

4. The gospel of work, love and sacrifice

There is no penance equal to a peaceful mind;

There is no greater happiness than contentment;

There is no worse disease than desire;

No righteousness can equal kindness.

EMBODIMENTS of Love! There is no penance superior to peace of mind. Every individual, every family, every society, every nation seeks peace in all possible ways. Every man should strive in every way to achieve peace as the most desirable objective.

There is no greater happiness than *Santhosham* (contentment). Man is perpetually in quest of happiness. But what is the happiness he seeks? Worldly happiness? Transient pleasures? These cannot confer true happiness. Only spiritual happiness can give true happiness.

Why has man lost this happiness? Because man is afflicted with insatiable desires. These desires are the cause of various maladies. It is only by limiting desires and thereby eliminating the diseases arising from them that the man can secure peace.

Next, what is meant by *Dharma*? Charity alone does not constitute *Dharma* (virtuous action). Charity is quite different from righteousness. A temporary, worldly act is equated with *Dharma*. *Dharma* in its true sense refers to something which is lasting. *Atma-Dharma* (the *Dharma* of the indwelling Spirit) transcends all worldly actions.

Difference between *Dharma* and Religion

Many people in the world consider religion as identical with *Dharma*. But *Dharma* is quite different from religion. Religion is like a river *Dharma* is like the ocean. There is well-known saying: "The ocean is the final destination of all rivers." All rivers ultimately merge in the ocean. The essence of all religions, the goal of all scriptures, the objective of all aspirations is *Dharma*.

It is totally wrong to equate the vast ocean of *Dharma* with the river of religion. "Religions are many, but the path is one. Jewels are many, but the gold in them is the same. Cows are of many colours, but their milk is white. Living beings are numerous, but the Indwelling Spirit is one and the same. Flowers may be many, but the worship is one only." (Telugu poem).

Religions have come into existence for the purpose of regulating human life. What is common to all of them is the *Prema-thathva* (principle of Divine love).

Man is governed by morality. In all countries morality and integrity should be like the life-breath. It is only when men adhere to morality that human ideals like fraternity, equality and liberty can become meaningful in daily life. It is because moral values have been given the go-by that you find today society bedevilled by disorder and unrest. The world will have respite from violence only when progress in science and technology is accompanied *pari passu* by development of ethical and spiritual values.

In the economic sphere, when human desires are governed by righteousness, a divine impulse will arise in man. When the quest for wealth and the concern for sensuous pleasures are based on *Dharma* (righteousness), the mind will spontaneously turn towards God.

Man's misbehaviour and natural disasters

In the vast cosmos, man is like a speck. Essentially, there is no conflict *between* man and creation, just as a child is entitled to enjoy the milk from its mother and the bee is entitled to enjoy the honey from flowers, there can be no objection to man enjoying the resources of nature. But as a result of uncontrolled desires and reckless exploitation of natural resources, Nature is exhibiting frightening disorders. Natural calamities like earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, droughts and floods are the result of disturbances in the balance of Nature caused by reckless exploitation of natural resources. Mankind today appears like a foolish man who is wielding the axe at the branch of a tree on which he is sitting.

Men have to develop a sense of spiritual oneness. Out of that sense of oneness, love will grow. Love alone can bind the whole of humanity into one unit.

What do you see in this hall today? Here are people *gathered from* Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia and other countries. What is it that has brought them together in this small village? It is only love and the sense of oneness with others. The bliss of life is embedded in this love. Pure bliss is derived from this love. When this love is shared with others you have the bliss of collective joy. When your life dances on the waves of this love it attains the fulfilment of humanness.

Man today does not recognise this sense of oneness. Man does not mean the body alone. Man has the mind, the intellect and the *Aathma* (the Spirit). It is the combination of all these that constitutes true humanness. When the balance among these four constituents is upset, man is plunged in troubles. When man maintains the balance among these four, the nation will prosper.

The transformation process of man

The transformation of man is based on transformation of the mind. When men are transformed, the nation is transformed. When nations change, the world is transformed. Hence, if the world has to be changed, there has to be a mental transformation at the individual level. The human mind should be filled with love.

The mind is a remarkable entity. When it is filled with wisdom, it makes a man a saint. When it is associated with ignorance, it runs into an agent of death. Hence it has *been* declared that the mind is the cause of human bondage or liberation. All change, in education or other spheres, has to begin with transformation of the mind.

Indifference, bad company, disrespect, arrogance and jealousy, these five tendencies reduce man to the level of the animal. No one with these vices can be called an educated person. To get rid of these vices, it is necessary to take note of some of the good qualities in animals and birds. Man can learn any number of good qualities from animals, birds, insects and worms. One animal which is viewed with contempt is the donkey. But there are quite a few virtues man can learn from the donkey. The quality of patience to be found in a donkey is not found even in man. Whatever burdens may be heaped on its back, it bears them all with forbearance. It puts up with any amount of beatings. Even when it is starved of food and water, it presents a calm face. Man has thus to learn the quality of forbearance from the donkey.

The ant is one of the tiniest among insects. But there are many lessons to be learnt from it. The ant has a capacity for foresight. With foreknowledge of the rainy season ahead, the ant starts storing food from three months in advance.

Then, there is the spider, from which lessons can be learnt. Determination is one of its traits. How many times its web may be destroyed or broken, the spider will go on remaking it with relentless determination.

Then, there is the dog. The dog is treated with neglect and indifference. But the fidelity displayed by a dog is not found in any other creature. Getting a few morsels of food from a man, the dog shows its gratitude to him by following him and wagging its tail out of affection. But such gratitude is lacking among students who have been nourished, educated and placed comfortably in life by their parents. Many do not have even a fraction of the gratitude displayed by dogs. Has their education or intelligence any meaning?

The supreme virtue of monogamy among birds

Next, take the example of the parrots. Conjugal fidelity is supreme quality among parrots. The firm attachment to each other in a parrot couple is not to be found even among highly developed human beings.

The story of how Vaalmeekei was deeply moved when a hunter killed one of two birds who were a loving couple is well known.

When one of the birds died, its mate followed suit, unable to bear the pangs of separation. Out of the intense sorrow and compassion of Vaalmeekei, the first *shloka* emerged from his lips and that was the beginning of the great epic.

When its mate dies, a bird will not seek another partner. It will starve itself to death. How many men care to follow the example of the birds in their devotion to monogamy? Many are ready to remarry after the loss of the first wife. The supreme virtue of monogamy is a quality man can learn from birds.

Thus, there are many useful lessons to be learnt from animals, birds and insects. Book knowledge alone is of little use.

In fact, the human heart is the best teacher in the world. Time is a supreme preceptor. This vast Cosmos is the ideal book for all. And there is only one true friend and that is God. There is no need to go in search of a preceptor Your heart is enough. If you follow the dictates of your heart, every action will be sanctified.

It is necessary also to recognise the importance of Time. Time determines many of our actions in life. Time is a great teacher.

The universe is a vast text-book. By properly studying what is happening in the cosmos you can learn any number of lessons. God is your best, unfailing friend at all times. All others are mere time-servers. People waste their lives believing in such petty fair-weather friends. Your best friend is residing in your heart as the Indweller.

"Your heart is your country"

Today the Chinese devotees are observing their national New Year Day here. What is the origin of the word "China"? It is derived from the two words "chung" and "kuo". 'Chung' means the human heart. "Kuo" refers to the country. The word "China" therefore means that "My heart is my country". This concept is applicable to all countries and all religions. For instance, Bhaaraatha. It is derived from, the two words- "*Bhaa*" meaning "effulgence" and "*Ratha*" meaning "to rejoice". The heart is the source of effulgence. Bhaaraatheeya is one who rejoices in

the effulgence emanating from the heart. Every man is attracted to the heart. God is not confined to any particular place. His mal abode is the heart.

The Chinese have esteemed the heart as their native land. the heart is subject to troubles and difficulties. From ancient times and to some extent even to-day, the Chinese have observed one ritual every morning before beginning their day's chores. They declare: "Difficulties are our friends. Let us invite them." The Chinese have looked upon difficulties as their friends. They have recognised that without trouble no good can be realised. They used to start the day's work with this thought before them. The Chinese also realised that true happiness comes from the satisfaction of a task well done. In Bhaarath also there is the dictum, "*Uddhareth Aathmanaa-aathmaanam*" (Raise the Self by the Self). What is it that can raise the Self? It is our own good conduct. Our good conduct is not for elevating the country, but for elevating ourselves. A whetstone is used for sharpening a knife, not for making the whetstone smoother. Likewise, in this world, your good conduct improves you and, as a result the world.

Work hard and follow the dictates of your conscience

There is a proverb current in China: "The most delicious food is that is got by hard labour." What is got by arduous effort is relished with joy. One who enjoys his food without having laboured for it is an idler In China everyone works hard to earn his living. This cult of work should activate every human being. Unfortunately this is forgotten today

From very ancient times, there have been close relations between China and Bhaarath. A short while ago a speaker mentioned how in the Chinese pantheon there are deities corresponding to the deities worshipped in Bhaarath like Lakshmi, Bhuudhevi, Kubera and others.

Similarly a common saying current in China regarding government regulations is applicable also to the situation in Bhaarath. Comparing Government regulations to a net, the Chinese used to say that the very small fish escape through the holes in the net, while the very big break through it. Only the middle sized fish get caught in it. In Bhaarath also it is a fact that the lowest among the people are unaffected by Government regulations. The very rich and powerful drive a coach and force through them. It is only the middle class that suffers most from these regulations.

I have often indicated the rule by which people should govern their lives. They have to follow the dictates of their conscience. Make conscience your master. You can then face any difficulties in life and overcome them. Never give way to despair in the face of difficulties.

Enshrine God your heart; Help ever and Hurt Never

Realise the relationship between your body and God. You are a limb of the society. The society is a limb of the world. The world is a limb of nature. Nature is a limb of God. Instead, of realising this integral relationship between man, nature and God, people are lost in the pursuit of wealth. This is totally wrong. People should *enshrine* God in their hearts and contemplate incessantly on the Divine. People today think of God only for money. God is sought only for money. Men resort to all devices to get money. Men go round wealth in adoration like the earth round the sun. This is the travesty of devotion that we witness today. Think of God. Money will come of its own accord. Today money rules every aspect of human life. Money has its place in life. But excessive wealth is a source of harm to the individual and the nation. You must strive to acquire wealth that will give you real happiness.

Today there are millions of devotees all over the world. The world would be a much better place if all of them practised at least one good principle in their daily life.

Jagadeesan from Malaysia who had spoken earlier called upon the devotees participating in the Chinese National Day festival in Prashaanthi Nilayam to give up one bad habit and cultivate one good habit as a mark of their visit to Prashaanthi Nilayam. In respect of Sai, it is enough if you observe one good precept, namely, "Help ever, hurt never." Indeed, you should cultivate the spirit of sacrifice. When you cultivate love with sacrifice, you will progress spiritually

When you plant a sapling you have to water it and manure it to make it grow. Likewise, for the plant of life, you have to provide the water of love and the manure of sacrifice to enable it to grow well.

Sacrifice! Sacrifice! Sacrifice!

The obsession with money is totally meaningless because you come with nothing in the world and leave it with nothing. Is it not more desirable to utilise the money on acts of charity? Many persons in Bhaarith deposit their ill-gotten wealth in Switzerland or some other country and leave the world empty-handed. The money you make in Bhaarith should be spent here for the people's welfare. Help the poor and the needy. Support educational and medical institutions. Money is given to you only for helping others. There is no meaning in hoarding it.

Sacrifice! Sacrifice! Sacrifice! That is the supreme quality you have to cultivate. The *Vedhas* have stridently proclaimed that immortality can be got only through sacrifice and not by any other means. Only through sacrifice can there be real enjoyment of what you acquire. What you earn with one hand, give away with the other. Without sacrifice life is a waste.

I give you three formulae: One--work, work and work. Two--enjoy the fruits of your labour. Today there is no gospel of work in the country. Everyone wants to enjoy without doing hard work. Whatever be the troubles, work hard. Three--use your earnings for public good. When this kind of renunciatory outlook develops among the people, the nation will prosper immensely.

Love all and Serve all

Prema and *Thyaaga* (Love and Sacrifice) are the two most important ideals in life. Love all, even those who hate you. That is the index of your devotion.

In the name of devotion, people are flocking to Prashaanthi Nilayam at great expense. What is it you have accomplished by coming here? What have you learnt? Being a Sai devotee, if you practise even one or two good qualities like morality and integrity the nation will benefit immensely. There is neither truth nor morality among most people. "A people without morality are worse than a monkey," goes the saying. A great monkey served the Divine and became the recipient of His grace. Men today talk about devotion, but have no regard for the Divine injunctions.

Peace, truth and love are inherent in man. Why do you search for them outside? Manifest these qualities which are within you. You must cultivate forbearance and compassion. This is the way to foster the love principle.

Today the demon of selfishness has reared its head everywhere. If selfishness goes, divinity enters.

Today people are steeped in desires (*aashalu* in Telugu). How many live for the sake of ideals (*aashayaalu* in Telugu)? People develop *dheha-abhimaanam* (attachment to the body), but do not care to develop *dhesha-abhimaanam* (love for the country). Man's primary spiritual effort today should be in the direction of getting rid of selfishness, narrow-mindedness and attachment

to the body, and developing love of God, a broad outlook and devotion to the nation. Develop confidence in the Self.

Today is the Chinese New Year Day: It is a new year for the whole world, because every one's heart is his native land. Every human being is a resident in the kingdom of the Heart.

Everyone should recognise his responsibilities in the kingdom of the Heart and not be concerned about his rights. What meaning is there in fighting for rights with a polluted heart? Your rights will be ensured if you discharge your duties prop-crime. There are officials who receive salaries in thousands. Are they doing enough work to justify those salaries? One who does not do enough work to justify his salary is a traitor to the nation. He is cheating the people. When you do enough work to justify your salary, you will be deriving boundless satisfaction. Duties must come first. That is the basis of Indian Culture.

A dog's example of Love and Loyalty

Let me tell you a story from my early years. I was then staying in the old *mandhir* in Puttaparthi. An English couple were living with Me at that time. They presented Me with a couple of puppies. They said that the presence of the puppies with Svaami would give them the feeling that they were with Svaami even when they were away. I accepted the puppies. They had been named Jack and Jill. How did they live with Me? At night when I went to bed, one would sleep near My head and the other at My feet.

One day, the Mahaaraani of Mysore came to Puttaparthi. She was a very orthodox lady. She would not take her food if she heard the bark of a dog. She sent a message to Svaami that if there were any dogs in His premises, they should be kept confined in a room. In those days there was no direct approach road to Puttaparthi. The Mahaaraani kept her car in Karnatapalli (on the other side of the Chithravathi) and came walking to Puttaparthi. There were no hotels at that time. The driver of the car had to come to Svaami's place to take his food and get back. The Mahaaraani said she was staying in Puttaparthi that night. The driver took his food and was returning to the car at night. As the driver would not be able to find his way in the darkness I told one of the dogs: "Jack, you better go with the driver and come back in the morning."

Jack led the way and the driver was following the dog. They reached Karnatapalli. Then the driver slept in the car. Jack slept underneath the car. The driver got up in the morning. It was chill outside. He was in a hurry to start the car and keep it ready for the Mahaaraani. He reversed the car for short distance. One of the wheels ran over the sleeping Jack and its back-bone was broken.

Students and scholars and all others should note how much devotion the poor dog had for Bhagavaan. In great pain, the dog came dragging itself all the way to Svaami's residence. It had to drag itself over the Chithravathi sands. It was profusely bleeding. At the gate of Svaami's residence there was a watchman called Chaakali Subbanna. He rushed to Svaami and said- "Svaami! Our Jack's spine is broken. It is crying as it is dragging itself." Bhagavaan came out and called out: "Jack!" The dog came crying, collapsed at my feet and passed away.

See, what devotion in an animal! It dragged itself all the way to give up its life at the feet of Svaami. Before it passed away, it was gazing at Svaami. I got some milk to be brought and gave it to the dog. It placed two of its front paws on my palm and gave up its life. What an amount of devotion in an animal!

After Jack's death, Jill gave up eating food. A few days later Jill died. Today, behind the old *Mandhir*, there is a *samaadhi* for the dogs.

What loyalty and what devotion in a dog! How much better mankind would be if only people had a fraction of the love and loyalty displayed by that dog?

Give up the bad and take the good

Today people have no faith. They remember God in times of difficulty and forget Him when they are all right. How many follow the ideals of Svaami? They only multiply their desires. What greater folly can there be than this?

There is one thing to be learnt by all people whether they are from China, Japan, India or America. The God who is in all of them is one and the same. Your love of God should remain unwavering, whatever may happen. Love is God. Live in Love. This one truth will protect you at all times. Leave all your bad qualities here and take back good thoughts and good habits. That alone will justify your coming here. Become good and improve the society

When you go back to your country with good qualities, people will mark the change in you after your visit to Puttaparthi. Treat Prashaanthi Nilayam as a spiritual workshop. No charges are levied here. Everything is free. I am ready. Make the best use of your stay here.

Discourse in the Sai Kulvanth Mandap on the morning of 13-2-1997, Chinese New Year Day