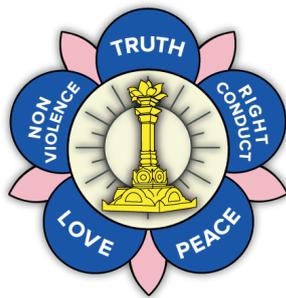

STUDY GUIDE

Love

A compendium of discourses and quotes from the works of
Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

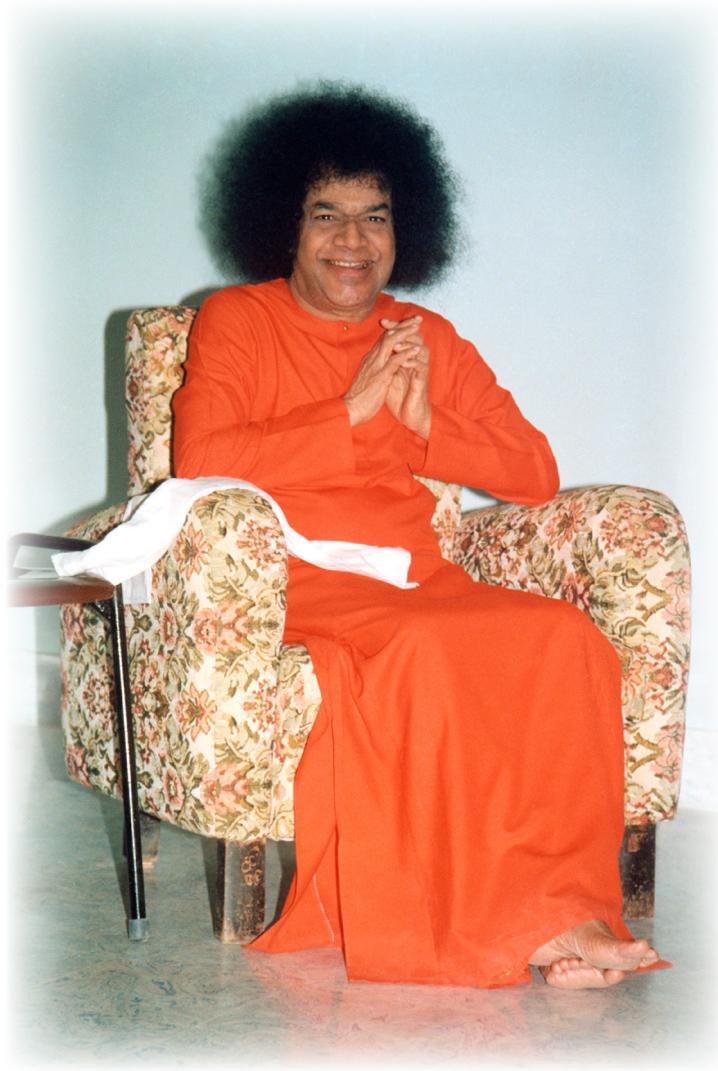




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DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND REVERENCE

AT THE DIVINE LOTUS FEET OF

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

THE EMBODIMENT OF DIVINE LOVE

Duty without love is deplorable. Duty with love is desirable. Love without duty is Divine. Duty implies force or compulsion while love is spontaneous and expresses itself without external promptings. All the japa (recitation), dhyāna (meditation) and the deeds of merit you perform will be futile if you do not cultivate universal and selfless love.

SS 1979.29

I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added lustre. I have not come to speak on behalf of any particular dharma (faith or religion), like the Hindu dharma. I have not come on any mission of publicity for any sect, or creed or cause; nor have I come to collect followers for any doctrine. I have no plan to attract disciples or devotees into My fold or any fold. I have come to tell you of this universal unitary faith, this Atmic Principle, this path of love, this dharma of love, this duty of love, this obligation to love.

SSS 8.22: July 4, 1968



Editors' Note

This study guide is a compendium of discourses and quotes from the following works of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba: *Sathya Sai Speaks*, *Vahinis*, *Summer Showers*. The editors have attempted to remain faithful to the presentation of the quotes as they occur in the online editions of the works from which they come, with the exception of minor changes to facilitate readability and coherence in the context of the study guide. Original audio files of Bhagawan's discourses were referred to as needed. The reader can easily find these discourses and quotes by visiting the international website <http://www.sathyasai.org> and by selecting "Discourses-Writings" from the top menu.

PREFACE

This set of two study guides, *Love* and *Selfless Service*, is a compendium of selected discourses and quotes from the discourses and writings of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the topics of love and selfless service. The two volumes have been prepared for use by individuals and groups at pre-world conferences in preparation for the Tenth World Conference to be held at Prasanthi Nilayam in November 2015. The study-guide set may also be of use to any spiritual seeker on the subjects of love and selfless service.

The choice of these two topics is deliberate. If one word could sum up the essence of Swami's life and teachings, that word would be "love". Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's life, His message, His ideals and His humanitarian works can all be enshrined in one word—Love. His life is His message and His message is love. He is truly the incarnation of love—Love walking on two legs. He says, "God is love; live in love", and exhorts us to "Start the day with love; fill the day with love; spend the day with love; end the day with love—this is the way to God". Just as the moon can be seen only by moonlight and not with the help of a candle, God who is the embodiment of love, can be experienced only through love. "But this love", Swami says, "is unconditional, pure, selfless love which is directed towards God with one-pointedness".

Lord Jesus Christ, when asked what is the greatest commandment, said, "The greatest and the first commandment is love thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength; and love thy neighbour as thyself". The great apostle St. Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians says, "Faith, hope and love abide, but the greatest of these is love". Swami says, "Love is the source; love is the path; and love is the goal". So, when we live our lives saturated with love, our lives get sanctified. Swami says, "The greatest examples of pure, pristine love are the *gopis* (cowherd girls of Brindavan) of yore". There are some other examples of pure, unconditional, Divine Love in this compendium. If one could master this single Divine Principle, the other four human values—Truth, Peace, Righteousness and Non-violence—would also, automatically, be mastered. Perfect mastery of love amounts to nothing less than Self-realisation.

Selfless service is perhaps the single, most efficient and universal tool for understanding, experiencing and expressing this Divine Principle of Love. Service is love in action. Swami says that the best way to love God is to love all; serve all. The main purpose of the Sathya Sai Organisation is to help one realise one's innate Divinity by the practice of Divine Love through selfless service. Swami has also made it clear that the quality of service is most important, not the quantity. The spirit or the motive behind service is the deciding factor. When we render service, we should feel that we are serving God. This is why He says, "Service to man is service to God". Service done in this manner makes us realise that "service is done by God, to God, and for God". The person who is serving, the recipient of the service and the process of serving are all one—and are all divine. Just as the proof of rain is in the wetness of the ground, pure, selfless, loving service transforms us and we enjoy supreme peace and equanimity—the "peace that passeth understanding".

Swami cautions us about major obstacles that stand in the way of selfless service: *ahamkara* and *mamakara*—ego and attachment; and *karthrithva* and *bhokthritva*—the feeling of doership and enjoyership. A true Sathya Sai volunteer strives to overcome these obstacles through selfless service. Service done in a pure, selfless manner then becomes yoga—leading to union with God. Swami says that when we realise “service to man is service to God”, we also experience the ultimate truth, “*Isa vasya idam sarvam*” (everything is pervaded by God).

The two subjects—love and selfless service—are, therefore, foundational and integrally related.

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s teachings are a treasure beyond compare. My sincere hope is that the readers will not allow this treasure to slip from their grasp. This compendium is intended to facilitate the reader’s ease of access to Bhagawan’s teachings on these two important topics. My sincere prayer is that each and every reader might experience Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s divine presence through His words on love and selfless service in these study guides and thereby be transformed by putting into practice these ideals.

Let us dive deep into the nectarine words of Swami, saturate ourselves with His love and redeem our lives through the daily practise of His universal and eternal message of love and selfless service.

To the One who has made the concepts of love and selfless service simple and easy to understand through His writings and discourses, and whose life is a supreme example of both, I offer my heart-felt gratitude. I humbly seek His blessing and grace on behalf of every reader who parts the pages of these guides to learn and follow Him.

Dr. Narendranath Reddy
Chairman, Prasanthi Council

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PART I

CHAPTER 1

What Is Love?

Introduction

“I separated Myself from Myself, so that I may love Myself”, proclaims the Lord. Love is the primordial urge and the basis of creation. Love is God. This love assumes many different forms in the phenomenal world and gives a variety of experiences to individuals. While the forms of love keep changing based on one’s relationship, the Principle of Love remains unchanged.

In this chapter, Swami enumerates the different forms of love that human beings experience and He delineates how human love differs from Divine Love. Human love is temporary and is based on attachment and affection. Divine Love is pure, selfless and enduring. Swami tells us that true *bhakti* (devotion) is love for God. We must cultivate such love and become embodiments of pure love.

Key concepts covered in this chapter include:

- Love—the basis of creation
- Love—the essence of devotion
- Love—the pathway to God
- All love is One
- Worldly love
- Divine love
- Love is God

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Love—The Basis of Creation

See in Me yourself, for I see Myself in all of you. You are My life, My breath, My soul. All of you are My Forms. 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.

SSS 29.18: May 29, 1996, colophon

The attraction that the vast *Brahman* has for the *añu* (atom) is the attraction of the whole for the part. It is the basis of all love—the love of the mother, of the father and son, of the friend, the spouse and even of the devotee towards God. The *jīva* (the individual self) loves the *Brahman* or the totality of which it is part. See all as parts of the same whole to which you belong. Then there can be no hatred or envy or greed or pride.

SSS 12.40: Brindavan, Summer Camp, 1974

Everything is based on love and love alone. The human being is born in love, is sustained in love and ultimately merges in love. Love is the basis of human life. But you are forgetting such true love and are getting carried away by the worldly and physical love, which is not love in the true sense.

SSS 33.19: November 20, 2000

In this world, no other virtue is greater than love. Love is Truth. Love is Righteousness. And love is wealth. This world originated from love, is sustained by love and ultimately merges in love. Every atom has its origin in love. There are innumerable powers such as atomic power and magnetic power in this world but the power of love surpasses them all. Life bereft of faith and love is meaningless and useless. For humans in this world, love is life and love is everything. It is from love that the five elements (*pancha bhūtas*) have emerged. It is love that shines brilliantly in every individual. But human beings, not being able to comprehend the significance of love, attribute physical relationship to it. The love of a mother toward her child is *vātsalya* (affection). The love that exists between wife and husband is *moha* (infatuation). The love that exists among

friends and relations is *anurāga* (affection). The love toward material objects is *ichhā* (desire). Love directed toward God in totality is known as *bhakti* (devotion).

SSS 32.pt2.2: July 28, 1999

Looking a little closer, we discover that life itself is love. They are not two but one. Love is the very nature of life, as burning is the nature of fire, or wetness of water, or sweetness of sugar. We tend a plant only when the leaves are green. When they become dry and the plant becomes a lifeless stick, we stop loving it. Love lasts as long as life exists. The mother is loved as long as there is life in her. When life departs, we bury her without the least compunction. Love is bound with life. In fact, love is life. The person with no love to share is as bad as dead. This is the reason why love expands in an ever-widening circle.

SSS 15.37: December 25, 1981

Love is not something which enters your lives midway. It is the *Atmic* Principle which is always with you at all times. You should not allow this love to change from moment to moment. You must transmute all your thoughts into expressions of love. To regard whatever actions you perform as an offering to God is the best form of *sādhanā* (spiritual discipline). Whatever good deeds or spiritual acts you may perform, if they are not suffused with love they are worthless.

SSS 25.21: May 30, 1992

Love exists for love and nothing else. It is spontaneous and imparts delight. Everything is permeated by love. Love sees with the heart and not the eyes. It listens not through the ears but by the tranquillity of the heart. It speaks not with the tongue but out of compassion. Compassion, kindness and love are separate words that mean the same thing. Love has many synonyms. Love can emanate only from the heart and not any other source. Love is immortal, nectarine, blissful and infinite. A heart filled with love is boundless. Just as rivers with different names and forms merge in the ocean and become one with it, love in many

forms enters the ocean of the heart and gets identified with it.

SSS 28.38: December 25, 1995

It is impossible to describe the Principle of Love in full. Love attracts all. Love of God has manifested in the form of Nature. Therefore, Nature attracts all. *Karshati iti Krishna* (The one who attracts is Krishna). God attracts everyone and confers bliss on all. He is the embodiment of sweetness. People prepare various types of sweets but sugar is the same in all. Similarly, Divinity is the same in all names and forms we see in this world. God cannot be limited to any particular form. Consider all forms as His. You may go anywhere, worship any form. All forms are divine. When you develop such love for and faith in God, you can see Him everywhere and experience His love. It is not possible to experience Divinity without developing love.

SSS 37.9: April 15, 2004

The entire Nature is suffused with power of attraction. The world attracts one and all. This power of attraction originates from the changeless and eternal principle of Truth, which is the basis of creation. This is known as Transcendental Truth. It is present in *trikālas*, *trilokas* and *triguṇas* (three periods of time, three worlds and three attributes). It is only one and not two.

SSS 36.5: March 16, 2003

The human being possesses the constituents needed for generating electrical energy, radiation and telecommunication. The whole world is filled with electromagnetic energy. The world is governed by the principle of mutual attraction. Green grass attracts the cow. The child attracts the mother. The law of universal attraction is related to this magnetic power. Rama is the supreme symbol of the power of attraction. "*Ramyate iti Rama*" (The one who confers *ānanda* is Rama). This Rama is not the son of Dasharatha but the spiritual Rama who is *Atma-Rama* (Indweller in every heart). The *Atma* is the universal magnet which attracts everything.

Today if so many people from all over the world are drawn to this place, it is due to the power of attraction. When you keep a flower here, bees are attracted from afar. They are

drawn to the flower because of the sweet honey in it. Not a single bee will be attracted by a plastic flower. The sweetness that attracts people is *prema* (love). This love may be manifested in many forms—maternal love, filial love, fraternal affection, marital love, friendly love and so on. Divine Love is the basis of all these forms of attraction. It is a powerful magnet. It is present everywhere including in every human being.

SSS 30.18: July 20, 1997

Live in love. Love is life. Without loving or being loved, no being can exist on the earth. Love sustains. Love strengthens. Love is the urge behind all adventure, all sacrifice, all success.

SSS 11.30: August 1, 1971

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Love—The Essence of Devotion

Devotion signifies love. Love for the Divine is the only true love. All other expressions of love are merely attachments of one sort or another. *Love is God. Live in love. Start the day with love. Fill the day with love. End the day with love. That is the way to God.* This love should be considered divine by people of every faith. Manifest your love regardless of how others behave. Cultivate this love.

SSS 28.34: November 21, 1995

The essence of *bhakti* (devotion) is love and not formal exercises in *japa* (recitation) or worship of various kinds. Worship should be offered to the Divine who resides in all beings. Love is God. Live in love. Love is the means of realising the bliss of the Self, which is centred in ourselves. It need not be sought elsewhere. It can be found within oneself when all thoughts are controlled and the mind is turned inwards. Dedicate all actions to the Lord. This is the highest knowledge. It is the *summum bonum* of existence. Love should become a way of life. That alone is true devotion.

SSS 19.22: October 8, 1986

There are nine types of devotion: *shravaṇam* (listening to the glory), *kīrtanam* (devotional singing), *vishnusmaraṇam* (contemplating), *pādasevanam* (worshipping the Lord's feet), *vandanam* (adoring), *archanam* (worshipping), *dāsyam* (being a servant), *sneham* (cultivating friendship) and *ātmanivedanam* (surrendering).

In whichever way you offer worship, God responds in the same way.

SSS 27.1: January 1, 1994

The *Purāṇas* (scriptures) have described the lives of the great exemplars of nine forms of *bhakti* (devotion). They are Parikshit for *shravaṇam* (listening to the glory), Narada for *kīrtanam* (devotional singing), Prahlada for *vishnusmaraṇam* (contemplating), Prithu for *archanam* (worshipping), Akrura for *vandanam* (adoring), Hanuman for *sevā* (service), Arjuna for *sākhyam* (friendship), Lakshmi for *Pādasevanam* (worshipping the Lord's feet) and Bali for *ātmanivedanam* (self-surrender).

SSS 22.1: January 14, 1989

What is devotion? It is not merely offering several types of worship or going on pilgrimage. Unalloyed and true love for love's sake alone constitutes devotion. True devotion is the love flowing from a pure heart unpolluted by selfish motives. Love is the intimate bond of relationship between the devotee and the Lord. There are nine types of devotion. But they are not equal to *prema* (pure love).

SSS 28.11: May 6, 1995

The inner current of all the nine types of devotion is *prema*—love for God.

SSS 30.17: July 19, 1997

The *Purāṇas* (scriptures) consider *moksha* (liberation) as mergence in the Divine. But the bliss that is experienced by constant contemplation of the Divine through devotion cannot be got even by merging in the Divine. *Vedānta* has proclaimed that the love of God is *moksha*. The heart of the devotee filled with love of God is tender and sweet. Sometime or other everyone is bound to make his or her heart such a shrine of love for the Lord. With the Lord enshrined in the devotee, the devotee renounces the desire for liberation. Devotion itself will make him or her one with the Lord. When a drop of water falls into the ocean it achieves immortality and infinitude. If you hold a drop of water in your palm, it evaporates in a few moments. But when you join it with the ocean, it becomes boundless and one with the vast ocean.

Only through love can union with the Universal be realised. To a devotee who has achieved such a union with the Eternal, everything appears as divine. The *gopikas* of Brindavan were such devotees. They experienced divine bliss through their intense devotion. Like a fish that cannot live out of water the devotee, who is immersed in the nectarine ocean of Divine Love, cannot exist for a moment without the love of God. That devotee cannot relish any other thing. Every part of his or her body is so much filled with the love of God that each organ finds expression in proclaiming the glory of God or rendering service to God. This was the kind of devotion the *gopikas* had for Krishna. It was something beyond the intellect and the power of reason. Krishna explained to Uddhava the true nature of the *gopis' bhakti* (devotion). Because such *bhakti* is incapable of intellectual analysis, it is dismissed as blind faith. Intellectual enquiry cannot explore what is subtle and can be known only through experience.

SSS 19.1: January 19, 1986

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Love—The Pathway to God

The path to God lies through love. With love you can go anywhere.

SSS 31.27: August 25, 1998

Truly speaking, you are the very embodiments of love. Let the stream of love flow from one heart to another. Consider love as your life. This is your foremost duty. You may search anywhere in the world. You cannot find anything greater than love. Here is an example. So many of you have gathered here today. What is the reason? It is Swami's love that has attracted all of you. Love is the divine magnetic power present in the human being. In all the sacred epics like the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavata*, you find love as the undercurrent. Once you cultivate love, you do not need to acquire any other property. You can attain God only through love. He cannot be attained by any other means. Love is the magnetic power that can transform even your bitter enemy into a dearest friend.

SSS 36.15: October 17, 2003

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All Love Is One

Love, lover and the loved, all three are one and the same. Without love, there can be no lover. Even if there are both love and the lover, without the loved, love has no function. In all three, love is the chief ingredient. That which is saturated chiefly and uniformly in everything, that is *Paramatma* (Supreme Self). So there is no difference among these three. In all three, *Prema* (Love) is discernible as the *sarvāntaryāmi* (residing in all hearts). Therefore, can it not be realised that everything is *Paramatma Swarūpa* (embodiment of the Supreme Self)? Certainly, it can be realised without fail. Everything is suffused with *Prema*. So we can unhesitatingly declare the *Paramatma* (Supreme Self) is *Premaswarūpa* (Embodiment of Love).

PV 37

For those immersed in love, everything appears vibrant with life. The power of love is boundless. The love impulse is manifested in different persons in different ways. Supreme devotees like the *gopikas* considered Sri Krishna as the very breath of their life and worshipped Him. “You are everything for us”, they declared. On the other hand, Yasoda’s love for Krishna was that of the mother towards her child. After Krishna’s departure, she waited for two days for news from Mathura. Note the difference between the devotional love of the *gopikas* and the maternal love of Yasoda. Yasoda looked upon Krishna as an ordinary child, the darling of her heart, who was innocent of the ways of the world. She was in anguish with the thought, “I cannot imagine what tortures the inhuman demons in Mathura have inflicted on Balarama and Krishna in the streets of Mathura. Oh Krishna! I cannot wait any longer for your return”. There is a great difference between the love of devotees and the love of a mother. The intensity of the mother’s feeling arises from the sense of maternal attachment. The devotees’ feelings are different. The *gopikas*’ lament was, “Oh Krishna! Why don’t you show your beautiful face and let us listen to the divine music of your flute?” The love of Radha, who was totally absorbed in the love of Krishna, was different. “Oh Krishna! Wherever you may be and whatever the form you

may assume, bless me so that I may be one with You in that form”. Radha yearned for this kind of union. But the Love Principle in all these cases was one and the same. Love may be called by different names, but its expression is the same.

SSS 24.23: September 2, 1991

Love is one but is expressed in many ways. Experiences are varied but the goal is one. To carry on this life in this phenomenal world, love has assumed these manifold forms. The forms of love keep changing according to one’s relationships. But pure love is unchanging. Such pure love is limited today by the human being’s self-interest.

SSS 25.21: May 30, 1992

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Worldly Love

Love can conquer anything. Selfless, pure, unalloyed love leads the human being to God. Selfish and constricted love binds one to the world. Unable to comprehend the pure and sacred love, human beings today are prey to endless worries because of attachment to worldly objects. The man’s primary duty is to understand the truth about the Love Principle. Once a person understands the nature of love, he or she will not go astray. The various contexts in which the word love is used today have no relation to the true meaning of love. The affection, between a mother and child or between a husband and wife is incidental to a certain temporary relationship and is not real love at all. True love has neither a beginning nor an end. It exists in all the three categories of time—past, present and future. That alone is true love which can fill the human being with enduring bliss.

SSS 28.38: December 25, 1995

At the human level, love assumes many forms. The word love is used in common parlance in the context of the relations between mother and child, husband and wife, master and servant, the preceptor and the pupil. But this is not true love. It cannot be termed *prema* (love). It is only *anurāga* (affection). *Prema* can be applied only to the total love towards the Divine. It is utterly selfless. It has not come from the world nor has it fallen from the sky. It is *sahaja swarūpaṁ*, (the es-

sence of one's nature that expresses itself spontaneously without external promptings).

SSS 25.21: May 30, 1992

Prema (love) and *anurāga* (affection) are one and the same. But affection, when it is directed towards worldly objects, gets tainted. Because of this pollution, joy and sorrow ensue. The human being becomes a prey to desires and disappointments. However when love is directed towards God, it becomes pure, selfless, enduring and divine.

SSS 23.35: November 24, 1990

There cannot be life without love. A small example to illustrate the point. A mother had a son. He was twenty years old. After sometime the son died. Then the mother was wailing over the body of the son, "Oh Son! I was able to live as long as you were alive. How can I live now?" Such type of grief is the result of the attachment the mother developed towards the physical form of the son. It is not true love. What is important is love but not love for the physical form. It is only those able to love for love's sake, who can attain real love. Those who love the physical body do so as long as the body is present. Thereafter the love ebbs away. Therefore, love for love's sake. Such love is life. That life is God. That is *Atma-tatwa* (principle of *Atma*) verily. *Atma-tatwa* is the only reality.

SSS 36.18: October 28, 2003

As a person grows from childhood to adulthood, his or her 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, that person begins to feel the need for God. This perpetual alternation of attachment and separation cannot be called real love which is spiritual and enduring.

SSS 29.29: July 27, 1996

Failing to understand the true meaning of this Love Principle, the human being is undermining his or her life. Everyone should realise that love is present equally in all beings. But this love assumes many different forms when it is exhibited in different relationships in worldly life. The love between husband and wife is termed *moha* (infatuation). The love between a mother

and child is called *vātsalya* (maternal love). The love between kith and kin is called *anurāga* (affection). The love towards God is termed *bhakti* (devotion).

SSS 25.21: May 30, 1992

Each member of all living species has many-sided love towards offspring, parents and comforts; and guards its food and drink, its joys and plays. Each of these types of love or attachment has a distinct name suited to the objects on which it is fixed. It is called affection when directed towards offspring. It is named infatuation when it is directed towards persons who are less fortunate, comradeship when flowing towards equals, attachment when extended to goods or places. It becomes fascination in some cases, friendship in others. When it is directed towards elders and teachers and parents, it becomes reverence and humility. But *bhakti* (devotion) is a word that is used only with reference to love as directed to the Lord. When this love is broken up into many streams flowing in many directions and towards many points, it causes only grief, for it gets fixed on mortal things of the moment. Instead, allow the love to flow single-pointedly to the ocean of the Lord's grace. This is the *sādhana* (spiritual exercise) called *bhakti* (devotion). Why waste life in the salty marsh of *samsāra* (worldly life)? Strive rather to reach the vast ocean of grace. There you realise your Self. You attain *Sat-Chit-Ānandaṁ* (Being-Awareness-Bliss). How holy is that consummation, how filled with bliss.

GV 21

A life without love is meaningless. The more you love, the more it grows. True love should be distinguished from attachment either to persons or to things. Attachment is based on selfishness. Love is based on selflessness. Love is the fruit which is born from the flower of your good deeds. Only when we engage ourselves in selfless service can we experience the essence of this pure love.

SSS 18.28: December 11, 1985

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Divine Love

Everything in the world is governed by the bounds set for it. However, love has no limits. “*Anirvachaniyaṃ prema*” (Love is beyond the power of words), declares the sage Narada. The flow of love is the life-giving water for everyone. How is this love to be secured by one? Not by *japa* (recitation) or meditation or by studying the scriptures. God does not dwell in the *Vedas* or the *Purānas* (scriptures). 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.

SSS 29.52: November 23, 1996

What we generally call happiness relates to the bodily comforts and is transient. Such transient pleasure which relates only to the body comes to us in a few moments but immediately afterwards it plunges us into a deep sorrow since it is only momentary. But the kind of bliss that one gets through the *Atma* is permanent, pure and selfless. This is the reason why *Brahma Vidyā* (spiritual studies) has been preaching to us that *prema* (love) has to be cultivated for the sake of *prema* only. You should not show *prema* for the sake of obtaining material benefits. If *prema* is shown for the sake of obtaining some material benefit, then it will last for a very short time and will wear out quickly. No material object is permanent and therefore *prema* shown for acquiring such objects is also not permanent. *Atma* symbolises truth and hence is permanent. Therefore, *prema*, which is attached to *Atma* will also be true and permanent. This kind of *prema* and truth are present in every *jīva* (individual self). If we develop *prema* and truth for their own sake, then the *prema* and truth which each one develops and the *prema* and truth present in everyone will all join together and will become *Prema* and Truth in infinity. That is why it has been said in the *Upānishads*, “*Satyasya satyam*” or the Truth of truths.

SS 1974.pt1.13

Fill your hearts with love. Love based on self-interest cannot be called Divine Love. That love alone is sacred which is based on complete obliviousness to one’s self and is solely concerned

with the yearning for God. In days of yore, the sages lived in the forests amidst wild animals and performed penance. How were they able to live in peace amongst these animals? Because the sages were filled with Divine Love, they could extend that love to the wild beasts also and transform them into creatures of love. The sages had no lethal weapons with them. They used only the weapon of love, which could transform even the nature of the wild animals.

SSS 24.25: October 18, 1991

The hallmark of love is *tyāga* (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, the human being 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 the human being from animality to Divinity. It transforms gradually all forms of worldly love to Divine Love. To experience this Divine Love, people 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.

SSS 29.22: June 20, 1996

Love of the Divine is of four kinds. One is *swārtha-prema*. The second is *samanjasa-prema*. The third is *parārtha-prema*. And the fourth is *yathārtha-prema*.

Swartha-prema (love based on self-interest) 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 *parārtha-prema*. It is like sunlight. 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 sometimes but it will appear again.

The fourth one is *yathārtha-prema* or *Atma-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 or she achieves the peace that passes understanding.

SSS 29.29: July 27, 1996

Love is a small word but it is pregnant with profound meaning. But people use it in the worldly sense: "I love you. I love you..." You should be prepared to sacrifice for others all that is dear to you. That is true love. Love is God. Live in love. Only then will you be able to understand the true nature of love. Do not misinterpret love in the worldly sense. Do not equate love to physical relationship. You should be prepared to give up your love for love. But today nobody is prepared to sacrifice their life for love. People are ready to take others' lives to meet their selfish ends. You might have acquired high educational qualifications. But all these will prove futile if you do not earn Divine Love. Only God's love is true and eternal. Worldly love is transient. It attracts you for a moment like a twinkling star. Acquire Divine Love which is the fundamental principle of your life. Be prepared to offer your life for the sake of Divine Love.

SSS 36.19: November 22, 2003

Love cannot bear separation from the beloved. Today is the day when we celebrate the advent in human form of the Lord who came down to the earth from Gokula to instil love in human beings. The nature of Divine Love can be understood only when the Divine in human form teaches as a human being to human beings the nature of this love.

SSS 24.23: September 2, 1991

Here is this body. [Swami points to His body.] It is made up of the five elements. There is another body. [Swami points to a person nearby.] That

too is made up of the same five elements. Therefore, both are one. Where is the scope for difference? Your mother, father, friend—every one of them is made up of the same five elements. Thus, even from the purely material point of view there is only one, reflecting the philosophy of *adwaitam* or non-dualism. In the entire universe, there are only the five elements; there is no such sixth element. No matter where you search, you cannot find a new element; everywhere, it is only these five. Yet, within a human being, there is a separate and distinct element. It is not gross but subtle. And that is Supreme Love. This Supreme Love may be regarded as the sixth element; it reflects the Indweller and the Divine Principle. The *vedic* aphorism "*Tat twam asi*" meaning "That thou art", reflects this Divine Principle. You must aspire for this sense of unity between yourself and God.

SS 2000.9

Love is your life. Love is your goal. The *Bhagavad-Gita* also lays great emphasis on the Principle of Love. You should fill your life with love. You have immense love for Me. It cannot be described in words. Love others as you love Swami. Give Me your love. Take My love in turn. There is no trace of body attachment in Me. Doctors said they would perform hip surgery on Me. I told, "You can do whatever you want. I am not the body. This body is yours". Your love becomes worldly in nature when you have body consciousness. You should develop such love which transcends body consciousness. Only then can you understand the eternal truth. When you truly experience Divine Love, you will not lead a worldly life. You will make your love flow incessantly towards God.

SSS 36.19: November 22, 2003

You should get rid of weakness by concentrating on Divine Love, as divine grace confers the greatest strength. All other things may come and go but divine grace is ever flowing. Whatever you may or may not be able to do, develop Divine Love. God is the director and all humans are mere actors. Be good performers in God's play. In the midst of the world replete with fear, distrust and mutual recrimination, you have to prove yourself to be the messengers of the Divine and embodiments of love, peace and truth. Declare your real-

ity as divine to the world at large and make them realise the Divinity in everyone.

SSS 30.15: July 17, 1997

Love is God. Love has no form. Cultivate such Divine Love. God exists. There can be no doubt about it. If God does not exist, there is no scope for Nature to exist. From an experience of *prakruti* (Nature) emerges apprehension of *Paramatma* (Supreme Self). From *Paramatma*, the realisation of *Parā-tatwa* (Supreme Reality) springs. That *Parā-tatwa* is *Atma-tatwa* (Self). Therefore, always love that *Parā-tatwa*. Do not confine your love to the particular, which is always susceptible to change. When students are able to understand the nature of this Divine Love, there can be no scope for disappointment. They are always engrossed in appointment and disappointment. Love has only a name, but no form. You can direct that love towards any form.

SSS 36.18: October 28, 2003

The Principle of Love cannot be described in words. All descriptions will only reflect a part of the whole Truth. So instead of trying to describe it, make efforts to become deserving of God's love. Love is the form of God. He may bestow His love on you in any form. Love is your ultimate goal. Only love can sanctify your life. Hence, develop love more and more. Love alone will protect you. Love for the physical body is attachment. A child becomes a youth and a youth becomes old and, accordingly, the physical body undergoes change and gradually loses its beauty and charm with the passage of time. But Love remains constant at all times. The term *prema* (love) is not just a word. It has a form. There is not a place where love does not exist. Love is all-pervasive. It encompasses *anḍa*, *pinḍa* and *Brahmāṇḍa* (entire cosmos). Love is the basis of all our activities such as eating, talking and walking. In fact, love sustains our life. People tend to forget such a sacred Principle of Love even after knowing its significance. How foolish they are. One should experience love, enjoy it and share it with others.

SSS 37.9: April 15, 2004

About Divine Love the *shruti* (*Veda*) 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 *Vedas* glorified Divine Love. Even Narada, the author of the *Bhakti Sūtras* (Aphorisms on Devotion), 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* (love) to a priceless gem. Likewise Tulasidas also referred to Rama's name as a precious gem. Where is this love to be found? It can be got only from Bhagawan 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.

SSS 29.29: July 27, 1996

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Love Is God

Love is the form of the Supreme Lord. It is to preach the doctrine of love that the Krishna Avatar and other divine incarnations made their advent on earth. According to the place, time and circumstances prevailing then, different names were given to the Lord. These differences are like the different figures made from sugar to appeal to the different preferences of children. These figures may be those of a peacock, or a dog, or a fox and so on. But what is common to all of them is sugar.

SSS 24.23: September 2, 1991

All the worldly relationships are temporary like passing clouds. They are subject to change with the passage of time, but the Reality is absolutely changeless. That is the Principle of Love. Worldly love may turn into hatred with the change of time. What is liked today may not be liked tomorrow. But love has no likes and dislikes. God is no different from love. You may adore Him as Jesus, Zoroaster, Allah, Rama, Krishna, Buddha or Guru Nanak. You may call Him by any name. All these are *pettina perulu* (names given by somebody). Love alone is *puttina peru* (natural name). The names given are bound to change, but love is changeless. You should aspire for that love. That is true *bhakti* (devotion). *Bhakti* confers on you

yukti (discrimination), *virakti* (detachment) and *mukti* (liberation).

SSS 33.10: July 16, 2000

You must realise that there is nothing more divine than Love. Love is God. Live in love. This is your duty. Fill your hearts with love. You will then be free from all afflictions. You must feel that you are suffering because of love. But that suffering is due to constricted love. When your love is all-embracing there will be no room for suffering.

SSS 30.33: December 25, 1997

Never forget God. God alone is everlasting. That is the only truth. Your parents will pass away sometime or other but God will remain forever. God is eternal. Always adore God. In addition, love your parents and all others. Your love for God should be steady and unwavering. That love is God. It is the very form of Ganapati. That love is present in all beings.

SSS 31.27: August 25, 1998

The *Atma* has no legs but moves faster than anything else. It has no hands but can grasp anything. It has no eyes, but there is nothing in the universe it cannot see. To experience this *Atma*, the only means is the way of love. When you are filled with love, the Lord is easily attained. Love is God. Live in love.

SSS 25.10: April 4, 1992

Love alone can reveal the Divinity latent in all. Love is God. Live in love. *Love lives by giving and forgiving; Self lives by getting and forgetting. Love is selflessness; Selfishness is lovelessness.* Do not waste your life pursuing the narrow interests

of the self. Love! Love! Become what you truly are the embodiments of love.

SSS 14.45 December 25, 1979

God has four qualities and it is only when you cultivate them that you can understand Him. They are Divine Love (*prema*), beauty (*soundarya*), sweetness (*mādhurya*) and splendour (*shobhā*). The development of *prema* is enough to add unto you the other three. When you are so full of love for the Divine in all creation, that stage is beauty. When you are immersed in the sea of Universal Love you reach the acme of sweetness. When your mind loses its identity and merges in the Universal Mind, then there is splendour indescribable.

SSS 6.42: November 23, 1966

I always teach you love, love and love alone. You may try to describe love in various ways. It is impossible to do so. Love has only one form, namely the form of attraction. Love confers bliss and grace. *Love is God; live in love.* Worldly love is but artificial. The human being, out of ignorance, thinks that there is happiness in it. All that human love is negative. He or she should direct love towards the positive principle. It never changes.

SSS 37.9: April 15, 2004

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. Swami's love alone attracted them all like a magnet.

SSS 29.52: November 23, 1996

Study Questions: What Is Love?

Group Study Questions

1. How is love related to creation, nature and the human being?
2. What are the differences among the following: attachment, selfless love and Supreme Love?
3. Describe the role of sacrifice in love.

Personal Introspection Question

Think of the significant relationships in your own life. Which ones are attachment and which are selfless love? Please describe. Have you ever encountered an example of Supreme Love? Please describe how you recognised that experience.

CHAPTER 2

How to Love

Introduction

We must strive to love more and more people and see God in them. Swami says expansion is His love and that this is the highest spiritual practice. Sacrifice, compassion, forgiveness, forbearance and control of desires are the main qualities of love. We should practise selfless love by integrating these qualities into our life.

Anything can be achieved through purity, perseverance and patience. Swami reminds us that our love must be steadfast and unwavering. “One path, one goal” must be the attitude to earn God’s love. Divine grace will transform our hearts into the source of an uninterrupted stream of love towards all.

Key concepts covered in this chapter include:

- Love all; Serve all
- Love God in all
- Develop forbearance and forgiveness
- Exercise ceiling on desires
- Cultivate steadfast devotion
- Purify mind and heart
- Love with intensity
- Always direct your love towards God
- Love without expectation of rewards

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Love All; Serve All

*There is only one caste, the caste of humanity. There is only one religion, the religion of love. There is only one language, the language of the heart. If these basic ideals are followed, there will be no room for petty differences and mutual re-
crimination.*

SSS 19.2: January 20, 1986

Today the human being has three kinds of faith. One of them is the lowest kind, and the second is of a middle kind, while the third is of the highest kind. If our *prema* (love), our belief and our affection are confined to our nearest kith and kin, that will be called the lowest kind of *prema*. On the other hand, if you go a little beyond the narrow region of your family and extend your faith and belief to your country and other people, then we say that it is the intermediate kind of *prema*. If you treat the entire world as one and regard all the people living in the entire world as one and extend your faith and sympathy to all of them, then it is the highest kind of *prema*. Thus, gradually we should move from the limited circle of our family to the wider circle of our country and then move on to the broadest aspect of one world. When we talk of humanity, it should not be confined to a small community or group of people. There is only one caste and that is the caste of humanity. And when we talk of humanity we must extend our *prema* to the entire caste of humanity.

SS 1976.15

Love, love, love. I love all and I ask all to love. My greatest wealth is love. People speak about My powers and My miracles, but My love is My greatest miracle. All should share in this love. Only then there will be oneness.

SSS 23.35: November 24, 1990

Acquire love through love. Only through love can unity in diversity be experienced. This kind of unity through love can be witnessed only in Prasanthi Nilayam and nowhere else. There are a myriad pairs of eyes here. There may be larger gatherings elsewhere but the eyes of the crowds there are directed in different directions. But here the eyes of everyone, young and old, men,

women and children, are all turned towards only one direction. Look at anyone's face. The eyes are turned only towards Swami. What is the reason? Only love.

SSS 23.35: November 24, 1990

Consider love as your life and truth as your breath. There is an intimate and inseparable relationship between Love and Truth. Today people use the word love without actually knowing its meaning. As the human being does not know the value and meaning of love, he or she is utilising it for trivial and mundane purposes. People are under the mistaken notion that worldly and physical attachment is love and consider such love as their life. True love will reign supreme only when people get rid of selfishness and develop a spirit of sacrifice. Love is God; God is love. But you are craving for worldly love which is bereft of life. You should aspire for Divine Love which is your very life. Today there are many who are highly educated. But what is the help they are rendering to society? Practically nothing. They are acquiring degrees for the sake of earning money. They do not serve society with the spirit of love and sacrifice. Love is the very form of *Brahman*. True spiritual discipline lies in connecting your love with Divine Love. Your life will be sanctified when you have steady and selfless love.

SSS 36.19: November 22, 2003

Love must be manifested as *sevā* (selfless service). *Sevā* must take the form of food for the hungry, solace for the forlorn, consolation for the sick and the suffering. Jesus wore Himself out in such *sevā*. The heart full of compassion is the temple of God. Jesus pleaded for compassion. Compassion was His message. He was sorely distressed at the sight of the poor. This day Jesus is worshipped but His teachings are neglected. Sai is being worshipped but His teachings are neglected. Everywhere, pomp, pageantry, hollow exhibitionism. Lectures, lectures, lectures! No activity, no love, no *sevā*. Heroes while lecturing, zeroes while putting what is said into practice. Develop compassion. Live in love. *Be good, do good and see good. This is the way to God.*

SSS 15.37: December 25, 1981

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Love God in All

You think that you love your family and friends but that cannot be called love in the true sense of the term. That is only attachment. Love towards God alone is true love. If you call yourself a devotee of Swami, act according to Swami's expectation. Do not count the number of bags of rice and the number of *saris* and *dhotis* (clothing articles for men and women) that you have given away in charity to the poor. You may submit such accounts to the income tax department, not to God. God wants quality, not quantity. He sees the feeling behind your acts of charity.

SSS 33.13: September 1, 2000

Believe that all are God through *jnāna* (knowledge). Even then, you have to love and serve with compassion. Believe that God is Master or Father and that you are His servants or children through *bhakti* (devotion). Even then, it is His command to wipe the tears, nourish the sick and help the lame to climb over the stile, through pity and sympathy. Believe, through faith in *karma*, that God has to be adored through dedication. Even then, love says the highest form of adoration is by means of *sevā* (service) done in love. Love, therefore, is the breath of the *sādhaka* (spiritual aspirant).

SSS 10.31: October 29, 1970

Love of God does not mean giving up your normal duties. In the performance of these duties, every action should be done as an offering to *Bhāgavat prītyārtham* (for the sake of pleasing God). Look upon the body as a moving temple, wherein God resides. Recognise that God is always with you and around you.

SSS 28.38: December 25, 1995

Modern students are taking to wrong path in the name of love. They do not understand what true love is. Love is the gift of God to every human being. It should be utilised for the service of society. Unity is very essential for the progress of community. A person should share his or her love with others. Only then will he or she have the right to be a part of society.

SSS 36.19: November 22, 2003

The same *Atma*, the same love and the same God is present in all beings. *Ek prabhu ke anek nām* (one God with many names). With such feelings of oneness, develop love for God. Then your heart will also be filled with love. The heart is like a tank and all the senses are like taps. When the "tank" is full of love, all that comes out of the "taps" will also be love only. Whatever you see in others is only a reflection of your inner being. First of all, understand this truth. If you see evil in others, it is actually the reflection of your own evil feelings. All are one. That is *prema* (love). That is God. That is *Atma*. That is everything.

SSS 34.10: June 1, 2001

All of you should live like brothers and sisters. All are the children of God. When you realise this truth, you will experience true love. You are born to different parents but the life principle in each of you is one and the same. Consider love as your life. Only then the education you acquire will be meaningful. If you forget love, your life becomes meaningless. Live for the sake of love. Share your love with your fellow human beings and become recipients of Divine Love. What you have to share with others is not worldly love. True love is related to the heart. People talk of Divine Love but get intoxicated by drinking the deep wine of worldly love. Love everybody without a trace of selfishness. That is Divine Love. Only when you develop such love can you attain the ultimate merger with the Divine. Pray to God for His love. Lead your lives spreading the message of love. Love is the goal of your life. Once you become the recipient of God's love, you will be loved by the whole world. Such is the power of God's love. It is totally selfless and sacred. Hence, always pray for His love.

SSS 36.19: November 22, 2003

All religions speak of Him as Love and as attainable through love. Forms of worshipping God differ, for they are shaped by time and place but love is the basic content of all the forms. The language of love is understood and spoken by all hearts. There is only one race really and that is the race of humankind. We now consider petty distinctions of nationality, race, religion and lan-

guage as vital and hold back love which must flow to everyone from the heart.

SSS 14.45: December 25, 1979

Expansion is love. Expansion is the essence of love. Love is God. Live in love. That is the *Dīpāvali* (Festival of Lights) message I give you. When a lamp is lit from another, there are two where there was but one. The first one did not stop emitting light. You can light a million lamps from one but yet the first will not suffer a jot. Love too is like this. Share it with a million. It will still be as bright as when it was alone.

SSS 10.31: October 29, 1970

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Develop Forbearance and Forgiveness

Love is selfless and self is loveless-ness. Love gives and forgives; self gets and forgets. When love underlies your activity, everything will be perfect.

SSS 13.30: February 16, 1977

In every one of your spiritual endeavours, you must make the resolution, “This I must achieve. This virtue I shall acquire”. This is the way to *prema* (love) and *kshamā* (forbearance). If you proceed in this manner with unshakeable faith and idealism then without any doubt your life will be fully redeemed. All your actions and feelings must be dripping with *kshamā*, *prema* and *dayā* (compassion). Love knows no hatred and is totally free from desires. Thus God is said to be love personified. *Kshamā* will grow if you have unshakeable faith in God. Once you have learned to be infinitely patient, love will walk in almost immediately. *Prema* combined with *kshamā* is the surest way to fulfilment. Therefore, when you worship God, make sure you repose total faith in Him. Without faith, what is the use of worship? Faith alone will take you beyond worries.

SS 2000.12

True and selfless love manifests as sacrifice. Such love knows no hatred. It envelops the entire universe and is capable of drawing near even those who are seemingly far away. Love is that transforms the human into the Divine. It can transform *pashu* (a bestial person) into *Pashupati* (Divinity). In the phenomenal world, you

come across many shades and derivatives of this primordial love. You love your father, mother, brother, sister, friends and so on. In all such cases, there is always a tinge of selfishness somewhere or the other. Divine Love, on the other hand, is totally free of even the slightest trace of selfishness. You must surrender to such love, become completely submerged by it and experience the bliss it confers. For acquiring such love, the quality of *kshamā* or forbearance is a vital necessity. Every individual must cultivate this noble quality. *Kshamā* is not achieved by reading books or learned from an instructor. Nor can it be received as a gift from someone else. This prime virtue *kshamā* can be acquired solely by self-effort, by facing squarely diverse problems, difficulties of various sorts—anxieties and suffering as well as sorrow. In the absence of *kshamā*, a person becomes susceptible to all kinds of evil tendencies. Hatred and jealousy easily take root in a person lacking this virtue.

SS 2000.12

The hearts of Indians are suffused with *kshamā* (forbearance). India encountered many setbacks and sufferings since the beginning of history. But Indians were not perturbed. They extolled:

“Forbearance is truth. Forbearance is righteousness. Forbearance is the teaching of the Vedas. Forbearance is non-violence. Forbearance is compassion. Forbearance is sacrifice. Forbearance confers happiness and heavenly bliss. In fact, it is everything in all the worlds”.

(Telugu Poem)

Forbearance is their life-breath. They inhale and exhale forbearance. Forbearance is the greatest strength of Bharat (India). This is the reason for its stability despite so many sufferings and losses. No amount of difficulties can unsettle a person of forbearance. The one who has no forbearance will face unprecedented difficulties. One who believes in forbearance remains unmoved and untouched in the face of difficulties. The Bharatiyas (Indians) are filled with such forbearance. Another form of forbearance is love. Love is also synonymous with peace. Thus, forbearance, love, peace all mean the same. *Mānava* (humankind) is referred to as love by the *Upāni-*

shads. A Bharatiya is one who possesses love as his or her nature. Indians today give up Indian culture and run after worldly, materialistic and transient things which cause misery. If you ask “What is the power of forbearance?”—it is too great to put in words. It cannot be measured by mind and speech.

SS 2002.13

In this worldly life love is manifesting in several forms such as the love between mother and son, husband and wife and between relatives. This love based on physical relationships arises out of selfish motives and self-interest. But the love of the Divine is devoid of any trace of self-interest. It is love for the sake of love alone. This is called *bhakti* (devotion). One characteristic of this love is to give and not to receive. Secondly, love knows no fear. Thirdly, it is only for love’s sake and not for selfish motive. All these three angles of love jointly connote *prapatti* (surrender). When one revels in this attitude of *prapatti*, one experiences the bliss of the Divine. For this the prime requisite is *kshamā* (forbearance). Only a person who has this attitude of *kshamā* can be considered to be endowed with sacred love. This cannot be learned from textbooks. Nor can it be acquired from preceptors, nor from anyone else. It is to be cultivated by oneself in times of difficulties, trials and tribulations that one is forced to meet. Only when we face problems and difficulties that cause grief and misery this quality of forbearance and forgiveness has the scope of taking root. When you are confronted with problems and difficulties you should not get upset and become victims of depression which is a sign of weakness. In such a situation, you should bring tolerance and an attitude of forgiveness into play and should not get agitated giving rise to anger, hatred and revengeful attitude. You are embodiments of strength and not weakness. Therefore, in times of despair, you should be filled with the feeling of forbearance and be ready to forgive and forget. This quality of *kshamā* is the greatest power for a human being. If one loses this quality, he or she becomes demonic.

SSS 27.1: January 1, 1994

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Exercise Ceiling on Desires

God is the embodiment of love and the ocean of compassion. But you are unable to receive God’s love and compassion because you have filled your mind with worldly feelings. If you want to receive something sacred, give up all that is unsacred. If the head is empty, it can be filled with anything. But if the head is already stuffed with worldly desires, how is it possible to fill it with sacred feelings? First and foremost, empty your head of all worldly feelings. Only then can it be filled with Divine Love. For this, you have to cultivate sacrifice.

SSS 34.9: May 7, 2001

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 the human being is unable to recognise such all-pervading love? It is because the human 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.

SSS 29.29: July 27, 1996

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, humans are 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 *tyāga* (sacrifice) on the highest pedestal. They adored righteousness. Today these sublime ideals are forgotten in Bharat. As a consequence, the country is racked by every kind of trouble.

SSS 29.52: November 23, 1996

Alexander ruled over a vast empire but when he died what did he carry with him? He went empty-handed. You should carry with you only pure love when you leave this world. If you earn

the wealth of pure love, you are the richest person in the world. The one who has much satisfaction is the richest person in this world and the one who has many desires is the poorest person in this world. Today people are filled with desires from top to toe. As long as you have desires, you will never be happy and peaceful.

SSS 34.10: June 1, 2001

Cultivate Steadfast Devotion

Where love prevails, there will be no room for hatred or envy. Love has nothing to do with evil thoughts and actions. Love should be steadfast and unwavering. If one goes on hopping from one Swami to another, from one form of worship to another, he or she 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 *Bhagavad-Gita* declaration: “A fragment of Mine is present in everyone in the cosmos”.

SSS 29.52: November 23, 1996

Everyone must strive to fill the heart with true devotion. Constant contemplation on the form of the Lord and frequent repetition of the Lord’s name are the means by which the heart is filled with the love of God.

SSS 19.1: January 19, 1986

God is the entity closest to the human being, dearest to the human being. Your mother and father might be a little afar but God is right with you, in you. Even if you do not love Him, He will not depart from you or move afar. “*Anorañiyān*” (smaller than the atom) say the *Vedas*. He becomes “*Mahato mahiyān*”, expanding beyond the cosmos and filling all with grace. In every cell He will be in you. You can earn this awareness through intense love.

SSS 15.37: December 25, 1981

Purify Mind and Heart

All your actions must be aimed at purifying your minds and hearts to experience the Divine. When the heart is pure, the light of wisdom shines. The illumined heart becomes the receptacle of pure love. Love is everything. A person without love is a living corpse. Love is not the relationship between human and human or between the human and other objects. It is inherent in every being. “*Mama Atma sarva bhūtātmā*” (I am the Spirit immanent in all beings). The divine *Atma* is present in all beings. The *Atma* has no form. It is experienced as love. If there is no love, there is no *Atma*. Hence, love is our life-breath. Love is our soul. Love is our everything. It should be unchanging. Young people should cultivate unwavering love and a steady vision.

SSS 18.10: May 6, 1985

Failing to understand pure love, the human being is leading a miserable existence. A person who is neck-deep in water would still be able to speak. But the person who is wholly submerged cannot speak. Likewise a person immersed in pure love cannot find words for the experience. It is those who are above the surface that attempt to describe it. How, then, is this Divinity to be described? There is a basic means for this. Some persons have a direct vision of the Divine. Some others in spite of all their *sāadhanā* (spiritual discipline) are not able to get such an experience. What is the reason? There are different kinds of *japamālā* (rosaries). One is a *rudrāksha japamālā*. Another is a string of lotus seeds. There are coral *japamālās*. No one can see the string which runs through all the different beads. Only in a rosary made of transparent *sphatika* (crystal) beads can the thread be seen. In the same way, in the hearts of all the persons *Brahmasūtra* (the subtle thread of Divinity) is present. But only in a heart filled with pure love can Divinity be perceived.

SSS 23.35: November 24, 1990

Nectar is described by the scriptures as extremely sweet. But nectar nowhere approaches the sweetness of love. As against love, nectar appears insipid. The uniqueness of such love is beyond the comprehension of ordinary people.

Such love arises only when you churn the ocean of bliss. Hence, all our actions should be based on love. But in this mundane world, love assumes external forms. When pure gold is given to the goldsmith for making a jewel, he or she mixes copper and other metals with it and thereby its value is reduced. Likewise, because pure love is mixed with worldly attachments, it gets tainted. But when such tainted love is directed towards *sevā* (selfless service) it gets purified.

SSS 23.35: November 24, 1990

You are not aware of your true nature. When you have faith in yourself, you will have faith in God. Realise that there is nothing beyond the power of God. Love God with that supreme faith. Then you will be drawn towards God. It needs purity. A magnet cannot attract a piece of iron covered with rust. Similarly God will not draw to Himself an impure person. Hence, change your feelings and thoughts and develop the conviction that God is everything. God will not give you up when you have this conviction.

SSS 28.4: February 27, 1995

Where there is love, there is no room for hatred. Do not be envious of anyone. When this evil quality appears, love takes to flight. A pure heart is the abode of love. Where there is purity, there is unity. Unity leads to Divinity. Today purity is absent. How then do you realise Divinity? You must offer everything to God without desire.

SSS 30.33: December 25, 1997

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Love with Intensity

Constantly remember the truth that love is God. Live in love. If you can cultivate such positive and noble thoughts, everything will turn out to be good for you. There are several people here who are deluded by ephemeral things. No doubt, you are pure at heart. You have only pure thoughts. But certain amount of pollution sets in now and then. You must ensure that it does not happen. That is *sādhanā* (spiritual discipline) for you. What is *sādhanā*? Is it sitting in meditation and doing *japa* (recitation)? No. This is not *sādhanā*. What do you think is the meaning of meditation? You think it is sitting in a lonely place and con-

templating on the Lord's name. Not at all. Contemplate upon the pure thoughts in your mind. Contemplate on the truth in you. If you really wish to know the secret of *sādhanā*, it can be explained through very simple methods.

For example, make your mind steady and sit still for as short a period as eleven seconds. You can attain realisation even in such a short period. Realisation cannot be achieved by becoming restless like a clock. Just eleven seconds of stillness of mind would be enough. But you don't do even that. You can achieve a lot during this period. Hence, do not trouble yourself unnecessarily. You are, at present, putting your body to a lot of trouble. You are wasting a lot of money too. Time waste is life waste. Money waste is an evil. Hence, do not waste money and time. Time is God and God is time. Hence, whenever you find time, think of Swami. I will certainly appear before you. Not only that, I will even talk to you. I am receiving several letters saying that Swami has appeared before them and talked to them. You can also do such *sādhanā*. Develop such unflinching faith in Swami. You will surely succeed in your *sādhanā*.

Several people have come here as devotees. They have, no doubt, deep devotion towards Swami. But what is devotion? What is the hallmark of a devotee? This has to be analysed first. First and foremost, you have to develop faith. Where there is faith, there is love. Where there is love, there is truth. Where there is truth, there God is. You need not have to make any special efforts to know truth. In fact, eleven seconds are enough to realise truth. You just contemplate in your mind for a period of eleven seconds on truth and you will be able to have God's *darshan*. Devotion is not merely performing certain forms of worship or undertaking religious vows or doing *japa* (recitation). Real devotion presupposes unshakeable love towards God, devoid of delusion. You have to cultivate such steadfast love towards God. Then you will certainly attain Divinity.

SSS 40.13: July 28, 2007

When dirty water gets mixed with milk, the milk has to be boiled to make it pure. Likewise man has to undertake various types of *sādhanā* (spiritual discipline) to purge his heart of impurities. Exercises such as meditation, *yajna* (ritual)

or *tapas* (penance) can only provide mental satisfaction. It is only when the heart is melted in the heat of Divine Love that one can succeed in getting rid of bad qualities and make the heart shine in its pristine effulgence. Just as the sun's rays can bum a heap of cotton if the rays are concentrated by passing through a lens, the rays of the intellect will destroy one's bad qualities only when they are passed through the lens of Divine Love.

SSS25.36: October 24, 1992

I shall leave one message for you to ruminate upon—that is the message of love. *Love is God. God is love. Where there is love, there God is certainly evident. Love more and more people. Love them more and more intensely. Transform the love into service. Transform the service into worship. That is the highest spiritual practice.* There is no living being without the spark of love. Even a mad person loves something or somebody intensely. But, you must recognise this love as but a reflection of the *Premaswarūpa* (Embodiment of Love) that is your reality, 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 taint of self from it. Do not seek anything in return for it from those to whom you extend it. In your daily affairs, do not create factions or revel in hatred. See the good in others and the faults in yourselves. Revere others as having God installed in them. Revere yourself also as the seat of God. Make your heart pure so He can reside therein.

SSS 5.17: March 26, 1965

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Always Direct Your Love towards God

Prema (love) should be like a mariner's compass. Wherever the compass may be placed, the needle will point only to the north. Likewise, the human being's love, in all circumstances, should be directed towards God. That alone is true love. It should be unaffected by pleasure or pain. It makes no difference between "mine" and "thine". Love has to be acquired only through love and not by any other means whatsoever. No one can describe the nature of Divine Love. It is beyond the

reach of poets. The one who is immersed in the waters of Divine Love will be unable to speak to anyone. When a person is only up to neck-deep in the water he or she may be able to say a few words.

SSS 28.1: January 14, 1995

Prema (love) transcends the three *guṇas*—*satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* (qualities of purity, passion and sloth). It is boundless. It flows continually like an eternal light. The sages called it *Atma*. This divine flame of love shines in every heart. *Atma* and *hridaya* (heart) are synonymous with Divinity. For this love, there is no distinction of "mine" and "thine". It is totally free from self-interest. Love is like the mariner's compass, which always points to the north. At any time, any place or in any circumstance love points only towards God. Hence, everyone should try to understand how the Love Principle works. Love can be compared only with love.

SSS 23.35: November 24, 1990

There are two forms of love. One binds you to God. The other binds you to the world. The mind is responsible for either of these states. It is like a lock. If you turn the key to the right, the lock opens. If you turn the key to the left, it gets locked. The heart is the key to the lock of the mind. If you turn the key towards the world, you have attachment (bondage). You must see that desire and hatred do not get lodged in the mind. Bear no ill-will towards anyone. Avoid the company of those who are evil-minded. By cultivating the company of the good, you can raise yourself because your bad qualities get diluted by association with the good, like sewage water when it enters the sea.

SSS 18.30: December 25, 1985

Anurāga (affection) and *prema* (love) are mutually dependent and inseparable. When the mind is turned towards things of the world, it is called *anurāga* and if it is turned towards God it is called *prema*. Love is the fruit of love. Love is comparable only with love. Love can offer only love itself. Love cannot be described by poetry. It cannot be proved by the mind or the spoken word. Hence, the *Vedas* declared that it transcends the mind and speech. Love is priceless and indescribably precious. Its sweetness is unexcelled. The

scriptures have described *amritaṃ* (nectar) as indescribably sweet. But love is far sweeter than nectar.

SSS 24.23: September 2, 1991

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Love without Expectation of Reward

What is true *prema* (love)? Pure, unselfish love towards all living beings considered as embodiments of the Divine, with no expectation of reward, is true love. “*Adweshtā sarvabhūtānām maitraḥ karuṇaivacha*” (“free from dislike, friendly and compassionate towards all beings”) with this attitude, when one regards Divinity as present in all beings, only then he or she can have true love. Whatever be the vicissitudes one may face, whatever be the personal sorrows and privations one may undergo, true love will remain unaffected. Today, when any difficulty arises or when some trouble crops up, love turns into hatred. True love is the sweet fruit that grows out of the fragrant flower of good deeds. Love rules without recourse to the sword. It binds without laws. Only one who has such true love can be described as human. The person without such love is human only in form. Like the lotus which blooms when the sun rises, the heart of a human blossoms when love enters it. Like the glow of the flame in a fire, like the rays of the sun, like waves in the ocean, Divine Love is the basic quality of a true human being. It is only when one is filled with pure, unselfish love that he or she can be called a human being.

SSS 18.10: May 6, 1985

There is nothing more precious in this world than Divine Love. God is beyond all attributes. Hence His love also is beyond attributes—*guṇātīta*. But human love, because it is governed by *guṇas* (attributes or qualities), results in attachment and aversion. Love should not be based on expectations of a reward or return. Love based on such expectations makes it a business deal. Love is not an article of commerce. It is not like a loan and getting it back. It is a spontaneous offering. Pure love of this kind can emanate only from a pure heart.

SSS 28.1: January 14, 1995

Many modern devotees pray, “O God, if you fulfil my desires, I will offer you ten coconuts”. They offer their filthy hair and pray for mighty favours. Can this be called devotion? No, not at all. A true devotee is one who only gives and does not expect anything in return. Surrender is the true sign of devotion.

SSS 33.10: July 16, 2000

Love is no merchandise. Do not bargain about its cost. Let it flow clear from the heart as a stream of truth, a river of wisdom. Let it not emanate from the head or from the tongue. Let it emerge full and free from the heart. This is the highest duty, the noblest godliness.

SSS 9.16: July 29, 1969

Worship of God must be totally free from any demands, especially the fulfilment of worldly desires and the expectation of worldly rewards. However, people always worship God with a lot of self-interest. This is not true devotion. What you must offer to God is pure and selfless love. It is such love alone that would secure liberation. Indeed, such love itself is liberation because it frees you from worldly desires. As Swami often says, *moksha* is *moha-kshaya*. Liberation from attachments and desires is true liberation.

SS 2000.8

When you come to Me weighted with wants, prayers for boons and materialistic wishes, you stand the risk of losing faith and losing your moorings, for that faith is frail. Develop the love that asks for no return. Build faith on that basis. Thereby, you can rescue yourselves from the duality of exaltation and despair. The path of love knows no ups and downs. It is smooth and level, straight and safe. It leads you to the throne of the King of Kings installed in your heart. Nothing can delay your journey or devise obstacles to stop you.

SSS 11.29: July 23, 1971

Study Questions: How to Love

Group Study Questions

1. How do forgiveness and forbearance help us to love God?
2. Why are one-pointedness and intensity needed to love God?
3. Why is purity important to love God?

Personal Introspection Question

Can you think of a time when you loved without any expectation of reward? Describe that experience.

CHAPTER 3

Cultivating Love

Introduction

God, who is pure love, can be attained only if we cultivate pure and unsullied love. Everyone has this spark of love. This tiny spark of love has to be kindled and nurtured before it can grow into a flame that encompasses the entire creation. To foster this flame we must always keep good company and cultivate good thoughts through constant and disciplined practice of *nāmasmaraña*, meditation and self-inquiry. In this chapter, Swami shows us different ways to expand our love and to become worthy of receiving Divine Grace.

Key concepts covered in this chapter include:

- Foster love through love
- Love for love's sake
- Perform duty with love
- Keep good company
- Cultivate good thoughts
- Eliminate ego
- Seek God's love
- Practise meditation
- Practise *nāmasmaraña* (constant remembrance)
- Develop unity of thought, word and deed
- Discriminate between Divine Love and worldly love

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Foster Love through Love

How is love to be fostered? Only through love can you foster love. There is no other way. For a plant to grow, you have to use manure and water. Students should realise that to foster love of God, they have to apply the manure of faith and the water of love. Only thus can the plant of devotion grow.

SSS 31.27: August 25, 1998

True love is pure, selfless, free from pride and it is full of bliss. Such love can transpire only through love.

SSS 29.29: July 27, 1996

You may get immersed in love, experience it and enjoy it. But your hunger for love can never be satiated. Love can be experienced only through love. There is no other path to experience love. Love is love and that is all. Have firm faith that God is the embodiment of love. Love Him wholeheartedly. Do not superimpose your worldly love on God's love. His is the only true and eternal love. Focus your love only on God. God is present everywhere in the form of love. You should never entertain doubts in this regard. The stream of love should flow in you incessantly. Only then can you have the divine vision. No doubt, you have the desire to see God but you are not expanding your love. If you are interested, I am ready to grant you the vision of God. You can see Him provided you cultivate true and eternal love in yourself.

SSS 37.9: April 15, 2004

We have the big tank of God which is filled with His grace. We also have devotees in the form of taps but the connection between this tap and the tank which is God's grace is missing. If there is no *prema* (love), how can the grace of the Lord flow? The pipe which connects the devotion of the devotee and the grace of God is the *prema*. God is always an embodiment of *prema* and if the devotee is filled with *prema* then *prema* can establish the connection. Unless you have all these three—namely the devotion of the devotees, God who is the embodiment of *prema* and the link of *prema* between the two—a connection cannot be established. God, who is the embodiment of *pre-*

ma, can be attained only by *prema* and not by any other method.

SS 1974 pt2.29

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.

SSS 29.52 November 23, 1996

Some people think, "Swami calls Himself a powerful magnet, but He is unable to attract us". The fault lies in them only. Their hearts are rusted. They will be attracted by the magnet of Swami's love only when they cleanse their hearts. How can you remove the "rust and dust" accumulated in the heart? Only by rubbing and polishing it with love. Everybody has to purify the heart with love and that love must be totally selfless. When you cultivate such selfless love, you can attract the whole world. Self is lovelessness and love is selflessness. Therefore, lead a life full of love.

SSS 35.23 December 25, 2002

You can teach love to students only through love. Because of My love which is My *swabhāva* (nature), the students in the Sathya Sai Institute are disciplined and orderly and there is no unrest in our campus. I have no ill-will towards anyone. There may be persons who may criticise Me or even bear malice or hatred towards Me. But I have no enemies at all. Everyone is dear to Me. As I have love as My permanent quality, I have no worry and am always happy and at peace. *Love in speech is Sathya (Truth). Love in action is Dharma (Righteousness). Love in thought is Shanthi (Peace). Love in understanding is Ahimsa (Non-violence).* This love is flowing in us as an unseen river. It is only by developing love that we can sanctify the educational system and train the

students in the practice of human values as the essential condition for leading worthy lives. I appeal to all of you, to strive in this direction and make education really purposeful for turning out students who will be good citizens, of whom the country can be proud.

SSS 19.2: January 20, 1986

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Love for Love's Sake

You need not surrender anything at all. Love all beings—that is enough. Love with no expectation of return. Love for the sake of love. Love because your very nature is love. Love because that is the form of worship you know and like. When others are happy, be happy likewise. When others are in misery, try to alleviate their lot to the best of your ability. Practise love through *sevā* (selfless service). By this means, you will realise unity and get rid of the ego that harms.

SSS 12.4: March 5, 1973

Do not manifest it for the sake of material objects or for the fulfilment of worldly desires. Desire begets anger. Anger provokes sin. For under its impact friends are seen as foes. Anger is at the bottom of every variety of calamity. Therefore do not fall a prey to it. Treat every one—whoever he or she may be—with the all-inclusive compassion of love. This constructive sympathy has to become the spontaneous reaction of all human-kind.

SSS 9.16: July 29, 1969

The rivers of love must flow continuously. It is enough, if you can understand the one Principle of Love. This love is everything. Treat this love as the be-all and end-all of your life. Do not direct your love towards material objects. If you continue to love for love's sake, then such a love will be eternal. It is not the body that is to be loved, but the Principle of Love. All the names and forms are evanescent and impermanent. We should not love such things. Love directed towards such things is physical, whereas love for love's sake is eternal. Consider truth as truth. You should not associate truth with material objects. Similarly, love should not be associated with material objects. Love is

simply love. As such, love is God. You must attain Divinity with such love.

SSS 38.18: October 28, 2003

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Perform Duty with Love

Duty without love is deplorable. Duty with love is desirable. Love without duty is divine. Duty implies force or compulsion while love is spontaneous and expresses itself without external promptings. All the *japa* (recitation), *dhyana* (meditation) and the deeds of merit you perform will be futile if you do not cultivate universal and selfless love.

SS 1979.29

If you wish to become eligible for God's love, then your actions must be consistent with love. It is impossible to secure God's love without appropriate and sacred actions. Can the one who is always hankering after rewards ever be truly happy? The only compensation you ought to seek is the pleasure and joy of doing your duty properly. The joy of service is the true reward. If you go against the command of God, then everything is bound to go wrong.

SS 2000.11

The nurturing of love is possible only in a tender heart. Because of attachment to worldly objects, that tenderness is lost. When the mind is directed towards the sensual world, life becomes artificial. When you go to your office, you greet people artificially. The *namaskāraṃ* (salutation) is done with *ahaṃkāraṃ* (ego). Respect is given artificially for the position and does not emanate from the heart. That which emanates from the heart is Truth. When you see a person doing service to others with love, you have to respect that person. It is not the formal action that counts. Only the good heart behind the action is entitled to respect and regard. So we should develop a tender heart filled with love rather than act mechanically. If there is no love in the heart, there is no use in doing anything whatsoever.

SSS 18.2: January 25, 1985

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Keep Good Company

The thought in the mind, the word on the tongue and the deed by the hand—try to make all three one. Many people hope to lead good lives by doing good deeds. But I do not believe this is possible. You can never become good by means of good deeds. You have to be good in order that your deeds and words can be good. First endeavor to be a good person. Thereafter, it becomes possible for you to do good. Be good. Do good. It is not possible to predict when and where or for what reason a person's life blossoms or expands. You may pray underneath a tree which yields bitter fruit. It can't give you a sweet fruit. But when a branch of the sweet fruit tree is grafted on that tree, it can yield sweet fruits, though originally it could not. This process of grafting is equivalent to *satsaṅga* (good company) in human affairs—getting involved with the good and godly. So do service to your fellow human beings with pure intentions and always seek good company. Then you can transform yourselves. The evil traits that have grown through many lives and generations cannot be wiped away in an instant. So mix in godly groups, cultivate good habits and attitudes and involve yourselves in good activities.

SSS 14.55: November 19, 1980

Paramatma (Supreme Self) alone is real. *Paramatma* is Truth. *Paramatma* is Love. Meditate on Him as Truth, as Love. It is possible to realise Him in whatever form you meditate upon. Be always in the company of His devotees. Through this *satsaṅga* (good company), *viveka* (spiritual discrimination) and *vairāgya* (detachment, renunciation) will be implanted and increased. These will strengthen the spirit and endow you with inner peace. Your mind will then merge in *Paramatma* (Supreme Self).

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Cultivate Good Thoughts

I always speak lovingly. You too will become divine when you cultivate such Divine Love. Cultivate good thoughts. Good thoughts lead to good actions. Good actions lead to *satsaṅga* (good company). Cultivate love.

SSS 33.19: November 20, 2000

It is not enough if you have devotion to Swami. Your *prema* (love) towards Swami is not necessarily going to result in Swami's *prema* on you. Unless you find ways and means by which you can earn Swami's grace, your effort is useless. You should follow a path by which you will be able to experience and enjoy *prema*. To know the path by which you will receive *prema* is more important than simply saying that you have *prema*. Your *prema* alone is simply like one-way traffic. If your *prema* results in your receiving *prema* from the other side, then it becomes two-way traffic. It is give and take. If you have good ideas, develop good thoughts and adopt good practices, then you do not have to ask for God's grace. God by Himself will shower His grace and *prema* as a reward for your good conduct.

SS 1974 pt.2.30

Experience the Love Principle. Thereby you will rid the world of hatred. Once hatred goes, the world will be free from violence and strife. For all the cruelty and violence that we find in the world today, the root cause is selfishness. This has to be eradicated. Cultivating the Love Principle and manifesting love in all your thoughts and actions, you will experience the bliss of love. When one is filled with love of the Divine, all pains and troubles will be forgotten. It is to propagate this Principle of Divine Love that the advent of Avatars takes place from time to time.

SSS 25.25: August 21, 1992

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Eliminate Ego

It is the ego that makes one feel glad or sad. Therefore control the ego by extending love to every living being. Self or ego is lovelessness. No person who is afflicted with ego can feel happy when others are happy and feel miserable when

others are miserable or can take positive steps to share the happiness and misery of others. Without this deep love, a person, however highly educated, is only a danger to the community.

SSS 14.17: January 15, 1979

There is no greater teacher than your heart. Time is a great preacher. The world is a scriptural text. God is the great friend. With full faith in these four entities, one should lead his or her life on this earth. *Prema* (love) is the natural possession of every human being. It is the fruit of the tree of life. There are certain impediments in your enjoyment of the fruit. But, before tasting a fruit, you have to remove the skin and rind covering the pulp inside and also cast off the seed. The fruit of love is covered by the thick skin of ego. You have to peel off this skin of “mine” and “thine”. Then only you can taste the sweet juice. That is why the *Vedas* describe God as *Raso Vai Sah* (Supreme Sweet Essence).

SSS 30.15: July 17, 1997

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Seek God's Love

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 Tukaram said, “*Dil me Ram, hath me kam*” (Rama 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.

SSS 29.52: November 23, 1996

Yad bhāvam tad bhavati. As is the feeling, so is the result. If you desire God's love, then your actions must match and be compatible with your desire. If you do not want God's love, then you are at liberty to do as you please. However, if God's love is what you want, then you must act in an appropriate manner. In this world, you first have to pay the price before you acquire the authority to possess what you desire. You go to a shop to buy a towel. The shopkeeper quotes a price of twenty rupees. When you pay twenty rupees cash, the shopkeeper packs the towel and gives it to you. No cash, no towel. God follows a similar “transaction” procedure. What kind of “business” does God do? Divine business. If you lovingly obey God's command, then you are sure to receive love. God's love has no limitations or stipulations. Only one condition—you give and then you receive.

SS 2000.11

Develop love for all in order to earn divine grace. You cannot get even a handkerchief unless you pay for it. You are asking God for peace, happiness and liberation. But what are you giving to God in return? Offer your love to Him and receive His grace in the form of peace, happiness and liberation. Everybody has this right. But you have to give first to earn it. Only through love and service will you earn this right to ask. There is no other way.

SSS 33.3: January 14, 2000

The grace of God cannot be won through the gymnastics of reason, the contortions of yoga or the denials of asceticism. Love alone can win it, love that needs no requital, love that knows no bargaining, love that is paid gladly as tribute to the All-loving, love that is unwavering. Love alone can overcome obstacles, however many and mighty. There is no strength more effective than purity, no bliss more satisfying than love, no joy more restoring than devotion, no triumph more praiseworthy than surrender.

SSS 11.12: February 23, 1971

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Practise Meditation

Always meditate on the divine Name—not just contemplation, but meditation. That meditation should be with love for God. Without love your meditation will not achieve the desired result. Your love for God should be continuous through day and night. It is possible that when you pray to God to fulfil some desire and things go contrary, you may get angry and develop hatred against Him. But, it has nothing to do with spirituality. Your innate nature and love for God should never undergo a change. You should continue to attach yourself to the divine Name. That is real meditation. When you are in deep meditation, nothing in the external world should be visible to you even if you open your eyes.

SSS 42.5: February 23, 2009

Meditation is a process that takes place beyond the senses. Between the concentration at the sensory level and meditation that is above the senses there is a border line where *chīntana* (contemplation) takes place. Contemplation is the second half of *chitta* (consciousness), whose other function is discrimination between right and wrong. An illustration will make this clear. There is a rose plant, with branches, leaves, flowers and thorns. Locating a place where there is a flower calls for concentration. At this stage we are concerned only with locating the flower. But the flower has to be plucked without touching the thorns. Love is the flower. Lust is the thorn. There is no rose without a thorn. How to get at the flower of love without touching the thorn of lust is the problem. This is where contemplation is needed. Having plucked the flower, how shall we use it? By offering it to the Divine. Meditation means offering the flower of love to the Divine. In the rose plant of our body, there is the rose of pure and sacred love, emitting the fragrance of good qualities. Below the rose, however, there are thorns in the form of sensual desires. The purpose of meditation is to separate the rose of selfless love from the senses and offer it to the Lord.

SSS 17.6: March 11, 1984

Bhajan (devotional singing) and meditation are only exercises for purifying the mind (*chittasya shuddhaye karmaṇe*). Develop love which is your life breath. When a tree is full of green leaves, branches and fruits, you are attracted by it. When it becomes dry, you destroy it because there is no life in it. A person without love is akin to a dead tree only. Love is as vital for a human being as fire is vital for a lump of coal to sparkle.

SSS 30.15: July 17, 1997

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Practise Nāmasmaraṇa (Constant Remembrance)

The Avatars in the four *yugas* (ages) incarnated to teach what was appropriate for that age: *dhyāna* (meditation) for the *Kritā Yuga*, *tapas* (penance) for the *Tretā Yuga*, *upāsana* (worship) for the *Dwāpara Yuga* and *nāmasmaraṇam* (constant remembrance) for the *Kali Yuga*. Common to all these is love of the Lord. In the same way what is common to the nine forms of worship—*shravaṇam* (listening to the glory), *kīrtanam* (devotional singing), *vishnusmaraṇam* (contemplating), *pādasevanam* (worshipping the Lord's feet), *vandanam* (adoring), *archanam* (worshipping), *dāsyam* (being a servant), *sneham* (cultivating friendship) and *ātmanivedanam* (surrendering)—is love. Common to all of them is the chanting of the Lord's name with devotion.

SSS 24.23: September 2, 1991

Another special thing about repetition of the Name (*nāmasmaraṇa*) is this. It is possible to acquire various occult powers (*siddhis*) through yoga and penance (*tapas*). And there is every likelihood of the Lord being forgotten when these powers come. Blinded by this pride, a person might even let go the basic victory won by his or her spiritual practices. This is not the case with remembrance of the Name, repetition of the Name and meditation. No such dangers beset these paths. These three paths make love (*prema*) grow in people more and more. Through love, peace (*shanthi*) is achieved. Once peace of mind is achieved, all other conditions are automatically attained. Through yoga and penance come extraordinary powers. Through remembrance of the Name, repetition of the Name and

meditation comes extraordinary love. This is the difference between the two.

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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* (recitation) you have to perform is constantly to remind yourself of the Divine within you. This is the supreme message of the *Vedas*. Realise that the path of Divine Love is the easiest, the sweetest and surest path to God.

SSS 29.28: July 5, 1996

How to manifest that love that is within you? You have to engage your hands in clapping as you chant the names of Rama, 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 Prahlada: "*Om namo Narayanāya*". Sing the praises of the Lord like Radha and Mira. Worship the Lord like Jayadeva, Gauranga and Tukaram. Shed tears in devotion before the figure of the Lord like Ramakrishna 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.

SSS 29.52: November 23, 1996

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Develop Unity of Thought, Word and Deed

There is no point in talking sweetly if there is no sweetness in your heart. Sweetness in speech and bitterness in heart is not the quality of a human being. There should be sweetness in your thought, word and deed. This is the true sign of a human being. You should fill your life with love. There is nothing superior to love in this world. The human being is considered to be most sacred because it has the unique quality of love within. But you are not able to realise the value of human birth. God incarnates in human form in order to spread the message of love. Once you have love

in your heart, you can conquer the whole world. There is love in you but you are not able to express it in the proper way.

SSS 36.15: October 17, 2003

All have faith in the power of love. But how is this love to be fostered and developed? This question may arise in the minds of many. When people ask, "How can we develop our love for the Lord?" The answer is, "There is only one way. When you put into practice the love in which you have faith, that love will grow". Because you do not practise what you profess, your faith gets weakened. A plant will grow only when it is watered regularly. When you have planted the seed of love, you can make it grow only by watering it with love every day. The tree of love will grow and yield the fruits of love. People today do not perform those acts which will promote love. When you wish to develop love for the Lord, you must continually practise loving devotion to the Lord.

SSS 24.23: September 2, 1991

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Discriminate between Divine Love and Wordly Love

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. Sage Narada declared, "*Yal labdhvā pumān siddho bhavati, amruto bhavati, tripto bhavati*" (Having gained Divine Love, *Parama Prema*, a person becomes perfect, immortal and content). 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.

SSS 29.52: November 23, 1996

There is Divine Love in you, which has neither birth nor death. You direct your love towards that Divine Love. That love is always with you. If

you cultivate such love, you will always remain as embodiments of love. Have firm faith in this Divine Love. Do not believe the worldly love, lest you should be deceived. The worldly love is like passing clouds. Such clouds come and go. They are not permanent. Love the eternal love. That is the *Atma-tatwa* (*Atma* Principle). Love that *Atma-tatwa*. Do not be deceived by worldly love that causes only disappointment. Cultivate such a type of love that will not cause disappointment. Do not be disappointed by directing your love towards all and sundry. Love the Principle of Love itself which is divine and eternal. The more you love that Divine Love, the more it grows.

SSS 36.18: October 28, 2003

You have no need to go in search of love elsewhere. It is all within you. A person makes every effort to accumulate wealth. An equal effort is needed to acquire the wealth of love. Human beings 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 characterised as *amrita-swarūpa* (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.

SSS 29.52: November 23, 1996

God gives you whatever you pray for. So take care. Ask for the right things. There was a man who had four wives. He happened to go to Bombay on some work connected with his business. From there, he wrote to all of them that he was prepared to bring home whatever each of them wanted. So they all wrote to him giving a list of things they wanted. The first wife asked for some nice tonics for her health and rugs and woollen clothing to be of service whenever she fell ill. The second wife wanted some *saris* (dresses) of

the latest style, *choli* (dress top) pieces, jewellery of the Bombay type and such other sundry decorative stuff. The third asked him to select for her some religious books, the *Jnaneshwari*, *Abhangs* and *Bhakti-vijaya* (spiritual books) available in Bombay book-shops, as well as pictures of Panḍharinath, Bhavani and Sai Baba. The fourth wife had no list at all. She simply wrote, “If you return soon and safe, that is enough for me”. She got nothing but his love. The others got big packets containing whatever they had written for. So think well, discriminate clearly before you ask, before you pray.

SSS 4.18: May 16, 1964

Who are one’s parents? Who are one’s children, relations or friends? Who are we? What were we in our previous lives? What will be our future? Immersed in thoughts of these impermanent relationships, we are losing sight of the Divine Love that is everlasting and unchanging. Even in experiencing temporary relationships, the nature of Divine Love should be understood. Human birth implies the existence of parents. But the relationship between a child and its parents is corporeal. The parents are instrumental for the birth but they are not the cause. However, even as instruments, elements of the Divine are present in them. It should be understood that human birth is the progeny of Truth as father and Love as the mother. Even if one’s natural parents are absent, one should not forget the real parents—Truth and Love. When Truth and Love beget *jnāna* (wisdom) as son, the true lineage of a person is established.

SSS 18.10: May 6, 1985

Immediately after birth as an infant the baby clings to the mother’s bosom and considers it as paradise. As the child grows, it gets interested in education and forgets the mother. In youth, one experiences this love in sport and games, in studies and recreation. After completing his education, the young man enters on family life and immerses himself in sensual pleasures. Later, he gets interested in earning wealth and loses interest in wife and children. Later on he loses interest even in wealth and turns his thoughts towards God. Thus, a man exhibits his love for different objects at different stages in his life. Today the human being is

not able to understand what true love is. If a person likes a particular object, that person thinks he or she loves it. When you have likes, you will also have dislikes. But when you have love, there cannot be anything negative. Love is changeless and eternal. It is divine. It is truly the form of Divinity. *Ekaṃ nityaṃ, vimalaṃ, achalaṃ, sarvādhī sākshibhūtaṃ, bhāvātītaṃ, triguṇarahitaṃ* (One without a second, eternal, pure, unchanging, the witness of all functions of the intellect, beyond all mental conditions and the three *guṇas* of *satva*,

rajas and *tamas*). It is not possible to describe love in worldly parlance. It is foolishness to think of love in a worldly sense. You cannot find a term equivalent to love. You may describe love in various ways for your own satisfaction. But none of them corresponds to the reality. Only love equals love. It is not possible to describe it in any other way. It is this Divine Principle of Love which you have to understand and practise.

SSS 37.9: April 15, 2004

Study Questions: Cultivating Love

Group Study Questions

1. Describe at least three ways in which love can be fostered.
2. What is “love for love’s sake”?
3. How do discrimination, repetition of the name and meditation nurture love?
4. How does “unity of thought, word and deed” foster love?

Personal Introspection Question

What factors have nurtured love in your own life?

CHAPTER 4

Obstacles in the Way of Love

Introduction

Swami says we are the embodiments of love and the reason we cannot experience our true nature is because of negative qualities like ego, jealousy, anger, hatred and pride. Once these obstacles are removed, there will be spontaneous expression of Divine Love. In this chapter, Swami identifies the main obstacles and shows us how to get rid of them.

Key concepts covered in this chapter include:

- Six enemies
- Criticism
- Competition
- Fear
- Desire
- Duality
- Selfishness

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Six Enemies

The mind is subject to varying moods—sorrow or joy, anger or fear, love or hate. For all the diseases arising from the mind the basic causes are two—*rāga* and *dwesha* (attachment and aversion). The mind is filled with these twofold feelings. Consequently, it tends to forget its basic human nature. The mind in this state considers the six basic enemies of the human—lust, hatred, delusion, greed, envy and pride—as virtues. These six vices can poison a person’s entire being. That person then forgets his or her inherent Divinity and ceases to be human. He or she is a victim of infamy. But a person filled with good feelings enjoys peace and happiness.

SSS 30.26: October 7, 1997

There is hardly anyone who is free from the vice of jealousy. Jealousy may arise even over very trivial matters and out of jealousy hatred arises. To get rid of hatred one must constantly practise love. Where there is love, there will be no room for jealousy and hatred and where there is no jealousy and hatred, there is real joy. This joy reveals itself in beauty. It has been well said, “A thing of beauty is a joy forever”. If you see beauty in anything, you will derive joy from it. But what is the beauty that one should seek which will be the source of permanent joy? Only God is the embodiment of beauty that is the source of everlasting joy.

SSS 17.19: September 6, 1984

No one should develop bad qualities like jealousy, hatred, desire and anger. Develop love. Love is God and God is love. “*Prema mudita manase kaho Rama Rama Ram*” is the *bhajan*. Love is the greatest gift God has given to a human being. The value of any material object in this world can be assessed, but not the value of love. Hence, develop love. Not only that, share that love with others. Thus, when you exchange love and spend your lives happily, evil qualities like hatred, jealousy and ego cannot come anywhere near. You must be knowing about a chemical stick called “*Lakshmana Rekha*”. When a line is drawn with this stick in the house, no insect of any kind can enter the area. Similarly, where there is love, there the evil

qualities cannot enter. Hence, only one quality, the quality of love is sufficient to drive away all evil qualities. Love can be shared with any number of people; it will not deplete in quantity. In fact, the more you share it with others the more it will grow. God is our Father, we are all His children. All these children have a right to inherit His property. All have to share that “property”, the property of love.

SSS 40.4: February 11, 2007

Anger, malice, greed, envy—all these are obstacles in the path of love and co-operation. They lower the human being from the divine to the animal level. Bear with others with patience and understanding. Practise forbearance and sympathy. Try to discover points of contact, not of conflict. Spread a sense of kinship and deepen kindness through knowledge. Then life becomes worthwhile, without fail.

SSS 6.20: August 3, 1966

The tree of the human body finds its fruition when it yields *prema* (love). That sweet gift is the reason why it grew and had to be fostered. It drew its substance from the earth and the sun. What does it give in return for the gifts it got from both these as well as from the human community? *Prema*. The fruit is sweet, but the rind can afford to be bitter. For the rind of anger, malice, envy, greed has to be peeled off before it is put to use. Use the bitterness in you to preserve and develop the sweetness within yourself.

From the experience of saints and sages, you can realise that the joy from the external world is infinitesimal when compared with the bliss won through spiritual discipline. To win that bliss, *sādhanā* (spiritual discipline) full of *vairāgya* (detachment) is essential. When boring is done to draw water from the bowels of the earth, the pipe has to be kept free from air so that the water can rise up. If the air enters, the water will not rise. So too, be sure that attachment to worldly things does not mar your *sādhanā*. *Prema* will not well up if sensual pleasures and personal pride invade the mind.

SSS 3.39: December 8, 1963

The *Upanishads* say that the human is a spark of Divine Love, encased in five sheaths: the *anna*

(gross, material, food component), the *prāṇa* (vital air, breath), the *mana* (the mental, emotional, volitional), the *vijnāna* (rational, discriminatory intellectual) and the *ānanda* (blissful, equanimous balance). It is the fragrance of that love that emanates from the person as love towards things, beings and ideas. That love is ever urging and surging for expression, enlargement and enfoldment. But the tangles of fear, greed, egoism and aggrandisement do not allow the spark to grow and illumine the sheaths as well as the world around. This day is the Festival of Lights; that is to say, of love. Knowledge too is praised as light, but it is often a clouding fog, a weapon of offence, a burden on the head, a drag on the hand of charity, a shackle on the feet. It ripens into a liberator only when it is earned through love and put into practice through love. Love alone gives light.

SSS 10.31: October 29, 1970

People talk about *bhakti* (devotion), yoga and *jnāna* (knowledge). What do they mean by these terms? Does *bhakti* mean getting involved in *bhajan* (devotional singing) and enjoying the tune and beat of the songs? Does yoga mean sitting in a corner and exercising breath control? Does *jnāna* consist in reading some books and getting by rote a few *shloka* (verses from hymns)? What is *sanyāsa* (renunciation)? Is it wearing the ochre robe? *Bhakti* means getting rid of the vices of attachment, hatred and envy and manifesting pure love. Anyone who loves pomp, who is filled with pride and is consumed by envy cannot be a devotee by any test. Devotion will go nowhere near that person. The devotee has to overcome hatred, envy and attachment and experience the peace and bliss of love. That devotee will then acquire the attributes of the Divine.

SSS 28.1: January 14, 1995

Love is vital. Love is divine. To render an act fit to be offered to God and pure enough to win His grace, it has to be a manifestation of love. The brighter the manifestation, the nearer you are to God. *Prema* (love) is not affected or modified by considerations of caste or creed, or religion. It cannot be tarnished by envy, malice or hate. Preserve love from being poisoned by these evils. Endeavour to cultivate lack of hatred, distinction-free feelings. The root of all religions,

the substance of all scriptures, the rendezvous of all roads, the inspiration of all individuals is the Principle of *Prema*. It is the firmest foundation for the human being's mission of life. It is the light that ensures world peace and world prosperity. Fill every word of yours with love. Fill every act of yours with love. The word that emerges from your tongue shall not stab like the knife, nor wound like the arrow, nor hit like the hammer. It has to be a foundation of sweet nectar, a counsel of consoling *vedāntic* (scriptural) wisdom, a soft path of blossoms. It must shower peace and joy.

SSS 9.16: July 29, 1969

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Criticism

Some persons consider small defects in others as huge mistakes and criticise them while they ignore even great drawbacks in themselves. This is highly improper. The correct method is to magnify your own small mistakes and consider them as big mistakes and the big mistakes of others as small ones of no consequence. That is how you can control the commission of errors. With this attitude, you will be able to realise the Divine. The love of humans is earthly and selfish while Divine Love is spiritual and selfless. It is pure Love. The ancients described the Divine as eternal, immortal, pure and unsullied. In order to experience love of God, you should give up petty-minded selfishness and expand your love.

SSS 30.15: July 17, 1997

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Competition

Dīpāvali (Festival of Lights) is intended to teach you this lesson of light and love. Move out, spread, expand, give up limits of "mine and thine", his and theirs, caste and creed, in one limitless flow of love. That is the culmination of all *sādhana* (spiritual discipline). Competition, the desire to defeat and overwhelm the other person, whatever the means necessary for his or her downfall; the greed to earn wealth, fame, superiority—these have put out the lamp of love in the human heart today. Resolve on this festival day to light it again. When the worship of God starts in the shrine room, the first act of yours is lighting

a lamp, isn't it? Without a lit lamp, no auspicious ceremony is initiated. When the lamp of love is shining, God manifests. Keep it burning bright and pure. God persists. Allow all to light their lamps from it. God showers grace.

SSS 10.31: October 29, 1970

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Fear

Saturate the breath—while you inhale and while you exhale—in love. Saturate each moment in love. Love knows no fear. Love shuns falsehood. Fear drags the human into falsehood, injustice and wrong. Love does not crave for praise. That is its strength. Only those who have no love in them itch for reward and reputation. The reward for love is love itself. When you are eager to place offerings before the Lord, instead of transitory materials, let your offering be love. Love is the very light of love. It is the only comprehensive Code of Conduct.

SSS 9.16: July 29, 1969

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Desire

Pray to God with pure heart, with a mind bereft of desires. Do not pray for the fulfilment of petty desires. Love God with a desireless heart. How did Shabari get the grace of Rama, who gave her liberation? How did Jatayu enjoy the privilege of dying on the lap of the Lord? They did not pray for petty things. Instead of asking for a particular type of jewel like a ring or a chain, ask for gold. You can make any jewel out of it.

SSS 31.14: April 20, 1998

Why does the Divine attract? Is it to deceive or mislead? No. It is to transform, reconstruct, reform—a process called *saṃskāra* (accumulated tendencies). What is the purpose of the reconstruction? To make the person useful and serviceable for society, to efface his or her ego and to affirm within that person the unity of all beings in God. The person who has undergone *saṃskāra* becomes a humble servant of those who need help. This is the stage of *paropakāra* (helping others). Service of this kind, done with reverence and selflessness, prepares a person to realise the One that pervades the many. The last

stage is *sākshātkāra* (Self-realisation). The *Vedas* proclaim that immortality—the stage when one is merged in the birthless, deathless, Universal Entity—is feasible through renunciation and detachment only and not through rituals, progeny or wealth. When the human being renounces selfish desires, his or her love expands unto the farthest regions of the universe until he or she becomes aware of the cosmic love that feeds all the four processes mentioned above. It is important that you know this underlying urge in all as I do.

SSS 13.25: November 23, 1976

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Duality

The human being should become the very embodiment of love. When one is filled with love, the entire world will be transformed into a love-filled world. The world will get divinised. The cosmos is permeated by the Divine. But this can be realised only when a human being is filled with love. As long as a person is full of hatred, the world will appear as a hate-filled world. It is only when love is developed that the dualism of good and evil can be transcended and the joy of oneness with the Divine experienced.

SSS 24.25: October 18, 1991

Understand that the same Principle of Love exists in you and others. A true devotee is one who understands the principle of unity and acts accordingly. Non-dualism is true devotion. Share your love with others without any expectation. Love everybody only for the sake of love. When you extend your love to others, you can attain the state of non-dualism. The love that you experience at the physical and worldly plane day in and day out is not true love at all. True love is that which is focused on one form, one path and one goal. It is a great mistake to divide love and divert it in different directions. Love is God. God is love. Live in love. Only then can you realise the principle of oneness and attain fulfilment in life. *Prema mudita manase kaho Ram Ram Ram* (Sing the sweet name of Rama with your heart filled with love). You may choose any Name you like, but you should call Him with all love. Love is most sacred, sweet and non-dual. It is a great mistake to divide

such love and associate it with multiplicity. Your love should remain steady in pleasure and pain. Love and devotion do not give any scope for differences. All differences are the making of your mind. Develop the feeling of oneness that I and you are one. Never think that I and you are different. That is the sign of true devotion.

SSS 38.9: April 13, 2005

Consider everything as divine and treat the dualities of life such as pain and pleasure, loss and gain with equanimity. *Sukhadukhe samekrutwā lābhālabhau jayājayau* (One should remain unaffected by happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat). Never be carried away by the vagaries of the mind. When you follow the mind, you see only matter but not the reality. Mind is related to matter. You should not have anything to do with matter. When you associate yourself with the mind, you can never visualise unity. You cannot develop true love and devotion unless you give up duality.

SSS 38.9: April 13, 2005

Many persons ask Me, “Swami, when can I realise the truth? Please grant me Self-realisation”. My reply is, “You will be liberated the moment the ‘I’ goes”. Do not ask for “my” liberation. The “I” should go. The “I” and “mine” should go. That is itself liberation. This “I” has been created, protected and grown by your own ignorance. A baby has no “I-or-mine”. It easily gives up anything from its grasp. The “I” hardens with the increase of intelligence and it does not part with a doll or

toy. Do not allow the role of the separate “I” to damage the springs of love and sacrifice in your heart.

SSS 11.21: April 18, 1971

Love cannot exist if there is a feeling of duality. *Ekātma prema* (non-dual love) is true love. Give-and-take relationship does not reflect the true spirit of love. One should keep giving and giving, without expecting anything in return. That is true love.

SSS 38.9: April 13, 2005

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Selfishness

The human being today is behaving with less gratitude than what birds, beasts and even trees display. People are ungrateful to parents, teachers, society and even to God. They make a parade of adherence to Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence but do not practise any of them. Why is this so? It is because of intense selfishness and preoccupation with one’s own concerns and interests. Only when the person sheds selfishness can he or she turn the mind towards God. The love of God will dispel the ignorance and conceit of the human as the sun dispels the morning mist. The heart is the seat of love. That love must express itself, to begin with, in the home. From there it must extend to one’s village or town, to one’s state, nation and ultimately to the whole world.

SSS 19.1: January 19, 1986

Study Questions: Obstacles in the Way of Love

Group Study Questions

1. How do the six enemies stand in the way of love?
2. How does criticism obstruct love?
3. How does love help one to go beyond duality?

Personal Introspection Question

Can you think of a time when your love was obstructed? How did that happen and what was the effect for you and for the other person? Can you imagine a way in which the obstruction could have been removed by a loving action or a loving shift in viewpoint on your part?

CHAPTER 5

Love and Human Values

Introduction

Swami simplifies our understanding of the Principle of Love with an aphorism: “Love in thought is *Sathya*. Love in action is *Dharma*. Love in feeling is *Shanthi* and Love in understanding is *Ahimsa*”. Love is the underlying current for all the human values. When we speak with love, it is *Sathya*; and when we our work is saturated with love, it is *Dharma*. Life lived according to these values gives us peace (*Shanthi*). Love emanating from a peaceful heart brings bliss and Swami says that God is bliss. This chapter helps us understand how Love is the basis of values and virtues and should guide all our thoughts, words and actions.

Key concepts covered in this chapter include:

- The five human values
- Love and *Sathya*
- Love and *Dharma*
- Love and *Shanthi*
- Love and *Ahimsa*

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The Five Human Values

Love is *Atma*. Love is wisdom. Love is Truth. Love is Righteousness. Love is Peace and Love is Non-violence. Where there is love, untruth and violence and restlessness find no place. The human heart is a single chair, not a double-seated sofa or a musical chair. So once you fill your heart with love, wicked feelings have no place in it. Everything is contained in love. Love is the life principle. But human beings have forgotten this Principle of Love and are ruining their lives in worldly love.

SSS 31.35: September 30, 1998

Truth is unity of thought, word and deed. When action is saturated with Truth, it becomes *Dharma* (Righteousness). When all actions are right, Peace reigns and one's mind is free from traces of violence. Love is the sustenance for all the four. Love, as thought, is *Sathya* (Truth). As action it is *Dharma*. As feeling it is *Shanthi* (Peace) and as understanding it is *Ahimsa* (Non-violence). When these four fundamental values that raise the human to even divine levels are practised and propagated by you, in school after school, in village after village, Bharat will justify the meaning of that name: *Bhā* (light) *rat* (delight)—drawing delight from light.

SSS 18.13: June 1, 1985

In order to experience *Prema* (Love), the human being goes about searching for several methods. If we really want to experience *Prema*, we have got to understand what Peace or *Shanthi* means. If we want to follow the path of Peace, we will have to accept the path of *Dharma*. If we want to follow the path of *Dharma*, we will have to accept the path of Truth. Here is a small example. Let us take *Prema* as the shining light. If we want to experience this shining light, we should have a bulb. If we want the bulb to glow and experience the shining light, we should have a connection to the bulb. By just a connection of wire to the bulb, the bulb is not going to glow. In that wire, we should have an electric current. Here we see that the electric current can be compared to the Truth, the wire can be compared to *Dharma* while the bulb can be compared to *Shanti* or Peace. If we

have all these three things, then only we will get *Prema*, the light. We may have a good new bulb. We may have a wire. Are we going to get light out of that? Unless there is current inside the wire, we cannot get the bulb to glow.

SS 1977.6

When your thoughts emanate from a mind purified by love, they will result in Right Action, which is *Dharma*. When love becomes part of your experience, thought and action you get *Shanthi*. When we comprehend love clearly, *Ahimsa* or Non-violence will result automatically. So Love is the unseen undercurrent binding all the four values. It can be summarised as follows: Love plus thoughts is *Sathya*. Love plus feelings is *Shanthi*. Love plus action is *Dharma*. And Love plus understanding is *Ahimsa*. Love is the common denominator for all these values. It is the form of God, for God is Love. One who gives love is a human and one who fails to nourish this love is a beast. Love or absence of love makes one an animal, human or God.

SSS 18.2: January 25, 1985

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Love and Sathya

You should restrict your talk to the barest minimum. When you talk too much, you may stray away from Truth. That is why the ancients practised “less talk, more work”. Love is the most essential undercurrent of your talk and work. Speaking with love is Truth and doing work with love is Righteousness. It will give you Peace.

SSS 30.16: July 18, 1997

Your love should not be based only on the physical forms. Bodies are perishable and impermanent. Beyond the biological parents, there are permanent parents whom you should revere. They are Truth and Love. Though the body may go, Truth remains as the permanent father. Likewise Love is the eternal mother. It grows with the passage of time and never diminishes. By regarding Truth and Love as your parents, as essential for your existence as your eyes or as the two wings for a bird or the two wheels for a cart, lead worthy lives. On this sacred day of remembrance, firmly enshrine in your hearts reverence

for Truth and Love, and make your lives sublime by rendering dedicated service to your fellow human beings.

SSS 18.10: May 6, 1985

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Love and Dharma

It is to teach humankind the truth about this Divine Love that Love itself incarnates on earth in human form. The scriptures declare that the Divine descends on earth to teach humankind the ways of *Dharma*, justice and truth. "*Dharma samsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge*" (I incarnate on earth from age to age to re-establish *Dharma*). This is Krishna's declaration in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Once people are filled with love, all *Dharma*, all justice and all Truth will be installed in them. Without love, righteousness will be a mechanical ritual. What kind of righteousness can there be without love? What sort of justice can there be? It will be a lifeless corpse. Love is life. Without love, no human can exist for a moment.

SSS 24.23: September 2, 1991

You may acquire various types of knowledge and travel across the globe. But, in spite of all your worldly achievements, you may not be able to understand the Principle of Love. Once you have the taste of love, you will see the world in its real form. Therefore, become truly embodiments of love. Let love flow incessantly from your heart. Immerse yourself in the flow of love. Out of Love, emerge Truth and Righteousness. *Sathyam vada. Dharmaṃ chara* (Speak truth. Practise *dharma*). Truth and Righteousness are the two pillars on which the mansion of human life rests. It is love that gives rise to these two principles. There is no knowledge greater than the knowledge of love. You may read a number of *pustaka* (books), but love cannot be acquired from such books. What is the use of reading *pustaka* (books) when your *mastaka* (head) is filled with "dirt"? It is because of such "dirt", you become an animal losing the sense of discrimination.

SSS 36.15: October 17, 2003

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Love and Shanthi

The human values are not visible to the naked eye. What is the form of Truth? None has seen the form. Rather, it is beyond any form. It emerges out of our bosom. What is *Dharma*? *Dharma* is to follow the teachings of our own heart. Where is *Shanthi* (Peace)? Is it outside? No, it is only *ashanthi* (unrest) outside. The human being today craves for peace and peace alone, in spite of possessing all sorts of wealth. You ask any millionaire. His reply will be "I have money, houses and all kinds of wealth but I have no peace". Peace therefore is not to be obtained from the world outside. It has to flow from within. Where there is peace, there will be love. The light of love shines in one and all. It is Love that illuminates the entire universe. Hence, if you strengthen love, there will be no scope for hatred at all. It is only when you develop a feeling of separation, there will be hatred between one another. On the other hand, if you develop a feeling of oneness, how can there be a feeling of hatred between you and the other person?

SSS 40.4: February 11, 2007

Our ancient *rishis* (sages) used to observe silence as part of their spiritual discipline. Observance of silence helps you to progress on the spiritual path. When you practise silence, you can easily experience peace of mind. Love manifests from peace. When you are filled with love, you will have no enemies. Therefore, lead your life with love. Only through love can we establish peace in the world.

SSS 41.13: July 22, 2008

We have attained human birth. There is nothing greater than this. *Jantunām narajama durlabham* (Out of all the living beings, the human birth is the rarest). You are born and brought up in society. Then why do you not work for the welfare of society? All the wealth that you have earned has come from society. You should show your gratitude to society. The world is facing problems because the human being does not show gratitude to society. You should never neglect society. Society's well-being is your well-being too. But is anybody looking for the wel-

fare of society? No. It is selfishness all around. Give up selfishness and work for the welfare of society. The world will enjoy peace and security only when you serve society and have devotion towards God. If you want that peace should reign in the world, then you should first develop peace in yourself. Where is peace? It comes only from our heart. Our heart is the source of Peace, Truth, Righteousness and Love. You have forgotten the heart and are searching for peace in the external world. You don't get peace in the bazaar. You get only pieces. Peace is only in your heart. Fill your heart with love. Whatever work you do, do it with total love.

SSS 34.10: June 1, 2001

The human being has put barriers around transcendental and infinite Love and is using it for trivial purposes. That is why the world has become chaotic today. People may attribute various reasons for the lack of peace and security. But the main reason is that people are not able to develop love within. They are not making any effort to realise the presence of the infinite, immortal and nectarine Love within. Today, love finds no place in the human heart, since it has become a den of desires. Where there is Love, there is Peace. Where there is Peace, there is Truth. Where there is Truth, there is God. So develop faith in God.

SSS 32.pt2.2: July 28, 1999

Acquire the love that draws all into the One. By this means, you can put down the fears and anxieties, the greed and envy, the hatred and haughtiness that are today infecting the peoples of the world and establish an era of peace and joy. "Let all the worlds be happy". This is the prayer that comes naturally from every human heart. This is the goal to which *Sanātana Dharma* leads. Everyone must sing of this goal, live in the melody of that song and merge, through that melody, in the *Paramātma* (Supreme Self).

SSS 14.55: November 19, 1980

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Love and Ahimsa

Do not seek to find differences between one person and another. Seek rather ways and means to strengthen the bonds of kinship through love. Factions and fighting emerge among the followers of the same family because they have not learned to love. From the self-same mind, many conflicting feelings emerge. Why? Love has not been nursed and grown therein. You have to sow love and grow love and destroy the weeds of fear and hatred that have spread over the world. Make the world a happy home of love.

SSS 14.55: November 19, 1980

You cannot always oblige, but you can speak always obligingly. Bodily wounds can be cured by the use of medicines. But the wounds inflicted by the tongue can never be healed. That is why I repeatedly tell you to cultivate love and talk with love.

SSS 33.19: November 20, 2000

Silence is the only language of the realised. Practise moderation in speech. That will help you in many ways. It will develop love, for most misunderstandings and factions arise out of carelessly spoken words. When the foot slips, the wound can be healed but when the tongue slips, the wound it causes in the heart of another will fester for life.

SSS 1.10: July 22, 1958

Lord Krishna permeates every atom of the universe. *Sarvatāḥ pāñipādaṃ tat sarvatokshi shiromukhaṃ. Sarvatāḥ shrutimalloke sarvamāvṛutya tishṭhati* (With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). He is Love personified. One can experience Him only through love. You can earn His grace only through love. Love can be conquered only through love. When there is love, the question of war does not arise at all. Love confers peace, prosperity, success, auspiciousness and bliss. They are not separate from each other. They are the various aspects of love. The Principle of Love is present in everyone in the form of *Atma*. The *Atma* is infinite and eternal. That is why the *Vedas* declared, *Sathyam jñānam*

anaṅtaṃ Brahmā (*Brahman* is the embodiment of truth, wisdom and eternity). Where is God? He is everywhere in the form of *Atma*. He is present in all beings. All names and forms are His. He is the embodiment of truth and bliss.

SSS 37.9: April 15, 2004

Study Questions: Love and the Human Values

Group Study Questions

1. How is love the underlying current for all human values?
2. How does the practice of any one of the human values facilitate the manifestation of love?

Personal Introspection Question

Think of an instance when pure love expressed itself through your life. Or think of a situation in which you were the recipient of pure love. In that instance, how were the four other human values also expressed, simultaneously, in your experience?

CHAPTER 6

Power of Love

Introduction

Life cannot exist even for a moment without love. God is love. The power of love makes us aware of the unity of existence. Swami says that the Divine Will operates as love in us. At the physical level, the power of love protects and sustains us. It can cure us of physical ailments and help us overcome the waywardness of our minds. Love has the power to unite people, communities and nations of the world. Swami says that only through love and not through war can the world attain peace.

Key concepts covered in this chapter include:

- Love transcends space and time
- Love heals
- Love bestows bliss
- Love protects
- Love destroys evil
- Love transforms
- Love unifies

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Love Transcends Space and Time

According to the “*Vishnu Sahasranāma Stotra*” (hymn adoring the thousand names of Vishnu), the entire universe is the very form of Vishnu (*Vishvam Vishnu-swarūpam*). Even if a human being were to travel at the speed of light, it will take twenty-two-thousand-crore (twenty-two-billion) years to circumambulate Lord Vishnu. Who can live for such a long period of time? Due to the evil effects of *Kali* Age, humans are not able to live even for hundred years, let alone twenty-two-thousand crore years. But it is possible to go around the *Vishwa-swarūpa* (God in the form of the universe) in one second. It is love that makes it possible. The speed of love is such that it can go around the universe in one second. The speed of light may be estimated, but not the speed of love.

SSS 32.pt2.2: July 28, 1999

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Love Heals

Give up ignorance. Light the lamp of wisdom within you and ultimately merge with the Divine. This is Swami’s message for you today. Develop love. Through love alone can you annihilate the mind and through love alone can you get cured of any disease. Only love can eradicate the evil qualities in you. So love all. Love the *hridaya* (heart), not the physical body. Love the Divinity that is installed in your heart. Body, mind, intellect and senses are merely instruments. You are the master. So master the mind and be a mastermind. Never become a slave of your mind. Contemplate on the Divine day in and day out. You may chant any Name, contemplate on any form; but understand the truth that God is one and only one.

SSS 33.10: July 16, 2000

The ancient Indian sages practised self-control, entertained good thoughts and led a blissful life. When a human being’s inner self is filled with love, his or her life becomes full of bliss and that person is always hale and hearty. Today human beings suffer from numerous ailments, the root cause of which is a diseased mind. There is no death for the mind though when the body is facing death the mind thinks it is dying. The mind, it has been said, is the cause of one’s bond-

age or liberation. Bad thoughts beget bondage. Good thoughts lead to liberation. Hence, everyone should develop good thoughts and perform good deeds. Such good feelings can arise only out of love. Today all the actions of human beings are governed by mundane desires. To achieve liberation the human being has to go beyond the vagaries of the mind. He or she should follow the *aṅtahnkāraṅa* (inner conscience).

SSS 30.26: October 7, 1997

There is one way of getting over the results of *karma*. If you earn the grace of the Divine, even mountains of sin can be reduced to dust. Only the Divine has the power to confer such grace. A spark of fire can burn down a mountain of cotton. How is the spark to be got into the “mountain” of human predicament? Only through love. Develop love. Serve all with love, ever remembering the Lord’s name. Without the name of the Lord on your lips, the mind will be running hither and thither. The mind is the birth-place of unsteadiness. Hence engage yourselves in action, concentrating your thoughts on God.

SSS 20.29: November 23, 1987

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Love Bestows Bliss

The Lord’s name on your lips, thoughts of God in your mind, seeing the Lord with your eyes and meditating on the Lord with love—these four will give you ineffable bliss. Strive to experience this bliss.

SSS 26.20: May 22, 1993

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Love Protects

The power in spirituality is limitless. The power of love far exceeds the power of the atom bomb. It transforms even those who hate. Develop such sacred love.

SSS 31.43: November 23, 1998

Once, when I went to Bombay, the then head of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Sri K.M. Munshi, convened a conference of intellectuals. He asked Me to address them. One person from the audience asked Me, “Swami, America and Russia are manufacturing more and more weapons. But India is lagging far behind in this respect. Should

not India also manufacture weapons?" I told him, "Dear one, what Bharat (India) needs today is not arms and ammunition. It needs to uphold *Dharma* (Righteousness). *Dharmo rakshati rakshitāḥ* (If you uphold *Dharma*, *Dharma* will protect you in return). We should not waste money in manufacturing weapons. Some countries are spending a lot of money on defence and, as a result, the people of those countries are suffering for want of proper food. Only Divine Love and grace and not weapons can protect a nation. You might have read in the *Mahabharata* that Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva implicitly obeyed the command of Dharmaja, the embodiment of *Dharma*. Likewise, India, America and Russia can be compared to Dharmaja, Arjuna and Bhima respectively. Just as Arjuna and Bhima obeyed Dharmaja, so also America and Russia will follow India provided India upholds *Dharma*. What India needs to possess is *sathyastra* and *dharmastra*, the weapons of Truth and Righteousness. Both are inherent in the Principle of Love. Just as a gigantic tree emerges out of a small seed, the entire universe originated from Love.

SSS 32.pt2.2: July 28, 1999

Today people are not making any effort to understand this Principle of Love. It is only the power of love that can nullify a curse or a sin. It is only love that can remove all the bitter feelings and enhance the sweetness of life.

SSS 32.pt2.2: July 28, 1999

If you pray to Him with all your heart and soul, the effects of all *karma* will disappear like mist. Devotion will free a person from the consequences of his or her deeds. If a person devotes a small fraction of the enormous time he or she devotes to wealth, family and position, to thoughts of God, he or she need have no fear about the Lord of Death. If one does not think of God even for a moment, how can a person hope for peace of mind?

SSS 24.13: May 27, 1991

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Love Destroys Evil

The most powerful weapon to destroy the forces of evil rampant in the world today is love. Unfortunately human beings 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, a person is engaged in the pursuit of wealth and power. No doubt wealth and power are necessary, but only within limits.

SSS 29.52: November 23, 1996

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Love Transforms

If the main switch is off, all the rooms will be in darkness and if the individual switches are put on, the bulbs will not burn. What is that main switch in the human being? It is Divine Love. When this switch of Divine Love is turned on, love will manifest itself in every limb and part of the body. Your words will be filled with love. Your actions will be saturated with love. Your eyes will gleam with love. You will be listening to loving words with your ears. The light of love will shine in every limb. Without that love, if you are steeped in selfishness and self-centred actions, every limb will be plunged in darkness. Therefore, love is supreme.

SSS 22.20: June 28, 1989

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 seventy-one. 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 that has attracted the whole world.

SSS 29.52: November 23, 1996

Love is like a mariner's compass, which always points to the north. Love should direct you Godward in every action that you do. There is no greater path or goal than this. Scholarship or ritual worship will not serve to transform your spirituality. Fill your hearts with love of God. Then the nation will enjoy peace. Your view of the world depends on the colour of the glasses you wear. When your vision is filled with love, the whole creation will appear as *Brahma-mayaṃ* (filled with Divinity). This is what the youth of today need most.

SSS 25.21: May 30, 1992

There is nothing that love cannot achieve in this world. It can even melt the hardest of rocks. When the Principle of Love in every human being is unified, it becomes cosmic love (*vishwa prema*). Do you want to quench your thirst for love? Yearn for His grace and worship Him. In order to experience bliss, develop love more and more. The more you develop love, the more you will experience bliss. Bliss (*ānanda*) cannot be attained without love. In fact, it is love that takes the form of bliss.

SSS 32.pt2.2: July 28, 1999

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Love Unifies

In this gathering, people from many countries, speaking many languages, belonging to many races, are present. They are all single-mindedly united in love for Sai and in love from Sai, in spite of differences in nationality, race, creed, colour and dress. This is My real task. This is the consummation of the yearnings of the ancient seers and sages of this land. Develop this oneness, this unity in love. Hold it ever before you as the ideal.

SSS 14.55: November 19, 1980

Being the embodiments of love, you should not hate anybody. Only through love can you attain immortality. There is love in everybody but it is used in a perverted manner. With love, one can achieve anything. One can even control the five elements. When you gain control over the five elements, the whole world will be under your control. It is out of ignorance that you consider yourself weak. In fact, all powers are in you. It is only love that can dispel the darkness of igno-

rance. Love is God. God is love. Love can unite the entire world. What is the relationship that exists between you and Me? This body was born in a remote village of Andhra Pradesh. You belong to the state of Maharashtra. What is the connection between you and Me? It is love and love alone. It is only out of love for Swami that you have all gathered here. Your love has made Me very happy. How much is the power of love? It is infinite. None can fathom its depth.

SSS 34.14: July 16, 2001

The Lord is Love. His Form is Love. All beings are Love. Love saves and serves. Through love alone can good arise. Love reveals the God in all. Love binds one person to another. Love attaches one thing to another. Without love the universe is naught. The highest love makes us aware of the Lord in every one. The Lord is equally present in all. Life is love. Love is life. Without God, deprived of God, nothing and nobody can exist. We live on and through the Divine Will. It is His will that operates as love in each of us. It is He who prompts the prayer, "Let all the worlds be happy". For He makes us aware that the God we adore, the God we love, the God we live by, is in every other being as Love. Thus Love expands and encompasses all creation.

SSS 15.37: December 25, 1981

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 Swami and Swami's love for you. You have all come of your own accord. The binding factor is love.

SSS 29.28: July 5, 1996

Study Questions: Power of Love

Group Study Questions

1. Describe the power of love.
2. What are the implications of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's statement that the power of love is greater than the power of the atom bomb? Explain how this statement is true, how it is more than a simple metaphor.
3. How does love bring about unity, transformation and purity?

Personal Introspection Question

Think of an example in which the power of love transformed a significant aspect or factor of your own life. Please describe that experience.

CHAPTER 7

Qualities of a Person Who Loves God

Introduction

The lover of God sees God everywhere. The greater the love for God, the greater is the bliss that one experiences. Swami says that the person with such love for God is so immersed in God that he or she sees nothing but God in everything.

Swami explains further, using a verse from the Bhagavad-Gita, that God loves those who are devoid of desires, pure of heart and unflinching in resolve; steady, detached and serene in nature; and unaffected by the ups-and-downs of life. Those who love God are engaged in activities that fill the Lord with joy.

Key concepts covered in this chapter include:

- Desirelessness
- Purity
- Determination
- Detachment
- Freedom from sorrow
- Renunciation
- Absence of hatred
- Blissful
- Fearlessness
- Yearning to please the Lord
- Ever serene
- Unwavering
- Total surrender
- Always giving, never taking

Anapekshaḥ Shuchirdaksha

Udāsino Gatavyataḥ

Sarvarambhā Parityāgi

Yo Madbhaktaḥ Same Priyaḥ

The one who is totally devoid of desires, absolutely pure, firm in determination, completely detached, immune to the play of time and has renounced pomp and ostentation —such a one is dear to Me.

(Bhagavad-Gita 12.16) SSS 2000.11

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Desirelessness

Anapekshā means that the devotee is beyond *apekshā*, desires or expectations. Is it ever possible for a person, bound as he or she is by the body and the senses, to be without desires? Hardly. Some desire or the other will always be there. However, there must be control over the desires that one has. What sort of desires are permitted? Recall what Krishna has to say about this matter. He says that all righteous actions are divine. Thus, among the permissible desires, the best is the desire for *tyāga* or sacrifice. The yearning for *Dharma* also is important. The desire for God is mandatory.

SS 2000.11

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Purity

The second quality that the devotee must possess is *shuchiḥ* or cleanliness. What sort of cleanliness does the Lord expect from us? Is it outer cleanliness or inner cleanliness? Both are required. God loves cleanliness. Cleanliness is godliness. However one cannot confine oneself to external cleanliness alone. Inner purity also is very necessary. In fact, it is of prime importance. God is omnipresent. He is present both outside as well as inside. However, we must first try to recognise the Divine Principle within. Here is an example. There is a brass vessel and you are using it to prepare soup. If the vessel is not tinned inside, the soup would get spoilt and even poisoned. Our heart is like the brass vessel. This vessel must be coated inside with *prema* (love). If this precaution is taken, the inside will be clean. Inner purity is essential for achieving external purity. What exactly is meant by external purity? It does not mean washing yourself with soap and water. It means performing selfless service to society and doing such action for the pleasure of God.

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Determination

The third quality that the devotee must have is *dakṣha* or strong and unshakeable determination. What sort of determination must you have? You must say, "Come what may, I shall not rest till I accomplish this or achieve this". This is the sort of resolve you ought to have. What is meant by determination? It means having the firm resolve, "I should definitely see God, have God and secure His grace". God loves dearly the devotee who has such firm determination.

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Detachment

Next comes *udāsina*, which means detachment. You must be totally detached with respect to whatever you are doing. You can do any kind of work. You may, for example, be engaged in service activity. However, you should not have expectation of any type (including the outcome), and also not seek any reward, praise, appreciation for what you are doing. Especially while working for service organisations, you should be very careful. You must not have any craving for fame and name. You must not seek praise and respect. You should not lament, "I am working so hard and doing so much but there is no mention of it whatsoever in the newspapers!" If you do your work with such cravings and expectations, then the good that you might be doing gets nullified and the sanctity of the work gets destroyed. Therefore, you must do service work sincerely, being immune to success and failure, praise as well as criticism.

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Freedom from Sorrow

After this, *gatavyataha*. This means being impervious to the ups and downs brought about by time. Acquisition of this particular virtue also calls for strong determination. You should neither brood over the past nor worry about the future. Don't worry about the future but concentrate on the present. If you take proper care of the present, the future is bound to be bright. Of that you can be sure.

SS 2000.11

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Renunciation

Lastly, *sarvarambhā parityāgi*. This implies total renunciation. Who is the true renunciator? The person who remains perfectly calm at all times and under all circumstances is the one who merits such a description. Such a one is beyond pomp and ostentation. God distances Himself from the ostentatious type. In fact, exhibitionism is the first thing that one must renounce. Shun pomp, show and publicity. Krishna declared that it was such a recluse that was dear to Him.

SS 2000.11

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Absence of Hatred

In love, there are three levels. The first is the best and the highest level (*uttama*). Human beings at this level have full faith and belief that God, who is the embodiment of Eternal Bliss, is present in all beings without exception. They will have the feeling that Ishwara (God) is present everywhere and in everything in the form of love. For such people, *adweshtā sarvabūtānām* (free from hatred and dislike towards anyone) will be the feeling. They see nothing but love in every being. They see no difference between their “own” people and others. Persons filled with such Supreme Love will experience bliss.

SSS 15.40: January 23, 1982

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Blissful

The greater a person’s love for God, the greater the bliss that he or she experiences. When love declines in a person, joy also declines equally. The lover of God sees God everywhere. Hence a person’s heart must be filled with the love of God. Love will not enter the heart of one who is filled with selfishness and self-conceit. Therefore, one should forget the petty self and concentrate thoughts on God. Love of God makes a person oblivious to his or her own existence. Love becomes a form of intoxication. Love makes the devotee and God dance in ecstasy and becomes one with them. It induces self-forgetfulness. It generates an ecstasy in which everything is forgotten.

SSS 24.23: September 2, 1991

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 bliss. Where there is bliss there is God. The yearning for bliss is the best proof of our holy nature. The human being is bliss. He or she seeks bliss. Bliss is blessedness for that person. Since God is bliss, happiness is union with God. Nothing else can award that joy, which is unaffected by whatever happens or does not happen.

SSS 15.59: January 25, 1982

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Fearlessness

Fill your hearts with love. You will be betraying yourself if you entertain evil thoughts but pretend 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 or her love.

SSS 29.22: June 20, 1996

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Yearning to Please the Lord

Devotion to the Lord is only a form of discipline to reach the goal. The seeker should not stop with the acquisition of devotion. One should pay attention not so much to the devotion or love that one has towards the Lord, but to the love and grace that the Lord bestows. The seeker must be always eager to find out which behaviour, what acts, will be most pleasing to the Lord, will fill the Lord with *ānandaṃ* (bliss). Inquire about that. Yearn for that. Carry out the things that will secure that objective. Be engaged in acts conducive to gain it. That is real *bhakti* (devotion). But people generally do not follow this ideal of *bhakti* nor do they think about the implications of that ideal. They pay attention only to the love that the devotee has for the Lord; and, in the process, they do not pay much attention to the *dharma* (righ-

teousness) and the *karma* (action) which the Lord approves or appreciates.

GV 21

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Ever Serene

It is love that confers peace on the heart. When one's heart is filled with peace, the whole atmosphere is filled with peace. You have been witnesses to what happened yesterday. The entire sky was covered with dark clouds. At 7:30 a.m. a heavy downpour seemed imminent but instead of a downpour the clouds "air conditioned" the atmosphere and left. When you have good thoughts and feelings, nature responds in the same manner.

SSS 23.35: November 24, 1990

Everyone may claim that he or she loves God. Hardly one in a million is a true lover of God. True love should remain unaffected by weal or woe. To deride God during times of adversity and to praise God in conditions of prosperity cannot be called true love of God. Divine Love is that which does not flinch in the face of difficulties and does not gloat over prosperity and remains equally serene in all circumstances. Life is full of vicissitudes, which are transient. Only Divine Love is immutable and permanent.

SSS 24.25: October 18, 1991

Can there be anything more lovable than God, who is beauty, strength, glory, fame, splendour, wisdom, in their fullest bloom? Love of God creates in the human being the love for all examples of His majesty, His mercy, His magnificence, His manifoldness. Ramakrishna saw in a flower His charm. He saw everywhere His grandeur, heard from every throat His melody, His flute song. Even filth and wickedness are loved, for God allows them to be.

SSS 7.9: March 19, 1967

One's thoughts, one's words and looks should be filled with love. This is Divine Love. One who is saturated with this love can never be subject to suffering. Human beings today are affected by praise or blame. But one who is filled with Divine Love transcends praise or censure. He or she is unaffected by criticism or flattery. That person

treats alike joy and sorrow, profit and loss, victory and defeat. It is not easy to experience such love. It is easy to blame God but difficult to realise God. Human beings today prefer the easy path to the rough one. They should realise that there can be no pleasure without pain.

SSS 28.38: December 25, 1995

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Unwavering

Although there are many types of spiritual practice, they are of no avail without love. This love must be unchanging in all circumstances. The faith of the eldest of the Pandava brothers, Dharmaja, was of this steadfast type. Whether as an exile in the forest or as an emperor, whether during the disrobing of Draupadi in Duryodhana's court or when Abhimanyu was killed in battle, or when the slaughter of the Upapandavas (by Aswatthama) occurred—in all situations, his faith in Krishna never wavered. He firmly believed that Krishna was his sole saviour. At all times he was contemplating only the name of Krishna. Whether as an emperor ruling over a vast realm or when he lost everything in the game of dice, he was neither elated with success nor depressed by defeat. The primary trait of the Pandavas was to cherish such unflinching faith in the Divine.

SSS 24.23: September 2, 1991

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Total Surrender

To the person, who is unable to recognise his or her innate Divinity and is forgetful of the real abode, the *Bhagavad-Gita* preaches that divine bliss and perfect love can be attained through surrender and dedication. The absence of trust consumes a person with anxiety and worry. A person on a tour of another region and staying in the house of a friend there cannot be free to visit the sights of that place if he or she lacks confidence in the host and does not leave his or her valuables in the latter's custody. So also, by not reposing trust and faith in the Almighty who is our dearest friend, we are subjecting ourselves to endless worry, difficulty and fear.

SS 1979.25

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Always Giving, Never Taking

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 in order to give it 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 human being without love in the heart is as good as dead.

SSS 29.29: July 27, 1996

To seek only your future is selfishness. To be concerned about your own bliss is also selfishness. Only the human being, who gives up self-interest and regards the happiness of others as his or her own and devotes himself or herself to their well-being, is a truly selfless person. The Lord will love only those who love others. If you seek to win the Lord's love, you must love others. You cannot win the love of others if you do not love them. Without worrying about what has happened in the past and without concern for the future, strive to make the best use of the present by cultivating love and doing service.

SSS 18.22: November 17, 1985

Even for cultivating the love of an ordinary human being, you will find that you will come across several difficulties and troubles. Thus, there is no surprise, if to acquire the love of God, you meet with many difficulties and obstructions. Because of this, the *gopikas* said that they were finding a lot of trouble in the process of acquiring the love of God. The same thing has been described by Vyasa by saying that if you want the love of God, you must give up love for other things. When you give up your love for other things, it is easy to acquire the love of God and you will not find any trouble at all. When you are bound by several other forms of love, you will meet with a lot of difficulties if you want to acquire the love of God. This process has been described as surrender.

When some insects look at a bright light, they are attracted by the brightness and even lose their lives. The deer, which are attracted by music, come close and get trapped. The bees, attracted by the honey inside a lotus, get trapped. In a similar manner, when you want the love of the Lord, you should be fully prepared to completely surrender yourself to the Lord. You should have no attachment to your body or pay any attention to your own honour or respect. You should completely detach yourselves from all these. Only then, can you get close to the Lord. Your mind should fully concentrate on the Lord. Until we rise to this high level of surrender, we should participate in divine and sacred activities like *bhajan* (devotional singing) or *dhyāna* (meditation) and develop the aspect of *prema* (love). When you are in a state of bliss and when your love of God fructifies and bears fruit, then His grace will be on you.

SS 1978.15

Study Questions: Qualities of a Person Who Loves God

Group Study Questions

1. What are the qualities of a person who loves God, as described in the Bhagavad Gita?
2. Select one of those qualities and describe it in detail. Explain what it means to say that such a quality would make a person dear to God.

Personal Introspection Question

Think of a challenging situation in your own life. Imagine how Divine Love might confer the benefit of a solution to that problem.

CHAPTER 8

Love—The Path to Self-Realisation

Introduction

Realisation transpires when one sees, recognises and experiences everything as God. Swami teaches us through an example of the *gopis* of Brindavan, who experienced the Krishna Principle in every speck of dust and every blade of grass. They were filled with the highest form of love for Krishna and denied existence of anything else other than Krishna. Love of Krishna made the whole world Krishna to them. Swami says that even one's own identity is lost in this experience of the unity of everything. He tells us that we must practise and contemplate on such ever-expanding love and become one with God, who is Pure Love.

Key concepts covered in this chapter include:

- Love God
- Love without distinction
- Know thyself
- Experience unity
- Become Pure Love

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Love God

Utilise every second to purify your heart and fill it with love. You will then realise that God is yours and you are with Love. True devotion is the means to realise the Divine. Devotion means love of God without any desire for reward. Such devotion can be developed only through good conduct. There can be no devotion without righteousness. Purity of mind is essential for enjoying divine bliss, as purity of body is essential for bodily health.

SSS 16.32: December 31, 1983

To enjoy the Love of God (who is selfless) in a selfish manner and confine His Love to yourself is not the right thing to do. But until we reach a certain level, we should try and experience the Lord in a limited manner. When we are in a limited position and when our own life is not broad enough, it is not possible to experience the love in a broad manner. Therefore, the first step for us is to practise certain methods by which our love can be broadened sufficiently. We have a small example. Suppose we take a small incense stick. In that small incense stick, we see fire. If you are smoking a cigarette, you will find fire in that cigarette also. If there is a forest fire on a hill, we see a big fire in that as well. The fire that we see on the incense stick, that we see on a cigarette, and the fire we see in the case of the forest fire, all constitute fire. In the feeling that all the three constitute fire, if you bring some logs of firewood and put them on the cigarette or on the incense stick the fire will be extinguished, the firewood will not catch fire. On the other hand, if we take even tender and green leaves and put them in a raging forest fire, they will catch fire and burn away. In the same manner, if the fire of love in you is not broad enough, you will not be able to sustain the great fire of love of God. If you begin to talk of the all-pervading love and widespread *prema* (love) of the Lord, then there is a danger of the feeble fire of love in you getting extinguished. Before you can experience such equal-mindedness and before you can experience this love in everyone, the first step is to promote the love within yourself and raise it to a sufficiently high level.

SS 1976.14

Bhakti (devotion) can flow along two paths—*saguña bhakti* (with form and attributes) and *nirguña bhakti* (without form and beyond attributes). When you feel that God is far away, far higher, far beyond you and when you plead for mercy, petition for grace and pray for boons, it is *saguña*. You adore Him as Lord and Master, as Guardian and Saviour. You go through the ceremonials of praise, propitiation and prostration, submission and service. But when you practise the discipline of seeing Him in all beings, as the core of every cell or atom, alive and aware; and experience unity with all creation—for creation is but His body and you are also in it and of it—then, it is *nirguña*. The *nirguña* is the contemplation on the sugar. The *saguña* is the adoration of a sugar doll, which has caught your fancy and attracted your love and loyalty. Let every act of yours stand as your credential when you quit the world. Let no single act be a drag or a debit. Soak every moment in love, that is to say, in God. Of what avail is it to spend hours in *dhyāna* (meditation), if when you rise and move amongst the people you spread anger, inflict resentment by your words and deeds? The *Bhagavad-Gita* asks you to be “*satatam yoginah*”—ever controlled, ever restrained, ever yoked with the Divine. So be vigilant, be steady, be earnest. The steady person earns wisdom. By the absence of careful tending, a spark can be nursed into a huge conflagration. By vigilant care, even a conflagration can be reduced to a flicker.

SSS 12.21: November 23, 1973

God is *Sat-Chit-Ānanda*. With the *Sat* (eternal feeling), you should seek *Chitta* (spiritual wisdom). Then you get *Ānanda* (bliss). You can get *Ānanda* only from *Ānanda* and not from a state of depression. You should worship the Lord with love, since love is God and God is love. This gives you real happiness. Today people pretend as if they love while their inner feeling is not filled with love. “*Yad bhāvam tad bhavati*”, as your feelings, so will be the result. Now we find that feelings are different from expression. You have to surrender to the Lord. From dawn to dusk, one is engaged only in pursuit of ways and means to fill the belly. People waste their life in this way without making effort to have a vision of the Di-

vine. They stand in queue for a long time to buy a ticket for a movie or for travel in bus; but they don't like to stand in the queue for *darshan* of the Divine, who can confer such great bliss on them as nothing else can.

SSS 31.14: April 20, 1998

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Love without Distinction

Have love for all. Impart your love even to those who lack love. Love is like a 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 a 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.

SSS 29.28: July 5, 1996

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Know Thyself

Higher than all the knowledge that can be acquired in the world is the *Atma jnāna* (knowledge of the Self). There is nothing equal to the bliss that comes from Self-realisation. It is attained only when the ego-sense is destroyed and there is prayerful submission to the Divine. Prayers must issue not from the lips but from the heart. Prayers from the lips are like a telephone number call. They will not reach the person you want. Prayers from the heart are like a "particular person call". They will go straight to God.

SSS 16.32: December 31, 1983

I often address you as "Embodiments of Love" because love is your true form, which is pure, unsullied, eternal, ancient, formless and non-dual. You love your mother because you have the confidence that she is your mother. So confidence is the basis of love. Where there is confidence, there is love. Where there is love, there is Peace.

Where there is Peace, there is Truth. Where there is Truth, there is bliss. Where there is bliss, there is God.

SSS 33.10: July 16, 2000

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* (recitation) you have to perform is constantly to remind yourself of the Divine within you. This is the supreme message of the *Vedas*. Realise that the path of Divine Love is the easiest, the sweetest and surest path to God.

SSS 29.28: July 5, 1996

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Experience Unity

Adi Sankara was propagating *adwaita jnāna* (wisdom of non-duality) all through the famous *Bhaja Govindam* verses. He said mere scholarship will not come to one's rescue at the time of death. One has to pray and worship God in order to get released from the bondage of birth and death. *Prema Tatwa* (Principle of Love) is essential for the emancipation of every human being. *Adwaita* (non-duality) is to see unity in diversity.

SSS 31.14: April 20, 1998

Religions are many but goal is one.

Jewels are many but gold is one.

Stars are many but sky is one.

Cows are many but milk is one.

Beings are many but breath is one.

Nations are many but earth is one.

Flowers are many but worship is one.

SSS 33.10: July 16, 2000

The same Principle of Love is present in all. All human beings are essentially one. The differences lie only in their feelings. So the human beings should change its feelings and try to recognise the truth that the same Divinity is immanent in all. Only then can there be transformation in the human being.

SSS 33.19: November 20, 2000

The devotee is ever conscious that the universe is a manifestation of the Divine and is permeated by the Divine. His or her life is based on the recognition of the immanence of God in everything. This state of mind is called “*prema adwaitam*” (unity in love). Through this love the devotee experiences oneness with the Divine. Enjoying the bliss of this experience, the devotee does not even desire *moksha* (liberation from birth and death). Unremitting love of the Lord is everything for him or her. Such devotion is known as “*ananya bhakti*” (total devotion to One and One only).

SSS 19.1: January 19, 1986

Love is the word which indicates the striving to realise the falsehood of the many and the reality of the One. Love identifies. Hate separates. Love transposes the Self on to another and the two think, speak and act as one. When love takes in more and more within its fold, more and more entities are rendered as One. When you love Me, you love all, for you begin to feel and know and experience that I am in all. By means of *dhyāna* (meditation), you can realise that I am the resident in all hearts, the urge, the motive, the guide, the goal. Yearn for that vision, that awareness and make it your priceless possession. Then, you have what you often ask Me for—*sākshātkāra* (direct vision of reality). Your love has to be as pure and as free from the taint of ego as Mine so that it can merge in Me.

Of course, it is hard *sādhana* (spiritual discipline). The mind is too much with you, now. One has to negate and deny, deprive oneself of many expectancies, dive deep into oneself, swim upstream against the current of generations of attachment to worldly things, including the body which one bears. The *gopīs* (cowherd girls) were so filled with the highest type of love that they saw and experienced the Krishna Principle in every speck of dust and blade of green that they saw. Love of Krishna makes the whole world Krishna. The denial of everything else is the method of visualising Krishna in all. There is only One, the integer I. When it is repeated once again, we have two. The manifold creation is only He and He and He repeated so often. Dust and blade, drop and spot—each is He, He and He alone. And, you are

no exception. You are also He. The realisation of this truth, this identity, this mergence—this is *sākshātkāra*.

SSS 11.15: February 24, 1971

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Become Pure Love

Love is the fruit that grows on the tree of the divine Name. The Love Principle proclaims the oneness of name and form. *Brahman* (Supreme Self) is the form of Love. *Brahman* is suffused with love. Love matching love is the law. When one is strongly established in love, he or she qualifies for mergence with the Divine to become one with the Divine.

SSS 24.25: October 18, 1991

Adore love. Live in love. There is no greater education than this. Traverse the path of love. Partake of the food of love. It is not enough if you merely partake of love, you should also assimilate and digest it. Only then the essence of love will spread to every cell of your body giving you immense strength and wisdom. Today’s education is leading to agitation. True education lies in assimilating and digesting the Principle of Love. You are the embodiments of love. You are filled with love. You may not know this, but I can see love in you from top to toe.

SSS 36.15: October 17, 2003

Today your foremost duty is to enthrone *tyāga* (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 *Vedas* declared that sacrifice alone is the key to immortal bliss. “God is love. How can you hope to realise God without love?”

SSS 29.52: November 23, 1996

Pippalada (Great Sage) told the disciple, “The *prāṇa* (life-principle) is the most important factor. You have to merge yourselves in the mind. Merge the mind in the *Atma*. Whatever you do, do it in a spirit of dedication to the *Atma*. You can carry on your respective avocations. When you practise it in a spirit of dedication, work will

be transformed into worship. When life is led in such manner, there is no rebirth". The dedication to the Lord should not be merely verbal but must emanate from the heart. When an offering is made in words, the response is also in words. When somebody tells me, "Swami. Why don't you come to our house?" I tell him, "Yes, I shall come to your house". For the invitation in mere words, the response also is in words only. When the invitation is whole-hearted, I come with all My heart. "*Yad bhāvaṃ tad bhavati*" (As is the feeling, so is the result). Your thoughts are in tune with you desires. According to your thoughts, the results follow. Therefore, whatever you do, do it with all your heart. All the myriad nerves in the human being pervade the heart and the entire body. Hence, when the heart is filled with good thoughts, the

entire body is filled with them. Everything stems from the heart. It is not the physical heart that is meant here. It is the spiritual heart. When your heart is filled with loving thoughts, you will realise freedom from rebirth.

SSS 24.13: May 27, 1991

Prema (love) is a two-letter word in Telugu. But in this short and small word, *akshaya jagat* (the entire universe) is contained. But, alas, today there is so little awareness of the power of this love. Wrapped up in their trivial attachments, people are ignoring the power of this infinite, sacred and all-encompassing Divine Love. Love is associated with immortality. It is nectar itself. There is nothing in the world comparable to it.

SSS 24.23: September 2, 1991

Study Questions: Love—The Path to Self-Realisation

Group Study Questions

1. How can your love for God help you in the pursuit of Self-realisation?
2. How does one love without distinction?
3. How does love help you experience unity in diversity?

Personal Introspection Question

Have you ever had an experience of unity in diversity? Did love play a part in that experience? If so, please describe.

CHAPTER 9

Exemplars of Divine Love

Introduction

Swami says that He is the embodiment of Love and love is His instrument. This chapter includes episodes that demonstrate love in action, taken from the lives and careers of Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and the Sai Avatars. This chapter also includes anecdotes from the lives of saints and devotees such as the *gopis* of Brindavan, Mira and others, who epitomised Supreme Love for the Lord. Swami says these examples are meant to inspire us to contemplate and intensify our practice of this discipline of love, which leads us ultimately to the realisation of our supreme goal.

Key concepts covered in this chapter include:

- A mother's love
- Love for God by Mira, Vibhishana and Rukmini, story of Jnanadeva and Bhaktideva
- Supreme devotion of the *gopis*—Radhika, Niraja
- Story of Dhruva
- Example of Saint Kulashekhara Alawar
- Lord Buddha
- Jesus Christ
- Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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A Mother's Love

You have to make your mother happy. Only then will there be peace and happiness in the world. It is meaningless to worship God without revering one's own parents. First of all, offer worship to your mother as she is the one who has given you birth. Only if the mother's heart is nectarous will the whole world be nectarous. Rama's Divinity blossomed under the loving care of Kausalya. As He was born from the womb of Kausalya, He got the qualities of Kausalya. That is why He is worshipped as God. Shivaji (Indian Emperor) could do so much sacrifice for the country because he was born to the pure lady, Jijabai. It is because of the nobility of the mother that the children attain good fortune. There is nothing beyond love. Only love is the mainspring of all your good fortune. A human being without love is lifeless. You should therefore adore and worship the mother who is the embodiment of love.

SSS 34.10: June 1, 2001

God's love is like an infinite and endless ocean. Simply because God's love is infinite and endless, you cannot carry all of it with you. What you can carry with you will depend on the size of the pot that you take. So the first thing to do is to enlarge the size of your pot and this can be done by the practice of *sādhanā* (spiritual discipline). In this *sādhanā*, the first step is respect for your mother. The *bhakti* (devotion) or love towards the mother should be such that you recognise the great love and affection with which your mother has brought you up. You must return gratitude to your mother in the form of love or *bhakti* (devotion). The mother will also show *bhakti* in the form of *vātsalya* (affection of mother for child), in return to the love of the child. Mother will bathe, dress and cajole the baby and put the baby to sleep. While doing all these, she will be attending to her daily duties. In this way, the attachment and affection between the mother and the child can be promoted. If promoted properly, that itself can be shaped in the form of *bhakti* towards the Lord.

SS 1976.14

This *Shivamātā*, this *Sai Mātā* (Mother of all) has the love of a thousand mothers towards Her children. That is why I do so much *lālana* (fondling) and so much *pālana* (protecting).

SSS 4.4: February 11, 1964

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Devotees

Mira

The power of love is unparalleled. It is beyond the ken of human understanding. Love can be understood only through love. Mira's husband Rana had built a *mandir* (temple) for Krishna. Being a great devotee of the Lord, Mira was always found in the *mandir* singing His glory ecstatically. Consequently, she earned the wrath of Rana. He commanded her to leave the *mandir*. This came as a great shock to Mira. She thought to herself, "When Krishna is all-pervasive and not confined to this *mandir* alone, how can Rana take me away from Him?" She left her home and hearth and set out to Mathura. Where is Mathura? It is not some geographical location. The heart suffused with nectarous love is Mathura. She sang, "*Chalare man Ganga Yamuna tīr*" (Oh mind! Go to the confluence of Ganga and Yamuna). Here Ganga and Yamuna symbolically mean *iḍā* and *pingalā* (left and right nerves that carry spiritual currents). The central part of the eyebrows where *iḍā* and *pingalā* meet stands for Mathura. This is the esoteric meaning of the song. She proceeded towards Mathura chanting the name of Krishna incessantly crossing rivers, hills, dales and forests. When she ultimately reached Brindavan, she found the temple doors closed. In spite of her repeated prayers, the doors did not open. Then she said, "Oh Krishna, my heart is Your temple. I have installed You in the altar of my heart". She banged her head against the temple door, calling out to Krishna. She had the vision of Krishna and merged in Him. King Rana repented for having driven away Mira from the temple. He prayed to Krishna for forgiveness.

People these days do not enquire into the inner meaning of certain words they use. They are carried away by the worldly meanings and interpretations. You should take into consideration the feelings that emerge from your heart which

is true and eternal. This is how Mira experienced oneness with Krishna. If one wishes to tread the path of devotion, one should hold on to the Principle of Love firmly. Ordinary mortals do not have such firm determination, but a true devotee will never deviate from the path of love under any circumstances. No other path except love can take us to God. Develop love more and more. Wherever you are, love is your sole refuge.

SSS 38.9: April 13, 2005

Vibhishana

How the love of the Divine manifests itself in a devotee is illustrated by the example of Vibhishana, the younger brother of Ravana. Vibhishana submitted himself to many indignities at the hands of Ravana out of the love he had for Rama. In the battle against the Rakshasas in Lanka, Rama and Lakshmana destroyed many of the great Rakshasa warriors on the first two days. On the third day a formidable warrior stood before them. Vibhishana told Rama: "If you conquer this warrior, the whole of Lanka will be yours. He is a greater warrior than even Ravana". Rama fought with this mighty Rakshasa the whole day, but could not vanquish him. Rama was on the point of giving up the battle for the day. At this stage, Vibhishana, who was behind Rama, 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 Vibhishana, Rama continued the fight and destroyed His opponent.

The formidable warrior fell on the battlefield. The moment he learned that the warrior was dead, Vibhishana also collapsed on the ground. Recovering himself after chanting the name of Rama, Vibhishana got up and confessed to Rama, "Swami! 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?" Rama observed, "That's all right. But why did you collapse so suddenly?" Vibhishana replied, "Swami! This happened because of bodily attachment. It was due to parental affection. That mighty warrior was my son".

He was Vibhishana's son. See what Vibhishana did. To ensure the victory of the Lord, Vibhis-

hana did not hesitate to get even his son killed in battle.

Rama asked Vibhishana, "Why did you do this? Is it not wrong on your part? Why did you not tell Me at the beginning that he was your son?" Vibhishana 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 concerned primarily about your victory and not about any temporary kinship. The only truth for me is Your will".

It is this abounding love of Vibhishana for Rama, which contributed to Rama's victory. Love for the Divine should be an inextricable bond. All other worldly attachments are impermanent. *Tāmasic* bonds (with qualities of sloth and inaction) are like iron chains. *Rājasic* bonds (with quality of passion) are copper chains. *Sātvic* (pure) 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. Vibhishana declared, "I have no use for any of these bonds. I am content with the pure love of Rama". It is to demonstrate to the world the supreme quality of total love for the Divine that Vibhishana acted in this manner.

SSS 29.29: July 27, 1996

Rukmini

When Krishna was being weighed in a balance, all the jewels of Sathyabhama 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 to more than balance Krishna's weight. So saying she placed a *tulasi* (type of basil plant considered sacred in India) 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 Sathyabhama were of no avail. But Rukmini's invoking the name of Krishna and

offering a *tulasi* leaf with a love-filled heart tilted the scales, more than balancing Krishna's weight. Such is the power of the Lord's name and a love-filled offering to the Lord.

SSS 29.52: November 23, 1996

Jnanadeva and Bhaktideva

There were two brothers, Jnanadeva and Bhaktideva. Both were going on a journey. On the way, they felt thirsty. Bhaktideva told Jnanadeva, "I am thirsty but I cannot see water anywhere". Jnanadeva 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.

Jnanadeva declared, "*Jnānāt eva tu kaivalyam*" (Only through knowledge, one can attain happiness). He immediately assumed the form of a bird, flew down to the water in the well, quenched his thirst and came up. Jnanadeva had the ability to assume any form because of the supreme knowledge of the Self.

Bhaktideva 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.

Jnāna (knowledge) requires a change in one's form. *Bhakti* (devotion) needs no such change. Intense, loving devotion will suffice. What the devotee needs will come running to him or her. There is nothing greater than devotion.

SSS 29.37: August 21, 1996

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Supreme Devotion of the *gopis*— Radhika, Niraja

Among the *gopis*, the foremost devotees of Krishna were Radhika and Niraja. Before Uddhava left, he heard them address Krishna as the Rama-parrot and pleaded for a vision of Krishna to assuage their grief-stricken hearts. Uddhava asked Radhika, who was lying unconscious on a sand-dune, whether she had any message for Krishna. Recovering her senses, Radhika thought only of Krishna. She cried:

*Were you a tree growing upwards I would
cling to you like a creeper.*

*Were you a blossoming flower I would hover
over you like a bee.*

*Were you the mountain Meru I would
cascade like a river.*

*Were you the boundless sky, I would be in you
like a star.*

*Were you the bottomless deep I would merge
in you like a river.*

Where are you, Oh Krishna?

*Whither have you gone, Krishna! Have you
no pity, Krishna! Krishna!*

On seeing Radhika in this piteous state, Uddhava's heart melted. He realised that Krishna had sent him on this mission to the *gopis* to make him learn what is true *bhakti* (devotion). Uddhava realised that Krishna had enacted that episode to show to him that even those well versed in the *shāstras* (scriptures) had to learn the inner truth about true devotion from the one-pointed, unalloyed devotion shown by the *gopis* towards Krishna. Love of God is the means and the goal. This was the secret revealed by the *gopis*. They saw love in everything—in the music of Krishna's flute, which filled the world with love and flooded the parched earth with love.

The Divine is in every one. But to realise it, there is only one way. It is to cultivate intense love of God. Only that day when one strives to develop such love for God is the day of Krishna's birth. Krishna is not born on every *Gokulāshṭami* (Krishna's birthday) day. Krishna is born in us when we try to develop Divine Love as the means to overcome our bonds. To live up to the teach-

ings of Krishna is the true way to celebrate His birthday.

SSS 16.23: August 31, 1983

One day the mother-in-law of Niraja was having fever and therefore Niraja was asked to go and light the lamp and bring it back. She was also told that she should not enter the house of Nanda and not attempt to look at Krishna. Niraja felt very happy that she had this opportunity of going to Nanda's house and of at least looking at the sacred house in which Krishna lived. But when Niraja went there, all her attention and all her thoughts were immersed in Krishna; and she was waiting for the opportunity of Krishna coming there at that time.

She was so immersed in the thought of Krishna that she was unmindful of the fact that the wick was already lighted and that the fire had spread onto her hand. Yasoda came out and saw this and said that Niraja was apparently new in the village; and she was surprised to see that her hand was burning, and yet she was not mindful of the event. At these words of Yasoda, Niraja regained her consciousness and was begging Yasoda not to tell about this incident to her in-laws as they would only harm her if they knew about this. She explained that she was lost in the visions of Krishna which she saw in the flame which she was lighting.

As she was saying these words, other *gopikas* quickly rushed in and saw this event. The *gopikas* who surrounded Niraja were not silent and they were quick in reporting this incident to all the others in the village. When the *gopikas* were singing like this, Niraja was very much afraid of the consequences and was worried what her mother-in-law would say; but she felt happy that all this was not half as important as the *darshan* of Krishna, which she had had. She was prepared for the consequences. Such love is the best with which to approach the Lord. In this matter, the *gopikas* were thinking of the form of Krishna all the time.

SS 1976.14

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Saints

Dhruva

Through *japa* (recitation), *dhyāna* (meditation) and *sevā* (selfless service), you have to cultivate love towards God. Take Dhruva, for example. He prayed and practised austerities in order to induce God to grant him the rulership of the kingdom. But when God appeared as Vishnu before him, he said, "Lord! I do not desire the Kingdom. I want You and You only". Similarly in the preliminary stages, one prays for worldly boons and material gain, but as thoughts get clarified and purified, one desires just one boon from the Lord—He Himself.

SSS 15.37: December 25, 1981

Kulasekhara Alwar

When there is this love, the devotee is filled with inexpressible ecstasy. It was out of such ecstasy that Kulasekhara Alwar, the royal saint, exclaimed, "Oh Lord! People talk of *moksha* (liberation) as the means of redeeming life and getting rid of birth and death. I do not ask for such redemption. I shall be content with loving You and serving You in countless lives. Allow me to love You and serve You—that is the only blessing I seek from You and not *moksha*".

SSS 19.1: January 19, 1986

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Avatars

Lord Buddha

Buddha was once confronted by a woman who was full of jealousy against Buddha because of His great popularity. When Buddha came towards her she expressed her wish to attack Him with a knife and kill Him, but Buddha smilingly told her "I love you too demoness". This surprised the demoness who thought nobody would love her and changed her heart instantly. She became a dove and surrendered at His feet. Anger begets anger and jealousy begets jealousy. The only way to conquer this is the sense of unity and love.

SSS 27.1: January 1, 1994

Jesus Christ

Every human being is potentially a messenger of God. But, today, human beings have become messengers of the Lord of Death. They are traitors to their true human state. Humanity demands that everyone should manifest the Divinity within. Everyone should be a real messenger of God and strive to promote peace and security in the world. There is no other path to be followed. God's message is sacred and totally free from self-interest.

When Christ was born, three kings came to see the infant. One of them declared that the child would be a lover of God. The second one said that He would be the beloved of God. The third one declared that He was God. A lover of God is a messenger of God. The one whom God loves is a "Son of God". When one experiences both of these, He becomes one with God. "Father and Son are one".

Therefore, at the outset you must prepare yourselves to be messengers of God. This means that you should live up to the message of God. The message calls for service to all. Compassion, morality and integrity are essential elements in the message. In propagating this message faith in God should be promoted. Love should be the watchword. The absence of love gives rise to hatred. Today there is no unity among the people. Without unity how can there be bliss? Without bliss how can anyone experience God?

SSS 28.38: December 25, 1995

Jesus resolved on three tasks: one, to be filled with Divine Love and to share it with others was the main purpose of His life; two, He should not succumb to praise or censure in carrying out His mission; three, to inspire in others the conviction that the Divinity within is omnipresent. Jesus considered spreading the gospel of love as His foremost task. He encountered many ordeals in carrying out His mission but He regarded them all as challenges to be overcome. He was determined to treat pleasure and pain, sickness and failure with equanimity. He could not bear to see anyone suffer. He was opposed to the business of trafficking birds that was going on in the temple in Jerusalem. The affected persons turned against Him. But Jesus carried on regardless of their hos-

tility. In the end He sacrificed His life for the sake of others and out of His love for all.

SSS 28.38: December 25, 1995

The Divine, though it moves among all and sundry, can never be affected or deflected. Envious folk heaped insults on Jesus. Even among His disciples, some betrayed Him and deserted Him. Self-dominated people turn envious at greatness and goodness. But since the *prema* (love) of Jesus, had no trace of self in it, Jesus was unafraid. The loveless are enveloped in fear. Love instils courage and promotes adventure. It delights in daring. If you follow the Master, you can face the devil, fight to the end and finish the game.

SSS 15.37: December 25, 1981

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Swami's Letter to His Brother

(25th May 1947)

It is not the way of the great to swell when people offer worship and shrink when people cool off. As a matter of fact, no sacred text lays down rules to regulate the lives of the great, prescribing habits and attitudes they must adopt. They themselves know the path they must take. Their wisdom regulates and makes their acts holy. Self-reliance and beneficial activity—these two are their special marks. They may also be engaged in the promotion of the welfare of devotees and in giving them the fruits of their actions. Why should you be affected by doubt and worry, so long as I am adhering to these two? After all, praise and blame do not touch the *Atma*. They can touch only the outer frame.

You must have read the life stories of Saints and divine personages. In those books, you must have read also of horrible falsehood and heinous imputations cast against them. This is the lot of *mahatmas*, everywhere and at all times. Why then do you take these things so much to heart? Have you not heard of dogs that howl at the stars? How long can they go on? Authenticity will soon win.

I will not give up My mission nor My determination. I shall carry them out. I treat with equanimity, the honour or dishonour that may result. Internally, I am totally unconcerned. I act, but solely in the outer world. If I talk and move

about, it is entirely for the sake of the outer world and for making the people realise the advent of Divinity. Other than this, I have no concern with anything.

I do not belong to any place. I am not attached to any name. I have no “Mine” or “Thine”. I respond to whatever name you might use. I go wherever I am needed or called.

For Me the world is something afar and apart. I act and move only for the sake of mankind.

No one can comprehend My Glory, whosoever it may be, whatever be the method of enquiry and no matter how long the attempt.

You will yourself see the full Glory unfolding in the coming years. Devotees must have patience and forbearance.

I am not concerned, nor am I anxious that these facts should be made known. I have no need to write these words. I wrote them because I felt that you will be pained if I do not reply.

May 25, 1947

What I will must take place; what I plan must succeed. I am truth; and truth has no need to hesitate, or fear, or bend. “Willing” is superfluous for Me. For My grace is ever available to devotees who have steady love and faith. Since I move freely among them, talking and singing, even intellectuals are unable to grasp My truth, My power, My glory or My real task as Avatar. I can solve any problem however knotty. I am beyond the reach of the most intensive enquiry and the most meticulous measurement. Only those who have recognised My love and experienced that love can assert that they have glimpsed My reality, for the path of love is the royal road that leads humankind to Me.

Do not attempt to know Me through the external eyes. When you go to a temple and stand before the image of God, you pray with closed eyes, don't you? Why? Because you feel that the inner eye of wisdom alone can reveal Him to you. Therefore, do not crave from Me trivial material objects but crave for Me and you will be rewarded. Not that you should not receive whatever objects I give as sign of grace out of the fullness of love. I shall tell you why I give these rings, talismans and rosaries. It is to signalise the bond between Me and those to whom they are given.

When calamity befalls them, the article comes to Me in a flash and returns in a flash taking from Me the remedial grace of protection. That grace is available to all who call on Me in any name or form, not merely to those who wear these gifts. Love is the bond that wins grace.

Consider the meaning of the name Sai Baba. *Sa* means “divine”. *Āi* or *āyi* means “mother” and *baba* means “father”. The name indicates the divine mother and father, just as *sāmbashiva*, which also means the divine mother and father. Your physical parents exhibit love with a dose of selfishness but this Sai “mother and father” showers affection or reprimands only to lead you toward victory in the struggle for Self-realisation.

For this Sai has come in order to achieve the supreme task of uniting the entire humankind, as one family through the bond of kinship, of affirming and illumining the *atmic* reality of each being in order to reveal the Divine that is the basis on which the entire cosmos rests, and of instructing all to recognise the common, divine heritage that binds human to human, so that the human being can rid himself or herself of the animal and rise into the Divine, which is the goal.

I am the embodiment of Divine 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 sweets. Those who preen themselves as atheists will one day, when their illness is gone, relish God and revere Him.

I had to tell you so much about My truth, for I desire that you should contemplate on this and derive joy therefrom, so that you may be inspired to observe the disciplines laid down by Me and progress toward the goal of Self-realisation, the realisation of the Sai that shines in your hearts.

SSS 12.38: June 19, 1974

I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added lustre. I have not come to speak on behalf of any particular *dharma* (faith or religion), like the Hindu *dharma*. I have not come on any mission of publicity for any sect, or creed or cause; nor have I come to collect followers for any doctrine.

I have no plan to attract disciples or devotees into My fold or any fold. I have come to tell you of this universal unitary faith, this *Atmic* Principle, this path of love, this *dharma* of love, this duty of love, this obligation to love.

SSS 8.22: July 4, 1968

Study Questions: Exemplars of Divine Love

Group Study Questions

1. Why is a mother's love pure and selfless?
2. What is the essential message of the story of Vibhishana?
3. Describe the essential message of the story of Rukmini.
4. How does the power of love compare to the power of knowledge, according to the story of Jnanadeva and Bhaktideva?

Personal Introspection Question

Can you imagine specific ways in which your recognition of the love inherent in each and every person you encounter, regardless of their behavior, can contribute to the coming of the Golden Age? If so, please describe.

PART II

DISCOURSE 1

Parama Prema (Divine Love)

The Lord is Love.

His form is Love.

All beings are Love. Love saves and serves.

Through Love alone can Good arise.

Love reveals the God in all.

Love binds one person to another. Love attaches one thing to another. Without love the universe is naught. The highest love makes us aware of the Lord in every one. The Lord is equally present in all. Life is love; love is life. Without God, deprived of God, nothing and nobody can exist. We live on and through the Divine Will. It is His Will that operates as love, in each of us. It is He who prompts the prayer, "Let all the worlds be happy". For, He makes us aware that the God we adore, the God we love, the God we live by, is in every other being as Love. Thus love expands and encompasses all creation.

Looking a little closer, we discover that life itself is love. They are not two but one. Love is the very nature of life, as burning is the nature of fire, or wetness of water, or sweetness of sugar. We tend a plant only when the leaves are green. When they become dry and the plant becomes a lifeless stick, we stop loving it. Love lasts as long as life exists. The mother is loved as long as there is life in her. When life departs, we bury her without the least compunction. Love is bound with life. In fact, love is life. The person with no love to share is as bad as dead. This is the reason why love expands in an ever widening circle.

Love is the fruit of life. The fruit has three components' the skin, the juicy kernel and the seed. To experience the fruit, we have first to remove the skin. The skin represents egoism, the "I" feeling—the excluding, limiting, individualising principle. The seed represents "selfishness", the "mine" feeling—the possessive, the greedy, desireful principle. This too has to be discarded. What remains is the sweet juice, the *rasa*, which the *Upanishads* describe as divine, the Love Supreme. *Parama Prema* is *jyoti* (flame), *amrutam* (nectar of immortality), *Brahmā* (Supreme Self): "*Āpo jyotīraso amrutam Brahma*". Everyone has the right to partake of this nectarine *prema* (love) and to share it with others. No one is excluded on the basis of race, caste, creed or place of origin. The only condition is: "Have the skin and the seed been removed?"

Give Love to God and Be Liberated from Worry

When the Love Principle is known and practised, the human being will be free from anxiety and fear. Imagine visiting a friend in a city and planning to stay with that friend for ten days. You have some money with you and you are afraid to carry it about with you. Now if you have handed over the purse to your friend for safe-keeping, you can happily go round to all the places in the city and suburbs that you long to visit. You can roam through the busiest market with no trace of fear. The purse you had is love. Give it all to God. He will liberate you from worry, anxiety and fear.

Through *japa* (recitation), *dhyāna* (meditation) and *sevā sādhanā* (selfless service), you have to cultivate love towards God. Take Dhruva, for example. He prayed and practised austerities in order to induce God to grant him the rulership of the Kingdom. But when God appeared as Vishnu before him, he said, “Lord. I do not desire the Kingdom. I want You and You only”. Similarly in the preliminary stages, one prays for worldly boons and material gain, but as thoughts get clarified and purified, one desires just one boon from the Lord—He Himself.

For, God is the entity closest to the human being, dearest to the human being. Your mother and father might be a little afar but God is right with you, in you. Even if you do not love Him, He will not depart from you or move afar. “*Anorañīyān*” (smaller than the atom) say the *Vedas*. He becomes “*Mahato mahīyān*”, expanding beyond the cosmos and filling all with grace. In every cell, He will be in you. You can earn this awareness through intense love.

Good Works Always Provoke the Wicked

Jesus was compassion (*karuṇā*) come in human form. He spread the spirit of compassion and conferred solace on the distressed and the suffering. Noticing the torture of birds and beasts at the temple in Jerusalem, He reprimanded the vendors and drove them out of the precincts. He drew upon Himself the anger of the priests.

Good works always provoke the wicked. But one should not falter or fear when opposition obstructs. The challenge gives joy. It evokes hidden

sources of strength. It brings down grace to reinforce the effort. Pleasure springs during the interval between two pains. One has to struggle with difficulties in order to taste the delight of victory. Jesus was the target for many mighty obstacles and He braved them all. As a result, His name and story and message are shedding splendrous light all over the world now.

Not Jesus only, every prophet, messenger of God, teacher of Truth and spiritual leader had to endure ridicule, neglect and persecution. Though a diamond is cast in a dust bin its lustre remains. Its price will not diminish. Though a sweet pumpkin grows on a thorny fence its taste remains. Its attraction will not diminish. Even if a peacock's egg is hatched in a fowl-roost, its charm remains and its nature does not change.

The Divine, though it moves among all and sundry, can never be affected or deflected. Envious folk heaped insults on Jesus. Even among His disciples, some betrayed Him and deserted Him. Self-dominated people turn envious at greatness and goodness. But since the *prema* of Jesus had no trace of self in it Jesus was unafraid. The loveless are enveloped in fear. Love instils courage and promotes adventure. It delights in daring. If you follow the Master, you can face the devil, fight to the end and finish the game.

Love Must Bind All Believers Together

Jesus was Love. *Sathya Sai* too is Love. That explains the gathering of Christians of all sects, which we see here. In Rome today, Catholics gather to celebrate the advent of Jesus. The Protestants celebrate it by themselves in their churches. The Jews are not welcomed anywhere. But in the presence of *Sathya Sai*, all are equally welcome. The Jews arraigned Jesus and demanded that He should be punished. In this presence [*Sathya Sai Baba's* presence], Jews are adoring that very Jesus. The *prema* of *Sathya Sai* has transformed and transcended those memories. It made them realise that there is only one caste, the caste of humanity. There is only one religion, the religion of Love.

A few moments ago, *AI Drucker* spoke to you on Jesus Christ. He got the courage and the wisdom to offer homage to Christ because of the impact of *Swami's* presence. He understands that

there is only one God and that God is omnipresent. Names and forms are different naturally but they are all aspects of the *One*. Love must bind all believers together. Not only believers but non-believers too must be loved and served as His images.

Love must be manifested as *sevā*. *Sevā* must take the form of food for the hungry, solace for the forlorn, consolation for the sick and the suffering. Jesus wore Himself out in such *sevā*. The heart full of compassion is the temple of God. Jesus pleaded for compassion. Compassion was His

message. He was sorely distressed at the sight of the poor. This day Jesus is worshipped but His teachings are neglected. Sai is being worshipped but His teachings are neglected. Everywhere, pomp, pageantry, hollow exhibitionism. Lectures, lectures, lectures! No activity, no love, no *sevā*. Heroes while lecturing, zeroes while putting what is said into practice. Develop compassion. Live in love. Be good, do good and see good. This is the way to God.

SSS 15.37: December 25, 1981



DISCOURSE 2

The Power of Divine Love

Love is the form of the Divine.

Love alone can merge in Love.

When one is filled with Divine Love

He or she can experience oneness with the Divine.

Happiness arises from pure love which is also the source of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and forbearance.

Students, Embodiments of Divine Love. The ancient renown of Bharatiya culture is tainted today by the proliferation of three evil tendencies—indulgence in self-praise, scandalising others and hypocrisy. What is the reason for this? It is the pursuit of mundane pleasures by the human being who forgets the glory of pure love.

There is no one in Bharat who does not know the word *prema* (love). The entire cosmos is steeped in it. *Prema* is incomparable and indescribable. The sage Narada declared “*Anirvachaniyam Prema*” (Love transcends speech).

The Difference between Prema and Anurāga

At the human level, this love assumes many forms. The word “love” is used in common parlance in the context of the relations between mother and child, husband and wife, master and servant, the preceptor and the pupil. But this is not true love. It cannot be termed *prema*. It is only *anurāga* (affection). *Prema* can be applied only to the total love towards the Divine. It is utterly selfless. It has not come from the world nor has it fallen from the sky. It is *sahaja swarūpam* (the essence of one’s nature that expresses itself spontaneously without external promptings).

Today the human being has forgotten this sacred and enduring love. There is nothing equal to love in this world. Even nectar is insipid in comparison with the sweetness of love. This love makes even the Divine dance in ecstasy, as well as the devotee. It expresses itself in dance. Such a love can find no place in the heart of self-seeking persons. It will dwell only in the hearts of the pure, the unselfish and the godly.

The scriptures have compared this love to a precious diamond. Where is this gem to be found? When even ordinary diamonds are preserved with great care in a strong safe, how much more safely should the precious diamond of love be preserved? Who is entitled to offer this

diamond to others? Only the person who is filled with love and who sustains himself or herself by love always. Only the Divine is qualified to offer such love. Only the Divine, who is the Embodiment of Love, knows the value of love.

Hence, the greater your love for the Divine, the greater is the bliss you experience. Your bliss declines in the measure of the diminution in your love. The extent of your love determines the magnitude of your bliss. The love which human beings today show towards God is filled with selfishness. The love is for the purpose of securing some desires. But love is not a commercial commodity to be gotten in exchange. It is offered spontaneously.

Pure Love Is the Royal Road to Reach God

There are many ways of realising God. Among them are the *shanti mārṅa* (path of peace), the *sākhya sārṅa* (path of friendship), *anurāṅa mārṅa* (path of affection), *vātsalya mārṅa* (path of maternal love), *madhura mārṅa* (path of sweetness). In all these five paths, there is some element of self-interest. But in the *prema mārṅa* (path of pure love), there is no trace of self-interest. Hence, all other paths merge in the path of love. Pure love is therefore the royal road.

We should consider that this love is present in all. It is the form of the Divine. Because the Divine is present in all, whomever you love, you are loving the Divine. Forgetting this sublime and all-encompassing conception of love, human beings today have lost themselves in narrow alleys. To promote love between humanity and God, the Divine descends on earth from time to time. For what purpose is the advent? To promote the Love Principle is His primary purpose.

Failing to understand the true meaning of this Love Principle, the human being is undermining his or her life. Everyone should realise that Love is present equally in all beings. But this Love assumes many different forms when it is exhibited in different relationships in worldly life. The love between husband and wife is termed *moha* (infatuation). The love between a mother and child is called *vātsalya* (maternal love). The love between kith and kin is called *anurāṅa* (affection). The love towards God is termed *bhakti* (devotion).

Thus love is one but is expressed in many ways. Experiences are varied, but the goal is one. To carry on this life in this phenomenal world, love has assumed these manifold forms. The forms of love keep changing according to one's relationships. But pure love is unchanging. Such pure love is limited today by the human being's self-interest.

How the Human Being's Love Changes from Time to Time

Immediately after birth as an infant the son clings to the mother's bosom and considers it as paradise. As the child grows, he gets interested in education and forgets the mother. In boyhood, the son experiences this love in sports and games, in studies and recreation. After completing his education, he enters on family life and immerses himself in sensual pleasures. Later he gets interested in earning wealth and loses interest in the wife and the children. Later on he loses interest even in wealth and turns his thoughts towards God. Thus, a man exhibits his love for different objects at different stages in his life. [Swami sang a song describing how a man's love changes from time to time and how he wastes his life at the end without developing love for God].

Students. Love is not something which enters your life midway. It is the *Atmic* Principle which is always with you at all times. You should not allow this love to change from moment to moment. You must transmute all your thoughts into expressions of love. To regard whatever actions you perform as an offering to God is the best form of *sāḍhanā*. Whatever good deeds or spiritual acts you may perform, if they are not suffused with love they are worthless.

Love Is Like a Mariner's Compass

Love is like a mariner's compass, which always points to the north. Love should direct you Godward in every action that you do. There is no greater path or goal than this. Scholarship or ritual worship will not serve to transform your spirituality. Fill your hearts with love of God. Then the nation will enjoy peace. Your view of the world depends on the colour of the glasses you wear. When your vision is filled with love, the whole creation will appear as *Brahmamayam* (filled

with Divinity). This is what the youth of today needs most.

This love is not related to the body. It is based on the heart. It is present equally in all. There may be varied bodily relationships but the kinship based on the *Atma* is one and the same. “*Ekovasi sarvabhūta-antarātma*” (the One who dwells in all beings). It is like the current that is common to all bulbs of varying power.

There should be no trace of selfishness in love. Unfortunately today the hearts of human beings have become barren without love. Hence, there is no compassion in them. People today behave in a more cruel manner than wild animals in the jungle. There is hatred between man and man. Maternal love has become rare and fraternal feelings among siblings are absent. The love among the Pandava brothers and that among Rama and his brothers are supreme examples of fraternal love.

Dharmaraja’s One-pointed Devotion to Krishna

The Pandavas overcame all their trials and tribulations by their faith in God. The eldest of the Pandavas, Dharmaraja, had his mind always centred on Krishna. He was known for his one-pointed, simple-minded devotion to Krishna. He always thought of Krishna even while experiencing all kinds of difficulties in exile. Even when his children, the Upapandavas were killed by Aswathama, he did not give way to grief because of his faith in Krishna. When he reigned as a mighty emperor, he did not feel elated and he was not overwhelmed by grievous ordeals. For the Pandavas, the Lord came first, the world next and their own interests last. First God, then the world, last “I”.

The Kauravas had a different order of priorities. First “I”, then the world and God last, with the result that they lost everything. Because the Pandavas kept God in the forefront, they were ultimately successful in their endeavours. If you want to succeed in life, you have to develop love of God as the most potent weapon. It was love which enabled the ancient sages to live in harmony with wild animals in the forest. Such is the power of love. But students today are not recognising the power of this pure love. Instead, they

are immersed in impure desires and undermining their precious lives.

The *gopikas* exemplified the highest and purest form of love for God. [Swami sang a song which the *gopikas* addressed to Krishna, praying to Him to fill their parched hearts with nectarine showers of His love.] Love of God is greater than nectar. It is called *parā bhakti*, devotion to the Lord. It transcends the four *purushārthas* (goals of life). The human being may love the body, the mind, the *buddhi* (intellect) or the *anthaḥ karaṇa* (the inner instruments). Love for the body ends with the death of the body. Love for the mind results in bondage because of the aberrations of the mind. Love for the intellect results in endless speculation and enquiry. Love for the *anthaḥ karaṇa* promotes the ego feeling. It encourages dualism (separating the human being from God). Only the one who realises his or her oneness with the *Atma* can experience infinite bliss—the bliss that is eternal.

Investigate the Nature of the “I”

Everyone should undertake an enquiry into the ultimate goal of life. For instance, we find that *ghee* (clarified butter) is the ultimate product derived from milk after it goes through the processes of conversion to curds and butter. This process of inquiry is known as *mimāmsa*. You have to investigate the nature of the “I”, which claims ownership of the body, the mind, the senses and other things (“my body”, “my mind” and so on). If you are not the body or the mind, who are you? Does anyone pursue this line of enquiry?

The human being is called *mānava*. This Sanskrit term has two meanings. One is, the human is a being who lives free from ignorance. The other meaning is that the human is not a new being, but has had a long past in many previous lives. When such meanings are recognised in terms of *vedantic* parlance, the greatness of human birth becomes evident. It fills one with joy.

Students. The world today is simmering with discord and violence. Peace and security are absent. Fear stalks the land everywhere. To get rid of fear, you have to acquire *abhayatwam* (fearlessness). How is it to be achieved? When you reduce desires and attachments.

Students. Develop morality and good conduct. Lead exemplary lives and serve the nation. The sole purpose of education is to develop humility and discipline. Respect your parents and have love for God. This is true education.

Your work as *sevādal* members and as volunteer helpers must correct your vision, clarify

your eyes, enable them to see God in everyone. Then, that awareness will transmute every word, thought and deed of yours into a benediction.

SSS 25.21: May 30, 1992



DISCOURSE 3

Real Name of God Is Love

It is the power of love that is responsible for the earth's rotation without a pivot.

*It is the power of love that makes the stars
stand across the sky without falling on the ground.*

*It is the power of love that keeps the oceans
within their limits.*

*It is the power of love that makes the wind
blow incessantly in all the worlds.*

*That power of love is mysterious, infinite,
most wonderful and one without a second.*

It permeates the entire cosmos.

The entire creation is saturated with love.

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love. God is love. Love is the form of God. The *Bhagavad-Gita* declares, “*Mamaivāṃsho jīvaloke jīvabhūta sanātana*” (The eternal *Atma* in all beings is a part of the Divine). Just as God, the Embodiment of Love, showers His love on the entire world, the human being too should share his or her love with one and all. The Principle of Love is beyond definition or description. As human beings are not able to recognise the sacredness of love, they are directing it towards worldly and ephemeral objects. God transcends all attributes. The same can be said of love too. But the human being conditions and limits love by associating it with worldly relations and wastes a life. A person uses the sacred word love to describe the relationship between mother and child, wife and husband, brothers, friends and relatives. Prior to birth who is mother and who is child? Similarly, prior to marriage who is husband and who is wife? The relationship that exists between mother and child, wife and husband, brothers, sisters, friends and relatives has the physical body as its basis. This physical relationship cannot be called love in the true sense of the term. There is no giving and receiving in true love. Many modern devotees pray, “O God, if you fulfil my desires, I will offer you ten coconuts”. They offer their filthy hair and pray for mighty favours. Can this be called devotion? No. Not at all. A true devotee is one who only gives and does not expect anything in return. Surrender is the true sign of devotion.

The world is combination of *dharma* and *adharma* (unrighteousness). Human life is a combination of physical and spiritual aspects, which are related, respectively, to the head and the heart. But the human being follows the head and has only the physical world in view, thereby forgetting the spiritual aspect. So long as a person follows the head alone, neither that person

nor the society or the country at large, can attain peace and security. Peace and security will reign supreme in this world only when the human being gives up body attachment and follows the Principle of Love that originates from the heart. The dualities of righteousness and unrighteousness, truth and falsehood, merit and sin, heat and cold co-exist in this creation of God. People want *adharma* to be eradicated completely from this world. They want only *dharma* to exist but it is not possible. In this world, *dharma* cannot exist without *adharma* and vice-versa. The world itself is a combination of *dharma* and *adharma*. It cannot exist if one of them is absent. The human being should use his or her power of discrimination and lead a life dedicated to *dharma*. There lies the secret of happiness.

Follow Your Dharma

The human beings' *dharma* is different from the *dharma* of animals. But human beings are unable to differentiate between the two. A human's *dharma* is to adhere to the principles of Truth, Non-violence and compassion. The human being can never attain peace and security so long as he or she does not give up bestial qualities. Food, sleep, fear and procreation are common for humans and animals. Then, what is the human being's *dharma*? To think that you are a human being constitutes only half of the total truth. The other part of the truth lies in understanding that you are not an animal. You should keep reminding yourself, "I am a human being, not an animal". Do not stop at this stage. Enquire further as to which sex you belong to and which stage of life you are in, whether you are a *brahmachāri*, *grihastha*, *vānaprastha* or *sanyāsin* (celibate, householder, recluse or renunciate). Follow the appropriate *dharma* according to the stage of your life. When you are a celibate, you should not follow the *dharma* of a householder. There will be decline in morals giving rise to troubles and turmoil when a human being fails to adhere to the *dharma* appropriate to his or her stage of life. A person today is unable to understand the principle of *dharma* corresponding to each of the four stages of life. The code of conduct is different for different stages of life. Never be under the mistaken notion that *dharma* is the same for all people ir-

respective of their stage of life. The cause of *adharma* today is that the human being is trying to follow *dharma* that is not appropriate to his or her age or stage of life. Each should strictly adhere to the *dharma* corresponding to his or her age and stage of life.

All Belong to the Race of Humanity

Today people do not understand the significance of different faiths and different modes of worship that are prevalent in Bharat. They feel it is the existence of different castes, communities and religions that is responsible for all the violence, unrest and conflict in this country. Existence of different religions has nothing to do with the violence and conflict in this country. Absence of inner purity is responsible for all this. It is the mind of the human being which is responsible for conflict and disturbance, not differences in religions and communities. It is a grave mistake to attribute unrest and disturbance in a country to the existence of different religions. For thousands of years people in India have lived in unity and fraternity in spite of the existence of various religions and communities.

Religions are many but goal is one.

Jewels are many but gold is one.

Stars are many but sky is one.

Cows are many but milk is one.

Beings are many but breath is one.

Nations are many but earth is one.

Flowers are many but worship is one.

Different religions have come into existence to lead the human being to Divinity, not to create conflict and disturbance. There is nothing wrong with any religion. The mistake lies in *mati* (mind), not in *mata* (religion). If mind is good, how can one find fault with religion? All people belong to one *jāti* (race), the *mānava jāti* (human race). You should understand the meaning of *jāti*. It is based on form.

Human Race Is One But Human Beings Are Different

For example, all flowers belong to the same *jāti*, but you cannot get mangoes when you sow a *neem* seed. No doubt all trees belong to the same *jāti* but their fruits and the flavour of their fruits vary. There are in all 450 kinds of tastes corre-

sponding to the fruits of various trees. You should try to understand the underlying principle of the unity of each *jāti*. The human race is one but human beings are different. Their feelings, thoughts and behaviour patterns are different.

It is utter foolishness to think of annihilating the *jāti* as a whole. It may be possible to kill a few individuals but it is not possible to annihilate the entire human race. The human race is true and eternal. It is highly sacred. It is a sign of ignorance to give room for differences and conflicts without understanding the unity of the human race. You have to recognise the Divinity in the human being as the basis of human unity. The ancient culture of Bharat lays great emphasis on understanding this unity in diversity. This is possible only through love.

Love is God. God is love.

Cultivating love is the true spiritual practice.

*If one holds on to the Principle of Love firmly,
one becomes eligible to attain the state of
non-dualism*

(Telugu Poem)

Love Is Your True Form

The state of non-dualism is contained in the Principle of Love alone. But the human being, carried away by body attachment and physical relationship, fragments his or her love in various ways. This cannot be called love in the true sense of the term. As Swami repeatedly stresses the need to cultivate love, some people may wonder as to what is the form of love. The answer is: *Prem Īshwar hai; Īshwar prem hai* (Love is God; God is Love). Love is the fundamental basis of everything. *Atma, Brahma, hridaya, uniki* (existence) are synonyms of love. Love is *Atma*. Love is *Brahma*. Everything is suffused with love. Then how can we describe the form of love? The same Principle of Love exists in one and all. Once you understand this principle of unity, there will be no scope for hatred.

Today conflicts are on the rise because unity is forgotten. *Ekātma sarvabhūtantarātma* (Beings are different but the same *Atma* dwells in all). *Adwaitam Brahma* (*Brahma* is non-dual). *Brahma* means vastness. It indicates unity and not multiplicity. So give up body attachment and strengthen faith in the spirit of oneness. It is only

the body attachment that is responsible for evil qualities like anger, jealousy and greed. Some people go to the temple of Lord Venkateswara and pray, "Swami, if You fulfil my desires, I will perform *Brahmotsavam* for You". Some others pray, "Swami, if my daughter gets married, I will conduct Your *Kalyānam*" (marriage). Can there be a marriage for God? Does God fulfil your wish so that you may perform His marriage? With such prayers people are trying to cheat even God. One should pray to God out of love, not with expectation of any favours from Him. Prayer born out of selfishness is no prayer at all. You should see the *Atma* everywhere and think that you are in the company of God always.

Confidence Is the Basis of Love

Embodiments of Love. I often address you as "Embodiments of Love" because love is your true form, which is pure, unsullied, eternal, ancient, formless and non-dual. You love your mother because you have the confidence that she is your mother. So, confidence is the basis of love.

Where there is confidence, there is love,

Where there is love, there is peace,

Where there is peace, there is truth,

Where there is truth, there is bliss,

Where there is bliss, there is God.

Peace, truth and bliss are not elsewhere. They are in you. You are the embodiment of peace, truth and bliss. It is foolish to search for peace and bliss in the external world. Nothing exists separate from you. Everything is the reflection of the inner being. Try to visualise your reflection in a mirror. In order to propagate this truth, Lord Krishna declared in the *Bhagavad-Gita*: "All are a part of My Being". I and you are not separate. The Principle of Love is one and the same in both of us. All your spiritual practices will prove futile, if you do not adhere to the Principle of Love.

The world is like a mirror. All that you find in this mirror is only the reflection, not the reality. Your right eye appears as the left eye in the mirror. Then how can you consider it as reality? When the mirror is removed, the reflection also disappears and the reality remains. Consider yourself as the embodiment of Divinity. Experience your true nature of love. This is *sākshātkāra*

(Self-realisation). Some people claim to have the vision of the Self in meditation, but the vision of your reality is true *sākshātkāra*.

All the worldly relationships are temporary like passing clouds. They are subject to change with the passage of time, but the reality is absolutely changeless. That is the Principle of Love. Worldly love may turn into hatred with the change of time. What is liked today may not be liked tomorrow. But love has no likes and dislikes. God is no different from love. You may adore Him as Jesus, Zoroaster, Allah, Rama, Krishna, Buddha or Guru Nanak. You may call Him by any name. All these are *pettina perulu* (names given by somebody). Love alone is *puttina peru* (natural name). The names given are bound to change but love is changeless. You should aspire for that love. That is true *bhakti* (devotion). *Bhakti* confers on you *yukti* (discrimination), *virakti* (detachment) and *mukti* (liberation).

Consider the Entire Universe as a Single Family

Lord Krishna was the embodiment of love. His name consists of five letters—K, R, S, N, A—which represent the *pancha bhūtas* (five elements), the *pancha prāṇās* (five life forces) and the *pancha koshas* (five life sheaths). Krishna is interpreted as *Karshati iti Krishna* (Because He attracts He is Krishna). *Krishiti iti Krishna* (Krishna is the plougher). That is, Krishna is one who ploughs the field of your heart and sows the seed of love in it. *Krushyati iti Krishna* (Because He imparts bliss, He is called Krishna). Thus the Divinity of Krishna can be perceived in every place and activity.

In this world everything is suffused with Divinity. Other than Divinity nothing exists. Even this cloth (handkerchief) is divine. This flower is divine. Everything is divine. If there is no Divinity in this cloth, one will not desire for it. Love pervades everything. You should make every effort to understand this. The human heart is full of love. Many students write to Me, “Swami, I love You”. They use the symbol of *hridaya* to denote love. This means *hridaya* is that which is filled with love and compassion. *Hridaya* is the very form of God. *Īshwara sarva bhūtānam* (God dwells in all beings); *Ishāvāsyam idam jagat* (God permeates

the entire universe); *Sarvam khalvidam Brahma* (Verily all this is *Brahman*). Share your love not only with your fellow beings but also with birds and beasts. Stand united. Consider the entire universe as a single family.

Embodiments of Love. Today you find disturbance and unrest all over the world. The reason is that the human being lacks broadmindedness. There is no expansion of love in human beings. There is only contraction of love. Narrow-mindedness is the human being’s own creation. You are trying to limit the infinite *Atmic* Principle.

Guru Dispels the Darkness of Ignorance

Embodiments of Love. Today we are celebrating the festival of *Guru Pūrṇimā*. Who is *Guru*? “Gu” stands for *gunātīta* (attributeless). “Ru” signifies *rupavarjita* (formless). There is another interpretation of the word *Guru*.

Gukāro andhakārasyāt; Rukārasthannirodhaka (“Gu” signifies darkness and “Ru” denotes that which dispels darkness). So, God, who is attributeless and formless, is the true *Guru*. In the word “*Bhagawan*” (God) the letter “Bha” stands for effulgence. An ordinary electric bulb illuminates only a limited area, but God who is all-pervasive illumines the entire creation. Divinity shines in everybody. So do not hate anybody. In this world people are driven by hatred and narrow feelings. They go even to the extent of killing each other. What a heinous crime it is. Hurting others amounts to hurting God Himself. Our hatred will certainly rebound on us. Today people derive demonic pleasure in causing harm to others without understanding the truth that one day or the other they will have to reap the consequences of their actions. Make others happy and you will certainly be happy. Today violence and murders have become the order of the day. Greatness does not lie in killing others. Even an insect is capable of doing that. Greatness lies in saving lives.

Embodiments of Love. You are bound to face the consequences of your actions. So do good and you will certainly reap good results. Do not get disheartened if there is no immediate reward. Wait for a while. You will certainly be rewarded. Your suffering is nothing but the consequence of

bad deeds in the past. Prayer alone can alleviate your suffering to some extent. Prayer is a way of expressing your gratitude to God.

The Quality of *Kshama*

As Venkataraman has pointed out (in his speech made earlier), the quality of *Kshama* (forbearance) is the most essential for one and all.

Forbearance is truth.

Forbearance is righteousness.

Forbearance is non-violence.

Forbearance is the teaching of the Vedas.

Forbearance confers happiness and heavenly bliss.

(Telugu Poem)

Forgive those who have harmed you and criticised you. Have faith that whatever happens is for your own good. If someone hurls abuses on you, do not retaliate. Enquire within yourself whether he or she has criticised the body or the *Atma*. If that person has criticised the body, indirectly he or she has done a favour to you because the body is nothing but a heap of flesh, blood, bones and faecal matter. On the other hand if he or she has criticised the *Atma*, it amounts to criticising his or her own self because the same *Atma* exists in both of you. One should cultivate this kind of forgiveness and broad-mindedness.

Embodiments of Love. Guru is one who dispels the darkness of ignorance arising out of body attachment. Body is but an instrument. God has given you the body to take to the path of action. It is God's gift. *Deho devālaya prokto jīvo deva sanātana* (The body is the temple and the Indweller is God). Consider all bodies as temples of God and offer your salutations. Salute even your enemies. *Sarva jīva namaskāram Keshavam prati gachhati* and likewise *Sarva jīva tiraskāram Keshavam prati gachhati* (Whomsoever you salute, it reaches God and whomsoever you censure, it also reaches God).

Understand the Principle of Unity

I often address you as *bangaru* (gold) because you are the embodiment of *Hirañyagarbha*. The principle of *Hirañyagarbha* is present in your heart. You may change the shape of the jewel, but gold remains changeless. The value of gold decreases when it is mixed with various metals like

copper and brass. Likewise, the human being by birth is highly pure and most valuable. But on account of his or her association with evil desires and bad company, the human being loses his or her value.

Tyaja durjana samsargam.s

Bhaja sādhu samāgamam.

Kuru puñyam ahorātram.

Smara nityamanityatam.

(Discard bad company, join good company, perform meritorious deeds day and night and enquire into that which is permanent and that which is ephemeral.) This is your dharma.

Consider All That You See as the Form of God

Embodiments of Love. It is said, *Jantunām narajanma durlabham* (Birth as a human being is the rarest of all births). So sanctify your life by making proper use of your senses. Do not talk as you please. Talk softly and sweetly. Have proper control over your vision. You all know what happened to Kichaka when he looked at Droupadi with evil intentions. Bhima smashed his head into pieces. That is why Buddha exhorted humankind to cultivate *samyak drishti* (sacred vision). Buddha attained enlightenment only after He cultivated sacred vision. Consider all that you see as the form of God.

Think what is good. See what is good. Hear what is good. Talk what is good and do what is good. Only then can you attain Divinity.

Embodiments of Love. This body is approaching its seventy-fifth birthday. All these years, I have remained blissful because I am aware of the principle of unity. You too can experience bliss if you understand this truth. I do not hate anybody nor do I have any enemies. I have absolutely no fear because everything is My own form. The same *Atma* exists in all. When an innocent child smiles at you, you too smile at it. Likewise, when I smile blissfully, all of you do the same. Have a sacred heart. Cultivate sacred feelings. Then the result also will be sacred. Have faith that God is everywhere. You may have to undergo trials and tribulations, but never lose faith in God. Consider faith as your very life-breath. Each one of you is an embodiment of love, but because of improper food and habits, evil qualities like jealousy and

anger arise in you. As is the food, so is the head. As is the head, so is God. So, consume only *satwic* (pure) food. Then you will have only sacred feelings and your speech will also become sacred.

Do Not Become a Buffalo

In order to put you on the right path I sometimes pretend to be angry but in reality I am never angry. The only harsh word that I use is *dunnapota* (he-buffalo). You are truly a buffalo if you do not undertake good actions. You can become a good fellow only when you do good. When there is a heavy downpour, the cow and calf may run away to safety, but the he-buffalo remains where it is because of its sloth and inertia. You should not become inactive like a he-buffalo. Try to transform yourself. Human life is highly sacred. Do not put it to disuse. I love everybody. Love is My true form. All of you are the sparks of My Divinity. So, share your love with your fellow beings, just as I share My love with you all. Then you too will become divine. When all follow the sacred path, the world will undoubtedly attain peace and prosperity.

Embodiments of Love. Give up ignorance. Light the lamp of wisdom within you and ultimately merge with the divine. This is Swami's message for you today. Develop love. Through love alone can you annihilate the mind and through love alone can you get cured of any disease. Only love can eradicate the evil qualities in you. So love all. Love the *hridaya*, not the physical body. Love the Divinity that is installed in your heart. Body, mind, intellect and senses are merely instruments. You are the master. So, master the mind and be a mastermind. Never become a slave of your mind. Contemplate on the Divine day in and day out. You may chant any Name, contemplate on any form; but understand the truth that God is one and only one.

SSS 33.10: July 16, 2000



DISCOURSE 4

Love Is God; Live in Love

Embodiments of Love. People think there are many troubles, difficulties and sorrows in this world whereby they are filled with anxiety and worries. But in fact there is nothing like this. It is bliss everywhere.

Brahmānandam, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnānamūrtim, Dwandwātītam, Gagana Sadrisham, Tattwamasyādhi Lakshyam, Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvādhi Sākshibhūtam, Bhāvātītam, Triguñarahitam

(Atma is the Embodiment of Divine Bliss, wisdom absolute, beyond the pair of opposites, expansive and pervasive like the sky, the goal indicated by the aphorism "Tat twam asi", one without a second, eternal, pure, unchanging, witness of all functions of the intellect, beyond all mental conditions and the three attributes of satwa, rajas and tamas.)

God and You Are One

The world is the creation of God. Right from human beings—all living beings including animals, birds and even insects are the creation of God. As they are the creation of God, all of them have their origin in bliss. All these difficulties and troubles are only the imagination of the human being. Pleasure is an interval between two pains. There cannot be happiness without difficulties. These difficulties are meant to give you happiness and not to make you miserable with more sorrows. Hence whatever comes to us, we should consider it as God's gift and be happy. We should not consider that it has been given to us to make us suffer. Suppose you have pain in the stomach. What will the doctor do? If he performs an operation, it is not for causing pain to you. The pain that the doctor causes is to remove your suffering. Hence, one should bear difficulties and overcome sorrows.

There are millions of living beings in this world. All of them have originated from God. Therefore, the same God is present in all of them. People give many names to God, such as Rama, Allah and Jesus; but God is only one. *Atma* is another name of God. It is the same in everyone. The real name of *Atma* is love. Love is only one but it is present everywhere and can alleviate all sufferings. One who is endowed with love is free from all sufferings. All of you have come from such a distant place like America. What for? You have come because you have love for Me. You can attain anything if you have love. God has no specific name. He is present in the human being in the form of the *Atma*. What does *Atma* mean? It means love only. It is love that unites all. If you imbibe this principle of unity, then all will become one. When you attain this unity, you will have purity. When you have purity, then *Atma-tatwa* (*Atma* Principle) will manifest in you.

Therefore, you must have unity to attain Divinity. I and you are one. God and you are one. God is not anywhere separate from you. You should develop the feeling that you yourself are God. When you say, “I”, it represents unity. You cannot estimate the bliss that is derived from unity. All are one. It is the fickle mind that is unsteady and wanders arbitrarily.

Only one thing is steady. That is love, love, love. Love is God. Live in love. This is what we have to learn today. The same love is present in everyone. The mother loves her children due to this feeling of love. All are the children of God. Therefore, God loves all. He has no hatred. He is not the cause for your pain and suffering. God is not separate from you. Wherever you may be, God is present there. God does not forsake you. There is no place where there is no God. Wherever you look, God is present there. [Swami pointed to different things.] This is God. This is God. You are all the embodiments of God. You have two eyes but you can see a large number of people with them. Similarly God is one but He can see all. Where is God? He is in you, with you, above you and below you. There is no need to search for Him. It is because our vision is limited to the physical level that we see differences. We should not rely on the physical body. The body is like a water bubble. The mind is like a mad monkey. In one moment the mind is here and in the next moment it flies away to another place. *Manas, buddhi, chitta, ahamkāra* (mind, intellect, reflective mind, ego)—all these are temporary like passing clouds. Only one thing is permanent. That is you. Where is God? You should develop the feeling that you are God. This is the correct answer to the question, Where is God? You may perform any number of spiritual practices like *bhajans, japa* and *tapa*, but love should form the undercurrent of all these practices. In fact, if you have love there is no need to perform any spiritual practices. There is no use performing any spiritual practice, if you do not have love. Fill your mind with love. “*Prema mudita manase kaho Rama Rama Ram*” (Recite the name of Rama with your heart full of love). Hence, give highest importance to love. Love is important. Love is God. Live in love. This is the spiritual practice that we have to undertake. Worldly relations are temporary. They are impermanent like passing

clouds which come and go. They are your mental reaction, reflection and resound.

[Swami shows His handkerchief.] What is this? This is a cloth. It is not merely a cloth. It is a combination of threads. It is not thread even. It is cotton which is the creation of God. Everything has emerged from God like threads. You weave the threads as per your liking. But it is not your liking that is important. What is important is what God likes. There can be changes in the body and the mind. But love is changeless. It is permanent. Everything has birth and death but there is no birth or death for love. The birthless and deathless love is only one. It comes from truth. Truth is one. Truth is God. This God in the form of love is present everywhere, wherever you look.

Treasure Love in Your Heart

God is present in the human being in the breath. When you breathe, where does the breath come from? It comes from within. The breath itself is your God. What is its form? It is present in the human being in the form of *soham*, which reveals your divine identity. “*So*” means “that”, “*Ham*” means “I”. Therefore “*soham*”, means “That I am”. “That” refers to God who is present in the human being in the form of love. Therefore, the human being should treasure love in his or her heart safely. Other thoughts come and go like passing clouds. Only love is permanent and eternal. You should perform every task with love. Even if you come across your enemy, you should love and greet that person saying, “Hello, Hello”. Then he or she will also respond saying “Hello, Hello” to you. This is the reaction, reflection, resound of your feelings. Whatever good or bad you experience is the result of your own actions. Everything comes from within you. Hence, you should always remain immersed in love. If you have love, you can achieve anything and perform any task. It is love that is responsible for the entire creation and its functioning in this world. There is no greater God than love. Love is God. Whatever you do without love is a futile exercise. Hence treasure love in your heart. Everybody will be attracted towards this love. It bestows everything on you. It is love that creates, sustains and destroys. When you look at the world with your physical eyes, you see diversity in creation. But,

in fact, everything is love. It does not change. You should be filled with such love. If you follow this Principle of Love, it will give you the fruit of all the spiritual practices.

People call God by many names such Rama, Krishna, Jesus and Allah. But all Names refer to the same God. If you call Him Allah, He responds. Similarly, if you call Him Jesus, or Zoroaster or Rama, He will respond. All these Names have been given by the human being. God is not born with these Names. The original name of God is only love. You may refer to any dictionary. Love is only one and not two. The human being may have many physical relationships. You may consider someone as your husband, someone as your son and someone as your daughter. They are all physical and worldly relations. Who has established these relationships? It is you only. Since these are relationships acquired by you, they are subject to change. But love remains the same. With such love you may chant any Name such as Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Narayana, Jesus or Allah. All these Names refer to the same Divinity. You may grind rice and prepare various dishes such as *dosa* and *Idli*. You may mix rice with sugar and prepare *payasam* (sweet pudding). But rice is the same in all these dishes. In the same way, only one God is present in the entire creation and that is love. You should perform each and every task with love.

We call others "brothers and sisters". At the physical level they are separate. These relationships are of your own making. But never observe diversity. Brothers, sisters and all other relationships are one. You see an old man or a child. Both are essentially divine. God is beyond all ages and all forms. Only love is His true form. The same love is present in all forms that you see. Hence every one of you should develop love. You may call God Rama, Krishna or Sai. But it is only a difference in Names. God is only one. Love everyone wholeheartedly. Then only can you experience bliss. So long as you have love, you will not be devoid of bliss.

People today observe individual differences. There are three aspects of an individual: 1) the one you think you are; 2) the one others think

you are; 3) the one you really are. At the physical level you may be identified with your name, form and village. But in reality, you are only one. This is what you should realise. Recognise the unity of the entire creation. Your worldly relations will also have some value when you recognise this unity. You may add any number of zeroes with one, the value will go on increasing. If you remove one, there is no value. In the same manner, you may chant any Name realising the oneness of God. *Ekam sat viprah bahudhā vadanti* (Truth is one but the wise refer to it by various Names). The *Vedas* authenticate the same truth. With love in your heart, you may go to any country, chant any Name, perform any spiritual practice. Do not hate anybody. Help ever; hurt never. This is what the devotees are supposed to do. When you call yourself a devotee, you should not observe any differences "You are not mine. He is mine". This is not good. It amounts to hating God. You should think "God is in me, with me, around me, above me and below me". Wherever you look, the same God is present there. Develop this feeling of oneness. Then you will attain the highest bliss.

You have come from different countries and you have different Names and forms. But having come here, you are all one. From today onwards, may you always remain in bliss forever and ever. People say, "Today is my birthday". What is the meaning of birthday? It is the day of the birth of the body. Today it is born. Tomorrow it may die. But you are eternal. You have no birth, no death. Be always happy. This is what I desire. Do not allow the differences of "mine and thine" to come near you. All of you have sung the glories of the Lord in one voice. This unity is Divinity. Where there is lack of unity, there is diversity. Hence develop unity. Where there is unity, there is purity. It is purity that attracts God. The white dress that you have put on symbolises purity. Differences are seen when you put on dresses of different colours. You should not give room to differences. Not only in dress, you should observe unity and purity in your mind, feelings and thoughts. All are one. On returning to your respective places, lead your lives with unity, love and bliss. Your *bhajan* has made Me happy.

Consider *bhajan* as your *bhojan* (food) which satiates your spiritual hunger. You should partake the food of *bhajan* every moment, day in and day out. Right from the morning till night, you should constantly do *bhajan* in your entire waking time. This is *Swami's* teaching to you. Perform all your

tasks, while contemplating on the name of God within you. God is within you, without you, beyond you, below you and behind you. Very happy.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DV	<i>Dhyana Vahini</i>
GV	<i>Gita Vahini</i>
PV	<i>Prema Vahini</i>
SR	<i>Summer Roses</i>
SS	<i>Summer Showers</i>
SSS	<i>Sathya Sai Speaks</i>

