

Control Your Senses

*If money is lost, one need not be worried about it,
For one can earn it again.
If a friend leaves, one can have another;
If wife is lost one can marry again.
If one loses ones piece of land,
One can purchase another piece of land.
All these can be regained; but
If body is lost, one cannot get it back.*

[Sanskrit sloka]

Embodiments of Love!

If wealth is lost, nothing is lost. If health is lost, something is lost. If character is lost, everything is lost. This is the teaching of the culture of Bharat. But, for the modern man, everything is lost if wealth is lost; something is lost if health is lost and nothing is lost if character is lost.

Since time immemorial, the Bharatiyas have been adhering to the principles of spirituality. Thus, they attained bliss and shared it with others in the world. The Himalayan mountains

form the boundary of Bharat on the northern side. *Hima* means pure and sacred. Mountains symbolize steadiness. Purity, sacredness, and steadiness are the hallmarks of the *Bharatiyas* (Indians).

The perennial rivers, the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswathi (underground) flow in this land. These three symbolize the threefold path of work, worship, and wisdom through which man can attain Divinity. The holy texts of the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, and the *Bhagavata* set noble ideals before mankind. What is the inner meaning of the word *Bharat*? *Bha* means light, effulgence, and divinity. So, *Bharatiyas* are those who spread light and effulgence of wisdom. The Indian scriptures like the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Upanishads*, and the *Brahma Sutras* are shining resplendently, showing the path of divinity to man.

Spirituality starts with faith

Buddha was born in this sacred land of Bharat. He declared to the world *Ahimsa paramo dharma* (nonviolence is the greatest *dharma*). He undertook penance for several years, met many noble souls, listened to spiritual discourses, and studied various scriptures. But he was not satisfied. Man aspires for bliss, but how can he attain it? Where there is faith, there is love. Where there is love, there is peace. Where there is peace, there is truth. Where there is truth, there is God. Where there is God, there is bliss. The path of spirituality starts with faith and ends with bliss. Bliss cannot be attained from materialistic pleasures or people of the world. It can be experienced only when the five senses are put to proper use.

Today, man reads sacred books to attain bliss, but all these books have their own limitations. One cannot get infinite bliss

by studying scriptures. One must study an infinite book in order to experience infinite bliss. This world itself is an infinite book. There are so many things to be learnt from this world.

Who are your friends? Not your classmates or roommates. Only God is your true and eternal friend. It is only with the help of this friend that you will be able to study the infinite book, the world.

When one undertakes the study of this infinite book, one has to put into practice the five important teachings of Buddha. They are *samyak drishti* (right vision), *samyak bhavam* (right feeling), *samyak sravanam* (right listening), *samyak vak* (right speech), and *samyak karma* (right action). A true human being is one who follows the path of truth. Truth, righteousness and sacrifice should be the way of life. Buddha said, *Buddham sharanam gachhami, dharmam sharanam gachhami, sangham sharanam gachhami*. It means: *buddhi* (intellect) should follow the path of *dharma*, and *dharma* should be fostered in society. Only then the country will prosper.

This is also the inner meaning of the word SAI. **S** denotes spiritual change, **A** denotes association (social) change, and **I** denotes individual change. Man's mind will become pure and sacred only when these three changes take place.

Life principles of man

Divinity is latent in every individual. But, today, man has forgotten his divine nature and is getting deluded by the worldly, ephemeral pleasures. *Sathya, dharma, santhi, prema,* and *ahimsa* are verily the five life principles of man. They are like his *pancha pranas*, namely, *prana, apana, vyana, udana,* and *samana*. Losing *sathya* amounts to losing one part of his life-breath. And when he loses all the four, viz., *sathya,*

dharma, *santhi*, and *prema*, he loses four parts of his vital life breath. As a result he is confronted with sufferings and violence from all sides. Who is responsible for this? Man himself is to be blamed for this.

Buddha said nonviolence is the greatest *dharma*. Love will be fostered only when nonviolence is practiced. When love is fostered, there will be peace in the world. When there is peace in the world, man will naturally take to the path of *dharma*. When man follows the path of *dharma*, he will attain Truth. It is, therefore, the primary duty of every man to foster these life principles.

The sacredness of Bharat is unmatched

Once, Buddha was traveling from village to village giving spiritual discourses. One day, he felt tired and asked one of his disciples to address the gathering. He went inside to take rest.

The disciple during the course of his speech said, "In this world, there has never been a spiritual master greater than our master, Buddha, and there will not be another like him in future." The audience gave a thunderous applause.

On hearing this, Buddha came out. One of the disciples told him the reason for the people's joyous applause. Buddha smiled and called the disciple who delivered the lecture. "What is your age?" he asked.

The disciple said he was thirty-five years old.

"How many kingdoms have you visited so far?" Buddha asked him again.

The disciple said he had visited only two kingdoms.

Buddha said, "You are thirty-five years old and have seen only two kingdoms. You have not understood the present completely. Then how can you say anything about the past and the

future? It is meaningless to say that a master like Buddha was never born before and will never be born again. Many *Avatars* and sages have taken birth in this sacred land of Bharat. Many more *Avatars* and noble souls will be born here in future also. There are many noble souls in this world, I offer my respects to all of them.”

In this way, Buddha reproached his disciple. It is foolish for a man with little knowledge to behave like a learned man.

No one can estimate the sacredness and greatness of this country, Bharat. To be called an Indian is in a great qualification and honor. How can one describe the great good fortune of the *Bharatiyas*, for the Lord Himself has taken birth several times in this sacred land to show the path of divinity to mankind? Many saints, sages, and men of sacrifice were born here. The sacredness and renown of Bharat are unmatched. That is why Buddha chose this country as his motherland.

Character is important, not money

The story of Buddha is highly noble and sacred. He sacrificed everything and went around in search of truth. He said, "*Dharmam sharanam gachhami* (I take refuge in *dharma*).” One has to practice, propagate and experience *dharma*. But, today, *dharma* has declined. People think that money is everything. Just as the earth revolves around the sun, people go around money.

*Some people take to corrupt ways to earn money.
They may cheat others,
But can anyone hoodwink God?
They will certainly reap the
Consequences of their misdeeds.*

[Telugu Poem]

This was the teaching of Buddha. Character is important, not money. Bliss can be attained only through control of senses, not through penance, *japa*, or meditation. Neither by penance nor by going through scriptures nor by having a dip in holy rivers can one attain liberation. Only by serving noble souls can one cross the ocean of *Samsara*. There is no easier path to peace and bliss other than controlling one's own senses.

Right vision confers double promotion

But today, man has given up this easy path and is craving sensual pleasures, which confer only misery and grief. Even birds and beasts enjoy sensual pleasures. The happiness that results from sensual pleasures is no happiness at all. So, first and foremost, man should try to control his senses. This is possible only when the vision is properly utilized. Once the vision is controlled, other senses can also be easily controlled. But, today, man has no control over his vision. He looks at things that he is not supposed to look at. Whatever man looks at gets imprinted in his heart. So, develop sacred vision.

There are forty lakh light rays in the human eye. But their radiance is destroyed on account of wrong vision. When you look at wrong things, you waste the enormous power of radiance of the eyes. There are thirty lakh taste buds on the tongue. But they get destroyed because of bad talk. So, first and foremost vision and tongue should be kept under check. Otherwise man may lose his humanness and ultimately ruin his life.

Along with right vision and right talk, cultivate right listening. If someone were to indulge in bad talk in your presence, leave the place at once. Right vision confers double promotion, it strengthens the will power and enhances the power of radiance of the eyes. Having understood this truth, Buddha made a

concerted effort to control his senses. Meditation and penance confer only temporary happiness. Eternal happiness results only from control of the senses. Buddha was the crown prince and had the entire kingdom under his control, but he sacrificed everything and tried to control his senses. He could experience bliss and attained *Nirvana* only after controlling his senses.

Man can get limitless powers through love of God. But, today, man is not making any effort to understand the principle of Love. Man's love is like an atom when compared to divine love, which is infinite, eternal, and nectarine. It is foolishness and ignorance on the part of man to think that he knows everything without understanding the Principle of Love. He should see through the eyes of love, hear through the ears of love and cultivate the feelings of love.

Giving up body consciousness is liberation

No benefit accrues from doing spiritual *sadhana* if man does not have unity of thought, word, and deed. The unity of these three constitutes humanness. The proper study of mankind is man. What does MAN stand for? **M** stands for giving up *maya* (illusion); **A** for gaining the vision of *Atma*; and **N**, denotes attaining *Nirvana*. Man has to give up materialistic pleasures in order to attain liberation. What is *moksha* (liberation)? Getting rid of *moha* (attachment) is *moksha*. Giving up body consciousness is liberation. But, today, man is immersed in body attachment. He can attain liberation only when he develops attachment toward the *Atma*.

*Humanness has declined in man
Since he lacks fear of sin and love for God.
This is the root cause of
Unrest in the world* [Telugu Poem]

Man should develop love for God and fear of sin. Only then there will be morality in society.

Embodiments of Love! You may celebrate any number of festivals and undertake various types of spiritual exercises, but all this will go waste if there are no divine feelings in your heart. Do not look at things that are unsacred. Let your vision be suffused with divine feelings. You will understand and experience the sacred principles like *Sarvam khaividam Brahma* (Brahman is immanent in everything), *Viswam Vishnumayam* (Vishnu pervades the entire universe), *Easwara sarvabhoothanam* (God is the indweller of all beings) only when you cultivate noble qualities. In order to cultivate divine feelings and noble qualities, you have to control your senses. Your life will be ruined if you do not control your senses.

A doubting man perishes

A river should flow within its banks; otherwise it will flood the villages causing untold sufferings. Similarly, human life, which can be compared to a river, should also have two eight-lettered dictums as its banks: *sraddhavan labhate jnanam* (only a person with steadfast faith can attain wisdom) and *samsa-yatma vinashyati* (a doubting man perishes).

Only then will the river of life merge in the ocean of grace. If your river of life does not flow within its two banks, not only will your life be wasted but you will also cause harm to others.

One who has doubts about God cannot have divine grace. One who has no sincerity of purpose cannot come up in life. A man with sincerity will make the best use of even the smallest opportunity given to him. For example, he can turn even a small bit of live ember into a big fire.

On the other hand, a man who lacks sincerity cannot make fire even if large quantities of live embers are given to him. He will turn all the live embers into charcoal with his lackadaisical attitude. You should have utmost sincerity in matters pertaining to divinity.

Individual, society, creation, and Creator

You are struggling hard to acquire worldly education. You are spending hours together concentrating on it. What is the benefit that accrues from it? You acquire this education merely to fill your belly, Even this education can be used for the welfare of the society. Leave selfishness and aspire for the happiness of all. *Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu* (May all the people of the world be: happy!). This should be our prayer and aspiration. That is the true spiritual practice.

Vyashiti means individual, *samashti* means society. So, you should progress from *vyashiti* to *samashti*, from *samashti* to *srushti* (creation), and ultimately merge in *Parameshti* (God). You should attain the unity of individual, society, creation, and the creator. Only spiritual transformation can bring about social welfare. The first letter **S** in the name Sai stands for service (work), **A** for adoration (worship), and **I** for illumination (wisdom). So, the very name of Sai symbolizes the unity of work, worship, and wisdom.

Today, man has failed to understand the sacredness and purpose of human birth. Having taken human birth, you should try to experience bliss. You have the desire to attain bliss, but you are not making the necessary effort. You cannot collect even a drop of water if you keep the vessel upside down, although there may be a heavy downpour. Some water will be collected in it if the mouth of the vessel is turned upward. So,

if you want to attain divinity, you have to practice *dharma*. That is the meaning of *dharmam sharanam gachhami*. But, this must also lead to the welfare of all (*Sangham sharanam gachhami*). This is the inner meaning of the teachings of Buddha.

Once, Buddha entered a village along with his disciples. A lady approached him and requested him to have food in her house. Buddha blessed her and accepted her invitation. Seeing this, many villagers, including the village headman, warned Buddha, saying, “O Buddha, you are one of wisdom and have renounced everything. She is not a woman of good character. It is not proper for you to have food in her house.”

Buddha smiled and asked the village headman to come forward. Buddha, holding the right hand of the headman, asked him to clap. The headman said, it was not possible for him to clap since one of his hands was in Buddha’s hold.

Buddha said, “True, it is possible to clap only when two hands come together. Likewise, this lady cannot turn bad by herself unless there are men of bad character in the village. The men of this village are the root cause of her bad character.”

The villagers realized their folly, fell at Buddha’s feet and sought his forgiveness. Through his teachings, Buddha instilled sacredness and wisdom in people. Buddha’s teachings are highly sacred, with profound inner meaning.

Develop friendship with Truth

Buddha’s mother, Mayadevi, passed away when he was just 8 days old. His stepmother Gautami brought him up. That is how he got the name Gautama. He was christened as Siddhartha at the time of his birth. He came to be known as Buddha because he developed *buddhi* (intellect) and discrimi-

nation power. Discrimination is of two types: individual discrimination and fundamental discrimination. Individual discrimination arises out of selfishness, whereas fundamental discrimination is concerned with the welfare of one and all. One should discard individual discrimination and have only fundamental discrimination. This was the teaching of Buddha to Ananda, son of Gautami, before he attained *Nirvana*.

When Buddha was on the verge of attaining *Nirvana*, Ananda started shedding tears of sorrow. Then Buddha consoled him, saying, “Ananda, why are you unhappy over my attaining *Nirvana*? I have been craving this state of *Nirvana* for the past many years. Why do you shed tears of sorrow when I am experiencing supreme bliss?”

Ananda understood the truth and followed the teachings of Buddha. Ultimately, he too attained *Nirvana*.

Divinity transcends space and time

True ideal is to give practical knowledge of *dharma* to others. One should be a hero in practice, not merely in preaching. This was the ideal of Buddha. All the *Avatars* and noble souls led their lives in the most exemplary manner and helped people experience divinity. Buddha said, “O man. you don't need to search for God anywhere. You are God yourself.”

The *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Upanishads*, and the *Vedas* also echo the same principle. The *Vedas* declare: *Tat Thwam Asi* (Thou art That). Man today does meditation in the morning like a *yogi*, eats sumptuous food during the day like a *bhogi* (pleasure seeker), and sleeps at night like a *rogi* (sick person). This is not the way one should lead one's life. *Sathatham yoginah* (one should be a *Yogi* all the time). Be filled with divine feelings all the time. *Sarva karma Bhagavad preetyartham*

(whatever one does, one should do it to please God). Divinity transcends space and time. *Sarvam khalvidam Brahma* (everything is *Brahman*).

In order to understand this truth, one should cultivate *sadgunas*. *Sadgunas* do not denote good qualities alone. *Sath* means Being, that which is permanent. So, *sadgunas* mean having divine feelings. Similarly, the word *sathsang* means being in the company of the Divine, not merely in the company of good people. Divinity is within us. That is *Sath*. One has to develop friendship with *Sath*. That is true *sathsang* and true friendship.

Never depend on worldly friendship. Worldly friends come and go. Only friendship with God is true and eternal. God is your true friend, world is a text and *hridaya* (heart) is your preceptor. Your life will find fulfillment if you understand this truth and put into practice.

All the worldly *gurus* are not *gurus* in the strict sense of the term. How can they be called *gurus* if they cannot tell you the goal of life? Mind itself will become your *guru* once you understand its mystery.

One God has many names

Embodiments of Love! You may call Him by any name, be it Jesus, Buddha, Allah, Rama, Krishna; God is one. *Ek prabhu ke anek nam* (one God has many names), if you understand this truth, you will realize that all are divine. *Sarva jiva nama-skaram kesavam prathigatchhathi* (saluting the individual amounts to saluting God). Your life will be sanctified only when you cultivate such broad feelings. Develop broadmindedness. Never give any scope for any doubt on divinity. All

such doubts are but imaginations. Never succumb to them. Follow only divine feelings.

Follow the Master,
Face the devil,
Fight to the end,
Finish the game.

That should be the goal of your life.

Embodiments of Love! Many devotees from Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand, and other countries have gathered here today with great devotion and dedication. Truly speaking, their hearts are highly sacred. Though they do not have many comforts and conveniences here, they have considered it a *sadhana*, treated everything with a sense of equal-mindedness, and are experiencing bliss. Their devotion is true devotion. In path of spirituality, have the determination to face any constraint that you may come across. That determination is the true *thapas* (penance). Bereft of determination, it becomes *thamas* (sloth).

*You are determined to achieve something,
do not give up until you achieve what you want.
You have desired for something,
do not give up until your desire is fulfilled.
You have asked for something,
do not give up until you get what you have asked for.
You must pray to God forgetting yourself and
make Him accede to your request.
It is not the quality of a true devotee
to give up half way.* [Telugu Poem]

Cultivate the spirit of sacrifice and be prepared to face any difficulties. *Na sukhath labhyathe sukham* (happiness cannot be attained through happiness). Ancient sages and seers had to

undergo a lot of difficulties. They had to live in the forest eating leaves and tubers. They could have the vision of God only after all this suffering. They declared to the world: *Vedhametham Purusham mahantham aditya varnam thamasah parasthath* (O people, we have seen God who is beyond the darkness of ignorance, shining resplendently like a thousand suns.) They also declared, “He is all-pervasive. We have seen Him not outside, but within ourselves. You can also see Him if you turn your vision inward.”

In order to attain divinity, one has to undertake spiritual *sadhana*. What type of *sadhana*? Not penance or meditation. One has to control the senses. Talk less and work more. Only then will the individual, society and country as a whole prosper. Don't waste time. Time is God. Time wasted is life wasted. The *Upanishads* declare that human life is highly sacred and unique. So, sanctify your life by contemplating on the Divine. Offer all your actions to God. Only then you can attain peace.

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Sai Ramesh Hall, Brindavan

Santhi is full of spiritual feeling and wisdom that is the natural accompaniment of bliss. Genuine santhi is won only by control of the senses. Then it can be called prasanthi. The experience of that stage is as a stream of peace.

—Baba