes on right lines, they will be protecting the nation. Mothers should foster in the children love for truth and righteousness and tell them stories about the lives of great men and women. In olden times, the elders used to tell the young children all about the nation's great heroes and saints. Where are such elders today?

Modern youth even mock at such old people. It is the seed sown by those elders which has kept our ancient culture alive to this day. Only the women of the nation can revive and restore to its glory the ancient culture of our land.

The culture of Bharath is a hallowed one. Everyone got up from bed with the name of God on his lips. You are all aware that in Kaashi (Vaaraanasi) there is the practice of reciting the name of Raama in the ears of dying persons. The idea is to remember the name of the Lord at the time of death because of the belief that one's rebirth is related to one's thoughts before death.

Teach the children sacred things and not nonsense verses. In the old day, the first words a child was taught at school were "*Om Namasshivaaya*" (the five-letter Divine *manthra*) or "*Om Namo Narayanaaya*." Today, as the sacred ritual of initiating, a child is taught a nursery rhyme like "Baa baa black sheep," or "Ding dong Bell, Pussy is in the well." Is this the kind of stuff that

should be taught to our children? What should be implanted in the hearts of our children are sacred names like Raama and Krishna.

How should devotees conduct themselves?

Chaithanya used to exhort his tongue to glory in chanting sweet names of the Lord, "Govindha, Dhaamodhara and Maadhava." (Bhagavaan sang sweetly the song of Chaithanya). How should devotees conduct themselves today? Their looks should be cool and soothing like the moon. Their speech should be soft like butter. Their hearts should be sweet like honey.

Seethalakshmi (who had spoken earlier) had quoted part of a poem of Svaami. (Svaami recited some other passages from the poem). "Oh brother, open your eyes and see the Lord Sai, who is in your hearts and not in Shirdi or Parthi." Fill your hearts with divine thoughts and feelings.

How do devotees behave today? Thinking that God is in Badhraachala, Thirupathi, Badhrinaath or Kedhaarnaath, they prepare themselves for long pilgrimages. But they will not appreciate the statements that God is in one's own heart and there is no need to go out in search of him. They have no faith in the God who is so close to them. They are prepared to incur any expense to go in search of God who is declared to be in some distant place. The statement that God is somewhere else is *bhrama* (delusion). The truth is God is within you. People forget that the divinity within you is there to guide you. Everyone should be good, think good and do good and enjoy good results. This is true *Vedhaantha*.

Have full faith in God as your Indweller. Develop pure sublime love. That alone will be lasting. All other qualities come and go. Learn to live in love. Women are the fountain-source of love. *Bhakthi* is considered a feminine quality while *Jnaana* (wisdom) is considered masculine. Let me not be misunderstood if I say that for the presence of all the male devotees present here, women alone are responsible. It is they who by their sacred feelings brought their menfolk here. Their work is sacred in every respect. They seek not only to sanctify their lives but the lives of all others in the family.

It is sinful to look down upon women

Women are not to be treated lightly. The Geetha says that women are endowed with seven kinds of powers while men have only three. It is sinful to look down upon women.

Consider, for instance, this fact. There are any number of women who have tried to bring back their dead husbands or to venerate their memory. How many men have done likewise for their wives? Many hasten to acquire a second wife.

In this respect, Bhaarath has been an example to the world.

Wherever women are honoured, there is prosperity and happiness. Women should never be slighted or treated with disrespect. A home in which the housewife sheds tears will be bereft of all prosperity. This is the ancient conception of the role of women in the home.

Discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 19-11 -1996.

You might say that the karma of the previous birth has to be consumed in this birth and that no amount of grace can save man from that. Evidently, some one has taught you to believe so. But I assure you, you need not suffer from karma like that. When a

severe pain torments you, the doctor gives you a morphine injection and you do not feel the pain, though it is there in the body. Grace is like the morphine, the pain is not felt though you go through it.

Baba

51. Adhere to Sathya and Dharma

*This motherland of ours gave to the world
Noble souls renowned in all the continents;
It is the land which freed
The nation from Western rulers.
This Bhaarath is reputed for its scholars hip.
It is the sacred land which stood forth
As the master in the realms of music,
Literature and sacred lore;
Born in the land of Bhaarath,
Noted for its fine arts and natural beauty,
It is your bounden duty to foster
The glory and prosperity of the Motherland.*

BHAARATH, which in the past was noted for its educational achievements in various spheres, is today confronted with a crisis in its educational system. The system attaches value only to the acquisition of degrees. Is it for earning a mess of potage that these degrees should be got? Or should they be acquired for rendering service to society? Or are they to be acquired for getting *Vijnaana* (wisdom)? Neither students, nor the authorities, nor the parents appear to be bothered about these questions.

The educational system of today

Can an education which is not of use to society or the nation be called education at all? Every year the colleges are letting lose upon the world lakhs of degree-holders. What is their future? What is the goal of the educational system? When you pose these questions, the answer you get is that the educational system has become mechanic. In today's education you find no trace of character-building, respect for values and regard for tradition. Education is pursued for selfish purposes and not for serving society.

There are in Bhaarath today 200 universities, 90,000 colleges and nearly a crore undergraduate students. What is the outcome of all this prodigious educational effort? What is happening to these millions of students and how is the outside world affected by them? The educational institutions appear to be mainly factories turning out graduates. Even the educational authorities seem to be content with statistical progress rather than the real achievements of the educational system. Schools and colleges are mushrooming everywhere, with or without official sanction. There is a pretence of acquiring education, without anyone being aware of what it really means.

Knowledge against Character

"Of what use is the acquisition of all kinds of knowledge if one has not good qualities and has no moral values?" says a Thelugu Poem. What for is academic knowledge acquired? Is it for deceiving others? Or is it for promoting one's selfish interests? Or for the selfish enjoyment of pleasures? Education today is being, used largely for these purposes than to promote the well-

being of society or the nation. An education that serves no useful purpose in daily life is utterly worthless.

Education today promotes largely intellectual cleverness.

*What is the use if the head is filled with bad thoughts,
If the ears listen only to scandals,
If the eyes look enviously
And the mind is plotting misdeeds? (Telugu poem).*

All that is noble in human life is being destroyed. The students of today are divorced from all that is ennobling.

Educated youth, instead of going to the relief of the suffering and the needy, are raising problems for society. But they are not to blame. The fault lies with the educational system. Governments in India set up many committees to report on the reform of the system. From the time of Morarji Dhesai till today these committees have been set up. No one knows what happened to the reports of these committees. There is no evidence that anyone in authority is concerned about training our young people to be useful and ideal citizens of the nation. In the place of high ideals, students today are cultivating high ambitions. What is required is not *Aasa* (desire) but the *Aasana* (ideal).

Students have no awareness of the greatness of humanness. They do not understand the significance of unity in thought, word and deed. Instead of unity and harmony, you have only discord and division. All problems arise out of this discord.

Respect for culture undermined

What is important is *samskaara* (culture) much more than mere knowledge.

*Occidental education has undermined
Respect for Indian culture,
Eclipsed Truth and Righteousness in daily life,
Encouraged fascination for foreign languages
And eroded the love of native languages,
Broken the norms of social behaviour,
And destroyed the respect for teachers.*

(Telugu Poem)

The higher values of education are being eroded continuously.

Education is getting increasingly commercialized, especially in professional courses like engineering and medicine. I am unable to understand what joy the students derive from going through these excessively expensive courses.

Students should first of all know how to deal with the problems of daily life. They have to acquire general knowledge and common sense. Practical knowledge is more important than

familiarity with books. It is this kind of bookish education that has led young people astray and made them lead worthless lives.

Serve the Motherland

Students! You are the children of Mother Bhaarath. You must cherish and foster the great culture of Bhaarath. Born in this motherland, you breathe her sacred air, drink her holy water and are sustained by her produce. Follow her sacred footsteps, engage yourselves in service to society in a spirit of dedication. You have to transform yourselves in accordance with our ancient culture. Only then will your humanness be vindicated. Otherwise all your education will be like cultivating a barren land.

Your own conduct accounts for how you live. There is no need to blame anyone else. Begin with the purification of your minds. Then your thoughts, your looks and your behaviour will become pure.

Today men's actions are governed by selfishness and self-interest. Even when one appears to love another, it is only out of self-interest. Self-interest is bound to exist. But there should be a limit to it. As long as they remain as students, the young people appear well-behaved. But the moment they get out of colleges and enter the outside world, they get polluted.

Students! Wherever you may be, remain in good company. Entertain and do good deeds. Adhere to good conduct.

Inherently all students are good. But the social environment pollutes their minds. They are spoiled by bad associations. Hence they should take good care about the company they keep. They must bear in mind three vital maxims: One, "*Sarvabhuutha hithe rathah*" (Rejoice in the well-being of all living creatures). Two: "*Sarvajnaana samayukthah*" (Have comprehensive knowledge of all things). Three: "*Sarvaguna Samayukthah*" (Develop all qualities equally). When you develop these qualities, your life becomes exemplary.

Today the world is filled with violence and fear. The root cause of all this is selfishness. Adhere to truth. Truth is your life breath. Truth transcends the categories of time. It is changeless. It is invincible. "*Sathyameva Jayathe*" is our national motto. The Chinese, though different in culture from us, also adore Truth. Truth is the basis of genuine prosperity.

The importance of Truth

There is a story relating to Prahlada. Once Indra secured from Prahlada the gift of his *Sheelam* (character). When character left Prahlada, the goddesses of Fame, Royal Prosperity and Prowess left him one after the other. Prahlada allowed them to go. But when *Sathya* (Truth) started to leave, Prahlada prayed to the goddess not to leave him. The moment Truth stayed with Prahlada, the other deities representing Fame, Prosperity etc. also returned.

Students! In whatever situation you may be placed in your official careers, never give way to untruth. You must uphold *Dharma*, which means acting according to your conscience. Always follow the dictates of your conscience. This is the meaning of the Upanishathic dictum: "*Sathyam Vadha, Dharmam Chara*" (Speak the truth, follow righteousness). This was the advice given by the Rishis to their disciples when they completed their studies.

Students! This is a great opportunity in your lives. Esteem this day of the Convocation as a sacred day. Take to your hearts the good counsel given to you. Dedicate your lives to righteous

ways. Earn a good name for yourselves. That is all that I desire. Bring a good name for your parents and for the Institute where you have studied.

Shed all fear except the fear of swerving from Truth. You should not be afraid because you are not an animal. You should not cause fear in others because you are not a wild beast. You are human beings. When you act upto this truth, you will benefit society.

I bless you all with the hope that you will not onlylead good lives but make your friends and all others with whom you are associated lead worthy lives.

Discourse to the Fifteenth Convocation of the Shri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on 22-11 - 1996, in the Puurnachandhra Auditorium, Prashaanthi Nilayam.

Values for Education; Education Jar Life; Life for Love;; Love for Man; Man for Service; Service for Spirituality; Spirituality for Society; Society for Nation; Nation for World; World for Peace.

Baba

52. Fill your hearts with love

*Whether one is a great scholar
Or a ruler living in a mansion,
Or a hero who has won great victories,
Or a destitute grovelling in poverty,
Without love in his heart, he is nothing.
A devotee with love is more worthy of veneration.*

*Of what use are men in Bhaarath
Who can make the stones sing in joy,
Men who can play with the heads of the enemy,
Men who can wield power over the land,
If they have no awareness
Of the wail of the oppressed,
When will they respond
To the cries of the poor?*

EMBODIMENTS of Love! The cosmos is filled with love. Love is Righteousness. Love is Truth. The universe is based on love. Lost in the transient pleasures of worldly life, man is forgetting this supreme Love Principle.

What is the reason? Selfishness has grown and selflessness-has declined. Narrow-mindedness is widespread. Broadness of heart is on the wane. Desires have increased. Ideals are vanishing. Human life is dominated by selfishness and self-interest.

The ancient sages enthroned *thyaaga* (sacrifice) on the highest pedestal. They adored Righteousness. Today these sublime ideals are forgotten in Bhaarath. As a consequence the country is racked by every kind of trouble.

A heart without love is a cemetery. Love demonstrates the existence of the Divine. It is all-pervasive. It is the basis for human unity. Only when selfishness goes and faith in the Divine grows will human unity be achieved.

Hence, every human being should fill his heart with love.

*God is love; Love is God.
Love is linked to love.
When one is full of love
He is fit for oneness with God.*

It is most vital for everyone to recognise and practice this Love Principle. At all times love has existed among the good and the bad, in the forest or in a palace, in attachment or in separation, in one's conduct as well as in one's speech, in the mind as well as in action. It is all-pervasive.

The power of love

The most powerful weapon to destroy the forces of evil rampant in the world today is love. Unfortunately men are not pursuing the right path to acquire this sacred love.

Love is the seed of love. It is also the branches, the flowers and the fruit. To enjoy the fruit of love, one has to practise Love.

Instead of seeking to know the true nature of love, man is engaged in the pursuit of wealth and power. No doubt wealth and power are necessary, but only within limits. The vast ocean, when it swells beyond its bounds, is censured for its misbehaviour. The human body and mind will be healthy only when food is consumed within limits. Excessive eating causes various disorders.

Everything in the world is governed by the bounds set for it. However, love has no limits. "*Anirvachaneeyam Prema*" (Love is beyond the power of words), declares the sage Naaradha.

The flow of love is the life-giving water for everyone. How is this love to be secured by one? Not by *Japa* (chanting the Lord's name) or meditation or by studying the scriptures. God does not dwell in the *Vedhas* or the *Puraanas*. God dwells in the heart and should be sought there. People should close their mouths and open their hearts. Then they will experience the divine bliss.

Today love has been almost totally banished. Where love should prevail hatred has taken its place. Petty jealousy has usurped the place of compassion. Man can experience true happiness only when the appropriate qualities reside in their allotted places.

Transform your entire life into a saga of love. You will then lack nothing to make you happy. All wealth and position will be added unto you. Love conquers all.

Have a feeling of total surrender

What is the nature of this love? When praying to God, you should have a feeling of total surrender. If you are really keen about realising God, if you are hungering and thirsting for God, then you should cultivate this all-absorbing love. Mere expression of desire is not enough. You should endeavour to experience union with the Divine. If your heart is full of selfishness, how can you experience the Divine merely by a wish?

There is love of sorts today. It is related to the body consciousness and not to the Self which is the basis. Spiritual love begins with the concept of *Dhaasoham* (I am your servant) and culminates in the concept of *Soham* (He and I are one). Without the feeling of *Dhaasoham*, you cannot experience the feeling of *Soham*. ;*Soham* is the expression of divine oneness. "The *Aathma* and I are one."

That Aathma is Brahma. That is love. That is Truth. That is Righteousness.

Men have been concerned with the four goals of human life--the *Purusharthas*---*Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kaama* and *Moksha* (Righteousness, wealth, sensuous desires and Liberation). But there is a fifth goal: Love. Only when love is achieved will the world become an earthly paradise.

Where love prevails, there will be no room for hatred or envy. Love can have no truck with evil thoughts and actions. Love should be steadfast and unwavering. If one goes on hopping from one Svaami to another, from one form of worship to another, he will never experience love of the Divine. "One word, one path"----that should be the aim.

Today thousands of people have gathered here. What has brought them together here? Love is the main cause. Without love few of you would have come from such distant places. How does this love express itself? It is a process of give and take. You have to receive God's love. And you have to offer your love. But both are one and the same love. God's love is reflected in your bodies. That is the meaning of the Geetha declaration: "A fragment of mine is present in everyone in the cosmos."

Use the Divine element for the benefit of others

That Divine element in you should not be misused. It should be used for the benefit of others. The Divine principle of love is being treated with narrow ideas. From ancient times the sages welcomed this Principle with open arms. Naaradha declared: "*Ya-labhdhva pumaan siddho bhavathi, amrutho bhavathi, thriptho bhavathi*" (Having gained Divine love, *Parama Prema*, a person becomes perfect, immortal and contented).

He considered Divine love as supreme over all things. Just as without sugar, no sweet will have sweetness, without love nothing in life can have any value. Your heart is inherently filled with love. But you are ignoring this plenitude and going after the trivial. Your real sustenance will come from this Divine love and not from other petty pleasures.

Every cell in the human body is filled with love. It is this microcosmic love that fills the entire cosmos.

Investment in devotion

You have no need to go in search of love elsewhere. It is all within you. A man makes every effort to accumulate wealth. An equal effort is needed to acquire the wealth of love. Men today invest their assets of love in pitiful ventures. Instead they should invest all their love in the Divine bank of devotion. This deposit is not only safe but will yield you increasing returns in terms of bliss. Your heart is the bank where your love for God should be deposited. Deposits elsewhere are insecure. Deposits of money may be in danger of being lost. But the deposit in your heart is immune from any kind of theft or loss. Make your deposit safe by "insuring" it within your heart. It is totally safe, though it has no bolts, doors or locks. This love has been characterized as *Amritha-svaruupa* (the form of eternal nectar). Nectar pleases only the palate. But Divine love confers eternal bliss which is sweeter than nectar. Everyone should resolve to acquire this nectarine Love.

Today your foremost duty is to enthrone *thyaaga* (sacrifice). Only when sacrifice reigns, love will come into its own. All your latent potentialities will then manifest themselves. You will succeed in all your legitimate undertakings. When love becomes the ruling principle, sorrow and disappointment will disappear. That was why the *Vedhas* declared that sacrifice alone is the key to immortal bliss. "God is love. How can you hope to realise God without love?" (Telugu poem).

How to manifest that love that is within you? You have to engage your hands in clapping as you chant the names of Raama, Krishna and others. Recite the names of the lord with your mouth. If you really desire to experience God-, you must remember the name of the Lord always like

Prahlaadha: "*Om namo Naraayanaaya.*" Sing the praises of the Lord like Raadha and Meera. Worship the Lord like Jayadheva, Gauraanga and Thukaaraam. Shed tears in devotion before the figure of the lord like Raamakrishna Paramhansa. Then you will experience the Lord. People shed tears over petty things, but do not shed a single tear for the Lord. There are two kinds of tears: tears of joy and tears of sorrow. What you have to shed for God are tears of joy.

Power of the Lord's name

When Krishna was being weighed in a balance, all the jewels of Sathyabhaama could not balance His weight. Rukmini then came and declared that the mere chanting of the name of Krishna would be equal to His weight. By the additional offer of a leaf, a flower or a little water, the scales will be tilted against Krishna. So saying she placed a *thulasi* leaf on the scale. And lo! it went down. The tulasi leaf carried the full weight of Rukmini's boundless love for Krishna. All the jewels of Sathyabhaama were of no avail. But Rukmini's invoking the name of Krishna and offering a *thulasi* leaf with a love-filled heart tilted the scales against Krishna. Such is the power of the Lord's name and a love-filled offering to the Lord. The Lord is not swayed by wealth or scholarship, power or position. Love alone can move Him.

If you wish to sway the lord, you must offer love and love alone. Today unfortunately love has become scarce. Even material love is disappearing. But God's love is boundless. In whatever manner you may love Him, He responds in equal measure. But without love, you have no right to seek His love. Filled with bad feelings and thoughts, if you pray to the pure and unsullied Lord, how do you expect to win His grace? If you remain pure at least in your shrine, you may acquire some fragment of divine love.

There are any number of able exponents of spirituality. But of what use are their discourses if they do not practise what they preach?

Manifest your love

Embodiments of the Divine! If you are really filled with devotion, manifest your love for God who is the very embodiment of love. If you are genuinely hungering and thirsting for God, partake of Divine love to appease your hunger and quench your thirst.

Divine love is the only panacea for all your troubles and miseries arising from insatiable desires and frustrated ambitions. God's love is like a lighthouse beacon. It shows you the right path. Divert the boat of your life towards the lighthouse of Divine love. You are then bound to gain the shore of bliss.

You do not need any special type of penance or meditation. Meditate on love. Fill your mind with love. Even while attending to your daily chores, regard all of them as offerings to the Divine. God is omnipresent. See God in everything and every being. Let love grow in your hearts like the waxing moon. Divine love will not wane like the moon. Let such steadfast love be enshrined in your heart. As Thukaaraam said: *Dhil me Raam, haath me kaam* (Raam in the heart and work in the hand).

The duty of everyone from today onwards is to cultivate true, unsullied love. With love of God you can secure anything. Without that love, you will only be steeped in misery.

Do not divorce yourself from Nature

Let the Buddhist prayer be your guide. First, take refuge in your intellect---*Buddham Sharanam Gachchaami*. Divert that intellect to the service of society--*Sangham Sharanam Gachchaami*. Then you will find refuge in Bliss--*Aanandham Sharanam Gachchaami*.

Do not divorce yourself from Nature. "*Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagath*" (The cosmos is permeated by the Divine). Hence recognise the Divine even in your enemy. His heart is bound to change. When you love even the one who has harmed you, he is also bound to change. Do not allow your love to be affected in any way.

When people pray to God, sometimes doubts may arise as to whether and how the Lord will respond. Such doubts arose even in the mind of Raadha..But all doubts disappeared when she realised that the whole universe was the mansion of God and there was no need to keep any door open or closed. All that was needed was complete surrender to God. The mystic significance of the songs of the saints and devotees like Raadha and Meera should be rightly understood. (Bhagavaan sang a Meera Bhajan, "Chalo re man" to explain the esoteric meaning of the song).

Sing the glories of God

God is moved by the devotee's heart-felt song. He becomes one with the devotee. No other form of worship has the same effect of God. It is enough if you do the singing within yourself. (Bhagavaan demonstrated by singing the opening lines of a song, "Raama nannu kaapaadu", how a melodious prayer can move the heart of anyone). Make music the passport to merger with the Divine. Music is the gift of God. Only the gifted ones can sing sweetly, appealingly and delightfully. We-.have here M.S. Subbalakshmi. From her early years, she dedicated herself to music, which filled her heart. This kind of soulful music cannot be acquired by anybody. It can come only through God's grace.

When you sing in public you can give delight to many. But if you cannot do so, you can sing to yourself. It will delight your heart and sweeten it. Immerse yourself in all work with love. Whatever you do, consider it as gifts from God. When you have malaria, you have to take the bitter quinine mixture. But that is the medicine for your ailment. Likewise, when adversity confronts you, treat it as a kind of medicine for your good. God has to be melted and beaten to make a jewel. A diamond is cut to make it more brilliant. Likewise troubles in life serve to refine a person. Love should enable you to welcome even hardships as meant for your own good.

Today this body enters on its seventy first year. This body is made up of the five elements and is essentially impermanent. Do not attach much importance to the body. Take to heart the Love Principle that is being conveyed to you. My entire life is filled with love. I have never put anyone at any time to any kind of suffering. I have never done any harm to anyone. I have hated no one. I have no aversion to anybody. What is the reason? It is my love that is transforming others. I am now 71. But no one can know what accounts for my condition. I may act as if I am angry on some occasions, but the anger does not stem from the heart but is confined to the tongue. From head to foot I am filled only with love. It is this love which has attracted the whole world.

I do not desire anything. I have three P's. One is Purity. Second is Patience. Third is Perseverance. It is these three which have secured the world's regard. No invitations were issued to those who have gathered here. Svaami's love alone attracted them all like a magnet. Some may ask why they are not attracted to Svaami if that magnet is so powerful. The reason is that these persons are like rusted iron which no magnet can attract. Let them remove the rust and dust and

they will be drawn to the magnet. Their hatred and desires, their envy and greed are the rust and dust covering them. If you cleanse yourselves of these, wherever you are, you will be mine and I will be yours. The hapless and the forlorn, wherever they may be, are the concern of Sai. Promote sacred love in your hearts. That love will not only redeem your lives but will promote the well-being of all around you.

You need not offer anything except love. In Prashaanthi Nilayam no offerings are permitted. Only love is allowed entry.

Discourse on 23-11-1996 in Sai Kulwant Mandap.

53. Realise God through love

ASTHIRAM Jeevitham loke (Life in the mundane world is impermanent). Life in this phenomenal world is not permanent. "*Asthiram yauvvanam dhanam*" (Youth and wealth are not lasting). They are like passing clouds. "*Asthiram dhaara-puthraadhi*" (Wife and children and other relatives are liable to vanish like white mist in a moment). "*Dharmam Keerthi dhvayam sthiram*" (Righteousness and fame endure forever). In human life, righteous living and a good reputation are the two that are everlasting.

In the history of mankind several religions arose to promote the moral advancement, the prosperity and the welfare of humanity.

Vaishnavites have esteemed Vishnu as the Supreme Shaivites have given the highest place to Shambhu

The worshippers of Ganapathi accord the highest place for Ganesha;

Saraswathi is adored as the Supreme by the seekers of knowledge;

Muslims regard Allah as the Supreme Lord While Christians hail Jesus as the Saviour; Buddhists worship Buddha as the Supreme Enlightened One;

Jains accord the highest place to Mahaveera;

Paarsis adore Zoroaster

Sikhs deem Naanak as the Supreme teacher

Baba devotees adore Sai as the Supreme

The wise regard all of them as equal.

All religions should be revered equally

Because God is one and the same God for all of them.

God is Truth. He is Righteousness.

He is peace. He is the embodiment of love.

(Telugu poem).

Embodiments of Love! It is essential to realise and act on the basis that the purpose of religion is to promote unity in diversity, banish divisive tendencies and make human beings lead ideal lives.

The common essence of all religions

The essence of all religions, the message of all scriptures and the destination for all mankind is the same. But because of selfishness, narrow-mindedness and concern for self-interest, religion is

used as a pretext for promoting differences and conflicts. "All religions teach only what is good if they are studied intelligently. If your mind is good, what religion can be bad?" says a Telugu poem. Morality and integrity, righteousness and charity, truth and tradition, forbearance and non-violence are basic tenets of all religions. These basic truths are common to all religions. But over the years men have forgotten these truths and have fostered divisive tendencies in the place of unity. As a result, respect for human values has gone. It is essential to recognise the Divine unity that suffuses all the diversity in human existence.

The life of Jesus

(Bhagavaan gave a brief account of the Jewish concept of the creation, of the cosmos and referred to the birth of Jesus as the son of Mary and Joseph). As the name and fame of Jesus spread, opposition to him developed among a section of Jews. After his father's death, young Jesus considered it his duty to help his mother and revere her as divine. Jesus preached the primary obligation of everyone to show one's gratitude to the parents. Jesus came with his mother to Jerusalem when he was eleven years old. His mother was worried about the activities of Jesus. Jesus was critical of the ways of the Jews in the temple in Jerusalem.

He came out against the harmful practices in the temple and preached the omnipresence of God in all living beings. He exhorted the people not to cause harm to anyone.

What he preached was in accord with the basic teachings of all religions. He engaged himself in a mission of mercy to the sick and the poor. He offered food to the hungry. Seeing his acts of love and kindness, people declared that he was a "Messenger of God." Jesus constantly referred to God as the father. Later he declared: "I and my father are one." Jesus dedicated his life to the propagation of faith in one God who is common to all mankind.

Men today celebrate the birthdays of great holy men but they do not follow the teachings of the masters. There is nothing great about the celebration of birthdays. People must resolve to uphold their ideals and act up to their teachings.

A unique book

There is a book compiled in Britain around 1530 A.D, containing all the information about Jesus gathered during the preceding centuries. The Russians condensed all this material in a small book which they preserved in a place on the Black Sea coast. (Svaami produced the little book by a circular wave of His hand and held it before the audience). This is the book. You can see the cross on the cover page. The book was designed to demonstrate the common features of all religions. What is contained in this book is not to be found even in the Bible. It contains an entirely new account of the life of Jesus.

It is not open to all to understand the ways of the Lord. To know about God one has to develop godly feelings. In this book, there are bookmark threads which distinguish every faith by a *shloka* relating to it. There is one page which contains the *shloka* from the Bhagavath Geetha in which Krishna exhorts Arjuna to give up all beliefs and take sole refuge in Him and assured Arjuna that thereafter he will absolve Arjuna of all the sins (Cheers).

The essence of all creeds is one and the same thing. Man's primary duty is to surrender to God. "Surrender" means attaining the state in which the devotee feels he is one with God. This feeling arises out of the conviction that the same divinity is present in all. Bodies of human beings are varied like bulbs, but the current passing through them is the same. The colour of the bulbs or their wattage may vary. But the current activating them is the same.

This book contains the *Vedhic* saying: "*Ekoham bahushyaam.*"

Follow the conscience

The same God dwells in all beings. There is no justification for differences on the basis of religion. It is attachment to the body which accounts for religious differences. Do not regard the body as permanent. It is a water bubble. The mind is a mad monkey. Don't follow either of them. Follow the conscience. That is the main message contained in this little book. The culture of Bhaarath has experienced this truth in the concept of *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being-Awareness-Bliss).

Today people read all kinds of books and go after all sorts of "great persons." They do not enquire about what constitutes greatness. Realise that there is no one greater than each of you. But you have not discovered the real truth about yourself, like an elephant that does not know its own strength. A mahout with a goad is able to control it.

Recognise the fact that the whole universe is within you. You have all the powers in you. They are derived from the Divine Spirit within you. It is the Divinity which endows you with a Free Will. Forgetting the supreme power of the Spirit, people place their reliance on the powers of the body, the mind and the intellect.

Love binds all people

Embodiments of Love! If you want to realise God, if you wish to experience the Divinity within you, if you want to know your true self, you have to develop pure, unsullied love. It is this that binds all people. It is described as the *Prema-paasham* (tether of love).

Today there are numerous sects within Christianity all of which are engaged in propagating their respective doctrines. While this preaching goes on, there is very little of practice in daily life. Practice is most important. People may be entitled to propagate their creed. But that does not achieve anything lasting. Only practical example matters. When you practise what you preach, others will be inspired by your example. No one will care for the teaching of a person who does not practise what he preaches.

I have often told the students that of all forms of knowledge, the one that is most beneficial is practical knowledge which is relevant to everyone. You have to act on the conviction that the same Divine Spirit dwells in one and all.

Oblivious to this truth, man is immersed today in selfish pursuits. This selfishness is degrading man to the lowest levels. To develop true humanness, everyone has to foster the feeling of spiritual oneness. This sense of oneness constitutes true religion. Religion means "realisation" of your true self.

Develop the love of God. All other forms of love are not love at all, but only fleeting and impermanent attachments. Man's biggest folly is forgetting his divinity. All should realise that they come "from God." All are children of God. Everyone should seek to get nearer and nearer to God. That is *saadhana*. You must feel that God is *Hridayavaasi* (dwells in the heart). You must develop compassion in the heart, because without it the heart is only a stone.

That is the message of Jesus--the message of love. Love is God. Live in love. Start the day with love. Spend the day with love. End the day with love. This is the way to God. Only the person who is filled with love will be dear to the Lord.

God is your unfailing friend

This book contains the declaration: "*Yo madhbhaktah.*" "The devotee who is filled with love of God is dear to me," says the Lord in the Geetha. God is your unfailing friend in weal and woe. You must acquire His friendship.

There are many devotees from overseas here today. They should be firm in their devotion whatever changes in the situation they may face.

You may begin worshipping God with specific form and name (*saakaara*). But when you are faced with difficulties you experience God as a helper. When you have some desires, you pray to God for fulfilling them. You are then an *artharathi* (seeker of favours). In these different ways the devotee has to develop his relationship to God.

To illustrate how God responds to the prayers of devotees, I would relate the story of a rich man with four wives, who expressed what they wanted him to get for them during a trip abroad. The first wife, who was spiritually enlightened, prayed for his safe return. The second wife wanted him to bring some sacred books. The third wife, who was ailing wanted him to get some medicines. The fourth wife, who was a "modern", asked him to get her sarees and jewellery. The merchant on his return gave the three wives what they wanted and stayed with the first wife because she had no other desire except to have him back.

How God responds to devotees

God responds to devotees in the same manner. To those who aspire for wealth, he gives wealth. Those who seek knowledge, He will help them to acquire it. Those who are ailing and who pray to God will get the relief they pray for. God builds hospitals for their treatment. Those who pray to God for oneness with Him, will realise Him. This is the way God responds to the four kinds of devotees.

The devotees should consider God alone as important and not other mundane desires. If you have God with you, all other things are got easily. So, God is your real wealth. Real health is God.

Men should strive for God-Realisation because they came from God and should go back to Him.

Today there are devotees here from many countries--Germany, Japan and others. Whatever happiness you may have experienced here, you will have to go back to your countries when your money is exhausted or your visa expires. Your aim must be to acquire a permanent visa to stay here permanently. That is got by God's grace. You can get it through love and love alone. When you have that love, your proximity to God is ensured for ever.

Embodiments of love! There is love in everyone of you. Develop that love. Share it with others. When you have this love there is no need for you to go in search of *aashrams*. There are some foolish, persons who go on hopping from one aashram to another. This is sheer folly. There is no need to go anywhere. The Divine is in your heart. Adhere to one belief firmly. Do not change your faith from day to day. Follow one path with firm faith. That is the Love principle.

Discourse on 25-12-1996, in the Sai Kulwant Mandap.

Grace takes away the malignity of the karma which you have to undergo; you know there are dated drugs, which are declared ineffective after a certain date; well, the ejection of karma is rendered

null, though the account of karma is there and has to be rendered or, the Lord can save a man completely from the consequences, as was done by Me to the bhaktha whose paralytic stroke and heart attacks I took over, some months ago, in the Gurupurnima week!

Baba