

## Love For God Is The Only Real Wealth

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Prasanthi Nilayam

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*Sweeter than sugar, tastier than curd, sweeter indeed than honey are the Names of Rama and Krishna.*

*Constant repetition of these sweet Names gives one the taste of divine nectar itself.*

*Therefore, contemplate on the Names of Rama and Krishna incessantly.*

(Telugu Poem)

Verily all this is Brahman (*Sarvam khalvidam Brahma*). Everything is the manifestation of Divinity. It is easy to criticise the divine play (*leelas*) and the supreme powers of *Avatars*, but it is difficult to understand the principle of their Divinity.

God, who is all-pervasive, is present both in truth and untruth, righteousness and unrighteousness, and good and bad. Such being the case, how can you call something good and some other thing bad, something divine and something not? Since ancient times, people have been investigating the principle of Divinity and propagating it to the entire world. Based on their own experiences, people have been demonstrating that the Divine has a particular form with some attributes

### Divinity shines in everyone

The entire world is governed by the three principles of creation, sustenance, and dissolution. One may belong to any country or faith, one cannot deny this truth, be one a scientist or a philosopher. However, these three principles can only teach you the principle of Divinity; they cannot grant you the vision of Divinity. They are only pointers to the existence of Divinity. When you look from a distance, you say that the pole star is on top of a particular tree, but in reality, the pole star is not located there. The tree is just an indicator of the

position of the pole star, which is millions of miles away. Likewise, the scriptures, epics, and mythological texts (*Vedas, Sastras, Itihasas, and Puranas*) are only pointers to the existence of Divinity but they cannot give direct experience of divine principle.

When you see a dense forest, a mighty mountain, a flowing river your heart is filled with bliss. All these demonstrate the mighty power of God. The stars shine in the sky, the planets revolve in their respective orbits, the sun gives light, and the wind blows—all these are indicators of Divinity.

When you recognise the nature of the spark of fire, you will know the nature of fire. When you know the nature of a drop of water, you will know the nature of the entire Ganga. Likewise, when you understand even a fraction of the principle of Nature, you will understand the infinite Divinity. That is why the *Upanishads* have declared in this context that “Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest (*Anoraneeyan mahato maheeyan*).”

Humanity is essentially the embodiment of all-powerful Divinity. It is Divinity that shines brilliantly in everyone. But people are not able to understand their innate Divinity because of their body attachment. You should consider everything as divine in this world and conduct a search for truth (*sathyanveshana*). What is meant by the search for truth? Where does truth exist? Where is the need to search for truth, which is everywhere? However, there is something called fact (*nijamu*), which is different from truth. For example, we say that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west every day. Here you have to conduct a search for truth (*sathyanveshana*), whether it is a fact or the truth.

When you go by your daily experience, it is a fact the sun rises in the east and sets in the west everyday. But when you investigate deeply, you will know that it is not the truth. The sun is stationary and does not move. It is because the earth rotates on its axis that you see the sunrise and sunset everyday. This investigation is called *sathyanveshana*.

The sun does not move; it is we on earth who move, and as a result we experience the phenomenon of sunrise and sunset. In the same manner, you should make efforts to search for Divinity in humanity. In what way can we know the Divinity innate in a person? It is in this context that the *Upanishads* exhort, “Know thyself.”

### **A pure human heart is the abode of God**

When someone asks you who you are, what answer can you give? If you say that you belong to such and such country, such and such community, and that you are the son of so and so, does it amount to knowing yourself? This is not the correct answer. Knowing yourself amounts to realising your true Self, which is beyond the body, the mind, the intellect, the mind-stuff (*chitta*), and the ego (*ahamkara*).

It is in this reference that the *Vedanta* teaches the principle of “not this, not this (*neti, neti*)”. The body, the mind, the intellect, the mind-stuff, and the senses—all these are mere instruments. You are the Divinity, which is beyond all these. It is Divinity that is responsible for their functioning.

However, when you start conducting such enquiry into truth, you may have to face many difficulties, troubles and ordeals.

When the demons and gods churned the ocean of milk, the first thing to emerge from the process of churning was deadly poison. It was only after this that the precious treasures like the wish-fulfilling cow (*kamadhenu*), celestial elephant (*airavat*), and the goddess of wealth, Lakshmi, manifested one after the other. The divine ambrosia also emerged only after the emergence of poison.

Likewise, when you churn your heart, which is like the ocean of milk (*ksheer sagar*), using wisdom (*jnana*) as the churning rod, initially you may have to face difficulties, but when you continue

the process with determination, precious qualities like compassion, forbearance, empathy, and love will manifest from it.

The human heart is pure, like the ocean of milk. But today it has become impure because of the presence of sea monsters like desire, anger, delusion, greed, pride and jealousy (*kama, krodha, moha, lobha, mada, and matsarya*) in it. The human heart is the repository of sacred qualities and hence is compared to the ocean of milk. That is why Saint Thyagaraja sang, “Oh the One reclining on the ocean of milk, please look after me *Ksheera sagara sayana nannelu*.”

God is described as the one reclining on the ocean of milk. It means that He dwells in the pure heart of a person. That is His true abode.

### **Atma is the source of bliss**

On receiving complaints from the cowherd maidens (*gopikas*) that Krishna was stealing butter from their houses, mother Yashoda chided Him, saying, “Don’t we have food at home? Don’t we have butter and milk at home? Why do You steal butter from *gopikas* houses?”

On another day, a *gopika* came and complained to her that Krishna was eating mud. Mother Yashoda caught little Krishna by His ear and said, “Does the butter made by me not taste good to You? Why do You eat mud outside?”

Krishna smilingly replied, “Mother, am I a child, am I hungry or am I mad? Why would I eat mud?” The words of God are full of mystery and have deep inner meaning. By His reply, child Krishna conveyed to His mother in an indirect manner that He was not a child but God Himself. God always teaches in an indirect manner.

Since people are always immersed in worldly life, worldly tendencies (*vasanas*) and worries, it is not possible for them to understand teachings relating to the transcendental principle when they are conveyed directly. A person’s life is centred around worldliness (*pravritti*) whereas God’s acts are related to spirituality (*nivritti*). To understand the principle of spirituality, one should transform oneself and take to the path that leads to spirituality. One should know how to conduct oneself in

accordance with the time, place and circumstances. Adi Sankara said:

One whose mind is fixed in Brahman is always in bliss,

Whether engaged in *yoga* (spirituality) or *bhoga* (worldly pleasures), in solitude or company.

*Yoga ratova, bhoga ratova,  
Sanga ratova, sanga viheena.  
Yasya Brahmani ramate chittam,  
Nandati, nandati, nanditi yeva.*

(Sanskrit verse)

Can the *yogis* attain Divinity just because they lead a very simple and austere life? Can the *bhogis* (those who seek worldly pleasures) attain Divinity just because they enjoy all pleasures and comforts? One can attain divine bliss only by offering everything to God and developing firm faith that God dwells in one's heart. One cannot derive bliss from people or material possessions or worldly endeavours. *Atma* is the only source of bliss. A person by very nature is a seeker of bliss, a repository of bliss, and the very embodiment of bliss. Then what is the reason for one's misery? Body attachment is the main cause for this.

You cannot leave your body and go somewhere else. You need not give up your worldly duties and responsibilities. You may continue to perform all your duties living in society—but never leave God.

There is no point in having any amount of wealth if you lack love for God in your heart. Your true wealth and property is God's love and God's love alone. What is the use of a person's existence in this world if they do not become the recipient of God's love? Worldly love is temporary like passing clouds. It comes in a moment and goes in the next moment. God's love alone is permanent, and it confers permanent bliss. Make yourself deserving of such divine love.

The Gopikas, the cowherd maidens and all the people of Repalle became recipients of such divine love. But many people criticised the divine plays (*leelas*) of Krishna due to their perverted thinking.

Krishna lived in Repalle only up to the age of seven years. It is meaningless to say that such a small child of seven years indulged in acts that were against the norms of society. After going to Ma-

thura at the age of seven, He never returned to Repalle.

Unable to understand the sacredness of divine acts, people attribute their own feelings to God and become distant from Him due to their misunderstanding. As the feelings, so is the result (*Yad bhavam tad bhavati*).

First of all, recognise what is true Divinity. The Consciousness (*chaitanya*) present in everyone is true Divinity. You should understand the nature of this consciousness.

There are so many people sitting in this hall. There are people here, this denotes 'being'. It is the light that makes us aware of their presence. Existence is denoted by *sat*, awareness is denoted by *chit*. When *sat* and *chit* come together, bliss (*ananda*) results. Therefore, *sat*, *chit*, *ananda* denote our true nature. They are all within us.

That all-pervasive God is present within and without (*Antarbahischa tatsarvam vyapya Narayana sthita*). The same Divinity is present inside and outside. When you understand this truth, you will experience bliss. People think they know the nature of Divinity, but actually they do not know anything. What is the reason? The reason is that they have no experience of Divinity.

### **The world is an illusion**

Once upon a time, a man not able to support his family left his house without informing anybody. After earning money by doing some odd jobs for some time, he decided to return home. When he left his house, he had a son who was very much attached to him. After his father left the house, the child died as he was unable to bear the pangs of separation from his father. As the father was returning home, all of a sudden, there was a heavy downpour with lightning and thunder and it also became dark. He thought it was not safe to travel in such a situation. He took shelter in a inn in a nearby village for the night.

As soon as he fell asleep, he had a dream. He saw that he had become a king served by many servants, and he was seated on a golden throne. He also dreamt that he had six sons dressed in princely costumes. He saw that he had a royal bed on

which he could recline without any worries whatsoever.

Meanwhile, his dream was broken by a loud thunder. He at once got up and looked around. He thought, alas, what happened to the royal bed? Till now I was a king; where has my throne gone now? What happened to all my servants who were attending on me? And where have my six children gone? Now he was in a state of despair, as he realised that it was all a mere dream.

Next morning, he got up and returned home. Seeing her husband, his wife started crying bitterly. On the one hand, she was happy to see her husband return home, but on the other hand, she was grief-stricken at the loss of their only son. When he asked his wife where their son was, she told him that he had died. On hearing this, he was shocked and stood there like a rock, without showing any emotion. His wife asked him why he was not showing any signs of sorrow on the death of their son, to whom he was so much attached.

He replied, “Oh foolish woman! Last night while sleeping in the inn, I had a dream in which I was a king served by a number of servants, and I was reclining on a royal bed. I had six sons dressed as princes. But now I have lost those six sons. Whom should I cry for now? Should I cry at the loss of those six sons or should I cry at the loss of our one son? They were my sons in the dream and he was my son in the waking state. There is no dream in the waking state and there is no waking state in the dream, but I am present in both. Therefore, I am the only reality, and everything else is mere illusion. I am omnipresent, all other things are passing clouds”.

He realised that this world was just an illusion.

### **How to experience true happiness**

In order to experience true happiness, three things are necessary. First and foremost, one should know what one is supposed to know. Secondly, one should give up what one is supposed to give up. Finally, one should reach where one has to reach. Only then can one experience true happiness.

### **Develop firm faith in God**

What is a person supposed to know? One should enquire: What is the nature of this world? How long is my stay here? What am I experiencing here?

You see many people taking birth and many others leaving this world in front of your eyes. As the name *ja-gat* (to come and go) indicates, everything comes and goes in this *jagat* (world). Once you recognise the transient nature of this world, you will experience happiness. This is what you are supposed to know. This is the way of the world.

Then what are you supposed to give up? illusion (*bhranti*). In your illusion, you consider unreal things to be real and experience sorrow in trying to cling to them. On top of that, you think that illusion (*maya*) and sorrow have taken you in their grip and are not going to leave.

Does sorrow have hands, feet, eyes, nose, etc? Only you have these limbs. Therefore, it is *you* who have caught hold of sorrow and not the other way round. Sorrow has no hands to catch you. But you imagine that you are in the grip of sorrow, which is the cause of your suffering. This is ignorance, and this is what you are supposed to give up. Only then can you experience true happiness.

Lastly, where are you supposed to reach? You should reach where you have come from. It is but natural for all living beings to go back to their source of origin. You have come from the *Atma*; you have to go back to the *Atma*. There lies the real happiness.

The same is stated in the *vedic* prayer: Lead me from unreality to reality, from darkness to light, from death to immortality (*Asatoma sadgamaya, tamasoma jyotirgamaya, mrityorma amritamgamaya*). It is a prayer to God to lead the seeker from untruth to truth. Untruth follows truth like its shadow. *Tamasoma jyotirgamaya*.

What is light and what is darkness? There is only one thing: light. When you don't see light, you experience darkness. Light and darkness do not exist separately. The absence of light is darkness. You can attain happiness when you realise this.

From death to immortality (*mrityorma amritamgamaya*). What is it that has birth and death? It is only the body, not you. You have no birth and no

death. That which is born is bound to die. Therefore, birth and death are related to the body and not to the *Atma*. The *Atma* alone is true, eternal, and immortal. When you realise this truth, you can experience real happiness.

Every day you recite this *vedic* prayer, but you do not try to know what you are supposed to know. Hence, you should know what you are supposed to know, give up what you are supposed to give up, and reach where you have to reach. Only then can you experience real happiness. Until then, the happiness that you experience is only temporary and not permanent.

The state of permanent happiness is termed as immortality. This state of happiness is described by the *Vedas* as attributeless, unsullied, final abode, eternal, pure, enlightened, free, and embodiment of sacredness (*nirgunam, niranjanam, sanathana nikanam, nitya, suddha, buddha, mukta, nirmala swarupinam*). Develop firm faith in God to experience true and eternal happiness.

#### **Avatars come to demonstrate great ideals**

Where was Krishna born, and what was His property? He was born in a prison, brought up in the house of Nanda, and lived in Mathura. But He attained great name and fame in the world, because He never considered worldly wealth as real. Worldly wealth is temporary and, in fact, it is no wealth at all. Bliss was Krishna's real wealth, and He was always blissful.

Here, you should understand the difference between the two *Avatars*, Rama and Krishna. Krishna performed everything always in a state of happiness, whereas Rama derived happiness from the work He performed. Rama battled with the enemy after being provoked, whereas Krishna Himself would provoke the enemy and fight with him. Both *Avatars* acted according to the need of the times. Krishna signified bliss, whereas Rama symbolised responsibility.

Rama incarnated to demonstrate the matchless power of truth and righteousness to the entire world. *Rama + ayana* is *Ramayana*, meaning *Ramayana* is the story of Rama's earthly sojourn.

The principle of Krishna was different from this in the sense that He was a world teacher. He never

desired anything for Himself, nor was He attached to anything. He offered all that He had to His people. He killed His maternal uncle Kamsa, but did not take his kingdom. He gave it to Kamsa's father, Ugrasena. Likewise, He took the side of the Pandavas, defeated the Kauravas, and anointed Dharmaraja as the king.

Krishna never aspired to become king. He was the king without a crown. He was the king of kings and lord of lords without any kingdom. In fact, He was the emperor of the hearts of everyone. This is the truth demonstrated by the Krishna principle. When you enquire deeply, you will understand that every *Avatar* comes to demonstrate an ideal.

#### **Krishna stole the pure hearts of the cowherd maidens**

Krishna always uttered truth, even when He spoke something in fun. He never uttered a lie even in a lighter vein. But those who do not understand the import of Krishna's words think that He indulged in untruth. In every age (*yuga*) and during the time of every *Avatar*, some people are afflicted with this type of malady.

Once, the cowherd maids (*gopikas*) came to Mother Yashoda and complained:

*Mother, your Krishna came to the top of our terrace in the middle of the night and tied the plaits of our hair when we were fast asleep.*

*Ask Him, oh mother, ask Him.*

(Telugu Song)

Then Yashoda asked Krishna:

*What work do You have in others' houses at midnight?*

*It seems You tied the plaits of their hair and came back running.*

*I am not going to leave You now.*

(Telugu Song)

Krishna replied with a smile:

*Mother, was I not lying by your side without moving anywhere at night?*

*When did I go and when did I come back?*

*You yourself tell Me.*

(Telugu Song)

What Krishna meant to convey was. “I am here, there, and everywhere, wherever you look.” He demonstrated such supreme truths by His divine sports.

Another group of *gopikas* once came and complained to Mother Yashoda:

*Oh mother, when we were carrying pots of  
buttermilk for sale, Krishna accosted us  
and asked us to pay tax.  
Then He hit the pots making holes in them.  
Oh mother, ask Him!*

(Telugu Song)

Krishna said to Mother Yashoda:

*They wanted to offer those pots of buttermilk  
to God, and God Himself came and made  
holes in them  
But unknowingly, they are pushing the blame  
on Me.  
I don't know anything about it; I am innocent.*  
(Telugu Song)

Here, Krishna conveyed to Yashoda indirectly that He is God Himself. He was trying to explain to His mother in a way she could understand His Divine nature.

Many a time, Krishna would steal milk and butter from the houses of cowherd maidens (*gopikas*) and would run away when they tried to catch Him. What do the milk and butter symbolise? Butter and milk are white in colour, which symbolises purity. Therefore, Krishna accepted the pure and sublime (*sathwic*) feelings of the *gopikas*.

Once Mother Yashoda chided little Krishna:

*Oh Krishna!  
You do not eat what I serve You at home.  
But You go to the houses of the gopikas and  
steal their butter.  
Oh dear Krishna! It spoils our good name.*  
(Telugu Poem)

She complained, “Oh Krishna! You are such a small child, but You are creating such a great commotion in the entire village by Your mischievous acts. Doesn't the butter prepared at home taste good to You? Is the butter in the houses of the *gopikas* so tasty to You?”

When Yashoda chided Him in this manner, Krishna said to her, “The hearts of the *gopikas* are pure,

sacred, and without any trace of selfishness. But there is an element of selfishness in your motherly love toward Me. Therefore, I am not interested in the butter you prepare at home. I am stealing from the houses of the *gopikas* not butter but their pure and selfless hearts. I steal the hearts of those who are pure and totally devoid of selfishness”.

That is why devotees praise Krishna singing the song, *Chitta chora Yashoda ke bal navaneeta Chora Gopal* (Oh Krishna, the son of mother Yashoda, You are the stealer of butter and the hearts of devotees). People think Krishna stole butter but, in fact, He stole the pure hearts of the *gopikas*.

What is the point in offering worship to the Lord if the heart is not pure?  
Without inner purity, what is the point in following ritualistic practices?  
What is the point in cooking delicious items in a vessel that is not clean?  
The word of Sai is verily the truth.

(Telugu Poem)

### **Krishna's leelas reveal His Divinity**

If you chant the Name of Rama even once with purity of heart, He will at once respond. He alone can bestow on you real happiness.

Purandaradasa said, “Rama and Yama (god of death) are not different from each other. Both are one and the same.” The same Rama appeared as Yama to the wicked Ravana and as God to the pious Vibhishana, who totally surrendered to Him. He appeared as Rama or Yama based on the feelings of the respective individuals.

The same Krishna appeared as God to Ugrasena, who had faith in Him, and as Yama to wicked Kamsa, who considered Him to be his enemy. Similarly, He became Yama to Hiranyakasipu, who hated God, and appeared as Narayana to Prahlada, who contemplated on Him all the time.

Once, the cowherd maidens (*gopikas*) became tired of Krishna's mischievous pranks. In spite of their best efforts, they could not catch Him. Therefore, one day Krishna thought: “The poor *gopikas* are pure-hearted; they are innocent and totally devoid of selfishness. It is not proper on My part to escape from them whenever they try to catch Me. I am the servant of devotees (*bhakta*

*paradhina*), and I should not put My devotees to hardship. This time, I will let them catch Me.”

He devised a plan by which *gopikas* could know His whereabouts and catch Him. Sensing that Krishna was in the house of a particular *gopika*, all others stood like soldiers around the compound wall so that He could not escape from them. What did Krishna do? He poured down all the milk from a pot hung to the ceiling, dipped His tiny feet in it, and ran away when the *gopikas* came to catch Him. The *gopikas* followed His footprints and caught Him.

There was a message for the *gopikas* in this episode. Krishna conveyed, “Follow in My footsteps, and you will be able to attain Me.”

Many such incidents in the *Bhagavatha* convey a profound message to devotees, but they appear to be mere pranks to those who consider them so. Opinions vary from person to person (*Munde munde mathir bhinnah*). When heads are different, thoughts also vary.

The *Bhagavatha* is nothing but the story of the Lord. The divine pranks of Krishna are the basis of understanding His Divinity. All these stories of Lord Krishna demonstrate great ideals. They cannot be made a subject of ridicule, as some people have a tendency to do.

Radha pined for Krishna endlessly. Krishna churned her heart with the churning rod of spiritual wisdom (*jnana*) and granted her the precious jewel of devotion. She considered Krishna as her only refuge and never relied on her kith and kin.

*I have no refuge other than You.  
Oh Krishna, I am carrying on this burden of life  
only for Your sake.  
My mind becomes restless if I don't see Your smiling face.  
At least appear to me in my dreams. I cannot live  
without You even for a moment.*

(Telugu Song)

God is ready to grant anything the devotee asks for. In fact, He is ready to give Himself. You cannot find such supreme spirit of sacrifice in your friends, relatives, or anyone for that matter in this world.

Radha had become completely weak and was about to breathe her last. At that moment, Krishna

appeared before her and asked, “What is your last wish?”

Radha replied, “Krishna, I don't want anything. My only wish is to listen to the melody of Your flute for one last time”.

*Oh Krishna!  
Sing a sweet song and fill my heart with nectarine  
words and bliss.  
Distil the essence of the Vedas, transform it into  
divine music, play it on Your enchanting flute,  
and captivate me with Your melody.  
Sing, oh Krishna! Sing for me!*

(Telugu Song)

The human body is a flute with nine holes. Radha prayed to Krishna to make the essence of the *Vedas* flow through this ‘flute’. Accordingly, Krishna played a sweet song on His flute, listening to which Radha gave up her mortal coil. Then and there, Krishna left His flute for good. From that day, He never touched it again as a gesture of Radha's great devotion toward Him.

### **The devotion of gopikas is worth emulating**

Once, Rukmini invited Radha to her house. On receiving the invitation, Radha at once came to her house. Those days *idli*, *dosa*, cakes, etc., were not known as they are today. People would offer milk or curd to guests. In her exuberance of happiness, Rukmini offered her hot boiling milk in a glass. Radha used to offer everything to Krishna before partaking of it. She said, “I offer it to Krishna (*Krishnarpanam*) and gulped the boiling hot milk.

In the evening, when Krishna came to Rukmini, she performed His *Padaseva* (pressing His feet), and she was shocked to notice blisters on His feet. She asked, “Oh Lord! What has happened? Who caused blisters on Your feet?”

Krishna replied, “It is your own doing. When Radha came to you in the morning, you offered her hot boiling milk without bothering to check whether it was fit for drinking. She offered that milk to Me before drinking. Therefore, these blisters have come on My feet”.

Some people think that these are mere stories (*ka-thas*). They are not mere stories but divine sports, which are meant to remove the sufferings (*vyathas*) of people. All the divine sports (*leelas*)

of Krishna are meant to remove the sufferings of people. He utilised all His divine powers only for the sake of devotees. When you try to understand the significance of the sacred *Bhagavatha*, you will realise the supreme power of Divinity.

The cowherd maidens (*gopikas*) led their lives in constant contemplation of Krishna while discharging their worldly duties. They had no formal education and no degrees. They neither went to a university nor studied any *Upanishads*. The Name of Krishna was the only *Upanishad* and scripture (*sastra*) they knew. The Name *Gopala* (a name for Krishna) was the only *Veda* they studied. In this manner, they sanctified their lives in the constant contemplation of Krishna. They also enjoyed all types of worldly happiness.

The *gopikas* were united in their love for and devotion to Krishna. All devotees should emulate them in this regard and give up all differences based on caste, race, and religion. What is the caste of the five elements, which are present in us? What is the caste of fire, wind, ether, water and earth? There was a great spirit of unity among the *gopikas*. Where there is unity, there is purity. When unity and purity come together, divinity manifests.

### **Suguna had the vision of Krishna**

People in the village Gokul lighted their oil lamps from the lamp in Nanda's house. They believed that they would attain plenty and prosperity if they lighted their lamps from the lamps lit in the houses of prosperous people. One day, a newly-married cowherd maiden (*gopika*) by name Suguna arrived in that village. She desperately wanted to see Krishna, having heard so much about His divine plays (*leelas*). But she could not express her feelings to either her husband or her in-laws.

Her mother-in-law commanded her not to go to the house of Yashoda lest she should see Krishna and become His devotee. But, in fact, no one has the right to prevent anyone from having the vision of God. Every day, the mother-in-law herself would go to the house of Yashoda to light the lamp.

One day, as she had developed high fever, she was left with no choice but to send Suguna to

Yashoda's house to light the lamp. Suguna was overjoyed, thinking that she had a chance to see Krishna at last. In that feeling of extreme happiness, she forgot herself as she entered Yashoda's house. As she lighted her lamp from the lamp kept in Yashoda's house, she could see Krishna in the flame. She was so much lost in the vision of Krishna that she did not realise that her hand was getting burnt.

In the meantime, other women from the neighbouring houses also came there to light their lamps. They were wonderstruck on witnessing this scene. They noticed that Suguna was not moving away from the flame even though her fingers were in contact with the flame.

Mother Yashoda also came running and asked her, "What is this? Don't you realise that your hand is getting burnt"?

But Suguna was not able to hear the words of Yashoda because her mind was totally focused on Krishna. Krishna was smiling at her, and she too was smiling at Him. Therefore, she did not feel any pain.

Later on, when the *gopikas* asked her about this incident, she told them, "I had the vision of Krishna in the flame. He smiled and made me also smile".

When they know something like this, will the women keep quiet? In a moment, this news spread in the entire village. Then *gopikas* joined together and sang a song describing the incident.

*It seems Suguna had a vision  
Of Gopala in the house of Nanda.  
She saw Krishna in the flame!*

(Telugu Song)

The mother-in-law of Suguna also came to know about this incident. But Suguna was not worried. She was happy that she could have the vision of Krishna. It is not possible to describe the glory and grandeur of the divine sports (*leelas*) of Krishna. He was a woman among women, a man among men, a child among children, and an elder among elderly persons. That is why the *Bhagavad Gita* says, "With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe (*Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham, sarvatah srutimalloke sar-*



*vamavruthya tishthati*.” He resides in the hearts of everyone.

Therefore, never observe differences with regard to Divinity based on name and form. God is one without a second (*Ekameva adviteeyam Brahma*). You may call Him by any name, Allah, Jesus, Zoroastra, Buddha, Rama, or Krishna, etc. Don't observe any differences whatsoever. There is only one religion, the religion of humanness. There may be something wrong with *mathi* (mind) but not with *matham* (religion). Therefore, set right your minds. Do not give scope to conflicts and hatred based on religious differences.

Students! You should propagate the principle of oneness to the entire world. Never give scope to differences. This is the real education you have to acquire. Only students have the capacity to revive the ancient culture of Bharat by adhering to the path of devotion and surrender.

### Swami's word is Swami

There is another important subject I want to tell you. Devotees coming to Prasanthi Nilayam are increasing in number day by day. Since they are happy having My *darshan*, I am also very happy spending My time with them. Since I am busy with My devotees, I have no free time. Therefore, it will not be possible for Me to perform marriages in Prasanthi Nilayam. Those who want to get married can happily do so wherever it is convenient for them and come here. I will happily bless them.

However, I will continue to perform mass marriages and mass *Upanayanams* (thread ceremonies). Swami's love is always with you wherever you are. But from now onward, I will not perform marriages either in the interview room or anywhere else. If anyone wants to get married, he can do so in the *Kalyana Mandapam*. I have no objection to that. Get married and come to Me; I will bless you with all love. Lead an ideal married life by serving the country and propagating the principle of oneness. Today is Krishna's Birthday (*Gokulashtami*). But what is birthday for God? This is only the birthday of the physical form. Do not give importance to birthdays; instead give importance to the teachings and ideals of Krishna. Krishna is not different from His teachings.

Krishna is *Gita*, *Gita* is Krishna. Likewise, Swami is not different from His teachings. Swami's word is Swami.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the *bhajan*, “*Govinda Krishna Jai ....*”)

— Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 4 September 1996.