

Start New Year with spirit of love

If the feelings and intentions
Behind your actions are good,
The results will also be good.
If your intentions are bad,
You will certainly meet with failure.

[Telugu Poem]

Embodiments of Love! Thoughts are the permanent asset of man. Thoughts are based on feelings and feelings on the mind. As the thoughts, so the mind. If thoughts are good, humanity will blossom into Divinity. Today man's behaviour is not good because his thoughts are polluted. Because the thoughts and actions of man have become perverted, the country is passing through troubles and turmoil. Man has filled his mind with thoughts about mundane, ephemeral, and transient things. This is totally negative in nature. Only thoughts based on Truth are positive.

Spiritual wealth of Bharat

In ancient times, the *Bharatiyas* (Indians), before partaking of food, used to chant the prayer. “*Annam Brahma, Raso Vishnu, Bhokta Devo Maheswara* (food is Brahma, the essence is Vishnu, and the one who partakes of it is Maheswara)”. The essence of food permeates the whole body and gives physical strength and satisfaction. It is the food that sustains the physical body. The subtle part of the food becomes the mind, and the subtler part of the food becomes speech. Human quality is expressed through thoughts, words, and deeds. The gross part of food is Brahma, the subtle part is Vishnu, and the subtlest part is Siva. So, the Divine Trinity is present in the food that we eat. Sacred thoughts, good words, and noble deeds are the true human values. But modern man lacks in human values.

Today, man is bereft of gratitude, which is one of the most essential qualities. He forgets the help rendered to him by others. As long as man is alive, he should be grateful for the help he received from others. There are two things you have to forget: the help you have rendered to others and the harm others have done to you. If you remember the help you have rendered, you will always expect something in return. Remembrance of the harm done to you by others generates in you a sense of revenge. You should remember only the help you received from others. The one with these sacred qualities is an ideal man.

In this ephemeral and transient world, man always aspires for peace and security. But money, education, position of authority and physical comforts cannot confer peace and security. Peace originates from the heart. Man can experience peace and security only when his heart is filled with love. Love is God, love is Nature, love is life and love is the true human

value. Bereft of love, man is equivalent to a corpse. You should lead a life filled with love. Love even the worst of your enemies. It is on the basis of the principle of love that the culture of Bharath has declared: *Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu* (May the whole world be happy!).

The land of Bharat is suffused with love

Since ancient times, this sacred land of Bharath has shared its spiritual wealth with the rest of the world to foster peace and security. It is because of its immense spiritual wealth that Bharat continues to be a land of peace and security in spite of many foreign invasions in the past. Without Bharat, there would be no trace of spirituality in this world. There is truth in the air of Bharat. There is *dharma* in the dust of Bharat. The land of Bharat is suffused with love. The water of Bharat overflows with compassion.

Having taken birth in this sacred land of Bharat, you must uphold and sustain the principles of truth, love, righteousness, and compassion. For whose sake should you uphold these principles? Is it for the sake of society or for the country? No. You should uphold these principles for your own sake. Only when everyone fosters these principles will the country prosper.

Today man is engulfed in selfishness and self-interest and is leading an unsacred life. Our ancient seers used to partake of food with the feeling that food is Brahma, the essence is Vishnu, and the one who partakes of it is Siva. Such a feeling would foster pure and sacred thoughts in us. Today, man has strayed away from the path of truth and righteousness. People criticise those who follow truth and righteousness. It is very easy to criticise, but very difficult to understand. The *Vedas*

say: *Sathyam vada, dharmam chara* (speak the truth and follow righteousness). Since ancient times, the *Bharatiyas* have considered these two as their two eyes.

True spirit of celebrating Ugadi

You would have celebrated many *Ugadi* (New Year day) festivals in your life. Certain traditional practices go with every festival, such as having a sacred bath, wearing new clothes, cleaning the house and decorating it with bunting of green leaves. Greatness lies in purifying our thoughts, not merely the transient human body. The significance of a festival does not lie in wearing new clothes but in cultivating new and noble thoughts. The house should be decorated not merely with the bunting of green leaves, but with bunting of love. Share your love with everyone who visits your house. Only then would we be celebrating the festival in its true spirit.

Today, we are celebrating *Ugadi*, which means the commencement of a new era. It denotes the beginning of *Kali Yuga*, not *Krita Yuga* or *Treta Yuga*. This is the beginning of *Nuthana Samvathsara* (New Year). *Vathsara* is another name of God. That is why God is extolled as *Vathsaraswarupaya Namah* (salutations to the one who is the embodiment of *Vathsara*). Time is God. *Vathsara* is its cosmic form. So, time and *Vathsara* connote the same Divinity.

The New Year has to be sanctified by sacred thoughts and broad feelings. Today, humanity is stricken with fear and restlessness. Courage and strength are on the decline, because you have unsacred thoughts and wicked feelings. Your enemies are not outside. Your bad thoughts are your worst enemies and thoughts based on Truth are your best friends. But today, people do not befriend the thoughts based on Truth, which are es-

sentially divine. You have to make friendship with *sath*, the eternal truth. *Sath* means Being, the ever-existent God. The worldly friends and enemies change with the passage of time, but *sath* is the true and eternal friend. This friend is always with you, in you, around you, above you, below you and protects you just as the eyelid protects the eye.

Exemplary devotion of Delhi seva dal

Embodiments of Love! There is nothing great in going round the world and getting accolades. Lakhs and lakhs of people in Delhi and Mumbai enjoyed the divine bliss during Swami's visit last week. It was not a temporary joy; it was the everlasting love etched in their hearts. That is why, while I was leaving Delhi, they expressed their feelings by putting up a huge banner with the words, "*Thanks for the visit. Please come back soon!*"

The aerodrome is situated miles away from the city. During Swami's drive, thousands of youth of the age group of 25 to 30 flanked both sides of the road with devotion, discipline, and enthusiasm. Usually, one does not find such well-behaved youth in cities like Mumbai and Delhi. It was a clear indication of the transformation brought about in them.

What wonderful service they have rendered! I have been observing the service activities of various *seva dal* groups for the past fifty years, but the service rendered by the Delhi *Seva Dal* (the Sai volunteer service organisation) was of very high standard. They discharged their duties, forgoing even food and drink. They said, "Since Swami says duty is God and work is worship, we are ready to sacrifice even our lives in following Swami's commands. Only then we shall have pleased Swami." Such was their devotion!

No one exactly knew Swami's schedule. Therefore, one could find a *seva dal* every nook and corner of Delhi carrying a cellular phone to exchange minute to minute information regarding Swami's movements. There was no complaint whatsoever from any quarter. You are all aware of the fact that neither the police nor the media take note of our *seva dal* activities. But this time in Delhi, the police personnel as well as the newspapers extolled our *seva dal* sky high. They said such selfless and dedicated youth are found only in Sri Sathya Sai Organisation.

The *seva dal* youth were ten thousand in number. Whomsoever I asked, "What do you want, boy?" the reply was one and the same, "Swami, I want You, I want Your love." They were very humble in their approach and spoke softly and sweetly. I often say, "You cannot always oblige, but you can speak always obligingly." That obliging nature was very much evident in Delhi *Seva Dal*. They brought a good name to the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation by their exemplary behaviour. In other states also, *seva dal* are doing good work. The whole world has recognised the truth that if there is any organisation where love, unity, friendship, co-operation, and selfless service are practised, it is only the Sri Sathya Sai Organisations. There are many organisations in this world, but nowhere would you find the idealism that is found in Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation.

Revival of ancient culture of Bharat

While I was in Mumbai, the Health Minister of Maharashtra came to Me and said, "Swami, we have many doctors here and we would like to work in collaboration with the Super Specialty Hospital in Prasanthi Nilayam. Every little activity

that Sri Sathya Sai Organisation undertakes is an ideal to the rest of the world. We have seen many organisations, but the spirit of sacrifice that is found in Sri Sathya Sai Organisation is not found anywhere else. We have spoken to many members of *Sai Seva Dal*. They are all highly devoted, dedicated and disciplined. Such an ideal organisation should spread all over the world."

Be "bigger", not beggar

Swami does not ask anything for Himself. Today there are many Swamis and *Ammas* who are making money in the name of spirituality. The Sri Sathya Sai Organisation has no connection whatsoever with them. You should not have anything to do with them. The Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation should progress with the spirit of sacrifice. Only then will the pristine culture of Bharat be firmly re-established. It will not be long before you will be a witness to this. Very soon, we are going to revive the ancient culture of Bharat. All the members of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation should develop sacred thoughts and noble feelings. We should perform all our actions based on Truth. Then victory will certainly be ours.

Keep this in mind: never ask anything from anybody. If you want anything, come to Me, I will give. Only beggars stretch their hands in front of others, not devotees. You should be "bigger", not beggar. Help the poor and the needy, serve society, and lead an ideal life. Only then you will be called a true devotee. I have explained to you many times the qualities of a true devotee. They are: virtues, good intellect, truth, devotion, discipline, duty. Participate in service activities.

This morning I am going to Kadugodi to inaugurate a *vridhashram* (home for the aged). There are many old people

in society who are leading a miserable life, since they have been deserted by their children. Anybody is welcome in this home for the aged. This is started to see that the old people may lead a peaceful life till their last breath. One should be in bliss at the time of death, and not be shedding tears of sorrow. One's last moments are the foundation for one's next birth.

Life bereft of sacrifice in inhuman

All members of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation should cultivate the spirit of sacrifice and service to help others. There are many affluent people in the society, but few have this spirit of sacrifice.

Life bereft of sacrifice is inhuman. The *Vedas* said: “*Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaikamruthatwamanasu* (one can attain immortality neither by rituals nor by progeny nor wealth; only sacrifice confers immortality).”

We do not need any publicity or advertisement. Work silently. Before leaving for Delhi, I instructed Kulwant Rai not to give any prior publicity about My impending visit. Why worry about newspapers? There should be heart to heart and love to love connection. Love expands automatically all over the world. We are able to listen to the programmes broadcast from the Delhi radio station through radio waves. Similarly, good thoughts are like radio waves. These waves should spread through love, not through publicity. *Prachar* (publicity) is not the *achar* (practice) of Sai Organisation. We should work for the progress of the Organisation through practice and spread the message of love throughout the world. The entire humanity should unite and live like one family.

Ushering in an era of Peace

The name of the New Year is *Pramadi*, which implies dangerous prospects. But no danger would befall this world. The name may imply danger, but in reality the world will attain prosperity. We shall escape from all dangers. Be prepared to face anything with love and broadmindedness. There are no dangers either for the world or for the nation or for the society or for the family. A person bearing the name Dharmaraja may not follow *dharma* at all. Similarly, this year, although named *Pramadi*, will not bring any calamities.

Embodiments of Love! Do not get elated by listening to what happened in Delhi and Mumbai. They have done it for their satisfaction. I have nothing to do with that. Praise or censure does not affect Me. Your devotion also should be steady. Some people shower praise on Me only when their desires are fulfilled. Happiness is obtained not when desires are fulfilled, but when desires are destroyed. Whether your desires are fulfilled or not, always be happy. Strive to attain this state of bliss. Develop friendship with God. Worldly friends have their dwellings outside, but God, your true friend, resides in your heart. So, you need not search for Him outside. Turn your vision inward and there you will find God.

Love is the most essential of all the qualities we should possess. So, cultivate selfless love. Love is God, God is love. Today is the New Year day. In this New Year, drive away all bad thoughts, breed good feelings, and spend time in contemplation of God. When you tread this path, you can achieve anything. You will not have any problems. Many of you are apprehensive of what lies in store for you this year. Nothing will happen. What we encounter depends on our thoughts. So, entertain good thoughts, and you are bound to be successful.

Keep in mind the welfare of nation and society

Embodiments of Love! I bless you with a long, happy and healthy life. Set an ideal to the rest of the country. Very soon, all countries will come together and will attain peace and security. I told Vajpayee, "Vajpayee, you are a good person, making efforts in the right direction. But develop friendship with Pakistan and China. If India, Pakistan, and China become united, they will make a formidable force." I told this on 11th evening. Vajpayee again came on the 13th and informed that he was happy that both Pakistan and China had responded positively to his invitation. He said, "It is Swami's Divine Will that has made it possible."

But, in fact, there is no unity amongst *Bharatiyas* (Indians) themselves. Today, one finds several groups in a single party. Parties may vary, ideologies may differ, but all should stand united. Never attach undue importance to parties and ideologies. Keep in mind the welfare of the nation. The welfare of the world depends on the welfare of the nation. The welfare of the nation depends on the welfare of the society. So, whatever you do, bear in mind the welfare of the society and the nation. There may be differences of opinion, but they should not stand in the way of unity. This is what the ancient culture of Bharat taught in the beginning.

*Let us move together, let us grow together
In intelligence and share the knowledge
That we have acquired.
Let us live in peace and harmony
without any conflicts.*

[Telugu Poem]

Only then Bharat will prosper. Bharat is the leader and an ideal to the rest of the world in the field of spirituality. So, all *Bharatiyas* should foster broad feelings. Today the country is facing problems because people have become narrow-minded.

The worst enemies of man

Every human being has the evil tendencies of *kama* (lust), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), etc. in him. The great epics, *Ramayana*, *Bhagavata*, and *Mahabharata*, teach good lessons to control lust, greed and anger, which are the enemies of man.

Ravana, who had mastered all sixty-four branches of knowledge and was a great scholar and a mighty warrior, lost his life and caused the ruination of his entire clan because of lust. It is not enough if you merely read the *Ramayana*; you should grasp its real significance.

Hiranyakasipu was a great scientist. Today, scientists have traveled only up to the moon, but Hiranyakasipu could travel even to the sun. He had control over all five elements, but he became a victim of his anger. His anger was directed at God Himself. Ultimately, what happened? He ruined himself. He subjected his son to all sorts of trials and tribulations and sought to kill him by many means, like throwing him from the hilltop, casting him into the sea, putting him in a pit of poisonous snakes and making elephants trample upon him. Because Prahlada was chanting the name of Narayana (God) ceaselessly, all the obstacles became Narayana for him and he came out unscathed. That is why it is said, *Yath bhavam, that bhavathi* (as is the feeling, so is the experience). God manifests on the basis of the feelings of the devotee. If you pray to God with purity of heart and love, you will experience God.

In the *Mahabharata*, Duryodhana personified greed. He refused to share the kingdom with the Pandavas and denied them their rightful share. Due to this greed, he perished along with his entire clan.

These three illustrations echo the need for the eradication of the feelings of lust, anger and greed. The Pandavas emerged victorious because they practiced all the human values of *sathya, dharma, santhi, prema, and ahimsa*. If you follow these values, success will follow automatically.

Today, New Year has begun. With sacred feelings and divine thoughts, cultivate the spirit of love in you. God is not found separately in a temple or in an Ashram, etc. Truth is God. Love is God. *Dharma* is God. When you worship God by following these principles, He will manifest Himself then and there. There is no doubt about this. Love God wholeheartedly. Pray to God and make friends with Him. You can achieve anything if you have God as your friend.

Learn today to fill your heart with love and adorn your hand with the ornament of sacrifice. Sacrifice is the jewel for the hands. Truth is the necklace one should wear. You must develop the habit of adorning these jewels in the New Year. In this New Year, develop divine love and foster peace in the country. Pray with a broad feeling: *Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu* (May the whole world be happy)! Start the New Year with this prayer. Then, you will lead a blissful and peaceful life full of enthusiasm. To lead such a life, cultivate noble thoughts. Love God and make friendship with Him, and you are bound to be successful in all your endeavours.

18 March 1999
Sai Ramesh Hall, Brindavan