

## Divine love is true religion

*At the time of birth all human beings are  
pure and unspoiled.*

*It is only the environment and company  
that pollutes the human mind.*

*Follow the dictates of your conscience.*

*Love and equality are the birthrights of man.*

[Telugu Poem]

At the time of birth, the human heart is pure, selfless and steady. But with the passage of time, man loses his purity on account of his association with various individuals.

The environment and company are mainly responsible for the good or bad in man. A piece of paper does not have any smell of its own. But if the same paper is used to pack *pakodas* or dry fish or jasmine flowers, it produces the smell associated

with them. That is why it is said, “Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are.” As your company, so you become. So, you should always join good company. You can attain exalted position only when he joins good company. Man is good by birth, but ruins himself because of bad company. Today man is not making any enquiry as to what is good and what is bad. Such an enquiry is very essential before making friendship with others. Adi Sankara declares:

*Sathsangathve Nissangathvam,  
Nissangathve Nirmohathvam,  
Nirmohathve Nischala Tathvam  
Nischalatathve Jeevanmukti*

By good company, attain detachment.  
By detachment, get rid of delusion.  
By freedom from delusion, attain equanimity.  
By equanimity, attain liberation.

### **Bad company is the root cause of man’s downfall**

*Satsang* (good company) helps you to attain sense control. *Sath* is that which is permanent and eternal. In this world, everything is transitory. Only Divinity is permanent. Your feelings will become noble and pure only when you associate yourself with Divinity. First and foremost recognise the fact that bad company is the root cause for man’s downfall.

Man wants to accomplish many things in life but is inhibited by the sense of fear lurking in his mind. It is only association with God that will make man fearless. Every flower that blossoms will not grow into a fruit. Every fruit that the tree bears will not become ripe. But every ripened fruit is bound to fall down from the tree. The same thing can be said of human life. Man develops desires and indulges in undesirable prac-

tices which will ultimately lead to his downfall.

Man has invented various wonderful gadgets, which can even take him to the moon, but the most wonderful and mysterious of all machines is the human body itself, which is God's creation. God has created this machine not merely for eating, drinking, and making merry. All these are common to animals also. This being the case, what is so unique about human birth?

*Deho Devalaya Prokto,  
Jeevo Deva Sanathana*

Body is the temple and the Indweller is God.

You may own a car, but it will be of use to you only if you know driving. Otherwise, it may expose yourself to great danger. Likewise, you should know how to make proper use of your body

Today, man is deceived by attachment. He is unable to realize the sacredness of human body. He is indulging in worldly pleasures just as birds and animals do. Human body is gifted to experience divine love, not to indulge in mean acts. Truth, righteousness, peace, and love are divine qualities. Birds and beasts have only love, but not the remaining three. Only one having all four qualities is a true human being. Man should make proper use of the body. Only then will his life find fulfillment.

### **Perform activities without expecting reward**

*Embodiments of Love!* Of all the gifts of God, Time and Love are the most precious. Man has to make proper use of time in order to experience Divine love. But today, man is wasting three-fourths of his time in mundane pursuits, whether he is *brahmachari* (student), *grihastha* (householder) *vana-*

*prastha* (recluse), or *sanyasi* (renunciant). Then how can he expect to have noble thoughts? He is unable to undertake any sacred activity because his mind is clouded with ego.

The *Bhagavad Gita* declares, “*Karmanyevadhikarasthe ma phaleshu kadachana* (man has a right over action, but not on the result.)” So perform all your activities without expecting any reward. Do not waste your time worrying over the fruits of your actions. This is what is meant by saying, “duty is God.” Divinity will manifest once you perform your duty with sincerity.

### **Serve with the feeling that you are serving God**

It is a mistake to consider yourself a devotee if you undertake service activities expecting something in return. You have to render service with the feeling that God is present in all. Realize the truth, “*Isavasyam, idam jagat* (God pervades the entire universe).” You may say that you have done rural service or served flood victims. But these cannot be termed service in its true sense if you have the feeling that you served others. Serve with the feeling that you are serving God, for God is omnipresent.

Consider, for example, the sacred epic *Bhagavatam*, which speaks of the intense love and devotion of *gopikas* (cowherd maids) for Krishna. *Bhagavatam chadivithe bagavatam* in Telugu means, “If we study *Bhagavatam*, we shall become good.” That is to say, *Bhagavatam* confers goodness on all. It contains the essence of all *Vedas*. The five letters *bha*, *ga*, *va*, *ta*, and *mu*, stand for *bhakti* (devotion), *jnana* (wisdom), *vairagya* (renunciation), *thapas* (penance), and *mukti* (liberation) respectively.

**Be one with the Lord, like gopikas**

This sacred epic, *Bhagavatam*, describes at length the *gopikas* (cowherd maids) yearning for Krishna when He left Gokul for Mathura, where He was actively involved in running the kingdom. The *gopikas* were unable to bear the pangs of separation from their dear Lord and were anxiously waiting His return. The entire Gokul bore the look of a barren land. There was no dearth of food and comforts in Gokul; yet, the *gopikas* did not enjoy any of them because they thought life was not worth living without Krishna, whom they considered as their very life breath. They lost their health and happiness because they were unable to bear the pangs of separation.

Krishna, being aware of the *gopikas* plight, summoned His friend Uddhava and asked him to proceed to Gokul to console the *Gopikas* and pass on His message to them. Uddhava was a great philosopher and a *jnani* (one of wisdom). He knew that Krishna was omnipresent. As per Krishna's command, He went to Gokul and conveyed Krishna's message to the *gopikas* and *gopalas*. He told them that they should not limit Krishna to a small physical frame thinking that He was present only in Mathura. He tried to explain to the *gopikas* that Krishna is God Himself and that He is omnipresent. He advised them that since Krishna was present everywhere, there was no need for them to feel sorry that He was away.

Since the *gopikas* had totally surrendered themselves to Krishna, they would not look at or talk to a stranger. So, they took a *bhramara* (bee) as an intermediary and talked to Uddhava through the bee. Having been used to worship Krishna's beautiful form, they could not readily think of Krishna as a formless entity. Making fun of Uddhava's preachings, they asked, "Do you practice what you preach?"

You are enjoying the proximity to our Lord Krishna but are telling us to experience His attributeless and formless aspect. We don't want your preaching or philosophy. We are not interested in your formless, attributeless God. Bring our dear Krishna to us." They said, "Krishna has stolen our hearts. We have only one mind, and that has gone with Him to Mathura, we do not have another mind to listen to what you are preaching."

### **One-pointed devotion of gopikas**

The declaration of the *gopikas* that they had only one mind made Uddhava recognize their one-pointed devotion. He realised that the pure, unsullied, and eternal divine principle can be attained only through fixing the mind on God.

The *gopikas* lamented their separation from Krishna, "We want to see nothing but Krishna's beautiful form, hear nothing, but the melodious music of His flute, and experience nothing but His Divine Love. We have cried for Krishna so much that our eyes are swollen and there is not a drop of tear left in them. How can the ship of your message sail in the barren lands of our hearts! So, take your ship and go back to the place you came from. We are not interested in the formless aspect of Divinity. We want to see the enchanting form of our Lord."

Hearing the words of the *gopikas*, Uddhava realised that all his *jnana* (wisdom) was worthless. He considered himself to be totally ignorant since he had underestimated the love and devotion of the *gopikas* for Krishna.

He stopped preaching and tried to hand over a piece of paper to the *gopikas*, saying that it contained Krishna's message for them. He wanted them to read it. They refused to accept the letter, saying that they could not read it as they had no knowledge of *akshara* (alphabet). But their minds were merged in

the *Akshara Swarupa* (immortal form) of Lord Krishna. Uddhava was a bit angry with the *gopikas*, thinking that they had no respect for even Krishna's message.

Then one of the *gopikas* started explaining, "There is no point in accepting Krishna's letter since we, being illiterate, cannot read it. There may be one or two amongst us who can read. But we are afraid that our tears may drop on the letter and wash out the words written on it. There is another reason. Our whole body is heated up on account of separation from Krishna. So, it is possible that the letter may get burnt to ashes if our hands were to touch it. You are unable to understand our plight."

They sent a message to Krishna, addressing the bee,

*O bee, why don't you go back and tell Krishna  
That He should look at us at least once?  
Can you not tell Krishna to illumine  
Our dark hearts with His resplendent form?  
Our life has become like a dried tree.  
Please tell Krishna that  
He should look at us at least once.  
Can you not tell Krishna to illumine  
Our dark hearts with His resplendent form?  
Our life has become like a dried tree.  
Please tell Krishna to put some life into it.*

[Telugu song]

Radhika prayed,

*O Krishna, we are anyway going to die  
Because of separation from you.  
Please allow us to be with you  
At least in Your next incarnation.*

*If you take the form of a tree,  
 Allow us to be creepers that twine around You.  
 If you stand like Meru mountain,  
 Let us be like a stream flowing from it.  
 If you become the mighty ocean,  
 Let us become the rivers ready to merge in it .*

[Telugu Poem]

Thus, the *gopikas* always craved the Divine proximity. That is the sign of true devotion. Truth philosophy consists of establishing a relationship between the individual and God. The *gopikas* never gave scope for narrow individual feelings. They aspired for the intimate relationship with God.

The best way to love God is to love all and serve all. Have the firm conviction that God is present in everybody. There is no place where God does not exist. But you cannot see God as long as there is the sense of 'I' (ego) in you. The *gopikas* had absolutely no sense of ego. Their 'I' had merged with Krishna. As long as there is ego in you, you will find only multiplicity. Once you realize that you and I are one, you will find unity everywhere, which is true and eternal.

#### **Dedication of the 'Messengers of Sathya Sai'**

The old student association of Anantapur Campus, the Messengers of Sathya Sai, is celebrating its anniversary today. They are serving society and spreading Swami's message in accordance with the sacred name of their association. You have listened to the report of their activities. Truly speaking, they have done much more than what was mentioned in the report. In fact, I instructed them to make the report as brief as possible. Though their report is brief, they are doing yeoman service to society. Not only here, but also in various other

countries like Japan, Canada, America, and Germany. They are undertaking service activities, upholding the ideals of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. They are spending their earnings in service activities. When questioned by their parents, they reply, “Swami has given us free education and free medical care. We owe our wealth and health to Swami. So, all our earnings should be directed for the service of society. We are not misusing even a *naya paisa*.” Thus they are bringing about transformation even in their parents.

### **Never underestimate the capacity of women**

You all know that there is a lady doctor, an eye specialist, by name Vansa in our General Hospital. She is a widow. Her daughter studied in our college and now she is living in Australia with her husband. She has brought about a transformation in her husband and, as a result, he is also actively involved in various service activities. Both the husband and wife spend their earnings in service of the society. They do not have children.

Dr. Vansa prayed to Me that her daughter be blessed with a child. Her daughter said that Swami is everything for her and she does not want to get entangled in bondage by having children. She said that she considers all children as her own. She prayed that she should have the freedom to render service activities to her satisfaction.

There are many women who have such noble desires, but among men, we hardly find anybody having such broad feelings.

Since ancient times, many noble women have taken birth in this sacred land of Bharat (India), women who have set an ideal to the world with their exemplary character and devotion. You might have heard of Savitri, who brought her dead hus-

band back to life; Chandramati, who extinguished the wild fire in a trice, demonstrating the power of truth; Sita, who came out of blazing fire unscathed; and Damayanti, who burnt a wicked hunter to ashes with the power of her chastity. All these noble women have brought name and fame to this sacred land of Bharat. Not only Bharat, the whole world will progress because of women of character and nobility. So never underestimate the capacity of women.

### **Women symbolise bhakti and men stand for jnana**

The 75th Birthday of this body is approaching. The Messengers of Sathya Sai have chalked out elaborate plans for the 75th Birthday and have already started executing them. They have purchased 1000 bags of rice for free distribution of food for 10 days to the devotees during the 75th Birthday celebrations.

There are nearly 3000 members in their Organization. Their faith is unwavering, and their devotion for Swami is becoming stronger and stronger day by day. They are preparing to distribute 75,000 saris. They want all the saris to be of the same design, so they have already placed an order in this regard. Such devotion and sincerity are present more among women than men.

In fact, women symbolise *bhakti* (devotion) and men stand for *jnana* (wisdom). The one with devotion has the right to enter even the inner chambers of the divine palace, whereas the one with wisdom has access only to the audience hall of God. You may be aware that kings of yore would convene meetings in their royal audience hall, where only men would assemble. Men had no entry into the *antahpura* (inner chambers of the palace). Only women who symbolize devotion have the access to the *antahpura* of God.

What is the *antahpura* of God? What is *antahpura*? *Antaratma* (Indwelling Spirit) is the *antahpura*. It is only devotion, not wisdom, that has entry to *antahpura*.

Most of the men who have assembled here today are here only because of the inspiration of their women. Women are responsible for men treading along the path of devotion. In My opinion, the Messengers of Sathya Sai should take the lead in spreading the divine message throughout the country. Mainly by the effort of women will the country progress. Not only Bharat, the whole world should progress. The ancient culture of our country should be revived.

The heart of Uddhava, who was considered one of wisdom, transformed on seeing the love and devotion of the *gopikas* for Krishna. He approached Krishna with a prayer that he may be blessed with at least a fraction of their devotion. The *gopikas* said they had only one mind, and that was centered on Krishna. But men have many minds! The statement of the *gopikas* is in itself the highest philosophy.

### **True Christmas spirit in Prasanthi Nilayam**

If you look at the world with material view, you see variety. If you look at it with an understanding of Divinity, all of it will appear to be the form of God. *Yad bhavam tad bhavati* (as your feelings, so you become). Allah, Jesus, Zoroaster — all these are names for the same Divinity.

Today (Christmas) is mainly celebrated by Christians, but do not make the mistake that it is only for Christians. It is a holy and happy occasion to be celebrated by the entire mankind. Get rid of religious and philosophical differences and enlarge your *matha* (religion) and *mathi* (mind). There is only one God, and He is the indweller of your heart. If you realise this truth, the entire humanity becomes a single race. There is

only one religion in the universe and that is divine love (*prema*).

The one without this principle of love in his heart is neither a Hindu nor a Christian nor a Muslim nor a Sikh. He is no better than a demon. Complete unity of all religions can be seen only in Prasanthi Nilayam. Imagine what a phenomenon it is that Christians from 64 countries in this world have assembled here to celebrate Christmas.

This principle of unity is the sign of true devotion. Swami reiterates that it is not a celebration for Christians only but is a holy occasion for the entire humanity. It is the desire of Swami that such differences be completely eradicated.

There are several tasks in front of the Messengers of Sathya Sai. Mere distribution of food and medicines and conducting *bal vikas* programs is not enough. Of course, all these are necessary, but along with these activities, spiritual teachings are also essential. If the spiritual element of life is lost, life is a waste. Therefore, all of you ensure that your spiritual life is in the forefront of all your activities. These words are addressed not only to the ladies of the Messengers of Sathya Sai. Young men should take up similar activities.

### **Women can transform the world**

Women generally have less freedom than men. If only women had been given the level of freedom that is allowed for men, the shape of society on the face of the earth would have been changed. They work under many constraints put by their husbands, fathers, and children. In spite of severe pressures from all sides, they are advancing.

On the other hand men have hardly any such constraints. It is surprising why people with such freedom do not enter into a spiritual quest or social service. What is the use of your educa-

tion if you do not use it for the service of society? You might as well throw your books in the fire.

**Accumulate *guna*, not *dhana***

It is more important to achieve virtues (*guna*) than to accumulate wealth (*dhana*). Wealth is accumulated by so many persons. What have they taken away with them when they leave this world? Nothing. Of course, one has to earn wealth. But, accumulation of wealth should be within limits. All your faculties should be at the disposal of society. Only then your country will also advance.

You know very well the kind of unrest that is prevalent all over the world today. Fear and terror haunt you wherever you turn. It is the duty of the youth of this generation to set right this situation. First of all, serve your parents. Then, look after your family. Serve your community. Then, you should undertake the task of serving your country. But do not be hankering after the results for your efforts. The appropriate reward for all your actions will be granted to you by God. Service to the country itself becomes worship of God.

Swami is pleased with the services that you have performed so far. But, it is the desire of Swami that you should all perform much more. You know how a mother blesses you. It is necessary for you to act in such a way as to get your parents' blessings and approval. Tomorrow you may also become mothers. Serve your parents today so that in turn your children may serve you in times of your need. As you sow so you reap.

The only worthwhile thing in this world is divine love. This is the noblest acquisition, which leads to bliss and immortality. Once you obtain this divine love all else in the world is yours for the asking. For this you first immerse yourself in social work.

The vain desire to obtain higher and higher educational qualifications should be moderated. You may earn as much wealth as you can, but use it for the welfare of society. Contemplate on God with your whole mind and heart. Only then will you attain a meaningful goal of your life.

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Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam

*Be pure in words and deeds and keep impure thoughts away. I am in every one of you, so I become aware of the slightest wave of thoughts. When the clothes become dirty, you have to give them a wash. When your mind is soiled, you have to be born again for the cleansing operations.*

—Baba