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1

Service To Man Is Service To God

*People can say that this is Brahman,
None can say, however, that this is not Brahman,
God only exists always,
The world is illusory, look!*

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

TODAY, everybody is enthusiastic about New Year's day. Significantly, this New Year Day has started on a Thursday. It is one's foolishness to single out a particular day in a year and celebrate that day with great joy. For a true devotee, every day is a festival day. Therefore, it is essential that we have to consider every minute, every day as new and celebrate it with joy. In fact, every day is a New Year Day.

This Body Is For Serving Others

Everything in this objective world is impermanent and unreal. Hence, we have to contemplate on the eternal truth and reality. We should not waste our time brooding over the past or anticipating the future. It is great foolishness to worry about the future or the past, forgetting the present. The present is only real. Past is past, you cannot get it back however much you may pray for it. The future is hidden in the womb of time. It is not possible to visualise it. Therefore, only the present is important. Unable to realise this truth, people are worried about the past and future.

The foremost activity man should engage in is service to fellow human beings. Instead, people are wasting their precious time worrying about either the past or the future. Therefore, embodiments of love! You should always engage yourselves in service to fellow human beings. There is no greater *sadhana* than such service. Considering the nine paths of devotion, namely, *sravanam* (listening), *kirtanam* (singing), *Vishnusmaranam* (contemplating on Vishnu), *padasevanam* (serving His Lotus Feet), *vandanam* (salutation), *archanam* (worship), *dasyam* (servitude), *sneham* (friendship), *atmanivedanam* (self-surrender) as the only important means for salvation, people are engrossed in these activities. They totally forget the importance of service. Only the fruits of service will be eternal. We must constantly engage ourselves in service

to others. God has given us this body for that purpose only. This body is not meant to be engaged in mere eating and drinking and thus wasting our valuable time. We must realise the truth that God has given us this body for serving others and thus help others. There is nothing greater than service to humanity.

Service To Man Is Service To God

All great men have sanctified their lives only by serving humanity. Therefore, you start serving humanity at least from now onwards. Service is more important than *bhajan* and all other *sadhanas*.

Embodiments of Love!

Service Alone Brings Eternal Joy

What, according to you is service? You consider helping people in difficulties is service. No. It is not as simple as that. Your body should be constantly engaged in serving others. The human body consists of several limbs. All these limbs are meant to be engaged in serving your fellowmen and not for other activities. Unfortunately, we are forgetting this basic fact. Every limb in the human body has been granted by God for *karmopasana* (worshipping God through service). *Karmopasana* is the only means by which the human life can be sanctified. We are building several temples. We are undertaking various *sadhanas*. But, all these *sadhanas* can give us only temporary satisfaction, not eternal joy. Our ancient *Rishis* have been able to achieve eternal joy

through a conscious effort. Therefore, you must develop firm faith in the truth that nothing can provide eternal joy, except service to humanity. Undertake service to the suffering humanity. Service is not merely confined to health services. Service encompasses every possible help to fellow human beings.

The ancient culture of Bharat is still preserved in the villages and not in towns and cities. In fact, our culture is defiled in all possible ways in the cities. Therefore, go to the villages, find out their necessities and undertake such types of services that will alleviate their sufferings. Today, several people shift to the towns and cities in pursuit of comfort and luxuries. In the process, they end up in sorrows and difficulties. This is their own making. *Na sukhat labhyathe sukham* (happiness cannot be obtained out of happiness). It is only through suffering, that happiness is achieved.

You should undertake service. In fact, the hands are given to you to serve humanity. *The hands that serve are holier than the lips that pray*. Therefore, undertake selfless service and attain glory. When you undertake good work, you enjoy peace in your life. Today, the boys who sang *bhajans* are former students of the Institute. They have undertaken several service activities to please Swami. God is not interested in worship and other *sadhanas*. He is interested only in service. Hence, undertake service and more and more service. *The best way to love God is to Love all and Serve all*. God is

interested only in love and service. If you can recognise the importance of these two and conduct yourself accordingly, there can be no greater *sadhana*. You need not spend a lot of money in service. Sanctify your life by undertaking loving service. Today, the old students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning brought a cheque for Rs. 48 lakhs for presenting to Swami as a token of their love and service. This amount has been saved by them from their salaries, by undergoing lot of difficulties. But, to whom should the amount belong really? This amount is meant to be utilised for service in the villages. It is for serving the poorest of the poor. Therefore, I told them, “My dear ones! You deposit the money in the bank and undertake service activities with the interest accrued on the amount.” Money is of no help in developing good qualities. Sacrifice alone can develop noble qualities. It is only in sacrifice, there is real *yoga*. That is why it is said *Thyagenaike amrutatthwamanasu* (it is only by sacrifice that man can attain immortality). Today, however, people want *bhoga* (enjoy material comforts). By such *bhoga*, only *roga* (disease) will be contracted. They cannot attain *yoga*. Hence, you try to attain *yoga* by *thyaga*. Only then can you attain eternal joy.

Embodiments of Love!

Human Beings Are Embodiment Of Divinity

There is no use contemplating on God without making sacrifice. By contemplating on God, you may

perhaps derive some mental satisfaction. But, that is of no use. Therefore, you develop firm faith in the truth that every living being is permeated by God and act accordingly. God lives in every living being and experiences bliss. The *Upanishads* declare, *Easwarah sarva bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings) and *Isavasyam idam sarvam* (the entire universe is permeated by God). You should not be under the impression that God is confined to some temple or a structure somewhere. It is said *Deho devalaya proktho jivo devah sanathanah* (the body is a temple and the indweller is God). The real temple for God is the body itself. God is installed in the temple of our heart. That is why it is given the name of *hridaya*. *hrid + daya = hridaya*. It is only when you cultivate compassion in your heart, it can be called *hridaya*. Therefore, cultivate the quality of compassion. Whatever service you undertake with a compassionate heart, it becomes sanctified. Consider every human being as a living divinity. God is present everywhere. Forgetting such an omnipresent divinity, we are hankering after petty and trivial bodily pleasures. The fact, however, is that we can never attain real happiness with the body. This body has several limitations. With such a body, you can never attain limitless *ananda*. (bliss).

The body is made up of five elements and is bound to perish sooner or later; but the Indweller has neither birth nor death. The Indweller has no

attachment whatsoever and is the eternal witness. Truly speaking, the Indweller who is in the form of the atma is verily God Himself.

(Telugu poem)

You must be able to recognise such a divine *atma*. Today, we are worshipping idols and pictures, thinking that God is somewhere in the outside world. But, God is very much present in the human being. That is why our ancient *rishis* have proclaimed, *Daivam manusha rupena* (God incarnates in the form of a human being). Of what use is it to worship unseen God, while at the same time causing suffering to the living beings around us? Every human being you come across is an embodiment of divinity. No purpose will be served by worshipping the idols and pictures, forgetting the living gods in front of us. Therefore, give less importance to such indirect methods of worshipping God. Consider the human being standing in front of you as an embodiment of divinity. Even if you come across your worst enemy, say, 'hello' to him lovingly. Address him as brother. Then, he will also respond by saying, 'hello brother'. On the other hand, if you hate him and start scolding him, he will reciprocate the same thing to you. Respect every individual and you will be respected. Man, today expects others to respect him; but he will not respect others. If you do not respect others, how can you expect others to respect you? *Manava* (human being) means an individual deserving respect. Since you are born as a human being, give respect and take respect. This is the quality you

have to cultivate today. When you respect others, others will also respect you. When you offer your *pranams* to somebody, to whom does it go actually? You are not merely offering *pranams* to the physical body consisting of the five elements. It reaches in fact the indweller in that human body who is none other than God. Now, what is the nature of this body?

*This body is a den of dirt, and prone to diseases;
it is subject to change from time to time; it cannot
cross the ocean of Samsara. It is nothing but a
structure of bones. Oh mind! Do not be under
the delusion that body is permanent. Instead take
refuge at the Divine Lotus Feet.*

(Telugu poem)

What can you achieve by relying on such a body? It is only sin that you accumulate. You should sustain the body for the purpose of serving others. You have taken upon this human body only for the purpose of serving your fellow human beings. Develop firm conviction in that truth. What happiness do you derive with the body? In fact, nothing. Whatever pleasures you enjoy with the help of this human body will have to be left along with the body in a trice one day or the other. Should you have to undergo so many trials and tribulations for the sake of these momentary pleasures? You have to respect the *Jiva* in the human body. That is the real *Daiva seva* (service to God). You have to dedicate your body to such service. If you do that, every minute of your life is fresh

and new. Every day is a festival day. On the other hand, if you undertake service once in a year, that is not real service. Your *deha* (body) is *mrinmaya* (made up of five elements). The divinity residing as indweller therein is *Chinmaya* (consciousness). Therefore, rely on such a divinity and earn salvation.

An Ideal Son Of A Noble Mother

You all know about Abraham Lincoln. He used to go to school in the company of wealthy boys, in his childhood. Those boys were wearing costly clothes and ornaments. Lincoln, however, had to go to school with worn out clothes that were mended by his mother. One day, his friends made fun of his poor dress. He could not control himself. He went straight to his mother crying and told her, “Mother! I will not attend school hereafter. My classmates are making fun of me. They are looking down upon me as a poor boy unable to wear decent dress.” Then, the mother took him into her arms lovingly and consoled him saying, “My dear son! You need not feel sorry for such a trivial issue. All this is going to help you in your future life. You keep our family condition in view. Do not give credence to what others say. Lead a life of self-confidence and self-respect. Respect every individual and be respected by every individual.” From that day onwards, Lincoln put his mother’s advice into practice and started respecting everybody. He used to be courteous with even a cobbler saying “Sir! How sacred is your life! You are doing great service by stitching

sandals for us so that our feet are protected from thorns”. Gradually, Abraham Lincoln could command respect from all people by his good behaviour. He earned a very good name for himself. After sometime, elections were held in America. He was persuaded by his friends and well-wishers to contest the elections. He expressed his inability saying, “I am a poor man. Who will vote for me? I do not want these positions and power”. Today, Indians are spending crores of rupees to contest elections, but refuse to part with even a rupee as alms to a beggar.

The good words taught by Lincoln’s mother made a lasting impression on his mind. He started respecting every individual. He used to speak courteously with everybody. As a result he earned a very good name for himself. At last, he bowed to the wishes of his friends and well-wishers and contested the elections. He scored a spectacular victory and was elected the President of the United States of America. Then, he went to his mother and said “Mother! I am able to rise to this exalted position and command the respect of the people of America, because of your noble teachings those days”.

It is the mother that is responsible for the children earning reputation and fame. If children wish to earn good name, they should obey the command of their mother. That is why, the *Veda* has conferred the supreme position on the mother and father and declared *Matru*

devo bhava, Pithru devo bhava (Mother is God, Father is God) . The mother is like the body and the father, the *atma*. Hence, we have to respect our father and mother. Then, we can earn any amount of respect. Abraham Lincoln could earn great name and fame and become the president of America, only on account of his respect for his mother. What do the children earn today? Nothing. They simply waste the money earned by their parents. They bring bad name to their parents. This is not what the children are expected to do. They should properly utilise the money given by their parents. In fact, every drop of your blood is the contribution of your parents. You owe your existence in this world to the love of your parents. Hence, whenever there is a need for blood donation, you should come forward to donate your blood. Thereby fulfil your obligation to your parents and society. Do not ever work for your selfish interests. In fact, selfishness and self-interest are the main causes degrading the human being. You might have heard about Winston Churchill, the former Prime Minister of England. He once declared “man has conquered all, but not conquered himself”.

Good Qualities Only Can Confer Peace

Children should cultivate good habits and good qualities and reach good position in life. Thus, they should bring good name to their parents. You can earn good name not by money, but by sterling character. No matter how wealthy a person is, his reputation will be

tarnished if his character is not good. A wealthy person may be living in a great mansion and enjoying the luxuries of life; but, he will not have peace of mind and happiness. People crave to earn more and more money. But, of what use is the money they earn? They waste all their money in worthless things. One has to utilise the money earned by him for undertaking good and beneficial activities for the society. He should conduct himself with good behaviour and good habits. Only then will he have real peace in life.

Embodiments of Love!

Today, everyone is literally crying for peace. But, what is this peace? It is in you itself. You are most sacred souls. Love is within you. Peace is within you. Unfortunately, today you are losing the peace and happiness that is within you and craving to earn something in the outside world. You want to earn great wealth and build big mansions. Devoid of good qualities, all the wealth that you earn becomes mere waste. Therefore, cultivate good qualities. There can be no greater wealth in the world than good qualities. The more you exercise good qualities, the more you accumulate. They will never exhaust.

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

Prepare yourself for sacrifices. You will find eternal bliss only in sacrifice. One who does not make sacrifice will not find peace anywhere. People of every

country in this world pray for peace chanting 'Santhi, Santhi, Santhi' But do they get peace? No. They are engulfed in disappointment and despair. Therefore one should develop faith in the truth that the eternal Lord is always with us. How can you obtain peace by ignoring the Divinity immanent in you and worshipping some unseen God?

Embodiments of Love!

Share your education and wealth with your fellow human beings. In fact, God is the real owner of the wealth acquired by you. The money you earn belongs to God's Trust. God Himself is the President of the Trust. Keep your trust on God and make proper utilisation of your money. Do not hanker after money and other forms of wealth. Constantly contemplate on God. You need not have to go to the forest or caves in the hills in search of God. He is always with you. Develop that faith and win over demonic qualities. Today, wherever you see, demonic qualities and violence are rampant. People do not hesitate to acquire wealth by sinful ways. What ultimately comes along with you at the time of leaving the body is the sin or merit you have accumulated and not the wealth you have acquired. Share at least a morsel of food you eat, with others. Help yourself and help others. This is the greatest *sadhana*. In fact, it is so easy to practise. Leaving aside this simple *sadhana* and forgetting the noble quality of love, you are going in search of peace in the wide world. Is it not foolishness

on your part?

Embodiments of Love!

Cultivate Love And Brotherhood

Develop the quality of love. Do not hate anybody. Develop the faith that whatever happens is for your own good. Whenever you encounter any difficulty or suffering, you alone are responsible for it. Respect others. That alone will protect you. On the other hand, if you insult somebody that will punish you. Pleasure or pain, they are the products of your own making. The merit or sin committed by you will follow you like a shadow. Man today is giving sermons to others. But he himself is not following his precepts. What values such teachings will have? All this is mere deception. Whatever teachings you may read or listen to, can never help you if you do not put them into practice. Help your fellow human beings at least in a small measure. That alone will help you. Do not blame others for the difficulties you face. Do not ever abuse others. Love all. Treat all people as your brothers and sisters. Cultivate the feeling of brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God.

Embodiments of Love!

The *Bharatiyas* are really fortunate. They have all facilities. But the quality of love is missing in them. If only they cultivate love, none can excel them. Therefore, enhance your honour and prestige by cultivating the quality

of love. Follow the twin principles of *Sathya* and *Dharma* with love. Love alone can protect you.

Embodiments of Love!

What for are you given the hands? Is it for feeding the mouth? No, no. You have to sing the glory of God with your tongue. The hands are given to you for the purpose of keeping the beat in accordance with the tune. *Bharatiyas* are those who worship God with *Bhava* (feeling) *Raga* (the tune) and *Thala* (the beat). The syllable 'Bha' also stands for *bhakti* (devotion) 'Ra' for *Raga* (tune) and 'Tha' for *Thyaga* (sacrifice). You have to sing the glory of the Lord combining these three aspects. They alone are the real *Bharathiyas*. Every individual born in the country of Bharat is sanctified. We do not need heaven. Let's participate in *seva* chanting the divine name. There can be no greater wealth than this. Why should we suffer when we have such a great wealth with us? Consider all your education and the service you undertake as God's work. The Gitacharya has given a clarion call, *Sarvadharmam parithyajya Mamekam saranam vraja* (surrender unto Me all your activities and seek refuge in Me alone). Hence, dedicate all your activities to God. Only then will you attain peace in every possible way.

[New Year Day, 1-1-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]

Respect For Parents - The Greatest Virtue

The sun shines serene and gentle. The brief daylight is softly wafting the cool wind. The fields are ripe with golden crops. Marigold flowers are blossoming like garlands of pearls on the banks of rivers. The farmers are rejoicing and singing. The ripened chillies are colouring fields with vestments of bright red. The sweet festival of Sankranti has come, filling our homes with the freshly harvested grains of cereals and pulses.

(Telugu poem)

OF ALL the festivals, the imminent *Sankranti* is the most important. It is the day on which the farmers bring home the harvested crop, feed the poor and rejoice. On this day, the *Vedic* scholars get up during the sacred *Brahmamuhurtha* time and

chant the *Vedic mantras*, purifying the hearts of one and all. This festival has a special significance also for the householders. They invite their newly married sons-in-law to their house, present them with new clothes and the entire house abounds with joy. In this context, there is a folk song in Telugu:

A Festival Heraldng Plenty And Joy

*As Sankranti is the festival of festivals,
Oh newly married bridegroom, visit your
in-laws' house,
Come, spend your time in fun and frolic with
your brothers-in-law
and sisters-in-law,
The entire household and the neighbourhood
will honour you with love and affection.*

It is also an occasion when the bullocks are decorated elaborately and taken to various houses in the village. The bullocks are worshipped and fed sumptuously as an expression of gratitude for all the hard work they do in the fields. Even the bovine members of the household are feted, a symbolic marriage is performed between a pair of bull and cow, naming them as Rama and Sita. They are taken along the streets and made to dance to the delight of everyone. In this manner, the festival of *Sankranti* bestows great joy and auspiciousness on farmers, householders, priests and children. Not only the human beings, even the birds and animals rejoice with

the arrival of the sacred *Sankranti* festival. At sunset, it is a wonderful sight to see the birds flying back to their nests chatting merrily and loudly in their own language filling the air with a joyous hum. It is an equally delightful sight to see the cows rushing back from the grazing fields to feed their young ones and the young ones craving for the caresses of their mothers, mooing loudly. *Sankranti* festival is so sweet and endearing to one and all. Cool winds, mellifluous bird songs and the sweet sugarcane crops herald the arrival of *Sankranti*. People celebrate this festival by distributing sweets and rice puddings. This festival drives away all disappointments and despair and fills our hearts with hope and enthusiasm. People get up early in the morning, have a sacred bath and worship their chosen deities, such as, Ganapati, Subrahmanya and Lord Easwara. The divine form of Lord Siva is described thus:

The Lord of Kailasa has manifested His Divine form with the crescent moon adorning His head, the cool water of the Ganga flowing between the matted locks, with His radiant eye in the middle of the forehead and the purple neck gleaming like the sheen of a blackberry. He wears serpent bracelets and a snake belt, His entire body is smeared with Vibhuti, His forehead is adorned with a kumkum dot, His ruddy lips glow with the juice of the betel, diamond-studded gold earrings dangle from His ears and His whole swarthy body

glows with divine effulgence.

(Telugu poem)

However, nowadays people are not celebrating *Sankranti* in its true spirit. Their celebration is confined to mere performance of rituals. They lack purity and sanctity. They are unable to enjoy the bliss of *Sankranti* because of hatred, jealousy and conflicts.

On this auspicious occasion of *Sankranti*, children aged 5 years are initiated into the process of learning with the chanting of sacred *Vedic mantras*. Our ancient sages declared, *Vedahametham Purusham mahantham Adityavarnam thamasah parasthath* (I have visualised the Supreme Being who shines with the effulgence of a billion suns and who is beyond *thamas* - the darkness of ignorance). The *Vedas* have extolled the Supreme Being in manifold ways. The *Rig Veda* contains *mantras* extolling God and His blissful form which attracts one and all.

People address their bullocks with names such as Ramudu, Bhimudu, etc. Similarly, cows are named after Sita, Gowri, Lakshmi, etc. The inner meaning of this is that even animals are treated with the same concern and care as human beings. They decorate the cows and bullocks with saris and dhotis and take them out in a procession.

These days only birds and animals lead their lives in accordance with their natural qualities. So, they are

able to enjoy happiness. On the other hand, man has forgotten his true nature and is behaving like an animal. Consequently, he is leading a miserable life. Birds and animals are better than men in the sense they live in unity and harmony. But due to the impact of modern education, man has degenerated to the level of a beast. He has lost the virtues of honesty and integrity. Birds and animals have a reason and a season, but man has no reason or season. In every house and in every human endeavour, money is given utmost priority. People are ready to stoop down to any level for the sake of money. Animals are satisfied once their hunger is satiated, but man has no sense of satisfaction. The more he earns, the greedier he becomes.

When a dog is sick, it does not eat food. If you have a pet dog, you might have observed this. Even if you pour milk into its mouth by force, it refuses to drink. It likes to remain on empty stomach. But man observes no such restraint with regard to diet when he is sick. He wants to take complete rest when there is only a mild rise in his temperature. He covers himself from head to foot and lies down on his bed. However, he gives no rest to his stomach nor does he observe proper diet restrictions even when he runs high temperature. He likes to eat sweets like *Mysorepak*, *Burfi*, *Gulab Jamoon*, etc., which will only aggravate his sickness. Man is behaving like an animal and animals are behaving like humans! When a person misbehaves, the elders reprimand him

saying, “Why do you behave like an animal?” Due to the impact of modern education, man has lost morality and integrity and has become worse than an animal. He is acquiring high academic qualifications like B.A. and M.A. But what is the use? He is adding the letter ‘D’ (dirty qualities) to his qualification and becoming ‘BAD’ and ‘MAD’. This type of perverted behaviour is unbecoming of a human being. Man should develop good thoughts, good qualities and good character. On the contrary, he is taking to wrong ways to earn money. *Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows.* But man is selling morality in the market for the sake of money.

Embodiments of Love!

Resolve To Start A New Life

At least from this *Sankranti* day, make efforts to cultivate good qualities. Let there be a change in your behaviour for the better. The festivals of *Bharatiyas* are meant to impart sacred teachings and transform human behaviour. They are not meant to merely eat, drink and make merry. First of all, there should be transformation at the individual level. There should be unity in the family. In olden days, people used to live in joint families. The young couples would live with their parents, in-laws and other elders of the family in harmony. Whenever there was any difference of opinion between the couple, the elders in the family would give proper guidance and pacify them. The daughters-in-law

would implicitly follow the advice of their in-laws. As a result, there never used to be any chance for conflicts in the family. But the modern trend is such that the daughter-in-law does not want to live in the house of her in-laws. She wants the family to be divided. Because of such divisive mentality, conflicts in the family are on the rise. Consequently, *Kali Yuga* has become *Kalaha Yuga* (age of conflicts) and *Kalmasha Yuga* (age of pollution). People in those days talked always in a pleasing manner. They would welcome the guests wholeheartedly by exchanging pleasant feelings like “How are you? Please have your food with us, etc.” More than the food, it was the warmth and affection of the host that appeased the hunger of the guest. But nowadays, even on a festival day, people do not like to entertain guests. When they find a guest entering their house, they greet him with the remark, “Please come, hope you have already had your lunch; please be seated.” Man has become so narrow-minded that he does not want to offer even a morsel of food to the guests. Such being the sorry state of affairs, how can you expect the children to be ideal citizens? Due to the influence of parents, even children are becoming narrow-minded. Parents want them to acquire modern education and earn a lot of money. In order to get the children educated in expensive prestigious schools, even the mother has to take up a job. The children are left to the care of *ayas* (female attendants). Consequently, the children are unable to experience the love of the mother. They shed tears when the *aya* dies, but not when the

mother passes away. The children should be brought up under the loving care of the mother. They should listen to her sacred teachings. Otherwise, how can they come up in life? Modern education cannot redeem man's life.

One may have acquired high academic qualifications such as B.A. and M.A. and attained name and fame,

One may have all the wealth and one may do acts of charity and earn merit and good reputation,

One may have all the physical strength and lead a long and healthy life,

One may be a Vipra (Brahmin) who teaches the Vedas and performs spiritual practices such as penance and meditation,

But none of them can be equal to the devotee of the Lord.

(Telugu poem)

Education Must Transform

What is this education? It is only leading to agitation. People are only acquiring degrees, but are not broadening their mind. True education is that which brings about transformation of the heart. There should be expansion of love. But, the present-day education system is leading to narrow-mindedness. People are highly egoistic of their academic qualifications. They have given up morality and integrity, the very essence of Indian culture. Without the virtue of honesty, how can

one attain *ananda* (bliss)? How can education bereft of morality redeem your life? Today the students are going to countries like America, Japan, Germany, etc., as soon as they complete their studies. When the parents go all the way to spend their time with their children, they are asked to have their food in restaurants. Modern educated people are not so fortunate as to serve food to their parents with their own hands. They do not show gratitude to their parents who have brought them up with love and care. This is the worst sin. You should look after your parents well. You should take care of their needs in their advanced age and protect them with love and concern. Today, when parents become old, the children demand a share of their property. They are interested in property but not in developing a proper mind. They do not hesitate to go even to the Supreme Court to settle their property disputes. Instead, one should strive to attain the Supreme State by cultivating virtues. The more one is educated, the more virtuous one should become.

Dear Students!

Just now you have seen Me calling an American boy. This boy is studying in our institution. Simultaneously, he is also learning *Veda*. In whichever portion of the *Veda* you question him, he will be able to chant the concerned *mantra* beautifully. In fact, it is the good fortune of the parents to have such children. It is only because of such parents, children are able to cultivate good qualities. This boy's parents are living in America, yet they have

admitted him in our Institute which is far away from their native place to enable him to learn good qualities and good behaviour. In fact, they have all the facilities available in America to educate their son there itself. But, they did not want to educate their son in America. They love our country and the noble qualities that the children imbibe here. Here the children learn education coupled with love. The children prostrate before their parents with respect and reverence. Such noble qualities have impressed these parents and therefore they have brought their son to pursue his education in our institution.

Here is a small example. There was one Hindi Pandit who was reputed for his literary skills. His two sons were studying in Allahabad, while he and his wife lived in a small town. One day he and his wife had to go by train on a visit to another town and they had to pass through Allahabad. He wrote to his sons to come and meet them at the station on that particular date.

The train halted at the station and the parents stood at the door of the carriage. They saw their sons hurrying towards them. The elder one touched the feet of both the parents before talking to them, while the younger son did not show such respect and reverence. The parents enquired about their health and studies. The elder son said, "We are fine here. Please take care of your health. Your happiness is our happiness." On the other hand, the younger son did not enquire about their health at all. He asked for more money. As the train was about

to start, once again the elder one bent and touched the feet of his parents while the younger one just waved his hand. As the train was leaving the platform, the parents were watching their sons through the window. The elder one was offering his *namaskar* till the end, whereas the younger son was keeping his hands in the pocket and looking somewhere with a callous attitude.

The mother became worried seeing the behaviour of the younger son. She blamed her husband for the reckless behaviour of the younger son. She said, "You have kept him away from us for the sake of his education. He is behaving like an animal as there is no one to guide him properly." The father pacified her saying, "After all, he is young, he will learn and improve in course of time." But, the mother could not come to a compromise and said, "He is already doing his degree course, if not now when will he learn?" Unable to control her feelings, she shed tears.

The mother's words proved to be true. In course of time the elder son, by virtue of his diligence and good behaviour, attained a high position in society. He was very much respected for his manners and sense of courtesy. He prostrated before his parents and said, "It is because of your blessings that I have come up in life." The parents shed tears of joy and blessed him profusely, "Son, it is because of your virtues that you have attained an exalted position in life." What happened to the younger son? He could not fare well in the examinations and ultimately

had to be contented with a clerical job. While the elder one received salutations from everyone, the younger son had to salute everyone. How can one who does not respect his parents be respected by others? *Yad bhavam tad bhavati (as is the feeling, so is the result)*. Our future depends upon our present behaviour. In Western countries today, they give respect and take respect. But this quality is becoming extinct in our country. When you do not respect your own parents, even dogs would not care to look at you. Therefore, wherever you go, you should never forget to respect your parents. The *Vedas* in our country have also exhorted, *Matru Devo bhava, Pitru Devo bhava, Acharya Devo bhava, Atithi Devo bhava* (revere your mother, father, preceptor and guest as God). Thus, they promoted noble qualities by their exhortation. Whoever respects his parents and obeys their commands will certainly reach high positions in life. In fact, the festival of *Sankranti* exhorts us to cultivate such noble qualities. '*Kranti*' means transformation. Therefore, *Sankranti* is supposed to bring about a transformation in our lives. But, how are we reacting to this? Are we able to achieve transformation in our life? No. The purpose of our education is to remove the bad qualities and cultivate good qualities and good behaviour. This is what the festivals in India are meant for. But nobody realises the inner meanings of these festivals.

Revere Your Parents First

Embodiments of Love! Students!

Your parents are struggling hard to feed you, educate you and bring you up in life. Even if they have to starve, they would somehow try to feed you and look after your welfare. They always struggle to keep you in good mood and good condition. They give you good food, good clothing and good education. If you do not respect such parents, how do you expect to be respected by society?

You all know about Abraham Lincoln. He used to go to school in the company of wealthy boys, in his childhood. Those boys were wearing costly clothes and ornaments. Lincoln, however, had to go to school with worn-out clothes that were mended by his mother. One day, his friends made fun of his poor dress. He could not control himself. He went straight to his mother crying and told her, "Mother! I will not attend school hereafter. My classmates are making fun of me. They are looking down upon me as a poor boy unable to wear decent dress." Then, the mother took him into her arms lovingly and consoled him saying, "My dear son! You need not feel sorry for such a trivial issue. All this is going to help you in your future life. You must keep our family condition in view. Do not give attention to what others say. Lead a life of self-confidence and self-respect. Respect every individual and be respected by every individual." From that day onwards, Lincoln put his mother's advice into practice and started respecting everybody. Gradually, Abraham Lincoln could command respect from all people by his good behaviour. He earned a very good

name for himself. After sometime, elections were held in America. He was persuaded by his friends and well-wishers to contest the elections. At last, he bowed to the wishes of his friends and well-wishers and contested the elections. He won the elections with a thumping majority and was elected President of the United States of America in due course of time. He attained such an exalted position because he implicitly followed the advice of his mother and respected everybody. Truly speaking, he did not have much money, but he had the wealth of virtues. He was happy at the prosperity of others. He was contented with what he had and did not crave for money and material possessions. Because of such noble qualities, he rose to become the President of America. During his tenure, he passed a decree for abolishing slavery of black Africans in America thereby putting an end to their inhuman suffering.

It is self-respect that protects man and takes him to an exalted position. You may be poor financially, but if you uphold your self-respect, you will be respected by all. Do not look down upon the poor. Respect them and treat them with love. That is the true human nature. Lincoln's mother inculcated such noble qualities in her son. That is why Lincoln considered his mother as God and revered her. Whoever inculcates sacred qualities in you is your God. He is not to be sought after somewhere else. When you develop self-respect, He will manifest right in front of you.

Dear Students!

You must respect your parents, whoever they may be and in whatever condition they may be. You must respect their words and obey their commands, without any reservation. Then only you will be able to command respect from society. All the great people in yesteryears did obey and respect their parents and set an example to the world. Do you know the underlying meaning of the ancient customs and traditions of Bharat? For example, they used to build big mansions with small doors. Do you know why? We think that these small doors were to prevent thieves from entering the houses and escaping with ease. No, that was not the reason. These doors were purposely kept low to enable the visitors to observe the custom of entering the houses with their heads bent in reverence to the inmates. Thus, every custom and tradition of Bharat were meant to promote mutual respect and goodwill among people. It was established with great care and wisdom. But, even the *Bharatiyas* have forgotten such noble traditions. Nowadays you will not find even a '*gadapa*' (threshold) to the door frame of the main entrance to the house. They think that the threshold is an unnecessary hindrance to enter the house. No, it is not a hindrance at all! The ancient traditions and customs of Bharat are meant to promote humility, respect and reverence among people.

Dear Students!

Let Humility Be Your Badge

You must learn and observe such great traditions and command the respect of people. You must bring joy to your parents, by your behaviour. The parents must feel happy that their children are obeying them. It is enough if you earn such a good name. God's grace cannot be obtained by performing mere rituals like worship. However highly qualified you are, it will only promote ego, but not humility and respect towards parents and elders. Therefore, **you must cultivate the qualities of humility, respect and reverence.** Then only you will become good citizens of the country. It is not necessary that you should become great. It is enough if you become good citizens. Name and fame come today, but may be lost tomorrow. But, the good name acquired will last forever. Therefore, earn a good name. We must earn the 'grace' of God. But, contrary to this, people are craving for the 'grass' of worldly desires. Grass is something that is consumed by the cattle. You should not become cattle by developing a taste for grass. You must strive to earn God's grace and thus become good individuals.

Dear Students!

These are the sacred days of the festival of *Sankranti*. On this occasion, we must cultivate the quality of giving respect to others and taking respect. I am giving you a small example here. (Swami called the American boy, a student of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, and said), "This boy is securing first

class not only in studies but also in the study of *Vedas*. He has given immense joy to his parents with his good behaviour. His father is very happy that his son has earned a very good name and is appreciated by one and all." (Swami called his father to the dais and showered His blessings on him.) This boy's mother is working in our Primary School and spending her time blissfully. The boy's parents have earned the love and respect of all because of his exemplary behaviour. In this manner, every one of you should strive to bring good name to your parents. Only then will your parents experience the real joy of begetting you as their son. You may earn a lot of money and build big mansions, but they cannot bring you good name. They are temporary. Once you earn good reputation, it will remain with you forever. Bring good name to the institution in which you have studied. Observing your noble qualities, people should be able to recognise you as Sathya Sai's Students. You are aware that we are not charging even a paisa from our students. Further, I am also providing books and other facilities for the needy and deserving students. The students have immense love for Swami and Swami also showers His love and grace on them. Even while leaving their parents and coming here, they do not shed tears. But when I go to Brindavan and return to Puttaparthi, the students in Brindavan start shedding tears unable to bear the separation from Me. How did they acquire such intense love? It is Swami's love that is responsible for this. It is only the love that I disseminate to all.

My property does not comprise mansions and palatial buildings. **Love is My biggest property.** I am giving My love and receiving your love in return. I often tell the students, “Give Me your love, I will give you whatever you want.” That is why the students have such intense love for Me. Develop love more and more. Love your parents. Obey their command. Your lives will certainly be sanctified.

Think of God always. Wherever you are, in the forest or in the sky, in the village or in the city, on the hilltop or in the middle of the deep sea, love alone can come to your rescue. It is always with you, in you, around you, above you and below you.

Chaala Santhosham (very happy).

[Sankranti Eve, 12-1-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]

3

Character Is The Goal Of Education

Students, Boys and Girls!

THE present Vice Chancellor, the former Vice Chancellor, the Secretary of the Central Trust and two students have made excellent speeches in beautiful vocabulary. In this vast world, wherever you see, you find most wonderful and joyful events that awaken your inner being and fill your heart with immense bliss. Our students also have developed great skill, intelligence and expertise in the fields of sports, games and music and demonstrated their talents giving joy to one and all. Whatever be the activity they undertake, they do it to please Swami and not for temporary happiness.

Education Must Develop Inner Vision

Right from the time of birth, all activities of man

are centred round the process of learning and acquiring wisdom. It is absolutely necessary to teach the spirit of idealism to our students so that they fill their hearts with love and give happiness to one and all. Today, there are a number of educational institutions all over the world, but, nobody seems to have understood what education really means. Students fill their heads with mere bookish knowledge, write examinations, secure pass marks and claim that they are educated.

In spite of his education and intelligence, a foolish man will not know his true Self and a mean-minded person will not give up his evil qualities. (Telugu poem)

Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to total wisdom. What is the use of acquiring education which cannot lead you to immortality? Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal.

(Telugu poem)

Vidya means *Jnana* (wisdom). *Jnana* does not mean worldly intelligence. True education is that which develops inner vision and makes you experience everlasting bliss. In what way are the students benefited by the present educational system? They are merely acquiring degrees and earning the appreciation of the authorities, but they do not understand the real significance of education. Modern students are unable to realise the true spirit behind their participating in sports

and cultural events. In all events of sports and games, you have a winner and also a loser. People are interested only in the outcome of the events and not in enjoying the spirit of sports. The aim of sports and games is not to produce a decisive result but to inculcate the spirit of sportsmanship in the participants. *Life is a game, play it. Life is a dream, realise it. Life is love, enjoy it.* It is only he who understands the import of these statements and realises them in his daily life is a true student.

Modern system of education, instead of developing the power of discrimination in students, is making them narrow-minded. It neither bestows true wisdom nor does it help them to become broad-minded. The present-day education has become meaningless. The textbooks that are prescribed for students do not contain the essence of true education. I wonder why the government promotes such meaningless textbooks! May be, even the government is unaware of the realities. It appears as though someone at some low level is taking these decisions without consulting the higher authorities. It is bringing a bad name to the government, but nobody seems to be concerned about it. Such an unhealthy trend is on the rise. Nobody is making efforts to understand the sacredness associated with the ancient system of education. Students are interested only in bookish knowledge, not in the essence of education. Only their textual knowledge is tested, but not practical knowledge. Students think that degrees are meant to earn a livelihood. *Education is for life, not for a living.*

But neither the students nor the parents realise this truth. Parents are happy if their children score high marks in their examinations. They are not bothered about the heap of bad remarks their children get. If only they care to look into the remarks, they will truly understand the type of education that their children are receiving. Due to the advancement in modern education, the study of *Vedas* and *Sastras* has declined. In this situation, how can the present education confer true wisdom on you?

Parents And Teacher Should Be More Responsible Students!

You should acquire such education which will be beneficial to the society and the world at large. What is the present state of society? In what way can we make it ideal? How should one work for the advancement of the society? Nobody seems to think on these lines. Even the present system of education does not lay emphasis on service to society. If someone talks about reforms in the system of education, the students just brush it aside. They think that textual knowledge is the be-all and end-all of education. The elders should take up the responsibility to give proper education to students. Students should uphold the honour of the society. We should follow the teachings of our ancient sages and seers who have given us the true meaning of education. It is a sign of foolishness to become egoistic by merely acquiring a few degrees. You should understand the needs of society and utilise your education for its progress. People say they

are serving the society, but without really understanding what the requirements of the society are. Such service is not *samaja seva* (social service), but *samadhi seva*, meaning a lifeless, mechanical activity. Society will progress only when the system of education is set right. As the craze for Western education has increased, the study of *vedic* texts is being neglected. Parents should teach their children what is good and what is bad right from their childhood. They should not be satisfied merely by securing admission in a college and acquiring a degree by their children. They should ensure that their children utilise their education to serve the nation. The government may not be able to do much in this regard; it is the responsibility of the parents to guide their children on proper lines. They should encourage the children to work for the progress of the nation. But nowadays, parents do not have such broad-mindedness. Even teachers are not interested in the welfare of the nation. They feel that their responsibility ends with imparting bookish knowledge to students. They do not even enquire whether the information contained in the textbooks is beneficial to society or not. They do not take up the matter with the government. Even if they do take it up, the government is not responsive. They are changing educational institutions into factories which produce degree holders. Students alone are not to be blamed for this state of affairs. Parents, teachers and the government are equally responsible for this dismal state of affairs. It is not enough if students secure high ranks

in the class and earn a good name. They should work for the progress of the society and the nation and thus bring a good name to parents. Parents should monitor the progress of their children from time to time, inculcate virtues in them and mould them into responsible citizens. They should not rest satisfied if their children get good marks. They should also observe what type of books they read at home. Some students read meaningless novels. But the parents do not bother to correct them. On the other hand, they say, “What is wrong in reading novels? It is enough if they are happy.” In this manner, they spoil their own children. They do not care to observe how their children behave in their absence. There is no point in merely educating the children without correcting their behaviour. Parents should emulate the ideals of our forefathers who brought up their children in the most ideal way.

Students Be Provided A Blend Of Secular And Spiritual Education

Embodiments of Love!

The modern system of education needs reforms. Parents today take pride that their children are studying in English medium schools and are able to recite English poems. They fail to understand what type of impact and influence this modern education has on their children. The tiny tots in kindergarten are taught nursery rhymes like “Ba ... Ba ... Black Sheep”. Because of such education, the children are ultimately becoming black

sheep themselves. I am really pained and disgusted watching the present-day system of education which is totally spoiling the lives of students. That is why I have established educational institutions spending crores of rupees to mould the character of students. I am providing even textbooks free of cost to the students. In the present-day world, the situation is so bad that even for admission to a primary school one has to register well in advance paying thousands of rupees as donation. Parents are happy if their wards get admission in what they consider good schools, but they do not bother about the benefit that would accrue on account of such an educational system. The children do not appreciate the privations the parents have to undergo for educating them. Parents take loans and even forgo proper food and sleep to educate their children. Ultimately, the children do not benefit out of this system of education. They are unable to understand what is good and what is bad for them. Today when the quality of education has become so ‘cheap’ how can such education make one a ‘chief’? Neither the parents nor the teachers nor the students are able to understand how the society and the nation are benefited by the present system of education. Therefore, all of them should join hands and work unitedly to bring about a complete transformation in the society. At present students’ agitation is on the increase. However, it is not their fault. They are in themselves very good-natured. Fault lies with the teachers, elders and the government. It is a decided factor that the present system of education

is not designed to mould the character of the students. There are many good students, but parents, teachers and textbooks do not guide them properly. It is high time that the parents opened their eyes and seen the real state of affairs. They should see to it that their children come up in their life by acquiring proper education. They should encourage their children to pursue such type of education which will lead them to immortality. Of course, secular education is also necessary. But, secular education should be harmonised with spiritual education to mould the character of the students and make them better citizens of the country.

The End Of Education Should Be Character

Students!

Do not feel proud that you are pursuing higher education. Along with higher education, you should cultivate noble qualities. Education bereft of virtues is useless. The end of education is character. Today many students read useless, even immoral fictions. The authorities should ensure that such books are not sold in the market. Students should read only such books which can improve their character. They should participate in sports and games in the true spirit. This advice would equally apply to the girl students as well. They question, “When boys ride motor bikes, why can’t we do the same?” In this way they argue and waste their time. Nobody says that girls should not ride motor bikes. But

one should act according to the time and circumstances. The number of fatal accidents of young people involved in two wheelers is on the increase. Parents make many sacrifices to bring up their children. But, if the precious lives of students are lost in motor cycle accidents, I can understand their agony.

Today, girls want to compete with boys in every field. They also aspire for name and fame. Their argument is, “In what way are we inferior to boys? Why can’t we acquire the same type of education as boys?” However, each one should acquire such type of education that is appropriate and suitable to them. It is essential for women to look after their families well and shape the character of their children in an ideal manner. Along with inculcating virtues in children, they should also be given proper education. The present-day education is leading students in the wrong direction. Parents are to be partly blamed for this. They want their children to acquire high qualifications and get married to another highly qualified person. Some parents while trying to fix up marriage alliance ask, “My daughter has completed her postgraduation. She is good. looking. What about your son? Has he completed his postgraduation? Is he handsome?” In fact, beauty is related to character, not to the physical appearance. Beauty of character is what one should aspire for. Is it always possible to get a postgraduate bridegroom for a postgraduate bride? The present-day education is leading to unhealthy

competition and conflicts. I do not say that girls should not pursue higher education. If I am against women's education, why should I establish women's colleges? I have established various educational institutions with the sole purpose of inculcating virtues in students. I am providing education free of cost. There are no examination fees even. My only aim is that students should acquire proper education, become ideal citizens and give happiness to their parents.

Students!

Do not misunderstand My words. I am telling you all this for your own welfare and progress. You should acquire such education which will bring a good name to you and uphold the reputation of your family. Do not become egoistic and take to wrong ways in the name of freedom. I quite often caution the boys not to look here and there while walking on the road. Some boys, while speeding on their motor bikes, keep looking at girls who are passing by. Their attention is diverted and they end up in accidents. If your character is good, you will always be protected. You should always keep your senses under control. You should always have a check on your vision, listening and speech. Buddha undertook various spiritual practices with a view to have mastery over his senses.

*Why are the eyes given to you?
Is it to look here and there? No.*

*The eyes are meant to see the beautiful form of
the Lord.*

Why are the ears given to you?

Is it to listen to vain gossip? No.

*The ears are meant to hear the glories of the
Lord.*

(Telugu poem)

The ears are given for hearing good words and putting them into practice and thereby lead a virtuous life. Having realised that God has given the sense organs for the purpose of leading a virtuous life, Buddha discarded all ritualised spiritual practices and put his senses to sacred use. He assured himself that what he had to achieve in life was virtues, and not sensual pleasures. He realised that conscience was his true *Guru* and made efforts to control his sense organs like eyes and tongue. If these two sense organs are controlled, all the other organs would automatically come under control. Having thus set a goal for himself in life, Buddha entered the wide world, after renouncing his wife and only child. I am not, however, advising you to leave your wife and children and go to the forest like Buddha. You look after them well and fulfil your responsibilities towards them. Teach your children noble qualities and bring them up in life. Lead a life of virtue. This is what Buddha taught. If you cultivate *samyak drishti* (right vision) like the Buddha, the whole world will be under your control.

Strive For A Virtuous Life

Do not pay heed to the wrong advice of others. Foster noble qualities. If you can control your senses, that itself amounts to realising the essence of the epic, *Bhagavata*. The study of the epic *Bhagavata* is meant to transform you into a man of virtue. Hence, control your senses and become a master of the world. This is what you have to strive for, today. Explain to your parents also about your priorities in life. Tell them, "Mother! You expect me to go for a job which offers a fat salary. But, high salaries are not as important as a virtuous life. If we give preference to money instead of a noble life, our life itself will be ruined." When you keep your senses under control, you will become a person of noble qualities. You will also gain the strength of character. Hanuman, the illustrious servant of Lord Rama is an example of such noble qualities. He was extolled as '*santhudu*', '*gunavantudu*' and '*balavantudu*' (calm and serene, one of virtues, one of mighty strength). He became a great *Guru* because of his noble qualities. We should emulate his noble qualities.

Dear Students!

You are like pure gold. You are people of noble qualities. You are precious. But, some of you are misguided by bad elements. Even if others try to mislead you, do not deviate from your chosen path. Stand firm. Only then will you acquire name and fame. This is My advice to the students. In today's education you are taught skills which will enable you to rise up in your

career, but, nobody teaches moral education. Morality is the most important aspect of education. *Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows*. Therefore, cultivate morality. That will earn you respect from society.

God is your sole refuge wherever you may be, be it in a forest or in the sky or in a city or in a village or on the top of a mountain or in the middle of a deep sea.

(Telugu poem)

Cultivate noble qualities. I shall give you everything. Nay, I shall give Myself to those who cultivate noble qualities and also to those who teach them. In fact, I am living only for their sake. I do not seek anything in return from them. Lead a life of character and nobility. Bring good name to your parents, your institution and to Swami.

Dear Students!

You are all men of noble qualities, but you are influenced by the contemporary society to a certain extent. Therefore, do not succumb to distracting influences. First and foremost, make proper use of your senses. Any elders you come across, revere them as your father and mother. Earn good name for yourself by your thoughts, words and deeds.

Join good company, speak good words, cultivate *samyak drishti* and pursue good education that will build your character – this is what I expect from you, students.

In fact, this is what your parents also wish for. No father or mother will expect their children to be spoiled. But, they are unable to advise the children properly and put them in order, out of some sort of inhibition. Of course, I have no such qualms. Therefore, I am advising you, with all the emphasis at My command, to see good, be good and do good. Cultivate noble qualities. *Thyaga* (sacrifice) is the noblest of all qualities, not *bhoga* (indulgence). In fact, *bhoga* will lead you to *roga* (disease). The *Veda* has proclaimed *Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaike amrutatthwamanasu* (immortality is not attained through action, progeny or wealth; it is attained only by sacrifice). Hence, *Bangaru!* (My dear golden students) cultivate such noble qualities as *thyaga*. I am prepared to sacrifice everything for you. But, you must also be in a position to receive My grace. I am yours and you are Mine. That should be the relationship between us. Try to understand Swami's love. All this is meant to advise you to tread the right path. Do not go against the wishes of your parents. If, by any chance, you have to differ from their views, explain to them lovingly your viewpoint. They will also feel happy that you have respected their feelings. The *Veda* has declared, *Matru devo bhava, Pitru devo bhava, Acharya devo bhava, Atithi devo bhava* (revere your mother, father, preceptor and guest as God). Speak sweetly and softly to your parents. Convince them, if necessary. I am prepared to sacrifice anything for the sake of such students. Several students join our educational institutions. Some of them

may not be in a position to pay fees. Therefore, we have decided that all education in Sathya Sai institutions should be totally free and no fees be collected from the students. You should be free from all anxieties and enjoy peace. By conforming to good behaviour only can peace be obtained. Several students today wish to enjoy good things in life, but are following wrong methods. They wish to partake of sugar, but consume bitter pills. They say one thing and do another. That is why it is said

*Manasyekam vachasyekam karmanyekam
mahatmanam*

*Manasyanyat vachasyanyath karmanyanyath
duratmanam*

(those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones; those who lack harmony of these are wicked)

I like such students whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect accord. I am prepared to sacrifice anything for them, nay, I will give away Myself to such people.

Dear Students!

Knowingly or unknowingly you might have committed mistakes in the past. But, at least in future, cultivate good qualities and try to keep your parents as well as Swami always happy.

(Swami called students from Primary School,

Higher Secondary School and also from the three campuses and gave away glittering silver trophies in appreciation of their performance in the Sports and Cultural Meet.)

[Sankranti Message, 15-1-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]

4

Love Is The Royal Path To Realise God

The sacred feet of the Lord are as vast as the cosmos, as pervasive as the sky. They reach even Patala Loka (lower world). His sacred crown lies beyond Bhrahmanda (cosmos). He is inaccessible, imperceptible and incomparable.

(Kannada poem)

Embodiments of Love! Students, Teachers and Educators!

I FIND it difficult to deliver a speech in Kannada language. It requires regular practice. If you do an activity regularly, you become adept in it. I get a chance to speak in Kannada very rarely, not always. N. Kasturi stayed at Prasanthi Nilayam for about 30 years and he was always with Me. He made good use of this golden opportunity for *Seva Sadhana*.

Kasturi was a well-known creative writer in Kannada. He was popularly known as “Kannada Kasturi.” He was very pure and sacred. Just by looking at his respectable personality one could make out the fragrance and sacredness of Kannada language. It is likely that I may make some mistakes here and there while speaking such an extremely fragrant language.

Pioneering Efforts Of Narayana Bhat

Narayana Bhat established two schools in Karnataka one at Alike in Dakshina Kannada district and another at Muddenahalli in Kolar district. Following Sathya Sai educational principles, he worked very hard for a long period of time to develop them into model schools (*loud applause*). In order to develop the schools, he had to take loan from various sources and also from a large number of his well-wishers. But he had to struggle hard to pay off the loan. He and his mother went to so many villages and towns and approached several persons for raising money. But the debts went on increasing and never showed any sign of coming down. On one occasion, Narayana Bhat approached Me and briefly explained how those outstanding debts were causing him a lot of worry. He prayed to Me, “Swami, *Anyatha sharanam nasti, Twameva sharanam mama, Tasmāt karunyabhavena....* (I have no other refuge except You. You are my saviour. Show mercy on me and protect me.) Swami, I beg and plead with You, please take over these two schools and put new life into them..” Then I

said to him, “Narayana Bhat! Health and education are essential for all. I know that. But right now, don’t give them to Me. You look after them as long as you can.” I encouraged him to go ahead with his service activities. I blessed him and said, “Be happy. Carry on teaching spiritual truths.” Later on, Narayana Bhat worked with much more zeal and vigour. These institutions made rapid progress. They were hailed as model schools. He was indeed a beacon light for all spiritual-seekers and service-minded persons. *Yad bhavam tad bhavathi* (As is the feeling, so is the result). Soon many good teachers joined him. They were all men of character, intelligence and sacrifice. They renounced everything and stood by him steadfastly. Presently, all those dedicated teachers together are running the institutions very efficiently.

Noble Ideals Set By Alike And Muddenahalli Institutions

Narayana Bhat carried on his mission and worked tirelessly day in and day out. But his time was drawing near. This body goes with time. *‘Kalaya namah, Kala kalaya namah, Kaladarpa damanaya namah, Kalatheethaya namah, Kalaswarupaya namah, Kalaniyamitaya namah* (salutations to time, to the one who is beyond time, to the one who has conquered time, to the one who transcends time, to the one who is the embodiment of time, and to the one who ordains time). Time is supreme. Everyone has to bow down to time. As time moved on, all of a sudden, Narayana Bhat met

with a car accident in 1978. The accident proved fatal and he left his mortal coil at once. The organization lost its mother. It was orphaned. Then Gangadhara Bhat, Narayana Rao, Narasimha Murthy and others came to Me and said, “Swami, that day You made a promise that You would look after these institutions. Kindly take over these schools and protect us all.” They intensely prayed and pleaded with Me.

My intention is to give proper direction to the present educational system. I always encourage any good move in this direction. *Vidya* has an important role in the life of man. Life without *vidya* is useless. One has to learn real *Vidya* and share it with others to lead them on the righteous path. That is what I intend to do in the field of education. If I took Alike and Muddenahalli institutions, I had to bear the burden of those debts standing against them. It was not a meagre sum. It was ten lakh rupees of those days! But all the teachers were praying; “Swami, You are our Lord, You are our saviour. You have to save us.” My heart melted at their sincere prayer. Instantaneously, I took over those institutions and cleared all their outstanding debts once and for all.

From then onwards, I used to visit Muddenahalli while travelling between Prasanthi Nilayam and Brindavan. I would talk to those dear children and enthuse them. *Darshanam papa nashanam, Sparshanam karma vimochanam, Sambhashanam sankata nashanam* (sight of the Lord destroys all sins, His touch frees from

Karmic consequences, conversation with Him destroys all sufferings). Thus, I gave them *Darshan, Sparshan* and *Sambhashan*. The teachers too felt encouraged and happy. Being free from all worries and problems, the teachers worked with relaxed mind and brought the institutions to this level. Now the institutions do not have the burden of debt. The schools have made a considerable progress attracting the attention of the world. The teachers are very good. They recognize the good qualities in each other and adopt them in their lives and thereby raise their moral and spiritual levels. They do not get into bad and demeaning company. You are judged by the company you keep. *Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are*. Association plays crucial role in one’s spiritual life. Teachers should always relish the company of the good and thereby work for the growth of the institution. The teachers of Alike and Muddenahalli are doing it. They are developing the inner strength of the schools. The schools have been showing excellent progress. They have now reached college stage. They have already won a lot of fame. People call them Sathya Sai Loka Seva Colleges. They will become full-fledged colleges in a few years. To reach the same standard, the remaining institutions of the Sai Organisation will have to put in a lot of effort.

The day-scholars in these institutions come from distant places. Some students walk some distance and then catch a bus and reach the schools. The heads of the schools and teachers cooperate with each other and help

each other to make good progress and march towards perfection. The students there have a high moral and spiritual standard. Students should totally avoid bad company. You should always associate with the good. You should always join the group of students who are good in their speech, behaviour and actions. By doing so, you will reach the height of eminence. In *Treta Yuga*, Lakshmana closely observed Hanuman and reported to Rama: “Swami, Hanuman is virtuous and mighty. He serves Sugriva very competently. It is Sugriva’s good fortune to have the *satsanga* of Hanuman. The company of Hanuman will help Sugriva and remove all his sufferings.” In the same way, students should become good by associating themselves with good company. Going to Muddenahalli is what I always like. In the past, I frequently went there and saw those children and guided the teachers with timely advice. But the times have changed. Under these changed circumstances, I cannot go there so easily as I was doing in the past. Now hundreds of vehicles follow Me. It is very difficult to provide even a minimum hospitality to so many people. Why should I put those teachers to trouble unnecessarily? That is why I have reduced the number of these visits.

Dedication And Devotion Of Gangadhara Bhat

Let us talk about Alike now. Alike was also handed over to Me along with Muddenahalli school. It is not near but far from here. It is not possible to personally go there quite often. That does not mean that I don’t like to

go there. They have been praying for My going to Alike for so many years. Especially on one particular occasion, Gangadhara Bhat pressed Me so much that I had no option but to yield to his intense prayers. He, in fact, said, “Swami, we are getting old. Once at least You should come to our village. You are our Redeemer. You have to grant us salvation.” He prostrated and intensely prayed to Me. I finally yielded to his feelings and emotions. At once I rented a helicopter and went there. You must know why I had to hurry to Alike. Gangadhara Bhat’s prayer came straight from his heart.

Even now, except Gangadhara Bhat, there is no one who can shoulder that great responsibility and lead the institution towards progress. That is why I said to him, “Gangadhara Bhat, you must stay there only. You remain there as My reflection. For every action, there is a reflection, reaction and resound. You have to conduct yourself in such a way that your words should reflect My views. You must have a feeling that the places you go about are the ones Swami has already trodden. While carrying out your duty, do it with a feeling that it is in fact Swami personally doing it. You must not leave the institution.” After I told him firmly, Gangadhara Bhat took up the assignment as per Swami’s command and marched along by putting his heart and soul in all the duties he performed. Right now both the institutions are making good progress. Seeing them itself gives Me great pleasure and happiness. Now they are developing at a

quick pace. What you saw there yesterday, you will not see it now. Growth is rapid there. It has become possible because of the efforts of the dedicated teachers.

Understand The Real Meaning Of Educare

Our schools and colleges (Prasanthi Nilayam, Brindavan, Anantapur) have also shown considerable progress. As the growth is inward, it is not possible for all to recognize it. This inner growth is educare. Educare brings out our latent sacred values. Values are not to be taught but manifested. Mere accumulation of information from various books is not educare; it is education. Educare is the blossoming of the Divine Lotus in our heart. Educare enables us to be not just receptors but vibrators and radiators of values to all creation. Values are to be translated into action. That means, both precept and practice are equally important. How to put the principles of educare into practice? Many modern boys and girls have no knowledge about these principles. It is absolutely necessary that every student should know all about educare and its importance. The latent powers in each student have to be brought out. These powers must play their part in all his activities as reflection, reaction and resound. Thus, the process of education has to work in such a way as to transform the students into reflections of their latent powers. They are to be moulded properly and shaped beautifully. Our institutions bring out ideal students and present them to the world.

Sathyannasti paro dharma. (There is no *Dharma* greater than adherence to truth). “You shall not tell anything but truth. What has happened should be reported truthfully. What all you have done, you should say it exactly.” This is what most people say and believe when they give the meaning of truth. But this is only one dimension of the vast interpretation of truth. Similarly, you must understand that Educare has much deeper meaning. In fact, *Sathya* (truth) is educare; *Dharma* (righteousness) is educare. It is truth and righteousness which protected India from all dangers. *Sathya* and *Dharma* do not come from outside. All that comes from outside is not permanent. Today it comes, tomorrow it goes. But what comes out from one’s heart is permanent. Educare comes from the heart and it has to go to other hearts only.

Recently, Vice Chancellors of 25 famous universities of India came to our Institute to take part in a Seminar on Value Education. They were all very eager to know about educare. They also wanted to know the workable method for introducing it into their curriculum. “*Vidyannasti parodharma.*” (There is no *Dharma* greater than *Vidya*). Therefore, one has to acquire real *Vidya*. Heart is the source of real *vidya*. Mere accumulation of information is not *vidya*. *Vidya* is eternal bliss. Real *vidya* is educare. But head is the source of education. Educare starts from the source of the heart and comes out through *buddhi* (intellect) whereas education is merely

bookish knowledge emerging from the mind. Educare is *Buddhigrahyamateendriyam* (Educare transcends the senses and can be grasped only by the intellect).

Saturate All Your Actions With Love

Whatever activities you do, love should be their foundation. There is no *Prana* (life) without love. Life without love is of no use at all. Education system should be so transformed as to develop love principle in one's heart. *Sathya* (truth) and *Dharma* (righteousness) are the reflections of *Prema* (love). They give you the much desired *Prasanthi* (supreme peace). If love springs out from your heart, it is enough. It will give you salvation. In *Dwapara Yuga*, *Gopikas* said to Krishna, “*Lord! Kindly pour down the nectar of love on our barren hearts. Sow the seeds of love. May the flood of love flow from our hearts!*” (Kannada poem) They earnestly prayed to Krishna to fulfil their heart's yearnings. If the world is to prosper, the rain of love should pour on it. The sacred land of Bharat has been laying great emphasis on the importance of devotion and surrender since ancient times. It has set lofty ideals for mankind in all spheres of life.

Every being has love in his heart. If we do not have love, we are not human. Love is with us from our birth. We have got this body because of the merits of our previous births. The body becomes sacred only if it is saturated with love. So, you must cultivate love principle.

Then your life becomes holy. You must cultivate love towards all beings regardless of what they are or what they do. It is natural for children to show love towards their parents. But it is important that they should be so moulded that they develop love for the entire mankind. Love comprises all aspects of *Vidya*.

The knowledge that the students acquire in schools and colleges is only information-oriented. Mere bookish knowledge is not of great importance. Expansion of love is very important. Your thoughts have to be purified. Only pure hearts comprehend God. Intellectual reasoning does not help you to realise God. Pure thought is another name for pure life. Love is God. God has no form except love. I wish that you all install love principle in the deep recesses of your heart.

Love is your *Prana* (life). It is enough if you have love. Love redeems all. Love wards off all suffering, hardships, pains and agonies. Love is nectarous in form. “*Srunvantu viswe amrutasya putrah*” (Oh, the children of immortality! Listen). You are *amritaputra*, not *anritaputra* (sons of untruth). Do not weaken yourself by considering yourself as sons of untruth. Feel that you are *amritaputra*. Then the tree of love will grow in your heart and give you the fruit of *atmic* bliss.

Do not be attached to the body. Get rid of body attachment. You have to realise the *atmic* principle. Immerse yourself in the ocean of *atmic* consciousness.

As long as you have body attachment, you will not understand the *atmic* principle. You have to do self-inquiry “Who am I? From where have I come? Whither am I going? How long will I be here?” The entire spiritual inquiry begins with these questions. When you feel that you are the *Atma*, you start contemplating on the *atmic* principle. “What is *Atma*, what is *Atma*?”, you think seriously about it. By making such an inquiry, you will understand the *atmic* principle.

All objects have both name and form. But the *atma* has no name or form. If you understand the *atmic* principle, you will understand the *Paramatma* principle. That is *parama thriпти* (supreme satisfaction), *parama asha* (supreme hope), *parama gamya* (supreme goal), *parama sathya* (supreme truth). In order to realise *amrutwa* (immortality), you have to become the embodiment of love. You have to radiate love. You have to treat everyone as your brother and sister. Whether others talk to you or not, you have to consider them as your own brother. If you are able to put it into practice in all walks of life, love will grow in your heart. You may have some enemies. You think that they hate you. Don't consider them as your enemies. Don't hate them. Instead whenever you happen to meet them talk to them lovingly and ask, “How are you, brother?” Then their feeling of enmity will suffer defeat in an instant. Their extreme dislike towards you will vanish and love will spring forth from their heart. Naturally, you will become friends. When love occupies your heart, jealousy, hatred,

etc., cannot enter it. You will get absolute peace. People say, “We want peace, we want peace.” Peace does not fall from heaven. It has to come from love. Love is the royal path to realise God.

What is the purpose of your birth as a human being? It is not just eating, loitering and merry-making. You must understand that you are born to realise the love principle. If love blossoms in your heart, you yourself will become *Paramatma* (God). You need not look for God here and there. He is in you. He is in the form of love. There is no escape from dualism as long as man does not recognize his inherent divinity. You should expand your love. Live in love.

Selfless Service Is Real Penance

At this juncture, I would like to say something more about Gangadhara Bhat. He was Narayana Bhat's trusted follower and a dependable person. He was verily his right hand. Once Narayana Bhat said to him, “Gangadhara Bhat! Serve sincerely for the well-being of the institution. Whenever you run into difficulty, pray to Bhagawan Sathya Sai. Then He will personally take care of you all.” From that day onwards till today Gangadhara Bhat has fully depended on Swami. He has unshakeable faith in Swami. Swami is his *Paramatma*. He firmly believes that Sai *Paramatma* will lead him. He has such a feeling of surrender. He performs his duties with devotion and dedication. He is working sincerely for the progress of both Alike and Muddenahalli

institutions. In fact, they have flourished under his honest leadership. I went to Alike two years ago (in 2002). I was wonderstruck on seeing the total transformation of Alike. When I went to Alike for the first time in 1979, there were only a few small buildings. Now Alike has become a town. That itself is not greatness. Its greatness lies in its inner strength. Mere buildings will not suffice. People construct expensive houses and tall buildings in towns and cities. They consider their houses as everything. They don't have purity of heart. Their hearts brim with evil thoughts and evil schemes. Such men do not understand the love principle. Purity in thought, word and deed is a basic requisite for man.

Thus, Gangadhara Bhat has been running the organization braving all hardships and unpleasant situations. Once he said to Me, "Swami, it is not possible for me to manage all the affairs effectively. I am getting old. It requires both physical and mental strength. Swami, I request You earnestly to appoint any good person who will manage everything very well." As a matter of fact, all are good in My view. No one is bad. People think that they are bad. That is all. It is their feeling only. Badness exists in our thoughts. As love is in everyone, all are good. I said to Gangadhara Bhat: "Don't leave your post. You remain in the same position. Do not worry. I will always help you and lead you. I will look after everything."

My words gave him courage and confidence. He has been continuing his work with enthusiasm. Where

can he go if he relinquishes the post? He will have to go somewhere else and do *Thapas* (penance). What is penance? Simply spending time, doing nothing is not penance. Simply sitting at a place and reciting "Rama, Rama, Krishna, Krishna" is also not penance. Real penance lies in doing good work constantly, having good thoughts always and developing good qualities in oneself. Leaving one's home, going to forest, doing *shirshasana* (standing on one's head) and publicising, "I am doing penance", is not at all penance. It is indeed false penance. Foster love in your heart; talk lovingly; do all work with love. Be in love. This is real penance. The teachers of Alike and Muddenahalli are doing real penance. (*loud prolonged applause*). This is how these schools produce students with purity of heart. I am happy to see all these students who have come here for the function. Today small children came to the dais and spoke beautifully. They gave a beautiful description of the *Atma*. Especially one high school boy spoke with heart full of love. What a sincere feeling he has! I am really delighted. That is real *Vidya*. I often tell the authorities of our Institute to give topmost priority to the boys of Alike and Muddenahalli while making selection for our colleges. Sometimes, these students may lag behind a little in Jagath Sathya (worldly knowledge). But they know *Atma Sathya* (*atmic* knowledge) very well. I am always telling everyone here not to leave them. Here, a little boy spoke with feeling of love. He expressed his love for Me in beautiful words. I am very much pleased.

It is what I want. I do not want that you come forward to offer the whole world to Me. I want your love. Give me your love. This is enough for Me. The seed of love should sprout in the field of your heart. Later on, it will grow into a *kalpavriksha* (wish-fulfilling tree). Then the world will flourish.

Students!

You have to follow the instructions of your parents. *Mathru devo bhava, Pithru devo bhava* (Revere your mother and father as God). You have come from your parents. Mother is the maker of your fortune. She is responsible for your progress. Don't act against her wishes. Don't oppose her words. Treat your mother with love. Then you will get your mother's grace. Mother is *Lokamatha* (mother of the universe), *Jaganmatha* (mother of the world). Don't think that she is related to your body only. She is the *Jaganmatha* who has come in the form of your mother. Gangadhara Bhat served his mother tenderly and lovingly. As a result of his sincere service to his mother, he got Swami. That is why Swami has kept him so near and dear. (*loud applause*)

Our Narasimha Murthy (now Warden, Brindavan) came to Prasanthi Nilayam and took charge as Warden. One day, he came to Me and said, "Swami, my mother is serious. She has cancer." I asked him, "Foolish boy! You are telling me, mother is serious. Which mother? That is your body's mother. Body's mother is not permanent.

You take hold of the permanent mother, eternal mother." After some days, he came to Me again and said, "Swami, mother passed away." I comforted Narasimha Murthy and said, "Narasimha Murthy, stay here itself. Don't leave Puttaparthi. This is your birthplace. Swami is your mother. I will look after everything." Narasimha Murthy's mother was a noble soul. She would often say, "Narasimha Murthy, even in adverse situations, don't go away from Swami. Stay with Him always." (*loud applause*). All mothers are suffused with love principle. They pray to so many gods and goddesses for the well-being and progress of their children. Try to understand your mother's selfless love. All should look after their mothers lovingly.

[Discourse in Kannada, Silver Jubilee Celebrations of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Institutions (Alike and Muddenahalli) 27-1-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]

Concentration Of Mind On The Divine Is Real Sadhana

NACHIKETA, son of Vajasravas, prayed to Lord Yama to teach him *Atma vidya*. Then, Lord Yama said, “Oh, the son of immortality! Listen. First establish your link with the source from which you have come into the world.” He also advised Nachiketa that since the body was perishable like a water bubble and the mind was fickle and unstable, he should transcend both and realise the fundamental truth.

The Lord of Kailasa has manifested his Divine form with the crescent moon adorning his head, the cool water of the Ganga flowing between the matted locks, with his radiant eye in the middle of the forehead and the purple neck gleaming like the sheen of a blackberry. He wears serpent

bracelets and a snake belt, his entire body is smeared with Vibhuti, his forehead is adorned with a Kumkum dot, his ruddy lips glow with the juice of the betel, diamond-studded gold earrings dangle from his ears and his whole swarthy body glows with divine effulgence.

(Telugu poem)

“Nachiketa! You need not search for Lord Easwara, for He is very much present in you”, said Lord Yama.

Comprehend The Transcendental Reality

Dear Students and Devotees!

You have to understand the true significance and philosophy underlying the festival of *Sivarathri*. First realise that you are not the physical body which is perishable and impermanent. You have to look at this objective world with *jnana chakshu* (the eyes of wisdom), not with *charma chakshu* (physical eyes). The animals, insects, birds and beasts look at this world with their physical eyes. If you also look at this objective world with physical eyes, then what is the difference between you and other living beings? If you remain at animal level, then how can you realise your true nature? You have to comprehend the transcendental reality which is beyond the body and the mind. This is possible only with the help of *jnana chakshu* (eyes of wisdom). The body is like a water bubble. It will disappear one day or the other. You are not the body that has birth, growth, decay

and death ultimately. Therefore, Lord Yama exhorted Nachiketa to realise the *atmathathwa* that has no birth and death.

Then, the question arises as to what is the *Atma*? The *Atma* is formless, infinite, indescribable and immeasurable.

Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathana Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam (*Atma* is attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness).

Such an *atmatattwa* is immanent in every individual, nay, in every being in the form of consciousness. Your life as a human being will acquire a meaning and purpose only when you realise the consciousness. Enquiries relating to worldly matters are meaningless and an exercise in futility. Lord Yama exhorted Nachiketa to realise that principle, having realised which he would have realised everything else. The body has birth, growth, decay and death. But the *Atma* is not subject to all these changes. It is the eternal witness of everything in the universe. You have therefore to realise the *atmatattwa*. Thus taught Lord Yama to Nachiketa.

The Atma is eternal without birth or death. It has no beginning, middle or end. It is omnipresent and eternal witness.

(Telugu poem)

Look! Several electric bulbs are shining here.

Though the bulbs are of different sizes, colours and capacity, the electrical energy manifesting as light through them is one and the same. Similarly, the same divine power is present in every living being and makes it function. That is *atmatattwa*. I often refer to the terms *Sathya* (Truth), *Dharma* (righteous conduct), *Santhi* (peace) and *Prema* (love). *Sathya* is the electricity, *Dharma* is the wire through which the electric current passes. *Santhi* is the bulb and *Prema* is the light. If you want to attain *atmananda* (atmic bliss), you have to follow *Sathya* and *Dharma*. That is why the ancient culture of Bharat laid great emphasis on *Sathyam vada* (speak truth), *Dharmam chara* (practise righteousness). In contrast to this noble principle, what is happening today? *Sathyam vadha* (truth is being killed) and *Dharmam chera* (righteous conduct is being imprisoned). No, No. This is not humanness. Speak truth and observe righteousness.

Lord Yama told Nachiketa, “This human body which is like a water bubble is bound to burst one day or the other. Therefore, realise that *atmatattwa* which is real and eternal”. You can recognise that *atmatattwa*, not by your *charma chakshu* (physical eyes) but by *jnana chakshu* (eyes of wisdom). Then, the question arises as to what is *Jnana* (wisdom)? Is it physical knowledge or secular knowledge or knowledge relating to the objects of Nature? No, none of these. Experiencing the principle of non-dualism is true wisdom (*advaita*

darsanam jnanam). *Atma* transcends the name and form. Lord Yama, therefore, exhorted Nachiketha to attain *atmajnana*.

Today, people are going mad in search of spiritual knowledge. They adopt umpteen number of practices and bodily postures and call it spiritual *sadhana*. But, none of these can help to attain *Atmajnana*. What is important is *prema* (love) which is the undercurrent of all forms of spiritual *sadhana*. Realising the perishable nature of this *deha* (body), one has to realise the indweller (*dehi*), who is none other than the eternal *Atma*.

Give Up Attachment To Body

The body is made up of five elements and is bound to perish sooner or later but the indweller has neither birth nor death. The indweller has no attachment whatsoever and is the eternal witness. Truly speaking, the indweller who is in the form of the Atma is verily God Himself.

(Telugu poem)

The true and eternal *atmatattwa* is immanent in one's own body. It can be realised only by the *jnana netras* (eyes of wisdom). You have to gradually give up *dehabhimana* (attachment to the body) and cultivate *atmabhimana* (love for the *atma*). You think you are the body and develop attachment to it. So long as the process of inhalation and exhalation continues in the body, you consider it as yours. Once the process comes to a halt,

you will not know what is happening around.

The human body, though of perishable nature, teaches one great lesson, namely, 'SOHAM' (you are nothing but the eternal *atmatattwa*). When you inhale, your breath, you make the sound 'So' and while exhaling you make the sound 'Ham'. The inhaling process represents life and exhaling represents death. If you wish to overcome life and death, one moment is enough. You have to give up body attachment, which I am demonstrating right before you day in and day out. This body which I have taken upon Myself is undergoing several types of suffering. Just as you suffer from physical ailments, this body also suffers. But I do not attach importance to this suffering. Several students and devotees have expressed anxiety and concern that I might undergo a lot of suffering while the *Linga* emerges from My body. No doubt, your apprehensions are true; but, I do not feel any suffering. In fact, it is only when I identify Myself with the body I undergo pain. Since I am not the body, I do not suffer any pain.

For example, this is a handkerchief (Bhagawan holding a handkerchief in His hands) As long as you consider this kerchief as yours, you pick it up, wipe your face and carefully put it back in its original place. Just because the kerchief is yours, do you accept it if there is dirt on it? No, never. You at once discard it. In the same manner, you should realise that you are different from the body. You should not attach any importance to

the suffering of the body. All those objects which you consider as yours have to be discarded one day or the other. When you do not consider something as yours, you do not feel any pain in discarding it. This body underwent several types of suffering, the recent one being a fracture in the hip bone.

The body is after all a conglomeration of *indriyas* (senses). Whatever has happened is only to the body and not to Me. When you adopt this attitude, you will get peace. For example, when you find an ant crawling on your hand, if you try to scratch it, you will have more pain. After all, why should you have to suffer so much on account of a small insect like an ant crawling over your body? It is only because you are under the illusion that you are the body. The eye sees something. But what it sees may not be real since it is bound to undergo change after some time. What the ears have heard may undergo change after some time. In the same way, the food we eat will also undergo change after a few hours. There is nothing that is permanent in this world. You have to realise this truth. You have to enquire as to what it is that remains unchanged in the past, present and future. If I teach you this simple truth by quoting Sanskrit *slokas* and *mantras*, you may not be able to understand. If this is related to your day-to-day experience, you will understand it better.

Some time back, when My hip bone got fractured, I was taken to the hospital. The doctors were planning

for performing a major orthopaedic surgery. I told them, “You can do whatever you wish to. This body is yours. I am not the body. I am not under the control of the body. I am I.” The doctors performed a major operation on this body. But I did not suffer any pain. Whatever pain was there, only the body suffered, not Me. If you also adopt a similar attitude, you will not feel any pain. Therefore, reduce your *Dehabhimana* (attachment to the body) gradually.

Cultivate Pure And Selfless Love

All of you are undertaking some sort of *sadhana*. What exactly is the real meaning of *sadhana*? Give up body attachment and try to experience *atmic* bliss. How do you attain that bliss? It can be attained only through *prema* (love). If only there is pure love, all your suffering will be removed. Therefore, cultivate pure and selfless love. Supposing, you came across a person on the road who is inimical to you. If you hate him and move away from him considering him as your enemy, the distance between you and him increases further. On the other hand, if you greet him lovingly saying “Hello! how are you?”, naturally he would respond with love. Thus, when you both greet each other lovingly, there will be no scope for hate persisting any more. As is your feeling towards others, so is their feeling. The same idea is contained in the *Vedic* declaration: *Yadbhavam Thadbhavati* (As is your feeling, so shall you become). Today, we are directing all our negative feelings on others. We should

not however bear any ill-will against anybody. Whatever negative feelings are there, they are just passing clouds. They come and go. The sun may not be visible when it is covered by thick clouds. The moment the clouds move away, the sun is visible. Similarly, when your negative feelings scatter away, what remains is pure love. You can achieve anything in this world with love. In fact, you can get the entire world under your control through love. People say they are sitting in meditation, both morning and evening. But, what kind of meditation is going on? What benefit are they deriving out of it? How long is its effect lasting? Not even a moment. Remember, all worldly matters are like passing clouds. Therefore, do not enagage yourself much in them.

Once Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was walking through the market place, chanting the divine name. In fact, he was dancing in ecstasy. Some people on seeing him thought he was a madcap. They snatched away his *mridanga*. But, he did not resent for this. He started chanting the divine name while beating the cymbals. The irate onlookers took away the cymbals also. Even then he was not bothered. He thought perhaps God did not like his beating the cymbals. He resolved not to touch the cymbals which he thought were not to the liking of God. He consoled himself saying whatever musical instruments were taken away from him, were not to God’s liking. God’s will prevails ultimately. Such was his faith. From then onwards, he gave up all worldly

attachments and concentrated on *prematattwa* (principle of love), which none could take away from him. One has to aspire for that which cannot be taken away by others. That is pure love. A printed matter on a piece of paper cannot be separated from it. Likewise, your heart should be like a pure white paper and love the printed matter. These two are inseparable. Cultivate such love.

Love is your sole refuge wherever you may be, in a forest, in the sky, in a city or a village, on the top of a mountain or in the middle of deep sea.

(Telugu poem)

Wherever you may be, divine love will protect you always. Cultivate such type of love. That is the real *sadhana*. *Sadhana* is not something that is associated with *dhana* (money). *Sadhana* stands for *salokya*, *sameepya*, *sarupya* and *Sayujya* (perception of the Divine, proximity to the Divine, identity with the Divine, merger with the Divine). Unfortunately, today people do not understand the real meaning of *sadhana*.

Students! You are reading big books written by elders. However, mere reading will not help. When you read a *pustaka* (book), whatever is contained in it will enter your *mastaka* (head). This means both the *pustaka* and *mastaka* become one. You should not stop at that, Whatever has been stored in the *mastaka* must get into the heart, where it will remain for ever.

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

Atma is divine. Never forget this aspect. Some people find happiness in physical *sadhana*. But, the pleasure they derive out of it is only physical and temporary in nature. All that is associated with time is bound to disappear one day or the other. You have to attach yourself to that which is permanent, eternal and real. God's love is beyond all description. It is supreme. On the other hand, the physical love is momentary and is associated with physical relationship. Whatever is associated with the body comes and goes. But, pure and selfless love which emerges from the heart comes and grows. You have to cultivate such love. It will never diminish. You need not have to beg for this from somebody. You cannot purchase this from the market either, since it is not a saleable commodity. God is the only source from whom love flows. It is available only in His shop. Therefore, find out a way to reach Him. Unfortunately, today people do not aspire to acquire such pure love in spite of being very near to the source of such love. They do not even realise that this invaluable gift is available right in front of them. People crave for worldly favours and objects, thinking there is great happiness in possessing them. No. They can never give real happiness. The happiness arising out of worldly things is only momentary. Only God's love is eternal principle. Therefore, love such Divine Love. You cannot get it from anywhere else except from God.

God has neither birth nor death. He has neither

beginning nor end. He is present in all beings as the eternal witness.

(Telugu poem)

Renunciation Leads To Liberation

God's love is the only truth. It will never change. Worship such changeless Truth. Seek refuge in that Truth. That is the only real *sadhana* for attaining liberation. What is meant by '*moksha*' (liberation)? Is it living in some palatial building with air-conditioned rooms, located in heaven above? No, not at all. To get rid of *moha* (attachment) is true *moksha* (liberation). You have to give up body attachment in the first instance. Once you get rid of body attachment, you will naturally develop *vairagya* (renunciation), which will ultimately lead you to liberation. Love is the only path that can lead you to liberation.

You might have heard the story of Mandana Misra, a scholar of great repute. His wife, Ubhayabharathi, too, was a great scholar. When Adi Sankara was proceeding on his victory march, he met Mandana Misra and entered into a scholarly debate with him. It was decided that Mandana Misra would take to *sanyasa* if he was defeated in the debate. Ubhayabharathi was chosen to be the adjudicator of the contest. Will anyone accept such a proposal wherein the rival's wife acts as the adjudicator? But Adi Sankara had no hesitation to accept her as the adjudicator, for he knew that Ubhayabharathi strictly adhered to the principle of truth in letter and spirit. She

was impartial in her judgement and declared Sankara to be the winner. Mandana Misra took to *sanyasa* in accordance with the terms and conditions of the debate. Ubhayabharathi, being his *ardhangi* (better half), followed suit.

Ubhayabharathi lived in a hermitage near the bank of the river Ganga. Many women became her disciples. Every day in the morning, they used to go to the bank of the Ganga to have a bath. On the way, there lived a *sanyasi*, whom people considered as *Brahmajnani* (knower of *brahma*). He had renounced the world to attain true wisdom. However, he was very much attached to a dried bottle-gourd in which he used to preserve water. One day he was lying down, using it as a pillow, lest someone should steal it. Ubhayabharathi observed this and asked her disciples as to who he was. One of the disciples said that he was known as *Brahmajnani*. Then Ubhayabharathi remarked, "Though he is one of wisdom, he is attached to his bottle-gourd which he is using as his pillow." The so-called *Brahmajnani* heard their conversation and became angry. When Ubhayabharathi and her disciples were returning from the Ganga, he threw away the bottle-gourd on the road, just to show that he was not attached to it. Seeing this, Ubhayabharathi at once remarked, "I thought there was only one defect in him - *abhimana* (attachment). Now I realise that he has another defect also - *ahamkara* (ego). How can one with *ahamkara* and *abhimana* be a *jnani*?" Her comment was an eye opener for the *sanyasi*.

Immediately, he fell at the feet of Ubhayabharathi and prayed to her to teach him true knowledge.

Seeing multiplicity is *ajnana* (ignorance); seeing unity in multiplicity is *jnana* (wisdom). Ubhayabharathi imparted such sacred teachings and transformed the individuals. As she understood the principle of unity, she ultimately attained liberation. On the other hand, Mandana Misra could not attain liberation as he was immersed in worldly feelings. Ubhayabharathi started preaching and propagating the path of wisdom. She became the *guru* of one and all. A true *guru* is one who dispels the darkness of ignorance and lights the lamp of wisdom. That which remains changeless in all the three periods of time is true wisdom. People accepted Ubhayabharathi as their *guru* because her thought, word, and deed were in complete harmony. *Manasyekam vachasyekam karmanyekam mahatmanam* (Those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones)

Manonashanam (annihilation of the mind) is what you should strive for. You should have desire for God and nothing else. You should not get entangled in the worldly relationships. That is true wisdom.

The teachings of Ubhayabharathi spread far and wide and she became highly reputed for her wisdom. Even today there are many such people of wisdom. Without men of merit and wisdom, how can there be light in the world? However, wisdom cannot be acquired

from individuals. It can be acquired only by developing love for God. A beggar who comes to our doorstep begs for alms saying “*Bhavati bhiksham dehi*”. He addresses *dehi* (indweller) and not *deha* (physical body). In this manner, you can learn profound spiritual truth even from a beggar.

Be A True Devotee By Fixing Your Mind On God

*One may acquire a high academic qualification
such as M.A. and B.A. and attain exalted
position,*

*One may amass wealth, perform acts of charity
and attain name and fame,*

*One may have physical strength and enjoy a long
and healthy life,*

*One may be a great scholar studying and
preaching the Vedas,*

But none can equal a true devotee of the Lord.

(Telugu poem)

No doubt, worldly education is also essential to eke out a livelihood, but it cannot impart true wisdom. Only *Atmavidya* (knowledge of the Self) can grant you everlasting happiness. However, secular education is also essential to take care of your physical needs. You should not give it up altogether. Worldly education is Negative and spiritual education is Positive. Both are essential for happiness here and hereafter.

Students! You should become masters in both forms

of knowledge, secular and spiritual like Ubhayabharathi. But always remember that only *atmic* knowledge is true knowledge. Once you acquire it, you would have acquired everything else.

Last night, I came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 1 o' clock. It is during this auspicious time that the divine *lingas* emerge from Kailasa. The *lingas* emerge of their own accord at the Divine Will. I saw several students and devotees singing *bhajans* with great devotion. But who are the real devotees? I observed that only a few people were singing with real devotion and a pure heart constantly contemplating on the Divine name. There were thousands of people participating in the *bhajans*. But not all of them are real devotees. Their body was present in the hall but their mind was not fixed on God. They were mechanically participating in *bhajans*. This is not real devotion. Wherever you sit, whether in the prayer hall, or elsewhere, if your thoughts are fixed on God, then you are a true devotee, and you will attain His grace. If you feel sleepy, you can sleep. There is no objection. However, even in sleep, may your thoughts should be fixed on divinity.

Is it not because of your love and devotion towards God that you came all the way to Prasanthi Nilayam to participate in *Sivarathri bhajans*? I can understand your devotion. A true devotee does not need any conveniences. He does not wish any type of comforts. Wherever you go, keep the mind under your control and direct all your

thoughts towards God. That is real devotion. That is what Ubhayabharathi taught to her disciples. If you also cultivate such devotion, your lives will be sanctified. Do not divert your attention on physical comforts. Always chant the *Panchakshari mantra*, "*Om namah sivaya*". If you merely chant with lips it will merge into wordly sounds. On the other hand, if you chant the divine name silently with full concentration of your mind, it will spread all over the world. Chanting of the divine name with full concentration by the mind is real *sadhana*.

[*Sivarathri, 19-2-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam*]

6

Realise The God Immanent In You

*Good and bad coexist. None can separate them.
But one with Sraddha (steadfast faith) will always
experience goodness. What else is to be conveyed
to this august assembly?*

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

TODAY marks the beginning yet another new year. Many new years have gone by but your old habits have not changed and life remains the same. The reason is that man is not making efforts to experience the principle of divinity which is present in all in the form of love. **Love is the true form of God.** It is your foremost duty to recognise this eternal principle of love.

Do Not Forget Your Innate Divinity

Today you are in search of divinity. Where is the

need to search for that which is everywhere at all times? You are in search of God even when you are unaware that **God is always with you and in you**. You are trying to have the vision of God through meditation. However, you should not be satisfied by merely performing such spiritual practices. What is meditation? **Adherence to truth is true meditation**. The eternal, immortal, wonderful and blissful principle of divinity is present everywhere. You should make efforts to realise this truth. This is the royal path to attain the goal of life.

People are making efforts to realise truth but their efforts are not yielding the desired result. Divinity is the very embodiment of eternal bliss and is present in all of us. How can you visualise it? Firstly, you should understand that there is nothing superior to truth in this world. Your foremost duty is to recognise the principle of truth that is present in you. But you are forgetting your innate divinity. You are undertaking a number of *sadhanas* (spiritual practices) to experience divinity. In fact, you do not need to perform any special *sadhana* to have the vision of God who is always with you, in you, above you, around you. There is no need to search for Him.

Embodiments of Love!

It is a sign of ignorance to search for God who is all-pervasive. People perform various spiritual practices such as *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* to experience divinity.

What is meant by *samadhi*? It should be termed as *sama-dhi*, meaning equanimity in all situations. Such an equanimous intellect is in fact present in every individual. It is a misconception to think that only those who perform *sadhana* are capable of attaining this state.

Embodiment of love!

Do you go about searching for yourself in the outside world? Such a person can only be called foolish. If you want to see yourself, you should turn your vision inward. Unfortunately, you are moving away from your own sacred self by indulging in various practices with worldly outlook. You are endowed with the sacred principle of love. **This divine love is your inherent nature**. It neither comes nor goes. Divinity has neither birth nor death. It is always present in you. Instead of spending your time in various types of *sadhanas*, realise the truth that **'I am I'**. One who realises this truth need not perform any *sadhanas*. Where does this 'I' come from? It is in you. Not realising this, you search for this divine self in the outside world. You have to realise that this divinity is very much in you. But because of illusion, you identify the principle of 'I' with your body. Infact, 'you' are different from the body. You should understand this truth and act accordingly. He is a true *sadhaka* who realises that God is present within. Some people sit in a corner, close their eyes and try to contemplate on divinity. One does not need to search for his shadow

which is always with him. Similarly, the divinity that you are searching for in the outside world is very much present in you.

Several people made efforts to fathom the true nature of Lord Krishna and undertook several types of *sadhanas* in that regard. But, ultimately none of them could realise the Krishna *tattwa*. In fact, where is Krishna? Where is God? He is present in one's own self. The person who cannot realise this truth and goes about searching for Him in the outside world is an ignoramus. Once Krishna told Arjuna, "I am yours and you are mine. I and you are one." Not realising such unity, it is foolish to search for God in the outside world. The boy who spoke earlier said that he was doing *sadhana* to attain the vision of God. One need not search for God in some distant corner.

Sarvata Panipadam
Tat Sarvatokshi Siromukham,
Sarvata Sruthimalloke,
Sarvamavriya Thishthathi.

(With hands, feet, eyes, ears, heads and mouth pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe).

Where is the need to search for God when He is present everywhere? Whatever you see is permeated by God. There is no place or form in which God is not present.

God is love and love is God
You can connect yourself with
God only through love.
Develop love and achieve
the supreme state of equanimity.

(Telugu poem)

Therefore there is no necessity to engage in a separate search for God. God is present everywhere as truth. Why should one search for such truth? Some people are under the misconception that Lord Krishna was born at such and such a place, left His mortal coil at such and such a place. No! This is not a correct concept. Krishna is present in all places at all times. Whatever you see and whomever you come across in this objective world is the very form of Lord Krishna. Only the names change; God is only one. It is foolish to search for such an omnipresent God. Instead of searching for God outside, try to realise the God who is immanent in you. You enquire into yourself who you are. Leave aside the body consciousness. Do not identify yourself with the body. It is only when you identify yourself with the body, the question of 'I' and 'you' arises. When this 'I' and 'you' merge into one, there will be unity. But unfortunately, today people are unable to forget their egoistic 'I'. Wherever you see, it is only one 'I' principle that is present in all. Once you realise that the same *atma* pervades every individual body, the differences of 'I' and 'you' vanish. But you are unable to give up your false identification with the body. Right from your birth, you

are accustomed to identifying yourself with the body.

The 'I' Principle Is Fundamental To All

Embodiments of Love!

Whether it is love or truth or peace or divinity there is no duality. They are all one. Only when you fortify the spirit of unity, will you be able to realise the truth. Love is not something that is acquired from outside. It emerges from within. When you share such love with everybody, you will be able to realise the truth that all are one. (Showing His handkerchief, Bhagawan said) It is made up of thread, which in turn, is made out of cotton. Similarly, mind is also made up of the threads of *sankalpas* and *vikalpas* (resolutions and aberrations)

Embodiments of Love!

You have to enquire yourself as to what extent you have understood the principle of love which is uniformly present in all; differences arise because of our perception and feelings. Right from the beginning man is carried away by his identification with the body and, therefore, he perceives diversity in creation. In fact, it is unity alone that permeates the apparent diversity. Whatever differences are there, they are only the creations of the mind. If one wants to eliminate these differences and realise the principle of unity in diversity, one has to realise his true nature. It is only when you turn your perception away from this fact of unity will you experience diversity. Therefore turn you cognitive

faculties on the principle of unity. I am not this body, I am I, the same I is present in every individual. When you identify Me with the physical form, you become separate from Me. It is only these differences in feelings that create differences between individuals. The principle of 'I' is the only fundamental principle that is present in every being. Each person is like a mirror and the same 'I' is reflected in all. Mirrors are different but the reflection is the same. You have to realise this reality of unity.

Embodiments of Love,

Students! *God has no specific form. All forms are His.* But, wise men describe divinity in different ways. That is why it is said *Ekam Sath viprah bahudha vadanti* (Truth is one but wise men call it by many names). To visualise unity as diversity is a misperception. This misperception arises out of *maya* (illusion). The truth is, there is only unity everywhere, not diversity. What you have observed as diversity is your illusion only. Forget this diversity and contemplate on divinity. i.e. unity. You may ascribe any name or form to divinity, but, God is only one. At one time, Radha the most ardent devotee of Krishna had realised that both Krishna and herself were one from the *atmic* point of view. But she slipped away from such feeling of unity and considered herself as different from Krishna on account of *deha bhava* (body attachment).

Embodiments of Love!

Whatever you see, whomever you come across, consider every form as nothing but the manifestation of divinity. Do not give scope for differences of 'I' and 'you'. Wherever you see in God's creation, everything is reaction, reflection and resound. You look into a mirror and say that you are in the mirror. In fact, you are not in the mirror. It is only your reflection that appears in the mirror. When you go behind the hill and shout "Oh!", you will immediately notice that someone is shouting at you with the same intensity. In fact that voice belongs to you only and to no one else. Thus, man today is immersed in such a mistaken impression. Whatever you see outside is the reflection of your inner being. You consider unity as diversity and make a mistake. Unfortunately, nowadays, people are unable to understand their own true nature.

Once, a young cowherd took his cattle to the forest for grazing. While the cattle were grazing, he began singing loudly. The song echoed from the hills. The innocent boy thought that someone was imitating to make fun of him. He grew angry. After he returned home, he complained to his mother about the incident saying, "Mother! I will not take the cattle to the forest tomorrow. There is someone in the forest who is imitating whatever I sing. I hate him." The mother said that she would accompany him to the forest the next day. He took her behind the hills and started singing loudly. Again, a resound of the same song was heard. Then the mother said, "Son, it is not that someone else is repeating your song to make fun of you. Whatever you sing, its resound

is being heard by you." Like the foolish cowherd boy, the present day man is swept away by the reflection, reaction and resound.

If you want to see God, you should firmly believe that you are not the body. To identify yourself with the body is but an illusion. Students should try to understand this clearly. All that is seen outside is only a reflection and is not the reality. You see Sai Baba in front of you. You identify Sai Baba with the body. But I am not the body. I and you are one. Once you understand this truth clearly, there will be no difference whatsoever. If you slap someone on the cheek, it amounts to slapping your own self. If you abuse others, it amounts to abusing your own self. You are bound to face the consequences of your actions. You are the cause of your happiness or suffering. Others are not responsible for it. In fact, there are no others. All are one. How can we say this? Consider for example, you have prepared 5000 *laddus* and distributed to others. *Laddus* may be different, but sugar is the same in all. Likewise, the same principle of *atma* is present in one and all. You should make efforts to understand your true identity. You are the very embodiment of Love. The principle of love is one and the same in all. You share your love with your children, parents and spouse. The feeling towards each of them is different but the fundamental principle of love is the same. *Atma* is the fundamental truth. It is one only without a second.

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

The *Atma* is one, not two. Once you recognise the truth that the same *Atma* is present in all, you will be free from all differences and conflicts. Develop firm faith that “you” are present in all. Understand this principle of unity. All the students have immense love for Me. They are happy that Baba loves them. Understand that it is only Baba who loves all. You see differences in individuals; but, in My view, all are one. I and you are one. Have firm faith in this unity. Only then can you transcend duality. When you enquire deeply, you will be able to understand this truth. Have patience. Do not feel disappointed that you are unable to have the vision of God. When you understand the principle of unity and hold on to it firmly, you become Sai Baba yourself. You are divine. But you are unable to realise it as you are intoxicated with the ‘deep wine’ of worldly desires. All are the embodiment of divine. I am not different from you and you are not different from Me. We are one. Understand and experience this unity.

[Ugadi, 21-3-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]

7

Manifestation Of The Vedas In Human Form

Sweeter than sugar, tastier than curd, sweeter indeed than honey is the Name of Rama. Constant repetition of this sweet Name gives one the taste of divine nectar itself. Therefore, contemplate on the Name of Rama incessantly.

(Telugu poem)

THE *Vedas* are the quintessence of profound, immeasurable and infinite wisdom. In *Treta Yuga*, the four *Vedas* assumed physical form and incarnated as Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna. While *Rig Veda* assumed the form of Rama, *Yajur Veda*, *Sama Veda* and *Atharvana Veda* manifested in the forms of Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna, respectively.

Divine Power of *Mantras*

Rama symbolized *Rig Veda*. He was *Mantraswarupa* (embodiment of *mantras*). Lakshmana was *Mantradrasta* (one who contemplated on the *mantras*) and he put the teachings of Rama into practice. He followed Rama faithfully. He considered *Rama Nama* as the *taraka* (liberating) *mantra*. He, in fact, considered Rama as everything - mother, father, *Guru* and God. Bharata was the embodiment of *Sama Veda* and chanted *Rama Nama* incessantly with *bhava*, *raga* and *tala* (feeling, melody and rhythm). While Bharata was engaged in *nirguna* worship (worship of formless God), Lakshmana rejoiced in *saguna* worship (worship of God with form). *Atharvana Veda* manifested itself as *satrughna* who followed his three elder brothers and conquered not only the secular world but achieved victory over the kingdom of senses also. The *vedas* thus incarnated in *Treta Yuga* to impart the most precious message to mankind. The two great sages *Vasishtha* and *Viswamitra* declared to the world that the four *Vedas* had taken birth in human form as Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and *Satrughna*. As a consequence of great merit earned by *Dasaratha*, the four *Vedas* incarnated as his sons. If anyone asked Sage *Viswamitra* any questions about the *Vedas*, he replied, "All the four *Vedas* have incarnated as the four sons of *Dasaratha* to set an ideal to the world." Hence the *Vedas* are not formless; they have a form.

The *mantras* contained in the *Vedas* are of immense significance. When Sage *Viswamitra* realized that the

rakshasas (demons) wanted to stop the chanting of *Vedic mantras* and destroy righteousness and truth on earth, he sought the help of Rama and Lakshmana who symbolized the divine forces that descended on earth to destroy the demonic forces and establish peace in the world. With the power of *mantras* taught to them by Sage *Viswamitra*, Rama and Lakshmana annihilated the *rakshasas*. This incident signifies the fact that with the power of *Vedic mantras* man can destroy his demonic qualities. By engaging themselves in the chanting of the *mantras*, the people of *Treta Yuga* annihilated their demonic qualities. Symbolising the divine powers of the *Vedas*, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and *Satrughna* destroyed demonic forces and fostered divine forces in the world. The four brothers thus established the supremacy of the *Vedas* as manifestation of the aspect of God with form. Each *mantra* has a form. It has also its own inner significance. When chanting is done with contemplation on form, it leads one to the path of self-realisation. The *Vedic* seers declared: *Vedahametam Purusham mahantam Aditya varnam tamasah parastat*. (I have seen the Divine Being who shines with the splendour of a billion suns beyond the realm of darkness). The seers and sages transcended the darkness of ignorance and visualized the effulgence of the Divine. They chanted the *mantras*, contemplated on the form of the Divine, performed *Yajnas* and attained peace and bliss. They made use of *mantra*, *tantra* and *yantra* in the performance of *yajnas* which ensured peace and prosperity of the people in *Treta Yuga*. With the help of

the *mantras*, they quelled the *rakshasas* and established the reign of gods.

Namasmarana for Man's Liberation

But the people of *Kali Yuga* have forgotten these *mantras* with the result that *Kali Yuga* has verily become *Kalaha Yuga* (the Age of discord and conflict). Even brothers quarrel with each other. They live and eat together in the same family, yet there is hatred and conflict between them. Different means for man's liberation have been prescribed for each of the four *Yugas*. While meditation was prescribed as the primary means of liberation in *Krita Yuga*, performance of *Yajnas* and chanting of *mantras* forms the means of liberation in the *Treta Yuga*. Similarly, *archana* (worship of God) was the chief means of liberation in *Dwapara Yuga*. But it is *namasmarana* that is the main means of man's liberation in *Kali Yuga*. As the people of *Kali Yuga* do not have the strength and capability to carry out rigorous *sadhana*, they have been advised to do *namasmarana*.

*Harernama Harernama Harernamaiva
Kevalam; kalau nastyeva nastyeva
Nastyeva gatiranyatha.*

(In *Kali Yuga*, there is no other means more effective than the chanting of Divine Name for man's liberation).

The *Ramayana* is not an ordinary story. It contains the direct message of the *Vedas*. Rama symbolizes the wisdom of the *Vedas*. Rama married Sita who represents

Brahmajnana (knowledge of *Brahman*). When Sita is taken away by demonic forces, Rama and Lakshmana search for her desperately. The *Ramayana* contains thousands of *slokas*. As it was not possible to remember all the *slokas* of the *Ramayana*, the sages recommended the chanting of the name of Rama. When the disciples of Vasishtha asked him what divine name to chant, the sage said, "It is enough if you chant the name Rama. The name of Rama will make you free from *raga* (attachment) and *roga* (disease)". As I often tell the students, the name Rama has two syllables, 'Ra' and 'ma'. These two powerful syllables are derived from the names of Vishnu and Siva. The syllable 'Ra' comes from the *ashtakshari* (eight syllabled) *mantra* 'Om Namō Narayanaya'. It is the life-breath of the *ashtakshari mantra*. Similarly, 'ma' is the very soul of the *panchakshari* (five lettered) *mantra* 'Om Namah Sivaya'. The *astakshari mantra* 'Om Namō Narayanaya' and the *panchakshari mantra* 'Om Namah Sivaya' become meaningless when 'ra' and 'ma' are, respectively, removed from the words of these *mantras*. Without 'ra' the *ashtakshari mantra* becomes 'Om Namō Nayanaya' which is meaningless. In the same way, the *panchakshari mantra* without 'ma' becomes 'Om Nah Sivaya' which is inauspicious. The name Rama is the life-breath of both the Vaishnavites and Saivites (worshippers of Vishnu and Siva).

In *Treta Yuga* when the sages and seers were engaged in the chanting of the divine name of Rama, Ravana, Kumbhakarna and other demons tried to put

hurdles in their way. They thought that if they abducted Sita, who symbolized Brahmajnana, Rama would lose His power. The name would lose its potency without *jnana* just like sugarcane loses its sweetness without *rasa*. Hanuman resolved to bring this *rasa* back to Rama and rejoiced in drinking *ramarasa* (ambrosia of Rama's name). The people of *Treta* and *Dwapara Yugas* considered the name Rama to be the essence of all sweetness and enjoyed its nectarous taste. Instead of tasting the delicious spiritual sweetness of the name of Rama, people today devour worldly sweets, and expose themselves to the risk of becoming diabetics. Worldly sweets cause diseases whereas the delicious sweet of *Ramanama* rids one of all diseases. In ancient India, even the cowherds and shepherds chanted the divine name while tending their cattle and sheep. There were not many diseases in ancient times. Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna propagated the glorious power of *Vedic mantras* to free the world from diseases and suffering.

Never Neglect The Teachings Of The Vedas

Mandodari, the queen of Ravana, strived hard to save her husband. She gave wise counsel to him but Ravana paid no heed to her. When husband takes to evil ways, a virtuous wife acts as his wise minister to put him on the right path. Mandodari was one such wife. *Bharya* (wife) is not the one who provides worldly pleasures to her husband; she is the one who does good to him by

leading him to the path of wisdom and righteousness. Mandodari was a true *Sati* (wife) who tried to mend the ways of her *Pati* (husband). Sita also tendered wise counsel to Rama and advised Him not to destroy all the demons. She suggested that only those who committed the evil deeds should be punished. Justice does not lie in destroying the entire clan. Women are great because they show the right path to men. They are, in fact, the light of wisdom in the world. They, therefore, deserve protection and reverence. Sita symbolizes *Jnanatattwa* (principle of wisdom). Sita told Rama that goodness was universal, irrespective of caste, creed and community. It is because of women like Sita that men have made progress in life.

There are numerous species in this world. Every one of them has a definite purpose to fulfil in God's creation. Some of them may appear more beautiful than others. One cannot say whether a cow is more beautiful or a bull. But virtues are more important than physical beauty. Observing the good and bad in the world, the students should develop discrimination to choose the former. They should strive hard to cultivate virtues. Right from early age, they should inculcate good qualities and develop good character. Wherever you go, character is of utmost importance. When the students develop good character, the entire country will become good and great. It is virtues that lend greatness to any person. Rama shines in the *Ramayana* because of His sterling virtues. Virtues are more important than

bookish learning.

In spite of his education and intelligence man does not give up his mean-mindedness and evil qualities. He has no knowledge of the Self. Modern education leads to argumentation, not to total wisdom. (Telugu poem)

Students - Boys and Girls!

You should try to attain total wisdom. You should make right use of your eyes, ears and tongue which God has gifted to you. Whoever is able to control these three will achieve greatness. One should therefore cultivate right vision, right hearing and right speech. Always speak sweetly and softly. One who cultivates these three virtues will verily become divine. This is the primary objective and fundamental basis of all your education. Those bereft of these virtues are virtually demons. This is the essence and the message of the *Ramayana*. The four *Vedas* and other scriptures exhort man to follow these principles. Dear students! Never neglect the teachings of the *Vedas*. They are for the emancipation and redemption of mankind. Put them into practice in your life.

[Rama Navami, 30-3-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]

8

Uphold Truth Under All Circumstances

The Effulgent Lord who shines in every atom and pervades the entire universe will protect you always. He is the Omnipotent Lord of Parthi who will grant you Bhakthi (devotion), and will certainly help you in all your endeavours. What else is to be conveyed to this assembly of noble souls?

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

GOD does not need anybody's support or help. He takes care of everything of His own accord and bestows His grace on all.

Humanity Cannot Exist Without Divinity

Devotees! Do not think that God is confined to a particular place and that you have to search for Him.

It is a sign of ignorance to search for God who is everywhere at all times. First and foremost, you should enquire and understand who God is. He is the one who pervades in every particle and every atom of *Prakriti* (Nature). Nature is the direct manifestation of God. There is nothing that God cannot accomplish. He sees everything at all times. Without recognizing the divine power of God in Nature, it is a mistake to think that God does not respond to your prayers and come to your rescue. Devotion and divine grace are interrelated and interdependent. Man is unable to understand the divine power of God because of *maya* (illusion).

Whatever God does is for the welfare of the world. Not a single act of God is without a purpose. Man gets confused as he is unable to understand the inner meaning of God's actions. The earth rotates on its axis at the speed of one thousand miles per hour causing day and night. Rising and setting of the sun as well as waxing and waning of the moon promote all activity on earth. Not merely that, the earth revolves around the sun at the speed of 66 thousand miles per hour, giving rise to various seasons. The seasons benefit man in many ways. Formation of clouds and occurrence of rainfall help man to grow food. In this manner, the earth provides food and sustenance to all beings. Can a human being or a government for that matter accomplish such a mighty task? No, no. Without recognizing these beneficial acts of God of such enormous magnitude, man wastes his life

in delusion and doubt. If you enquire deeply, you will know that divine power is at work at all times. Every *kana* (cell), every *kshana* (moment) and every *Yuga* (aeon) is governed by Divine Will. God is everywhere and is in the form of Nature. Unable to realize this truth, people develop doubts regarding the existence of God. Everything is supported and sustained by God. There can be no *Manavatwam* (humanity) without *Daivatwam* (Divinity). Your life will be sanctified when you understand this truth.

Offer All Your Actions To God

God does not waste even a single moment. All the time He is engaged in action for the welfare of all. He is the sole refuge of all at every moment of time. Nothing is impossible for God who permeates *anda*, *pinda* and *Brahmanda* (terrestrial, celestial and cosmic planes). Every second of our life is dependent on the Divine Will. Every breath of our life is governed by God. We cannot take even one breath without His Will. People are unable to recognize such omnipresent, omnipotent God and waste their time in vain argumentation regarding His existence. They do not experience even an iota of joy due to their lack of faith in all-powerful God.

Once Arjuna asked Lord Krishna, "Swami! What is the reason that You are always engaged in action?" Krishna replied, "Arjuna! I perform *karma* (action) in order to demonstrate an ideal to the people to emulate.

When I perform action, people follow My example. The entire world will come to a standstill if I do not perform action. The value of action is beyond all description.”

*Na Me Parthasthi karthavyam
Trishu lokeshu kinchana,
Nanavapathamavapthavyam
Vartha eva cha karmani.*

(Oh Partha! There is no action that I need to perform in all the three worlds. Nor is there anything worth attaining unattained by Me, yet I am constantly engaged in action). I do not perform actions for My sake nor do I gain anything out of them. There is nothing that I need to achieve by performing actions. Whatever I do is for the welfare of the world. You should understand this and emulate My example. God is teaching you everything not merely by precept but by practice. Only through proper enquiry can you understand this truth. You should enquire with sincerity and steadfast faith. If you lack faith, you cannot understand anything, however long you may try. Each step of Mine has a definite purpose. Each act of Mine reflects a certain facet of *dharma*. Nothing can happen in the world without My *sankalpa* (will). But you are unable to understand My *sankalpa* and *dharma*. God has incarnated not for His sake but for the sake of all beings. God is the reality and the world is its reflection. It is natural that the reflection follows the reality. Whatever God does is for your welfare. Likewise, whatever you do should be pleasing unto Him.

Morality Earns Divine Grace

You may proclaim in public that all your actions are meant to please God. But that does not mean that He is really pleased with you. God will be pleased only when you cultivate *papa bheethi*, *daiva preethi*, *sangha neethi* (fear of sin, love for God, morality in society). Bereft of morality, you cannot be called a human being in the true sense of the term. Morality is the hallmark of a human being. That which adheres to *neethi* (morality) is true *manava jathi* (human race). First, you should develop love for God. *Daiva preethi* gives rise to *papa bheethi* which in turn develops *sangha neethi*. Hence, *daiva preethi* is the basis on which the mansion of human life rests. Humanity can progress only when there is morality in society. But modern man has no clear understanding of the term morality. Even birds and animals adhere to the code of conduct prescribed for them. But man is not following the rules of morality. If only he adheres to morality, God will certainly bestow His grace on him. Morality is not something that you should force upon yourself. It is your natural quality. Therefore, first and foremost develop morality. Only then will divinity blossom in you. The entire world will prosper when man adheres to morality. Only then can man lead a happy life. Wherever you are, whatever you do, consider morality as the basis of your life. Morality is, in fact, your true reputation. You can earn divine grace when you have morality.

Truth Is The Real Name Of God

What is true worship? It is not merely offering flowers to God and performing some rituals. You should implicitly obey the divine command and strictly adhere to morality in your daily life. That can be termed as true worship of God. Today people think that they are praying to God and singing His glory. But God does not need all this. You pray to God only for your sake and not for His sake. You undertake various spiritual practices such as *japa*, *thapa*, *yoga*, etc., only for your satisfaction. In fact, you need not do all this to worship God. It is enough if you discharge your duty properly. Then, God will certainly bestow His love and grace on you. If you do not do your duty sincerely, how can you expect to be the recipient of God's love? God thinks of your welfare every moment. Where is God? He is everywhere. Wherever we are, there God is. *Sarvata panipadam tat sarvatokshi siromukham, Sarvata sruti-mallope sarvamavirya tishthati* (With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe).

It is sheer ignorance to think that God is confined to a particular place. As Mukundan (an earlier speaker) has said, truth is God, God is truth. Hence, we have to safeguard truth. *Sathyam vada, Dharmam chara* (speak truth, practise righteousness). Truth and righteousness are the two main pillars on which the entire world rests. If we protect truth and righteousness, they will in turn protect us wherever we go. Truth is the source of all

happiness. If you do not adhere to truth, how can you expect to attain happiness? Truth is the fundamental principle of life. But today man's thoughts, words and deeds are tainted with untruth and unrighteousness. That is the reason why he is unable to enjoy happiness in life. The culture of Bharat teaches, *Sathyam bruyath, Priyam bruyath, Na bruyath sathyamapriyam* (speak truth, speak pleasantly and do not speak unpalatable truth). God protects those who protect *Sathya* and *Dharma*. There is nothing superior to truth in this world. Truth pervades the entire universe. But people ignore such all-pervasive principle of truth. They try to suppress truth and indulge in falsehood. Consequently, unrighteousness is on the rise in the world.

Embodiments of Love!

Truth is your life. There is no God other than truth. Only truth can protect you always. Since ancient times, the culture of Bharat has been emphasizing on the need to follow truth and righteousness. I am pleased to note that the devotees of Kerala are leading their lives in an ideal manner by cultivating love for God, fear of sin and morality in society. If you have love for God, you can achieve anything in life. Once you put *Sathya* and *Dharma* into practice in your life, every moment of your life will be filled with happiness. Those who are unable to experience everlasting happiness should come to Me; I will show them the path to happiness. If you uphold truth and righteousness, God will be with you always

to protect you. What is truth? *Trikalabadhyam sathyam* (Truth is that which transcends the three periods of time). That which undergoes change with the passage of time cannot be called truth at all. But today children are not being made aware of the real significance of truth and righteousness. Small children do not understand the correct meaning of truth. It is not enough if you teach them to adhere to truth in their speech and conduct. We should teach them that truth is God and that it is truth alone that can protect them. Without teaching the correct meaning of truth and its importance, how can we expect the children to adhere to truth? Our entire life is based on truth and righteousness. There can be no *Dharma* without *Sathya*. *Sathyannasti paro dharma* (There is no *dharma* greater than adherence to truth). Truth is the root, righteousness are the branches and sub-branches and happiness is the fruit of the tree of life. Hence, we should lead our life keeping truth and righteousness as the basis of all our actions.

Many people perform ritualistic worship of God with great pomp and show. I feel like laughing at their ignorance. These are not the true spiritual practices. How can such *sadhanas* (spiritual practices) lead to *sakshatkara* (vision of God)? Instead, you should put *Sathya* and *Dharma* into practice in your life. Without *Sathya* and *Dharma*, all that you do is mere show. Truth is changeless and eternal. It transcends time, space and circumstances. It should form the basis of all your actions. If your actions are not based on truth, they

become artificial. Truth emerges from your heart and it should be put into practice. We should pray to God with purity of thought, word and deed. You should never give up truth at any time and under any circumstances. Only then will you be protected by truth.

Body Consciousness Is The Cause Of Your Delusion

Embodiments of Love!

There is no point in adhering to truth and righteousness with a negative attitude. It is like building castles in the air! Whatever you do with a negative attitude is bound to yield negative result. Hence, develop positive attitude. Fill your life with love. Man has accomplished mighty tasks, but what is the use? He is unable to understand the importance of *Sathya* and *Dharma*. In fact, there is none superior to man. There is divinity in humanity. But man is unable to realize his innate divinity because of the influence of *maya* (illusion). Man should make efforts to recognize his divinity. Only divinity can redeem humanity. Instead of realizing his innate divinity, man is getting entangled in worldliness. What is that we have to experience today? It is divinity, divinity and divinity alone. It is eternal and is always with you wherever you go. You should never forget this positive power even for a moment. Give up negative feelings and develop faith in the positive power, i.e., divinity. It is very much present in you in the form of conscience, guiding you and guarding you. If you

take to wrong ways, your conscience will immediately caution you. It shows you the right path. It is impossible to experience divinity if you ignore the dictates of your conscience.

All that you see is only God, and nothing else. You may point to an individual and say, "I see him as another person. How can he be God?" Wherefrom has he come? He has come from God. Everything is God. How can you have the vision of God if you see multiplicity in unity? In this world, wherever you see, there is unity and unity alone. Truth is only one. It cannot be two. Likewise, God who is the embodiment of truth, is only one. *Ekam Sath viprah bahudha vadanti* (Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). You may call Him by any name, worship Him in any form but always remember that there is only one God. You may call Him Allah, Jesus, Rama or Krishna but He is one. Once you understand this principle of unity and get established in it, you will certainly attain divinity.

You should always speak truth. Truth is the real name of God. If you want to pray to God, it is enough if you say, "*Sathyaswarupaya Namah*" (salutations to the embodiment of truth). All other names are His duplicate names. Truth is God. This truth is installed in your heart. If you realize this truth, you can achieve the ultimate goal of life. It is possible to realize this truth in a moment. The same divine principle is present in all in mother, father, child, etc. But you have forgotten this divine

principle. You think that God appears only in a specific form. In fact, God has no specific form. Wherever you see, He is there. All are His forms. Conduct yourself with such sacred feeling. That is true devotion.

Give up body attachment. Whomever you come across, right from a child to an old man, consider everyone as the embodiment of God. When you develop such a sacred feeling, your devotion will become steady. If you do not give up body attachment and if your mind wavers every moment, you will end up in utter confusion. Body consciousness is the cause of your delusion. Hence, get rid of body consciousness and develop God consciousness. Do not be carried away by the illusory world. Develop love for God. Then gradually you will be able to overcome body consciousness and your devotion will become strong and steady. What is the reason that people lack steady devotion? They do not contemplate upon one name and one form. Your devotion becomes steady when you install one name and one form in your heart. When you do *Laksharchana*, you chant many names such as *Kesavaya namah*, *Madhavaya namah*, *Narayanaya namah*.... (salutations to Lord Kesava, Madhava, Narayana....). You may chant any number of names but you worship only one God. Keeping such principle of unity firmly established in your heart, you should pray to God.

Wherever you see, only God exists. *Never doubt that God is here and not there. Wherever you search for*

Him, He is there. (Telugu poem). When you contemplate incessantly upon the *Atma*, you will see divinity everywhere. Hence, make efforts to recognize unity, realize it and become one with it. If you want to realize divinity, it is enough if you hold on to the principle of truth. Truth has a name and a form. Hold on to it firmly. Follow it implicitly. Only then will divinity reveal itself to you.

Everything Is The Manifestation Of God

Do not get deluded by names and forms. The youth of today lack steady mind because they are carried away by names and forms. Have firm faith that God is one, truth is one. Consider God as your sole refuge. Then wherever you go and whatever you see, you will find His manifestation. Wherever you see, He is there. He is not confined to one place. He is everywhere. What happened to the wicked Kamsa who followed the *Pravritti Marg* (path of worldliness)? Whenever he uttered the name 'Krishna', He was there. But he thought it was a mere illusion. He could not realize the divinity of Krishna because of his body attachment. You can have the vision of the Divine only when you develop *atmabhimana* (love for the Self). *Atma* is one and only one. Consider, for instance, the three words - *Dehatma*, *Jeevatma* and *Paramatma*. *Atma* is common in all. You should always contemplate upon *atma*. Develop firm faith that *atma* is God. *Atma* is always with you, in you, around you, above you and below you. Other than the *atma*, there is

no other entity in this world.

Embodiments of Love!

Do not waste time. You waste not only your *kalam* (time) but also your *Kayam* (body). You may be performing spiritual practices but you are unable to overcome worldly illusion. Consider everything that you see as the manifestation of God. Even a mosquito is a form of God. An ant is a form of God. That is why Saint Thyagaraja sang thus, "*Oh Rama! You pervade everything right from a Cheema (ant) to Brahma. You are in Siva and Kesava as well. Please come to my rescue.*" (Telugu poem). There is divinity even in an ant. You all know very well what the pain is like when an ant bites you. Not merely that, ants build big anthills which become the dwelling places for snakes. If not for the presence of divinity within, how can a small insect like an ant be endowed with such power? Divinity pervades everything, right from microcosm to macrocosm. Never disregard microcosm since divinity is all-pervasive.

Modern youth do not understand what divinity is. This is the effect of their age. In youth, one's blood is hot and mind is unsteady. How can one understand divinity with a wavering mind? First, you should keep your mind steady. Only then can you realise divinity. Truth is the best friend of love, and righteousness is related to both truth and love. The terms such as truth, love, righteousness, etc., may be different but the underlying principle of divinity is one and the same in them.

Embodiments of Love!

Today three thousand youth have come from Kerala out of their immense love for Swami. Develop such love day by day. Consider love as God. Only love will come to your rescue in times of need. When Surdas, a blind devotee of Lord Krishna, was traveling in a dense forest, Krishna came to his help in the form of a small boy. He told him, “Surdas! I am going to Brindavan. Hold My hand. I will take you with Me.” When he heard the name Brindavan, Surdas’s joy knew no bounds. The boy had told him to hold His hand. Being under the influence of *maya*, Surdas held the stick which Krishna had in His hand. With Krishna’s Divine Will, gradually the stick became smaller and smaller. Consequently, Surdas’s hand was about to touch Krishna’s hand. It was then that Krishna revealed His identity. He told him, “Surdas! God is your sole refuge wherever you may be, in a forest, in the sky, in a city or a village, on the top of a mountain or in the middle of deep sea. That is why I have come to your rescue.” No sooner had Surdas’s hand touched Krishna’s hand than he attained divinity. Till then he was speaking to Krishna and was listening to His sweet words but he had not touched Him. The moment he touched Krishna, he became ecstatic and called out loudly, “Krishna! Krishna!” It is said, *Darshanam papa nashanam, Sparshanam karma vimochanam, Sambhashanam sankata nashanam* (Vision of the Lord destroys all sins, His touch destroys the bondage of *karma*, conversation with Him destroys all

troubles). God incarnates to grant *darshan*, *sparshan* and *sambhashan* to His devotees. Krishna came to Surdas in order to show him the way to Brindavan. Then He started conversing with him and ultimately granted him His *sparshan* and thus relieved him of the bondage of *karma*. Hence, *darshan*, *sparshan* and *sambhashan*, all the three are essential. You should not be satisfied with mere *darshan*. You should aspire to attain all the three.

Treat everyone as the form of God. It means that every individual is the embodiment of divinity. All names and forms are His. Here you are able to see thousands of forms of God. How lucky you are! It is a sign of ignorance to consider yourself weak, forgetting your innate divinity. Truly speaking, you are not a mere mortal, you are the embodiment of immortal divinity. God Himself is playing the role of a human being in this cosmic drama. *Daivam manusha rupena* (God assumes the form of a human being). Hence, develop firm faith that all are divine. Then you will lose your individual consciousness and become one with Divinity. Seeing multiplicity in unity is due to *maya* (illusion). When you understand unity, your *jeevatwa* (individual self) will be transformed into *daivatwa* (Divine Self).

[*Sadhana Camp for Kerala Youth, 11-4-2004*
Brindavan, Bangalore.]

9

Develop Love To Experience Divinity

All names and forms are but the manifestations of the Supreme Being who is the embodiment of peace and auspiciousness. He is Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute and non-dual. He is Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram (Truth, Goodness, Beauty).

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

MANY describe at length the power of Sai, the love of Sai and the truth and peace that He embodies. But, do they really practise Sai's teachings? The answer is an emphatic no. That is why I do not feel like giving discourses these days. People are heroes in giving speeches but zeros in practice. What is the use of speaking to those who do not put My teachings into practice? People are interested in

acquiring bookish knowledge but not in practising what they have learnt. No benefit accrues by merely learning the teachings by rote. You only strain your throat when you do not practise what you preach. Different people have different opinions about the path of spirituality. However, spirituality can neither be described in words nor be understood by merely listening to discourses. Spiritual teachings cannot fill your heart with bliss unless you put them into practice.

Krishna Permeates Every Atom Of The Universe

It was the time of the Mahabharata war. One day, Abhimanyu approached his mother Subhadra with the request to grant him permission to enter *Padmavyuha* (lotus-shaped military formation). He prayed to his mother to bless him so that he could vanquish the enemy and emerge victorious. Subhadra said, “My dear son, I will certainly bless you to emerge victorious but ultimately it is God’s Will that prevails. Everything depends on His grace. How can I permit you to enter *Padmavyuha* knowing fully well the danger involved in it? *Padmavyuha* is not an ordinary formation. It has been devised by the great military genius Dronacharya himself. Moreover, your wife is in the family way. We do not know whether the time is favourable for us or not. Your father Arjuna and uncle Krishna are also not here to give you necessary guidance and support. Hence, give up the idea of going to the battlefield.” Abhimanyu replied, “Mother, there is no place where my uncle Krishna is not present. He is everywhere.” Bestowing

her blessing on her son, Subhadra said, “Krishna is the embodiment of love. Every atom of the universe bears the touch of His love. His love can be experienced through love only; there is no other way to experience His love. But, my dear son, how can you experience it in the battlefield? You see Lord Krishna everywhere. But do not act out of ego. Do not think that your views have divine sanction.”

Lord Krishna permeates every atom of the universe. *Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham, Sarvatah sruthimalloke sarvamavruthya tishthati* (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 Jnanam Anantham Brahma* (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.

Everything Is Good In God's Creation

God's ways are mysterious. People develop doubts as they are unable to understand His actions. You consider something as good and some other thing as bad but everything happens according to God's Will. You say yes for good and no for bad but both are the manifestations of God. Man tries to judge something as good for him and some other thing as bad. It is impossible for man to make correct judgement. How can he know what is good for him? Good and bad happen according to Divine Will. Certain forms may not be pleasing to the eye but for God everything is *Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram* (truth, goodness and beauty). How can you describe such a principle? There is beauty in whatever God does. But none can fathom His ways. From a worldly viewpoint, some things may appear bad to the eye but when you enquire deeply, you will understand the truth that everything is good. Since you have only external vision, you consider something as beautiful and some other as ugly. Whatever God creates is beautiful. But people are not able to appreciate real beauty because of their external outlook. If you enquire into the truth, you will know that everything in God's creation is beautiful. To every mother, her child appears to be beautiful. None can deny this fact. A child may appear to be ugly to you but his mother sees only beauty in him. You have no right to dispute the judgement of the mother in this regard. Similar is the case with God's creation. Then, how can you say that something is good

and some other thing is bad? The entire world is full of beauty and charm. Can you show Me anything right from microcosm to macrocosm that is bad in this vast universe? It is impossible. You should accept everything as God's Will with an open mind. Consider everything as good. You do not have any right to pass judgement on God's creation or on what He does. The ways of God are highly mysterious and wonderful.

The sankalpa (Will) of the Lord and His stories are most wonderful and sacred in all the three worlds. They are like sickles that cut the creepers of worldly bondage. They are most ennobling and elevating. They confer bliss on the sages and seers doing penance in forests.

(Telugu poem)

See Divinity In God's Creation

Prahlada was a great devotee of the Lord. He incessantly chanted the Divine Name of Narayana and consequently experienced his oneness with the Lord. He could see the entire world as the manifestation of Lord Narayana. God pervades the entire universe. Such being the case, how can you say that God is present here and He is not there? You see the world but you fail to recognise it as the form of God. In fact, everything is divine. Do not get deluded by whatever you see with your eyes.

Man does not have any power of his own. It is divine power that makes him function. But man, out of

his ignorance, is carried away by a sense of doership and develops ego. This is what we witness in the world today. Under these circumstances, it is not possible to differentiate between truth and untruth. It is better to consider everything as good. When God is all-pervasive, how can there be anything bad? Try to visualise God everywhere. Do not superimpose your feelings on His. It is impossible to understand the principle of divinity through the study of scriptural texts or worldly education. Even sages and seers of yore were unable to comprehend divinity. He is beyond the three worlds. How can anyone understand such divinity? What Ajit Popat (an earlier speaker) has said is true. But one should be realistic in one's views. You say that you have seen the form of Lord Vishnu. How does He look like? You say that He has *Shankha, Chakra, Gada* and *Padma* (conch, discus, mace and lotus) in His four hands. *Shankha, Chakra, Gada* and *Padma* are only symbolic. Such a form does not correspond to reality. It is only a superimposition of your feelings but not the ultimate truth.

Suppose, you find a snake in front of you while walking on a road. You think it is poisonous. Who is relatively more poisonous? Is not man more poisonous when all his thoughts, words and deeds are full of poison? In fact, he is more dangerous than the snake. Whatever is seen may not correspond to reality. You have to enquire deeply to know the truth. The *Mahabharata* is full of these teachings. He is a true human being who understands the teachings of the *Mahabharata* and puts

them into practice. The sacred teachings of this epic are a great contribution of Bharat to mankind. With your limited understanding, you have no right to pass judgement on anything. True wisdom lies in accepting everything as good and following the path of truth.

Embodiments of Love!

There is love in each of you but you cannot experience it unless you give up body attachment.

This body is a den of dirt, and prone to diseases; it is subject to change from time to time; it cannot cross the ocean of Samsara. It is nothing but a structure of bones. Oh mind! Do not be under the delusion that body is permanent. Instead take refuge at the Divine Lotus Feet.

(Telugu poem)

How foolish is it to develop attachment to such a transient body? The world appears to be permanent but in reality it is not so. What appears good to the naked eye may not be so in reality. To see bad in good is a great sin. You should try to see good even in bad. Never condemn anything as bad. Even if something appears to be bad, you should enquire deeply and try to visualise the positive aspect in it. You find innumerable forms in this vast world. However, all forms have emerged from the same source. They are the different aspects of the same divinity. All forms are essentially divine. Such being the case, how can you condemn something as bad?

Everything is good. When you eat food, you consider it sacred. So long as the food remains in your stomach, you feel it is good. But when it comes out as waste, you cannot bear its sight and smell. If it is so disgusting, how could you keep it in your stomach earlier? Good and bad depend on your likes and dislikes. Leave aside your likes and dislikes. You have to keep in mind what God likes. Only God knows what is good for you. Hence, surrender to His Will and take refuge in Him.

True Love Is Changeless And Eternal

Embodiments of Love!

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 no place where love does not exist. Love is all-pervasive. It encompasses *anda*, *pinda* and *Brahmanda*. Love is the basis of all our activities such as eating, talking, walking, etc. 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.

Embodiments of Love!

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* (Krishna is one who attracts). 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. That is why the *Gopikas* prayed to Krishna thus:

Oh Krishna, play Your sweet flute and sow the seeds of love in the desert of loveless hearts.

Let the rain of love fall on earth and make the rivers of love flow.
(Telugu song)

The *Gopikas* yearned for Krishna's love and nothing else. You are the drops of nectarous love. A number of drops join to make a stream which ultimately merges in the ocean. But today man is not able to

understand what true love is. If he likes a particular object, he thinks he 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. *Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam, Bhavateetam, Trigunarahitam* (One without a second, eternal, pure, unchanging, the witness of all functions of the intellect, beyond all mental conditions and the three *gunas* of *sattwa*, *rajas* and *thamas*).

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.

Embodiments of Love!

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. But you can see Him provided you cultivate true and eternal love in you.

Embodiments of Love!

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, i.e., the form of attraction. Love confers bliss and grace. *Love is God, live in love*. On some other occasion, I shall dwell further on the principle of love. Worldly love is but artificial. But man, out of his ignorance, thinks that there is happiness in it. All that man loves is negative. He should direct his love towards the positive principle. It never changes. Here is a small example. You have been coming here for a number of years. Do you ever feel satiated with Swami's *darshan*? No. The same Swami whom you saw in the morning comes again in the evening. But you long to see Him again and again. The reason for this longing is love.

[Divine Discourse, 15-4-2004, Brindavan, Bangalore]

Mother Is Your First God

*“When man emerges out of his mother’s womb
He has no garland of any kind around his neck:
Neither of pearls nor of gold, nor a necklace of
topaz*

*Or of rubies or other precious gems
There is, however, one garland carrying the
unbroken link of the consequences of the
good and bad deeds of the past lives strung
together.*

*Brahma, the creator, strings together the
consequences of his past deeds into a heavy
garland and puts it around his neck at the time
of his birth”*

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love !

EVERY individual has four *gurus* in this world. The *Vedas* proclaim “*Mathrudevo*

bhava, Pithrudevo bhava, Acharyadevo bhava, Athithidevo bhava”, which means the mother, father, teacher and the guest are to be considered as God. Among the four, the mother is the first and the foremost *guru*. There are several inner meanings to the teachings of the mother. A true disciple is one who meticulously follows the mother’s instructions. The mother may appear to be an ordinary individual like any other, but when you delve deep into her teachings, you will realize that she is a great *guru* (teacher). But, those who are not on the spiritual path, may take all this lightly.

Three Laudable Desires Of A Noble Mother

Once, mother Eswaramma was returning from Chitravathi river with a vessel full of water. An old woman was walking along with her with great difficulty, unable to bear the burden of the vessel filled with water. Eswaramma enquired “Mother! Are you feeling difficulty in carrying the vessel full of water?” The old woman who was perspiring and unable to keep pace with her replied, “Yes, mother! I am unable to carry this vessel for such a long distance. But, I have no children to help me in this task. I myself have to carry this vessel full of water everyday”. These words of agony were imprinted on the mind of Eswaramma. After walking for some distance, she saw a small boy holding a slate and pencil in one hand and carrying a heavy load of books in a bag hanging round his neck. He was unable to walk, but he had to continue his journey to

the Bukkapatnam School. Eswaramma enquired of the boy, “My dear son! What for are these slate and pencil? Why are you carrying such a heavy load of books?” The small boy replied “Mother, I am carrying these books so that I can note down all that the teachers teach me.” Eswaramma kept all these incidents in her mind. After walking for some more distance, she came across a frail lady carrying her infant child on her shoulders proceeding towards Bukkapatnam. Eswaramma again enquired of this lady, “you appear to be frail and weak, unable to carry the child. Why should you walk such a long distance up to Bukkapatnam?” The lady replied, “Mother! What else can I do? There is no doctor in this remote village who can give some medicine for my child. He is suffering from cold and fever. I have to take him to the Bukkapatnam hospital.” This incident also made an imprint on the mind of Eswaramma.

There used to be a mother and small child in a remote village near Kolkata. As soon as the child was born, the father died. The mother somehow brought up the child with the meagre income she earned by doing some odd jobs. There was not even a lamp in the house for the boy to study during the night. He used to sit under the street lights and study. Thus, he continued his studies with great difficulty and earned a high degree. That little boy blossomed into the legendary Eswarchandra Vidyasagar.

Once, a fair was being held in Kolkata.

Eswarchandra's mother also started out to visit the fair, wearing a worn out sari. He saw her pitiable condition. While everybody else was going to the fair wearing expensive clothes, Vidyasagar could not bear the sight of his mother going to the fair wearing a worn out sari. He asked, "Mother! Why are you going to the fair wearing such a worn-out sari?" The mother replied "My dear son! I am happy with whatever I have. Please do not worry. You continue with your studies and come up in life."

A few years after this incident, Vidyasagar completed his studies. He was able to secure a good job with a decent salary. He bought some good saris for his mother with his first month's salary. Then, his mother told him, "I will not be really happy with these costly saris. If you help the poor people in our village and alleviate their suffering at least to some extent, that is enough for me." She further expressed that she had three desires. Immediately, Vidyasagar fell at her feet and prayed, "Mother! It is my duty to fulfil your desires. It is the responsibility of a son to fulfil the desires of his mother and make her happy. Please let me know what your desires are." The mother replied, "My dear son! There are several poor, uneducated and sick people in our village. Who will alleviate their suffering? I will be really happy, only when you can remove their difficulties. The children in this village have to walk long distances and go to the neighbouring village for studies. I am really moved at their pitiable condition. Should they have to undergo so many difficulties for the sake

of education? I want you to build a small school in this village itself so that these children can comfortably study here." Vidyasagar built a small school in his village as per the wishes of his mother and she was happy.

On another day, Vidyasagar found his mother sitting in a pensive mood and enquired what the reason was. She told him, "My dear son! The people of our village are suffering a lot for want of drinking water. They have to fetch the water from long distances, walking all the way. The well in our village has completely dried up. How can old ladies like me fetch water from such a long distance? If you can arrange for the digging of a well in our village, it will be a great boon for them. This is my second desire." Vidyasagar assured her, "Mother! I will certainly fulfil your desire. I will try to solve the drinking water problem in our village." Initially, he got two or three bore wells sunk in the village, but they were not of much use. The bore wells were able to supply water only during the rainy season. During summer, they used to dry up, yielding not even a drop of water. Therefore, the mother advised him to find a permanent solution for the problem. Then, Vidyasagar arranged for digging a big well and solved the problem of water scarcity permanently. His mother was happy.

Education Must Confer Humility

After sometime, Vidyasagar got a promotion in his job. His salary also increased. Then, he approached his mother and enquired, "Mother! What is your third

desire?” She replied, “My dear son! You have built a school. You have provided drinking water to the villagers. But, the mothers in our village are compelled to take their children whenever they fall sick, to the neighbouring village for treatment. I am unable to see their plight. Hence, I will be happy if you can arrange to build a small hospital in our village.” In accordance with his mother’s wish, Vidyasagar got a hospital built in his village. Thus, he fulfilled all the desires of his mother in due course.

Gradually, he reached a high position in his career due to his good behaviour. His salary also increased commensurate with the high position. In spite of that, he continued to be humble and obedient and thereby earned a good name for himself. One day, his mother called him and advised him, “My dear son! I am happy that you have attained a very high position in life. But, do not become arrogant.”

For some people,

Excessive wealth gives rise to ego which in turn paves the way for many wicked qualities. When wealth leaves you, ego also vanishes and as a result the evil qualities disappear.

(Telugu poem)

However, this was not the case with Vidyasagar. He cultivated the quality of humility along with education. He earned a good name for himself as a great orator.

Educated people in large numbers used to flock round him to hear his speeches. Once a meeting was arranged in a neighbouring town and Vidyasagar was to address the gathering. Vidyasagar started for that town. An ICS officer was travelling in the same compartment in which Vidyasagar was travelling. The officer was going to that town to hear Vidyasagar’s speech. However, he had only heard his name, but had never seen him before. As soon as the officer alighted from the train, he started shouting “Coolie! Coolie!” On seeing this, Vidyasagar approached him and enquired what luggage the officer had. The officer replied that he had only a small suitcase. Then Vidyasagar asked him, “Is it necessary for you to engage a coolie to carry this small suitcase? I will carry it for you. But, where are you going?” The officer replied, “I understand that a great scholar and orator by name Eswarchandra Vidyasagar is going to deliver a speech. I am going to attend his speech.”

Vidyasagar then took the suitcase in his hands and started walking along with the officer. Both of them reached the venue of Vidyasagar’s lecture. There, Vidyasagar handed over the suitcase to the officer. The officer then took out his purse and enquired how much money he had to pay Vidyasagar as portage charges. Vidyasagar politely refused his offer saying, “Sir! You have given me an opportunity to serve you. I don’t need anything more.” He silently walked away from that place. Considering Vidyasagar to be a madcap, the officer proceeded to the venue and sat among the

audience. The organizers of the function were waiting to garland Eswarchandra Vidyasagar on his arrival. In a few minutes Vidyasagar arrived there, dressed in very simple clothes. He was accorded a warm welcome and profusely garlanded by the organizers of the function. The officer who was observing this welcome-ceremony realized to his utter astonishment that the person who had carried his suitcase from the railway station was none other than Eswarchandra Vidyasagar himself. He felt ashamed. He reverentially offered his pranams to this great, yet humble individual, in his heart of hearts. Then Vidyasagar began his speech. He explained that humility is the foremost quality of an educated person. He said, pride and arrogance are the result of excessive wealth and consequently such a person loses the fundamental quality of human nature.

After the conclusion of the programme, the ICS officer met Vidyasagar and offered his sincere apologies for his mistake. He pleaded with Vidyasagar, “Sir, your speech was a great eye opener for me. I behaved arrogantly due to the pride that I am a highly educated person. Please excuse me.”

In course of time, Vidyasagar’s reputation as a scholar and orator spread by leaps and bounds. He continued to do great service to the people. He got several poor students educated. He provided drinking water to several villages, where there were no such facilities. His mother felt very happy that her son was

doing great service to the poor and needy. She prayed to God that every mother should be blessed with such noble children.

Humble Wishes Of A Generous Mother

Similarly, Sathya Sai has undertaken several community welfare activities in Puttaparthi like constructing residential houses for the poor, educating their children, providing drinking water to the villagers, etc., as per the wishes of His mother. What the mother expressed in those days were small desires. But, in course of time, they assumed the form of gigantic projects and created history. Mother Easwaramma was very happy at the great service rendered by Swami to the villagers. She expressed with satisfaction, “My dear son! You built houses for the poor, You solved the drinking water problem for the villagers, You provided electricity to the village which was miserable under darkness. Not only that, You have also built a school and a hospital. You have fulfilled all my desires.” She felt extremely happy that her son had undertaken and completed such great tasks. She used to tell the ladies gathering round her, “I requested Swami to build a small school in Puttaparthi village. But, Swami established a great educational institution in its place.”

Thus, the humble wishes of the mother transformed themselves ultimately into great projects providing immense benefit to the humanity at large. What the country needs today is children who follow the teachings

of their mothers. The teachings of the mothers may appear to be very simple and insignificant, but, in course of time, they provide great happiness. Easwamma's desires were very simple! She wanted drinking water to be made available to the small village of Puttaparthi. But, Swami provided drinking water to the entire district of Ananthapur. She wanted Me to build a small school. But, Sathya Sai built huge buildings and established great educational institutions. In those days, villagers used to suffer due to lack of basic medical facilities. Therefore, Mother Easwamma requested Me to build a small hospital. But, Swami built great temples of healing, the Sathya Sai Super Specialty Hospitals, one in Puttaparthi and another in Bangalore. Thus, the small wishes of the mother resulted in the establishment of world class institutions.

Embodiments of love! You need not follow anybody. It is enough, if you engage yourself in activities that would satisfy your mother. If your mother is happy and contented, that will confer great blessing on you. Whatever your mother says, obey her command willingly and sincerely. That is what is required today! Obey your mother and become recipients of her love. Then the whole world will progress. You need not undertake any other acts of merit. Sacrifice your entire life to satisfy your mother. It is only because Sathya Sai fulfilled the wishes of His mother and provided satisfaction to her, His glory has spread far and wide.

Sathya Sai has built great Hospitals that provide

expensive medical treatment absolutely free to everyone, right from the poorest of the poor to the richest. In the field of medical services, there are no institutions anywhere in the world which can be compared to Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences. In this hospital, medicines, operations, food everything is provided free of cost. Nobody is able to comprehend how we are able to provide all these things free of cost in the present day scenario of sky-rocketing costs. Unfortunately, people are not able to realize the great value of the services being rendered by our hospitals. Today, many hospitals advertise their facilities through electronic media, attract people and loot them of their hard earned money and even go to the extent of causing death to patients by negligence. This is not right. The poor people should be given free food, free education, free water and free medicine. There can be no greater service than providing all these services free of cost. I wish that all the students, past and present, should undertake such services. We are not collecting even a paisa from our students as fees. The Sathya Sai Educational institutions provide education totally free of cost. People have to spend huge amounts for acquiring higher education in other institutions. But, our students need not spend any money for their education here. I am providing totally free education from KG to PG to all the students who come here with love and great expectation. In fact, all our services are provided with loving care and free of cost.

Serve The Society With A Spirit Of Sacrifice

The Sikh student who spoke earlier, tried his best for a long time to acquire higher education. But, he could not pursue his higher studies due to paucity of funds. Hence, he took up employment on a meagre salary. Later on, he joined our college and earned his MBA degree. Now, he is contributing his services to the hostel as a grateful offering to Swami. There are several students like him, who are undertaking service activities in Swami's institutions. The boy who spoke after him hails from Delhi. He also had a great desire to pursue higher education, but had no funds. He joined our Institute and qualified himself with an MBA degree in first class. All this is free of cost. Since then, he remained here in the service of Swami. He has decided to dedicate his life to the institution which produces such boys. Thus, all the students of the Sathya Sai institutions have been cultivating broad-mindedness and the spirit of service. All our students are broad-minded. You will not find any narrow-minded students here. They are filled with love and behave among themselves like brothers. It is My endeavour to train such ideal boys and girls. It is My wish that all our students should willingly undertake free service activities to the society with a spirit of love and sacrifice.

Many of our students are working in highly paid jobs in big cities like Delhi and Agra. In fact, top companies in India are seeking the services of our students, offering them high-salaried jobs. Our students

working in these places are also undertaking service activities like providing free tuitions to poor students. Wherever they are, our students are undertaking various service activities with a spirit of sacrifice and broad-mindedness. Education is not mere bookish knowledge. Developing broad-mindedness, spirit of sacrifice, sharing one's resources willingly with fellow members of the society and making them happy-these are the true qualities of an educated person. There are several such students in Prasanthi Nilayam who are happy and contented by undertaking service to society. My main task is to prepare such boys and girls. I am providing everything that is required for them. I am even sending them abroad for higher education, if necessary.

Dr. Padmanabhan who is sitting here may be known to all of you. He qualified as a doctor at a very young age and wanted to set up a small clinic here in Bangalore. I called him and told him, "Doctor! You must acquire higher degrees in medicine. You should not stop your education with the present degree. Your family circumstances may not be conducive to pursue higher education. But, I am with you. I will provide for your higher education". One day, I called him for dinner and later sent him to Vienna for higher education in medicine. Accordingly, he went abroad and obtained higher degrees in medicine. After his return, he is now doing wonderful service in Brindavan. He is not money-minded. The great name he has acquired in Swami's service is all that matters to him. Can there be greater

wealth than a good name? He serves the poor. Even though he has undergone a heart surgery, he continues to serve the poor patients. Thus, Swami has moulded him as a loving, soft-hearted and selfless individual with a sacred heart and prompted him to serve people.

Our students, in spite of being highly qualified, are very unassuming and without ego. They subsequently take up teaching jobs in our educational institutions. It is My firm resolve to foster such noble souls.

There may be some minor ailments now and then to this body. However, they do not bother Me. They are natural to the human body. Last year, one boy was decorating the door with colour buntings, standing on an iron stool. Meanwhile, I opened the door and came out from My room. As soon as he saw Me, he became nervous and fell down from the stool. As he was falling, the iron stool got tilted and fell on Me. My hip bone was fractured. That is how it happened. It is not due to any past *karma*. I did not, however, mind My injury. Yesterday, as I was entering My room, I casually took the support of a brick projection from the wall. The brick, however, got loosened and fell down on the floor. Consequently I also fell down, landing heavily on the wrist. It was an accident. But, I had to perform My duty, come what may. Of course, accidents do happen due to past *karma*, but this incident is not of that kind. Such disruptions may happen now and then, but , no disease can ever afflict Me. I carry on My work unmindful of

such incidents.

There are seven boys here. All of them did their post graduation. They want to stay with Swami permanently, doing service here. I am looking after them. I told them, “My dear children! You must progress in your education. You need not depend on your parents for this. I will take care of all your requirements. You study well and come out with flying colours. Set an example to others.” Thus, I am making arrangements for their higher studies. I always help others and do not cause inconvenience to anybody. As for Myself, I will never be afflicted with any disease whatever. Some minor incidents may happen. But, I will carry on My work, unmindful of such incidents. Yesterday, when I fell down, there was a loud noise and people present there were very much afraid that some major accident had taken place. They thought to themselves - “What has happened to Swami! Till recently, He was not able to walk properly due to the hip fracture. Now He has sustained an injury to His hand. What a misfortune has befallen us!” But, I consoled them saying that nothing serious had happened and that they should not worry. The devotees had arranged a meeting here, in which I had to participate. I do not like to desist from performing My duty, whatever may happen to this body. Therefore, I agreed to come here. I put on My dress. The students arranged a shawl to cover My gown, so that I may not be inconvenienced with the bandaged arm. The doctors however advised Me not to move. They were right in

their advice. But, I volunteered to come down against the doctor's advice, with the help of two boys. Since I love My boys so much, they also love Me with the same intensity. They are constantly in attendance on Me and look after Me.

(As per Swami's instructions, some boys stood up. Showing them to the audience, Swami said).

These boys have come from far off places like Delhi and other cities and studied here in Brindavan and Prasanthi Nilayam. They are all staying with Me and doing great service to Me. This problem is not something that can be cured with medicines. Their love itself is working as a great medicine for Me. Their love alone is protecting Me in different ways.

(Again pointing towards a student...)

This boy did his PhD. All these boys are highly educated. Still they would like to stay back and serve Swami. There are some more boys inside Swami's residence. For example, Sathyajit and some other boys are constantly in attendance on Me like a shadow and are looking after Me. Such boys are My only property. Several people ask Me, "Swami! How much is the value of your property? Where is it located?" I tell them, "My dear! I cannot say that the value of My property is this much. My students are My property. It cannot be evaluated in terms of money. Any amount of description of the love of My boys will be insufficient." I cannot

remain for a single day without this property. They also cannot live without the loving care of Swami. These boys are setting a great example to the world by their service. *Seva* (selfless and loving service) alone confers great value on the educated. I cannot describe the amount of service they render, so lovingly. No one can adequately estimate and express in words the loving nature of our students. No one can understand their broad-mindedness. Outwardly, they appear like any other students. But, each one of them is highly educated, with double post-graduate degrees. Such boys can render great service to the world. They are serving Me in various ways.

Sravanam (listening), *kirtanam* (singing), *vishnusmaranam* (contemplating on Vishnu), *padasevanam* (serving His Lotus Feet), *vandanam* (salutation), *archanam* (worship), *dasyam* (servitude), *sneham* (friendship), and *atmanivedanam* (self-surrender) are the nine paths of devotion.

These boys are expressing their total and unconditional love towards Me through those nine paths of devotion.

The doctors advised Me bed rest. In spite of that, I decided to fulfil My commitment to My devotees. Having known My firm resolve, the boys stitched a shawl to cover My robe and brought Me down stairs. This service may appear to be a small and insignificant one. But, if you enquire into the matter deeply, you will understand that it is very difficult to get this opportunity

to serve Swami in this way. It is only because of their loving care, that I am able to come down without much inconvenience to speak to you. Is it really possible in My present condition? In fact, it is their pure love that brought Me down here. These boys have good character along with good education. The service rendered by the boys here or in the Primary School or Higher Secondary School or other institutions in Puttaparthi, is beyond description. Even little boys in these Institutions behave well. I am standing before you today to describe the good qualities of My students; otherwise, I had no intention to give a discourse. The students are doing great service to the society, as per My advice. I exhort the new entrants who join the Institution this year to cultivate noble qualities, be healthy and happy and humble like these boys and render good service to the society. I conclude My discourse with blessings to one and all.

[Easwaramma Day, 6-5-2004, Brindavan, Bangalore]

11

The Form Of God Is Love

Forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land of Bharat. Of all the rituals, adherence to truth is the greatest penance. The most nectarous feeling in this country is the feeling of love towards one's mother.

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

IN this sacred land of Bharat, forbearance is the real beauty. The modern man has no idea of what forbearance is. He is not able to realise that forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land. One bereft of forbearance is no human being at all. We should have sympathy and forbearance towards the poor and the physically challenged. But the modern man shows disgust towards such unfortunate people. In fact, *sahana* (tolerance) is the most valuable and sacred *mantra* of the

Bharatiyas. But man, out of his ignorance, has given up such a sacred *mantra* and is carried away by *yantra* and *tantra*.

The foremost quality expected of a devotee is forbearance. What is *bhakti* (devotion)? Several people are under the mistaken notion that worshipping some idols, observing certain vows and performing some rituals is *bhakti*. It is not as simple as that. The foremost duty of a devotee, especially of the *Bharatiyas*, is observing the quality of forbearance in practice.

Adherence to truth is the real *tapas* (penance). Man, today, has forgotten this principle. Forbearance is a quality which inspires people to undertake noble deeds. This noble quality is to be taught to others as well, to enable them to imbibe it.

The nectarous feeling in this country is the feeling of love towards one's mother. Today, people overlook the most important duty to look upon every woman as one's own mother. There is nothing greater and sweeter than this motherly love in the world. One who has cultivated such noble feeling is most fortunate. It is not a quality that can be purchased or hired. This motherly feeling flows from the natural love that one has for one's own mother. The people of Bharat are forsaking such noble qualities and are trying to imitate and cultivate alien cultures and traditions today. In fact, they are running after alien culture with excessive enthusiasm, treating it as their very life breath.

Divine Love Permeates The Whole World

Embodiments of Love!

You cannot find anything more sacred than love in the world. Today, you will find worldly and physical love everywhere. But, it is very difficult to find love suffused with *atmic* bliss.

Embodiments of Love!

Love is not merely that which exists between two individuals at the physical level. True love is that which exists between two hearts. *Bharatiyas* today are neglecting such sacred and noble love. It is only the love towards God that has sustained and protected the people in this sacred land of Bharat since ancient times, just as the eye lid protects the eye. This divine love permeates the entire universe. Wherever you look for, it is present. There is nothing in the world, except divine love. All other types of love are only mere passing infatuation. Real love emerges from the depth of one's heart. Cultivating such divine love and sharing it with others is most pleasing to Me. Today, you find worldly and physical love for achieving selfish ends everywhere. But, you cannot call it real love. Real love which is sacred, divine and selfless has to spring from one's heart.

Embodiments of Love!

Cultivate and strengthen such divine love. When

you cultivate such love, you will not be lacking in anything. It is only when you cultivate such noble love, you will be entitled to be called “Embodiments of love”. God is omnipresent. Who is God? In fact, you are verily God. You must strive to attain that state. Though God is present everywhere, you should not forget the divinity immanent in you. Some people think that God exists separately in some distant place.

Prahlada, the child devotee of Lord Vishnu declared:

Never doubt that God is here and not there.

Wherever you search for Him, He is there.

(Telugu poem)

This is the real culture of Bharat, which we are not able to perceive today. Everyone chants the name of God. But, where is God? In fact, you yourself are God. You and God are not separate. Man forgets the divinity latent in him and runs after trivial and mundane things.

Embodiments of Love!

Under all circumstances, do not give up love. Love is your greatest treasure. One who forgets this treasure, is not a human being at all! We love our father, mother, brothers, sisters, etc. All these relationships are but mere roles in the divine drama. You must try to apprehend true love. In fact, it is always in us. You need not search for it outside. Unfortunately, today we are going after things

which are not real and permanent. (Showing a flower . . .) What is this? This is a flower. Everybody says so. But, the truth is, it is a manifestation of divinity. There are several petals in it which represent divinity. If the petals are taken out one by one, it cannot be called a flower. Similarly, if there is no love in a human being, he cannot be called an “Embodiment of love”. The source and sustenance for the entire universe is love. This quality of love takes different shapes in different individuals, say between father, mother, brothers and sisters, but you refer to it all as love. All these individuals together constitute a family. It is not enough if you limit your love to the family members. The entire universe must live like a family. Whomever you see, offer your *pranams*. Say “*Namaskar! Namaskar!*” Can you come across a nobler feeling than this? All the forms you come across in this world are embodiments of divinity. There is nothing in this universe which is not divine. You consider the different objects in the universe as mere objects. No! No! Consider them as “Embodiments of divinity”. Unfortunately, today we have become foolish and are searching for God in some distant corner. Wherever you see, there is God. Therefore, it is the noblest feeling to consider everything in the universe as “Embodiments of divinity”. The universe is but a form of God! God is manifest in all forms. Consider such an omnipresent divinity as God. Do not give credence to the outward form of any object, but firmly believe in the divine power that is immanent in that object. We are

not experiencing anything other than divinity in our day - to - day activities. For example, we are thirsty. Thirst is a fire manifest as divinity. We quench our thirst by drinking water, which is another manifestation of the divine.

Thus all the five elements in the universe, the five senses, five sheaths and the five vital breathes in the body, are all manifestations of divinity. Today, we are misusing our senses. This is an act of grave sin. All the senses are pure, sacred and selfless. The senses have no distinction of caste, creed, religion, nationality, etc. Keeping such noble qualities in our own self, we are searching for divinity in the outside world. What a great pity! What do you think the human values are? They are nothing but divine qualities. God has no attributes separately. Divinity itself is the sole attribute. We are deluded to see the attributeless divinity as God with attributes.

Love Is God's Only Attribute

Embodiments of Love!

Whatever I speak, it is only love. I do not know any other word. There is no other quality greater than love. Hence, we have to love the quality of love, which is God.

The different ways by which we describe God such as *Nirgunam, Niranjnam, Sanathana Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam* (God

is attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness) are only for our satisfaction. They cannot, however, describe God in full. In fact, God is beyond description. The only word by which we can describe God is "love". Nothing better can describe Him.

Embodiments of Love!

You are all the "Embodiments of love". Your form is love. God's form is also love. I am very much distressed to see those physically challenged children seated on the tricycles. They are, in fact, "Embodiments of divinity". To look down upon those divine children with contempt is a great sin. In fact, there are no lowly people in the world at all! That low thinking is in us only. It cannot be attributed to God. God has only one attribute, which is love. That is His form. When someone converses with Me lovingly, My joy knows no bounds. If people employ empty rhetoric without love to describe My qualities, I am not at all pleased or impressed. Talk to Me with a loving heart. Pray to Me with a love - filled heart. Whatever you pray for with a loving heart, I will readily respond. You call Me "Sai" with love; I will readily respond saying "Oyi". Any amount of prayer devoid of love cannot move Me. If you call Me with love, I will respond immediately, wherever I am. There is nothing greater than love. Therefore, if you wish to have the *darshan* of God and experience Him, pray to Him lovingly. You may have any amount

of wealth and virtues, but they are no match to the quality of love. The sweetness inherent in the word *prema* is not to be found anywhere else in the world. The more you cultivate and practise it, the sweeter will be your personality. Therefore, cultivate love as the foremost quality in you.

Love is your sole refuge wherever you may be, in a forest, in the sky, in a city or a village, on the top of a mountain or in the middle of deep sea.

(Telugu poem)

Love is not confined to any particular place or residence; it is universal. Therefore, cultivate such universal love. Such a universal love cannot be purchased with any amount of money. It can only be attained with a heart filled with intense love. Man has, therefore, to cultivate such pure and selfless love. In order to cultivate such pure love. *bhakti* (devotion) is prescribed as a means. *Bhakti* is not somewhere in some distant corner. *Prema* (love) is *bhakti* (devotion). Devotion without love is deep ocean. And how is that ocean? It is full of salt water, whereas devotion with love is like sweet water. Love is a nectarous feeling. Love is verily bliss. Love is a wonderful feeling. It is unfathomable. Therefore, such a nectarous, sweet, blissful and unfathomable love, you should never give up.

Embodiments of Love!

Instead of making hollow claims of *bhakti*, keep

prema as your goal to be attained. There is nothing greater than this *sadhana*. There is nothing that can liberate you easily than pure and selfless love. There are four words - *mukti* (liberation), *bhakti* (devotion), *rakti* (attachment) and *anurakti* (attachment or love towards God). But, love is the undercurrent in all these things. On this auspicious occasion of Guru Purnima, love is the most valuable gift I hand over to you. This is my most precious gift to you. Devoid of love, whatever other gifts I may give, they will be of no use. My love is pure, sacred and most precious. You also cultivate such love.

[Guru Purnima, 2-7-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]

My Students Are My Wealth

*One may acquire a high academic qualification
such as M.A., B.A., MBA and MFM and
attain exalted position,*

*One may amass wealth, perform acts of charity
and attain name and fame,*

*One may have physical strength and enjoy a long
and healthy life,*

*One may be a scholar, but if he lacks human values
all his achievements will prove futile.*

(Telugu poem)

*Students! Boys and Girls! Teachers! Patrons of
Education!*

BY mere acquisition of worldly education man cannot attain exalted position in life. All human efforts will be in vain without divine grace. There are many in this world who are highly educated,

but are they rendering any service to the nation? No. In this respect, the unlettered people appear to be better human beings than the highly educated. In spite of his education and intelligence, a person who does not know his true Self is but a fool. One may be highly intelligent and educated, but bereft of human values his life is meaningless. In fact, one devoid of human values is no human being at all! There is little use in acquiring a number of degrees without imbibing human values.

Character Is The Prime Objective Of Education

Embodiments of Love!

To know and recognise a truly educated individual, you have to look closely at our students. They are not satisfied with mere acquisition of degrees. They utilise their knowledge for the benefit of society. Education which is not useful to society serves no real purpose. Our boys are highly virtuous and are endowed with the wealth of character. They consider virtues as their very life. Men of eminence who come here from all over the world learn many things from our students. Some of our students remain here and serve as teachers after the completion of their education. I am very happy about it. We need not be worried about getting good and noble teachers from elsewhere for our Institute. Our own students, after their studies, take up the responsibility of teaching. In other academic centres students are interested in pursuing higher studies for their own selfish ends, but our students are not interested in accumulating

degrees, but in disseminating their knowledge for the benefit of others.

One cannot acquire such character and nobility from mere education. The education they received here is not limited to textual knowledge alone. It develops virtues which originate from the heart. Our students are incomparable. They are taking up the roles of teachers all over the world and are helping society by moulding ideal students and men of character. Character is the prime objective of education here in our Institute. A person of such education and character, can rule over the entire world. Education without character is useless. I am very much pleased to have such students who are virtuous, energetic and intelligent. Our MBA students have all the noble qualities that are expected of them. In addition to their studies, they learn various languages. Students from Kerala have gained proficiency in various languages, such as, Tamil, Hindi, English, Telugu, etc. They speak all these languages with such fluency that it is very difficult to identify their mother tongue. For such talented students, it is not difficult to learn the language of the *Atma*. They give talks even in Sanskrit. But they also adhere to our *samskriti* (culture). *Samskara* is not imbibed by learning Sanskrit, it comes from adherence to *samskriti*. One who adheres to *samskriti* will be able to attain all types of wealth and be an ideal to others. When I asked one of the students which place he belonged to, he said, “*Swami*, I belong to Puttaparthi.” That boy speaks Sanskrit very fluently. He has also learnt

various other languages. Students who have studied in Puttaparthi are spreading Swami's message in various countries, such as, America, Japan, Germany, Italy, etc. Students who have such dedication and devotion are very rare these days. But here are many such students in our institutions. It gives Me great joy to have such students here. We need such students. I wish that these students, after completion of their education, share the knowledge they have acquired here with fellowmen in society and transform them. Men of eminence like the President of India, the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers are all praise for our students. They extol our students whenever they visit this place.

In our Institutes, students are provided education totally free of charge. In addition to this, scholarships are provided to deserving students. If you ask what is Swami's property, I say, "Students are My property." Without the students, I will not be able to do anything. They are looking after Swami with utmost love and care. In fact, they are responsible for all the development that we find in our educational and other institutions.

The culture of Bharat is based on the *Vedas* which are in Sanskrit language. Here students chant the *Vedic mantras* both in the morning and in the evening. You cannot get such students even if you do intense penance. They can certainly bring about progress in society. There is no language that our students do not speak; they are very versatile in all kinds of skills. You may be under

the impression that Swami is taking great pains to mould the character of students. There is no pain whatsoever. In fact, students are of great help to Swami. They are spreading the ideals of Sai to the rest of the world giving *hai* (joy) to one and all. There is a need to establish more similar institutions in order to mould such ideal students. Parents themselves are not aware of the innate potential of their children. Our students are filled with noble thoughts and sacred feelings. They give top priority to the service of their parents. They treat their friends and relatives with love and affection. They have no desire for accumulating wealth. Their sole aim is to obey Swami's command and work for the progress of society. I do not want any other property than My students. With the help of these students, many educational institutions can be developed. Unlike students elsewhere who wake up very late in the morning, our students get up in the early hours at the crowing of the cock. They observe moderation in food and habits. Such discipline can not be found among student community elsewhere. They are attentive in classes and learn their lessons well. They are obedient to their teachers. They take part in sports and games, such as, Badminton, Tennis, Volleyball, etc., in the right spirit. They take good care of their health too. They are all very strong in physique and spirit. You do not find anyone weak and afflicted with diseases. Such students who take care of themselves are capable of taking care of the country as well. Our institution is fortunate to have students of such calibre. If there are

another five institutions of this quality, they will be able to raise the happiness level of the whole country. In fact, other colleges are trying to emulate our institution.

Our students are like diamonds. They are obedient to elders, courteous towards relatives. Seeing their good conduct and listening to their sweet words, the guests who visit their houses are highly impressed. They are creative in their thinking and shine as role models. We do not wish to praise the qualities of our own students. But when dignitaries who visit this Institute talk high of our students, I feel very happy.

(Here Bhagawan referred to the hip bone fracture He suffered last year.) I am not suffering from any disease or any ailment. Last year, one boy was hanging colour buntings on the door while standing on an iron stool. Meanwhile, I opened the door and came out of My room. As soon as he saw Me, he became nervous and fell down from the stool. As he was falling, the iron stool got toppled and fell on Me. He too fell on Me. That was the time when My hip bone was fractured. Doctors tried their best to set it right. They felt sorry that it would be difficult for Swami to walk. I told them, "No one needs to feel sorry for Me. My students will take good care of Me. They will follow Me like shadow wherever I go." My students have become My doctors. It is because of them that I am able to move around. Our students tell Me, "Swami, we don't need to be worried about anything when we are with You. We want to sanctify our lives in Your service. With such love and faith,

hundreds of students have remained with Swami after the completion of their education, performing various duties assigned to them. They do not want to go outside for a job. You may find it hard to believe if I tell you about the work they do. Once someone from outside came here and took two of our boys for employment. They were given a salary of 50,000 to 60,000 rupees per month. They utilised the money to serve the poor children. Later on, they resigned their jobs and came here as they could not bear the separation from Swami. Our students have transformed Prasanthi Nilayam into a big workshop. They are able to handle various types of instruments and equipments very efficiently. They are striving hard for the development of hospitals. It is not possible for anyone to understand the sacred feelings of our students.

(Swami asked one of the boys who was sitting near Him to get up.) This boy did his Engineering and then completed his MBA degree in our Institute. Many people from all over the country requested him to join their companies. But he declined their offers.

What is he doing at present? He is spreading Swami's message all over the world through Radio Sai Global Harmony. Even his parents tell Me, "Swami, please keep him with You always." When he was with his parents, though they would force him to eat more, he did not put on weight. But after coming here, he has gained 18 kg. even without timely intake of food. Now

he is always with Me attending to My needs. At the same time, he does not keep his office work pending. He attends to it at night.

(Swami asked another boy to get up.) What do you think of this boy? He hails from a backward area in Orissa. His father has three sons. Now, all the four of them are working in Puttaparthi. These boys have completed their M.Sc. and MBA. They do not want to undertake any job outside. All of them have remained here serving Swami. They are satisfied with the salary they are paid here. In this manner, all the boys who are working here are full of virtues and are leading a life of sacrifice. For the last few months, our boys are taking good care of Me. I do not have any pain. I do not require any medical treatment. I do not need to be worried about anything. It is because of the loving service of My students, I am spending My time blissfully without any inconvenience or suffering whatsoever. They are always ready and eager to serve Me. They carry out My instructions meticulously. There are 200 such students around Me in Parasanthi Nilayam. They do not sit idle; they discharge their duties diligently. It is not possible to describe the magnitude of work they do. They attend to all jobs. If there are such students everywhere, the nation will certainly prosper. They help everyone. I want to make them totally self-reliant. They should depend on the work they do and not on anybody else. They will certainly be able to lead their lives in that manner. I am telling all this today so that

you will know the noble qualities of our students. They are *gunavanthlu* (virtuous), *balavantulu* (energetic) and also *dhanavantulu* (wealthy). They earn their own money. They do not take even a paisa from their parents. Sometimes, the parents may come and ask, “Do you require anything? They reply, “Swami has provided everything. He is taking care of us very well.”

In future, many great events are going to take place. The country need not fear. Bharat will certainly become a land of plenty and prosperity. Our students will contribute a lot to the development of the nation. They are the future leaders. It is a matter of great joy for Me to see the students as future leaders.

[Divine Discourse, 21-8-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]

Do Constant Namasmarana For Mental Peace

Oh man! You struggle hard in life merely for the sake of filling your belly. You acquire myriad types of knowledge from various fields. Examine and enquire for yourself what great happiness you have achieved by spending all the time from dawn to dusk in acquiring worldly knowledge and earning wealth, while forgetting God.

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

WHETHER a pauper or a millionaire, one has to eat. But, having attained the sacred human birth, it is unseemly of man to spend his entire life merely for the sake of filling his belly. Why don't you spend a few minutes in the contemplation of God, instead of spending your entire life just to earn a living? There

are of course a few people in this land of Bharat, who are sanctifying their time and their environment in the contemplation of God, but the vast majority are wasting their births in vain pursuits.

Human Birth Is Meant To Experience Divinity

Embodiments of Love!

It is not only in Srikakulam district, but in many other places all over India, there are people who are struggling and straining to eke out their livelihood. In spite of all the effort, they are unable to attain peace, happiness and comfort. Only those who are spending their time in the contemplation of God are able to experience peace and happiness. Those who forget God and spend all their time and energy in mundane pursuits are bound to suffer. Till this day, nobody has been able to enjoy mental peace and physical comfort in full measure. The body is like a water bubble. It is nothing but a bag full of bones. Mind is like a mad monkey. It is a mistake to strive for the happiness of such a physical body and wavering mind. So long as one is alive, one should make efforts to keep the body healthy, so that one may not cause inconvenience to others. There are many who spend their entire life for the sake of physical comforts and pleasures. It is only a few who are not concerned with their mind and body, but are centred on eternal peace and happiness. Human birth is meant to experience divinity and not to crave for fleeting pleasures. Human body is a divine gift, which is being put to improper use,

instead of its proper purpose of adoring God. Do not be under the mistaken notion that body is meant for eating and enjoying physical pleasures only. Certain duties have been assigned to man by performing which he will be able to experience happiness at the level of the body, mind, senses and the spirit. One should enquire what the purpose of human birth is? The goal of human birth is to work for release from the cycle of birth and death. This body is a den of dirt, and prone to diseases; it is subject to change from time to time; it cannot cross the ocean of *samsara*. The body should be used as an instrument to rise from the level of humanness to divinity. Human life is sanctified only when we experience divinity. There are many people who are making efforts in this direction. But only a few are able to realise the truth and achieve the goal. One may undertake any type of activities, but one should always aspire to attain peace of mind. Without peace of mind whatever enterprise that man undertakes will only add to his restlessness.

God Is Your Sole Refuge

Embodiments of Love!

You are really fortunate to have come here all the way from Srikakulam in spite of your financial constraints and various other difficulties. Swami is very well aware of your aspirations. You have come here to experience divine bliss. You were feeling sad that Swami has not spoken to you a word even after two days of your stay here. In fact, last night you were all praying intensely.

In response to your sincere prayers, I have decided to address you this morning. It is not My intention to satisfy you with just a discourse. I am ready to extend all the help required to fulfil your aspirations. Many of you are facing problems due to shortage of water. Some of you do not have even proper food to eat. Food and water are very essential for everyone. Do not give room to worry and anxiety. God is not stone-hearted. He will certainly take care of your needs. His heart is filled with compassion. Swami's concern for you is hundred times more intense than the concern you have for yourselves. You need not be worried at all. Develop the feeling that difficulties and suffering are for your own good. Even insurmountable difficulties will vanish like thin mist when you have firm conviction. Hence, do not be unduly perturbed about your problems. Difficulties come and go. Not only the poor, even a millionaire cannot escape from difficulties. Swami confers His blessings on you so that you will be relieved of your suffering soon.

You may consult the elders of your villages and take the help of those who are willing to cooperate with you. I will see to it that there is plenty of water available in your mountainous area. Do not be depressed or bogged down by difficulties. Having put on the vesture of the human body, one cannot escape from difficulties. The physical body may undergo suffering, but you should make efforts to attain peace of mind. Mind is the basis for happiness for everyone. All physical comforts will be of little use without peace of mind. Only through

contemplation of God can you attain peace of mind and not by any other means. Hence, chant the name of God incessantly unmindful of the difficulties that come in your way. It is because of contemplation of God's name that you have been able to experience peace in spite of the innumerable difficulties you faced. God is the refuge for the poor and the forlorn. He is always with them through all the vicissitudes of life. Do not think that God is in some distant land. God is by your side always. In fact, He is present in the inner recesses of your heart. Never think that God is away from you at any point of time. Neither friends nor relatives can come to your rescue. God is your sole refuge. He will protect you under all circumstances. In spite of numerous difficulties, *Bharatiyas* never swerved from the Godward path. If Bharat occupies a pivotal position among all nations, it is only because of *Bharatiyas*' one-pointed devotion to God. There are many affluent countries where people lead a luxurious life, but they are unable to attain peace of mind. It is the good fortune of *Bharatiyas* that they are able to enjoy peace of mind. Their devotion to God is responsible for this. Since ancient times, the culture of Bharat has been protecting the *Bharatiyas* in all respects. Its glory and grandeur defy all description. One who has peace of mind will have moral strength. Hence, chant the divine name constantly. Yesterday you went round the entire village singing the glory of God and entered the portals of Prasanthi Nilayam; you experienced peace of mind. It is not possible to experience peace by any other

means. Hence, never forget God. Sanctify your time by chanting His Name. Contemplation of God should be man's constant endeavour. There may be some jealous people who will try to dissuade you from chanting God's name. They say, "What is the use of chanting God's name? It will not help us to eke out our livelihood. We have to work hard for our survival. So, stop chanting God's name." Do not pay heed to such narrow-minded people. Never forget God's name. You may not be aware; people all over the world in all villages are facing hardships. They are suffering from physical ailments and mental agitations. Only *Bharatiyas* are able to enjoy peace of mind because of their devotion to God. There is no happiness greater than experiencing peace of mind.

Mental peace can be obtained only by constant contemplation of God. This cannot be purchased from the market. It is only by constant contemplation of God that mental worries can be overcome. This is the experience of people all over the world. Contemplation of God alone can bring about mental peace and happiness. No other means can achieve this.

To be born is a worry, to be on the earth is a worry; world is a cause of worry and death too; entire childhood is a worry and so is the old age; life is a worry, failure is a worry; all actions and difficulties cause worry; even happiness too is a mysterious worry. (Telugu poem)

Namasmarana Will Obviate All Difficulties

Contemplation of God is the right royal path that would remove all types of worries. Therefore, do not try other means for achieving mental peace and get into trouble and worry. March on along the divine and glorious path. All the *karmas* in the spiritual field are meant to bring peace and happiness to us. They are not intended to trouble us. Mental peace can be achieved only by performing one's own duty, not by any other means. *Karma* brings about a result; and that result brings happiness and peace. Even when you are undergoing difficulties, always think that they are meant to bring you happiness. Every human being undergoes difficulties, only to enjoy happiness later. However, he does not realise this during the period of suffering. But, in course of time, when suffering ends and happy days arrive, he would realise the truth. Hence, always remember the truth that sorrows and difficulties are prelude to happy days ahead. In fact, real happiness comes out of suffering only.

Embodiments of Love!

Love is the only property that always grows — the more you spend, the more it grows; it never diminishes. Supposing you go up a hill and sing the glory of God; the divine vibrations will reach a large area and the people hearing the *namasmarana* even from a distance will feel very happy. Divine music can confer solace even to children and animals. By hearing *namasankirtan*, even the heart of a stone-hearted person will melt. We have

heard of several instances in Indian history where great devotees of God, by their *namasankirtan*, could bring about complete transformation in die-hard criminals.

Suppose you are digging a pit; the soil in that is taken out and stacked by its side becomes a mound. You need not feel anxious that the pit is becoming deeper and deeper. The soil that is dug out of the pit and the soil that is piled up next to the pit are the same. Similarly, along with the difficulties you undergo, you will experience happiness also in abundant measure. When you fill in the soil that is piled up (namely happiness) in the pit of sorrows and difficulties, you will attain a state of equanimity. This is what you have to realise today. You need not feel sorry, “Oh! I have fallen into this pit of sorrows and difficulties. How can I come out of this? How am I to bear this?” The soil of happiness stacked next to the pit of suffering may be filled into the pit. You will attain a state of equanimity. You have to do this *sadhana*.

Embodiments of Love!

You have come here with love-filled hearts, undergoing lot of difficulties and physical strain. It is your love and devotion to Swami that brought you here. Go back to your places with the same intensity of love and devotion. Continue to enjoy the moments of joy and happiness you experienced in the presence of Swami.

Pleasure and pain, good and bad co-exist, none

can separate them. You cannot find pleasure or pain, good or bad to the exclusion of the other. Pleasure results when difficulties fructify.

(Telugu poem)

Thus, happiness and sorrow come to teach us equanimity.

Embodiments of Love!

Love is the only wealth that can never diminish. That is the property of God. Therefore, cultivate pure and selfless love. God’s love will always follow you wherever you are and will protect you at all times. Do not ever consider that money alone is your property. In fact, love is your real wealth. The wealth of Love always grows (expands), never diminishes. Those who realise the *Paramatma* will be able to understand this truth better. My heart is overflowing with love and joy on account of the *namasankirtan* you have done yesterday in the streets of Puttaparthi. Continue this *namasankirtan* wherever you are throughout your life. Especially, when your spirits are down with sorrow, sing the glory of God full-throated. Never feel diffident to sing the glory of God, thinking that others may make fun of you. Irrespective of what others may think or say against you, continue this sacred activity of *namasankirtan*. Only then will you be charged with divine power.

Embodiments of Love!

I am very happy that you are all gathered here. I

always wish joy, happiness, comfort and peace for all of you. Today, 8000 devotees from your place have come here to share the happiness of Swami's divine presence. All of you, please go to the canteen and partake of Swami's *prasadam* happily. Swami's *prasadam* will become *akshaya* (never diminishing) and will remove all your sorrows and difficulties. Everything that is granted by Swami is suffused with love. Whatever is granted by Bhagawan is always free. God will never succumb to monetary considerations. Wherever any service activity is associated with money, it is tainted. The entire property of Swami consists of Love only. Such divine love must become your very life-breath. All your past *karmas* will become extinct, if only you cultivate that pure love.

All of you go to the canteen and have food, as Swami's *prasadam*. Thereafter, you can go to your respective villages, happily.

Embodiments of Love!

Having come here from such a long distance, fill your hearts with love. Sometime ago, there was a singer by name Saluru Rajeswara Rao. He used to visit Swami, regularly. He remained absorbed so much in music that he would sing while walking in the streets, unmindful of what others thought of him. Today, his son has come here to sing some devotional songs in the divine presence of Swami. These devotional songs fill the hearts of people with overwhelming joy. Late

Rajeswara Rao used to sing a particular song on Sri Krishna melodiously "*Challagaalilo Yamunathatipy Shyama Sundaruni Murali ...*" (Shyamasundara is melodiously playing His flute on the banks of the Yamuna, while the cool breeze is blowing). His voice as well as his feelings were sweet. Both Rajeswara Rao and another devotee Adi Narayana used to come here regularly. They were the people who composed the "*Sai Charita*" and sang those songs melodiously. They may be anywhere; the lives of such pure-hearted devotees are sanctified. Those, who sell their God-given talents and make a living out of it, can never be truly happy. Rajeswara Rao and Adi Narayana never made business out of their musical talents. They always sang to their heart's content, with love and devotion. The glory of such devotees, whether dead or alive, will remain forever. There was another well known devotee by name Ghantasala Venkateswara Rao. He also underwent many difficulties. But, he was always devoted to God. Whenever he was in difficult situation, he used to sing, "Oh! God! Won't You pull me out of these difficulties?" Even when he was sick and was hospitalised, he used to sing lying in the hospital bed, "Oh! Lord! How long have I to suffer this agony! Won't you relieve me of this pain?" "Once I went to the hospital to see him. I consoled him saying, "My dear Ghantasala! Never think of these difficulties and suffering. These things happen to test your faith in God. You will come out successful in this test, by constant *namasmarana*." A devotee like him

who is constantly engaged in *namasmarana* under all circumstances, will become immortal. *Namasmarana* is the only property that lasts forever. Therefore, you also undertake this *sadhana*, as a lifelong activity. Whether your voice is good or not, continue to sing the glory of God by constant *namasmarana* at least in your heart. Thereby, you will acquire merit that will protect you throughout your life. If you do this *sadhana*, God will always be with you, in you, around you. Whenever you take food, do *namasmarana* before partaking of the food. By doing so, the food will be sanctified and will become *prasadam* (gift) of God. Your heart also will be purified. That is why, our ancestors prayed thus before partaking of food:

*Brahmarpanam Brahma havir
Brahmagnou Brahmanahutam
Brahmaiva thena ganthavyam
Brahma karma samadhina.*

When you pray in this manner before you partake of your food, God immediately responds thus:

*Aham Vaishvanaro bhutva
Praninam dehamasrita
Pranapana samayukta
Pachamyannam chaturvidham.*

(My dear! I am present in you in the form of *Vaishvanara* digesting the food that you partake of)

The prayer thus made invokes an immediate

response from God. That is reaction, reflection and resound. Therefore, constantly engage yourself in *namasmarana*, which will confer bliss on you.

[Divine Discourse, 23-8-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]

14

Divine Love Alone Can Save Us From Sorrows

Oh man! You struggle hard in life merely for the sake of filling your belly. You acquire myriad types of knowledge from various fields. Examine and enquire for yourself what great happiness you have achieved by spending all the time from dawn to dusk in acquiring worldly knowledge and earning wealth while forgetting God.

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Hunger, thirst, pleasure and pain, are quite natural to man. One follows the other. Food is essential for man. But filling the belly is not the be - all and end - all of human existence. Man is born not for the sake of *ahara* (food) but to experience *ananda* (bliss). One who is oblivious to *ananda* and spends his

time and energy in the pursuit of *ahara* will ultimately fritter away his life. The purpose of celebrating festivals is to experience bliss and not merely to partake of delicious food. No doubt the body requires food, but life is not meant for food alone. Unmindful of this truth, man is treading the path of unrighteousness for the sake of food and physical pleasures. The body is made up of five elements and is transitory. The mind is a mere bundle of thoughts and desires. We should not be unduly attached to the body and the mind. We should strive to experience bliss.

Sanctify Your Time With Sacred Actions

Embodiments of Love!

Human body has emerged out of love. Hence, we should lead a life for divine love and not for food. But man has not understood this truth. He struggles hard from dawn to dusk for the sake of filling his belly. He is not utilising the gift of the body for the purpose it is assigned to. This body is a den of dirt, and prone to diseases; it is subject to change from time to time; how foolish it is to develop attachment to such an impermanent body and strive for its pleasures?

Embodiments of Love!

We should lead our lives in such a manner to redeem ourselves. We should love God and aspire only for Him. Your love should be directed only towards God, not for the body. Our speech, actions and the life-breath

itself are meant to experience the *Atma*. Sometimes the body may be afflicted with ailments, but they are like passing clouds. Man is born to attain the eternal truth of the *atma*. Life is meant for *atmaanveshana* (quest for the *atma*) and not for *annaanveshana* (quest for food). *Annaanveshana* gives cause to physical ailments. They come and go like passing clouds. How foolish it is to be depressed about such 'passing clouds'? We should never forget the truth that we are born to experience the eternal bliss of *atma*.

Embodiments of Love!

You have come here all the way from Kerala to celebrate the holy festival of *Onam* and experience joy and bliss in the divine presence of Swami. We should not allow trivial matters to dampen the spirit of enthusiasm. We should march forward with courage and conviction, unmindful of any hurdles and inconveniences in the way. A few minutes ago, when all of you were blissfully immersed in the celebration, all of a sudden My nose started bleeding. I went inside, wiped the blood and came out cheerfully as if nothing had happened. How can we discontinue the celebration of a sacred festival of this kind on account of such trivial matters? We should not lose our self-confidence on such minor physical discomforts. They are transient in nature; you should not get distracted by them. Ailment and suffering are but natural to the physical body. Sometimes even the sun is covered by clouds. But can the clouds ever diminish the effulgence of the sun? No. Just as the sun is not affected

by the clouds, you too should remain unaffected by ailment and suffering. When you develop such courage, conviction and determination, you will not be depressed or dejected by any suffering.

Embodiments of Love!

We should sanctify our time by performing sacred actions. This is the spiritual lesson we have to learn today. We can experience transcendental bliss only when we overcome the difficulties and suffering that come in our way. Never be afraid of difficulties; face them with courage. Only then humanness will blossom in you. Once you experience the bliss of the *atma*, difficulties and suffering will no longer bother you.

Embodiments of Love!

Amidst the joyous celebration of the festival, My slight physical discomfiture has caused anxiety to you. You should never give scope for anxiety or worry. In order to allay your fears and anxiety and to give you joy I came back immediately. In this world, many difficulties come in our way. Truly speaking, they merely cause anxiety in you; they cannot harm you.

Transcend The Mind

Onam is the most sacred festival of Kerala. You have to understand the significance and message of this festival and put it into practice. *Onam* is an occasion to share our joy with others. You cannot experience happiness without undergoing difficulties. *Na sukhat*

labhate sukham (one cannot derive happiness out of happiness). Happiness gains value in the face of difficulties. Even insurmountable difficulties will vanish like thin mist when you face them with courage and self-confidence. The problems may appear to be mountainous in nature, but you should not give scope for fear or anxiety in your mind. Mind is like a mad monkey. It easily gets swayed by difficulties. Hence, you should brush aside the difficulties that come in your way. Never allow them to get the upper hand. Mind is the veil of *maya* (illusion) that stands as an obstacle in your path to spirituality. You should not become a slave of the mind; you should conquer the mind. Only then can you attain divinity. But you are carried away by the vagaries of the mind which is nothing but *maya*. You should ignore the dictates of the mind. We consider the mind to be the most important aspect of humankind. However, it can lead you to dangers and difficulties if you are carried away by its whims and fancies. Hence, do not submit yourself to the mind.

Embodiments of Love!

One who has control over the mind is a true *manishi* (human). One who lacks control over the mind is no human at all. How can you call yourself a human being if you are fickle-minded and depressed over trivial problems? You should make efforts to overcome problems posed by the mind without being unduly worried about them. In this world, there is nothing

greater than God's love. Hence, we should transcend the mind that stands as an obstacle in the Godward path.

Embodiments of Love!

You are born out of love and sustained by love. You should sanctify your life by leading a life suffused with love. Treat love as the very basis of your life. You are not fit to be called a human being if you submit yourself to trivial problems. Even tiny ants are able to overcome obstacles that stand in their way. Problems are not limited to human beings alone; even birds, beasts and insects have problems.

Saint Thyagaraja sang,

“Oh Rama, You pervade everything right from a cheema (ant) to Brahma. You are in Siva and also in Kesava. Please take care of me.”

(Telugu poem)

The same divinity that is present in an ant is also present in man. Likewise, difficulties are also common for all. The suffering that an ant undergoes is similar to that of man. When such a tiny creature like an ant is able to withstand suffering, why is it that man is not able to do the same? He is influenced by his food and habits and thus has become a slave to his mind. That is the reason he is unable to withstand suffering. We should face the challenges of life with fortitude and brush aside the difficulties. Never be cowed down by difficulties. You can attain God only when you face difficulties with

courage and overcome them.

Focus Your Mind On God

Embodiments of Love!

You should not seek anything other than divine love. There is nothing superior to love in this world. You consider gold, silver, diamond, etc. as most valuable. In fact, all these so called valuable things are meant to delude man. We should not care for such worldly possessions. Instead, we should focus our mind on God. Perform your daily activities keeping God as your goal. Only then will your human birth find fulfilment. We should strive to attain the grace of God and not be deterred by difficulties and losses. When you have God on your side, you can achieve anything. All your difficulties and suffering will vanish in a trice. When such omnipotent divinity is within us, why should we be worried about trivial matters? Love is the divine power that bestows on us the courage to overcome difficulties. Anything can be achieved with the power of love. We should be afraid of sin, and not difficulties. We have to develop *daiva preeti*, *papa bheeti* and *Sangha neeti* (fear of sin, love of God and morality in society). Instead of developing fear of sin, we are enslaved by sin. Instead of seeking refuge in God, we are submitting ourselves to difficulties. Morality in society will lead to love of God which will in turn lead to fear of sin. Hence, we should uphold morality in society and dedicate ourselves to God.

Thyagaraja once prayed, “Oh! Lord, I am deeply concerned about the fear of sin. I am unable to surrender to your love. Please grant me the strength of conviction to bow down before your divine love. Please give me the strength to overcome the fear of difficulties.” What did we achieve in our life? What is the purpose of constant contemplation of God? One who is constantly contemplating on God should be able to keep himself away from sinful acts and develop love for God. There can be no greater fortune than having love for God. One must strive to achieve that great treasure. One should not be deterred by sorrows and difficulties in that *sadhana*.

Embodiments of Love!

You have all gathered here to attain that great fortune of love for God. One should never be subdued by sorrows and difficulties. Sorrow and sin are obstacles in the path of spirituality. They are like the waves. When one gets into the water and attempts to swim, the surging waves must be pushed aside, so that one may move forward. Similarly, in the stream of life, if one wants to move forward, one has to push aside the surging waves of sorrow and sin. From a child to the adult, everyone has to strive to attain the love of God. This struggle for God’s love, moulds the personality of a human being. What is meant by personality? Does it mean height, weight and a strong body? No, it is a mistake to think so. Undeterred by the sorrows and difficulties, one has

to march forward with courage to attain God’s love. That is the real meaning of personality. In fact, God has already granted such personality to every human being. Unfortunately, we fail to realise this truth. The word ‘Person’ implies a great divine force that is granted by God to Man. Our ancestors called this divine force as ‘Persona’. This is a great gift of God, granted to every individual. We are unable to safeguard this great treasure. These sorrows and difficulties are like passing clouds that come and go. Why should we be afraid of them? We have the eternal Divine principle immanent in our personality. Therefore, there is no need at all to be afraid of anything as long as we are constantly aware of our latent divinity. March forward with courage and conviction and achieve your life’s goal. It is only to instil this feeling of courage in you and reinforce your faith in God that you are subjected to face certain anxious moments.

Be Rooted In The Atmatattwa

Embodiments of Love!

I am aware that you are very anxious about the physical discomfort that Swami underwent, a few moments ago. You are very worried about this physical body. Understand and be convinced by the fact that the body is after all physical in nature. It is like a water bubble; the mind is like a mad monkey. You need not be afraid of this mad monkey. You should not worry

about these passing clouds. They are like visitors who come and go. We have to be firmly established in the *Atmatattwa*, which is nothing but divinity. Develop full faith in the *Atmatattwa*. That alone will protect you in every way.

Embodiments of Love!

God can do anything by His divine will. Why should you fear when such all powerful God is always with you, in you and around you? Develop such courage and conviction and march on. There cannot be a more powerful force than faith in God in this world.

Embodiments of Love!

All these children have gathered here to spend some sacred moments in the divine presence of God. They are really fortunate. Their good fortune is the result of the merit acquired by their parents. Here is a small girl (pointing towards a girl). She participated in a group dance programme a short while ago. While doing so, she was constantly observing the steps made by other girls in the group. She developed so much concentration in this activity that she was constantly maintaining her steps in tune with the steps of other girls. (Swami created a gold chain and put it round her neck.)

Embodiments of Love!

I will be very happy, if all of you can become children once again. A child will never have the bad

qualities of anger, passion, jealousy, conceit and ego. Jesus Christ was always appreciative of the quality of innocence in children. Once, he lifted a small child from the lap of her mother in the crowd and said “I like this small child very much; she has all the qualities of divinity. She is pure, selfless and is in perfect bliss”. Children in general are divine in nature. As they grow up they develop bad qualities like excessive desires, attachments, anger, jealousy, etc. Along with advancing age, sorrows and difficulties will also increase. Therefore, one should strive for attaining control over one’s desires. That is ceiling on desires. If you can develop this control, you will come under the influence of divine power. Otherwise, you will be deluded by the power of desires and get into that vortex from which you can never come out. A child like simplicity, purity and innocence, is the road to divinity.

Embodiments of Love!

I wish you should become children at least for one minute a day. You should emulate those noble qualities, which are characteristic of children. Supposing you are troubled with desires, chase them away as unbecoming of your noble personality. Only then can you hold your head high. A few minutes ago, My nose was bleeding profusely. If I were to submit Myself helplessly to this bodily ailment, it would have aggravated further. Therefore, I decided to defy this bodily discomfiture and stand erect with firmness, unmindful of what is going to happen to the body. I washed My face and came

back immediately. After all, this body and the blood circulating therein are nourished and nurtured only by the food we partake of. If we cannot control our own body, what is the purpose of our living? Wherever we are, we must keep the body in our control. Only then we become real human beings and can move closer to divinity. The more you control your body and mind, the nearer you move to God.

The Message Of Onam Is Love

In fact, love is the only quality that takes you nearer to God. There is nothing greater than love. It is a divine attribute. *Love is God. Live in Love.* When you cultivate this noble quality, you deserve to be called a human being. This divine love is like the blood that circulates in every human being, nay, every living being. If we can cultivate this universal love, you can love not only every human being, but all living beings. *Love is God and God is Love.* Therefore, take every individual lovingly to your heart. Do not ever show anger or hatred towards anybody.

Embodiments of Love!

The quality of love that permeates every human being is one and the same. There are no differences whatsoever in this regard. When you cultivate such universal love, it becomes your very life-breath, which is dearer to God. Therefore, cultivate such pure, unsullied and selfless love. Love your neighbour's child as your

own child. All are embodiments of love. The message of this sacred festival *Onam* is Love. This festival is observed to spread this message of Love among all human beings. In fact, we are born to cultivate this sacred love and share it with others. If we fail in this endeavour, our whole life becomes a waste.

When My nose was bleeding a few minutes ago, some doctors advised Me that I should take complete rest and not to go out to give a discourse. I asked them why? The doctors explained that if I started talking, the bleeding might recur. Then I replied, "Ok! Let Me see!" Thus I faced the problem squarely with courage and confidence. Thus, when we encounter a difficult situation, we should not feel sorry and dejected. We must face it with courage. Only then can we overcome the situation.

Embodiments of Love!

Whenever you encounter suffering either bodily or mentally, do not lose your cool. Do not get dejected. Instead, face the problem squarely and undertake activities that will instil a sense of courage and confidence in you. No doubt, situations do arise in life when we have to undergo sorrows and difficulties. When our loving parents depart from this world, we are in deep sorrow. Instead of losing our poise in such difficult situations, it is advisable to face the ordeal with courage, expressing gratitude to our parents for granting us the gift of this body.

Embodiments of Love!

I hope I am not causing inconvenience to you by speaking at length. It is only to instil courage in you that I am giving this long discourse. When I was suffering with a bleeding nose, all our children were anxiously waiting in the adjacent room in an anxious mood. I told them, “Do not feel worried. I will go out and administer a strong dose for this ailment. Such is My courage and confidence in facing difficult situations. In fact, this courage is My real strength. Come! Let us go!” The children collected all the blood-soaked towels and felt very distressed on seeing them. If those clothes are washed, the blood stains will vanish in no time. Likewise, only God’s love can wash our sorrows off! Therefore, cultivate such divine love. All your sorrows and difficulties will be removed.’

[Onam, 28-8-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]

15**The Lord Accepts Only A Pure Heart**

*Oh Krishna! You don't eat what I give You,
You don't eat our home-food,
You go to the houses of the cowherds,
And eat butter stealthily,
You spoil Your good name, my dear!*

(Telugu poem)

Thus, mother Yashoda expressed her anguish one day, having been vexed by the complaints of the neighbours. She chided Him saying, “Oh Krishna! I have to face a lot of trouble on account of Your mischievous pranks. You don’t have taste for the food prepared in our house. You always like the items prepared in the neighbouring houses. How shall I manage with You?” True, people develop a taste for food in the neighbouring houses. A sweetmeat shop

owner sitting in his own shop, all the while enjoying the sweet smell of the laddus, develops a taste for puffed rice from another shop.

The Vamana Avatar

Kashyapa, a great devotee of the Lord had completely surrendered himself at the Lotus Feet and was totally lost in divine bliss. One day, his wife, Aditi, approached him and advised him, “My dear! We do not have children. You have surrendered everything of yours to the Lord. Why don’t you pray to Him to bless us with a child?”

Emperor Bali, in *Krita Yuga*, performed many *yajnas*. After completion of one hundred and seven *yajnas*, he made arrangements for performing the one hundred and eighth *yajna* known as *Viswajit*. As he was performing this *yajna*, Lord Vishnu appeared before him as Vamana in the guise of a dwarfish *Brahmin*. Vamana asked for three paces of land in charity from Bali, which he was about to give. In the meanwhile, Emperor Bali’s preceptor Sukracharya came there and tried to dissuade Bali from giving this gift of charity. He advised Bali, “Please do not give anything in charity to this short *Brahmin*, much less the three paces of land. Do not underestimate him. He is not an ordinary *Brahmin*. He is an *avatar* of Vishnu. He is born to Sage Kashyapa, in fulfilment of the boon granted by Lord Vishnu to him.” But Emperor Bali did not pay heed to the advice of his preceptor. He asked Lord Vamana, “Sir, What can I do

for you?” Vamana replied, “Oh King! I do not need anything. Just give me three paces of land.” Sukracharya again pleaded with Bali, “Oh King! You consider this person as an ordinary *Brahmin*. No. No. He is capable of filling the entire universe. It is not wise on your part to grant his request.” But, Emperor Bali turned down his advice saying that he could not go back on his promise, as it was a great sin not to stand by one’s word.

In those days, people considered death preferable to going back on one’s word. But today in *Kali Yuga*, people make promises and break them at will. Emperor Bali was of pure heart. Once a promise was made, he fulfilled it, come what may!

He said, “I gave a word to this *Brahmin* boy. I am prepared to face any eventuality in fulfilling my promise. I will offer the fruits of all the *yajnas* I have performed, including the one I am now performing to this *Brahmin* boy. So saying, he put the garland of the fruits of 108 *yajnas* performed by him round the neck of Vamana and prostrated before him. (As He said this, Swami created a necklace of 108 gold coins.)

Vamana covered the entire land given in charity by Bali under one foot. He grew in size and filled the entire universe with his second foot. There was no further space to put his third foot. Then Sukracharya said, “Oh emperor! You did not pay heed to my advice. You underestimated this *Brahmin* boy and got yourself tricked by his innocent looks.”

Vamana received the offering of Emperor Bali and praised his large-heartedness and blessed him. Vamana was short in stature, but he could fill the entire universe. Being an *avatar*, He was *aprameya* (beyond all limitations, indescribable and immeasurable). Human beings have limitations, but not an *avatar*.

The Universe Functions As ordained by The Lord

The sunrise and sunset happen according to a predetermined divine command. It happens regularly, uninterrupted. The sun, the moon and the stars follow a definite pattern of schedule. All the five elements in the universe discharge their duties regularly as ordained by the Lord. Even God Himself observes the rules that He lays down for all. Everything in God's creation goes on according to a predetermined order and divine command. Nothing in the universe, including the five elements, has an independent existence. But, unfortunately, man is unable to recognise this divine force that regulates the functioning of the universe. Scientists are making unstinted efforts to discover this divine force. The stars shining brightly in the sky at night are, however, not visible during daytime.

The sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening with utmost regularity everyday. The stars glitter beautifully in the sky at night and hide themselves during the day. The wind blows incessantly and sustains the living beings without taking rest even for a moment. The rivers make

gurgling sounds as they flow perennially.

(Telugu poem)

What could be the reason for this phenomenon? Scientists probed into this aspect and concluded that the stars were not visible during daytime because the sun was shining brilliantly in the sky during that period. Similarly, they tried to explain the divine force in ever so many ways.

The moment the umbilical cord is cut and the child is separated from the mother, it cries. Why? Nobody could explain and explore this secret. The moment a drop of milk or honey is put on the tongue of the newborn child, it sleeps happily. This means ever since a human being comes out of his mother's womb, he struggles to satiate his hunger.

Oh man! You struggle hard to acquire various types of knowledge in order to fill your stomach. In spite of all your hard work and acquisition of knowledge, you are unable to experience everlasting happiness. Instead, why don't you contemplate on the Lord and seek refuge in Him? He will certainly show you a way to overcome your misery.

(Telugu poem)

Every human being thinks that he is born merely for filling his belly. He constantly struggles to acquire food.

There is another interesting phenomenon in nature. The branches of a tree rub against each other due to the wind and fire is born out of that friction between two pieces of wood. How does it happen? Though there is fire in the wood of a tree, it is not burnt away. Why? No scientist could ever discover this secret so far. There are several such inexplicable phenomena in nature. With a view to recognise and understand such phenomena, man is constantly engaged in the quest for divinity. However, one need not search for God, who is omnipresent.

Oh man! You struggle hard in life merely for the sake of filling your belly. You acquire myriad types of knowledge from various fields. Examine and enquire for yourself what great happiness you have achieved by spending all the time from dawn to dusk in acquiring worldly knowledge and earning wealth, while forgetting God.

(Telugu poem)

Everything in this universe moves strictly according to the Divine Will and force. Man, of his own accord cannot achieve anything. The divine force manifests itself in several ways in this universe, in the form of various types of energy. People think they are created by somebody. Strictly speaking, nobody has created them. They are natural phenomena that manifest out of divine will. For example, when two pieces of stone are struck against each other, fire is born. It means, there is fire latent in the stone, but does not manifest outside.

Thus, all the powers are latent in nature.

Pure Devotion Of Suguna

A few minutes ago, one boy spoke about Nanda and Yashoda, the foster parents of Lord Krishna. In those days, there was no electricity. People in the village used to go to the house of Nanda (since he was the chief of the village) and lighted their oil lamps from the lamp lit up in Nanda's house. People were of the belief that they would attain plenty and prosperity if they lighted their oil lamps from the lamps lit in the houses of well-to-do-people. A newly married daughter-in-law by name Suguna arrived in that village. Her mother-in-law told her to go to the house of Nanda and get her lamp lighted from theirs. When Suguna went to the house of Nanda and lighted the lamp, she could visualise Krishna in that flame. On having this divine vision, she lost her body consciousness. She fixed her gaze on that beautiful form of Lord Krishna and was lost in bliss. She could not even realise that her fingers were being burnt, having come into contact with the flame. She was in total bliss. In the meanwhile, other ladies from the neighbouring houses also came there to light their own lamps. They were wonderstruck on witnessing this scene. They could notice that Suguna was not moving away from the flame even though her fingers were being burnt. They then realised that she had the vision of Krishna in that flame. They sang a song describing this incident. (Swami sang a Telugu song, the meaning of the first few lines is as

follows ...)

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

On hearing this song, Yashoda came there literally running. She saw Suguna's fingers getting burnt in the flame. While all the *Gopis* were dancing in ecstasy, Yashoda went near Suguna and pulled her hand away from the flame. She chided her saying "Oh! Suguna ! Did you not notice your fingers being burnt on coming into contact with the flame? Do you wish to bring a bad name to us that if anyone goes to Nanda's house, their fingers will be burnt?" Suguna's mother-in-law was by nature a short-tempered woman. On hearing about this incident, she came running to the house of Yashoda and made a big issue of this incident. She ordered her daughter-in-law not to go to the house of Nanda again in future, for getting the lamp lighted.

Several miracles happened in the house of Yashoda. After Krishna left for Mathura, the *Gopis* could not bear His separation and were pining for His *Darshan*. In such a moment of yearning, Krishna appeared in *Gokul*. However, neither Nanda nor Yashoda could see Him. All the *Gopis* gathered at the house of Nanda and prayed that they may be allowed to have Krishna's *darshan*. They started complaining, "Nanda and Yashoda! you have kept Krishna away from us. Please tell us where he is." But, Krishna did not make his appearance in public.

He appeared to some *Gopis* individually in answer to their prayers.

A few minutes ago, a student of our University narrated an incident wherein Swami had appeared before him in answer to his prayers. No one else could see Swami. Then, the boy prayed again, "Swami! What is the use of giving *darshan* to me alone? Please give *darshan* to all the students; otherwise, they will not believe my words and will make fun of me." I replied, "Does not matter. Let people think whatever they wish to. This is your *prapti* (deservedness), only you deserve to see Me". So saying, I disappeared.

God Likes Only Pure Hearts

Once, Yashoda reprimanded child Krishna saying, "Oh! My dear Krishna! You don't eat the food I prepared for you. You go to the houses of the milkmaids and stealthily eat the butter stored in their houses. You are creating problems for me. Is it that the butter suffused with mother's love does not taste good for you?" So saying, she tied Krishna to a mortar with a rope. It is everybody's experience in the world that we do not like the food cooked in our own house. The items cooked in others' houses will appear to be tasty. This is quite natural. However, Krishna did not steal the butter from others' houses for its taste. There is an underlying message in this *leela*. Here, butter symbolises a pure heart. Wherever such a pure heart is available, Krishna takes it. Such a pure heart will be soft and sweet. The

hearts of *Gopis* were ripened with devotion. They were pure, soft and sweet. Hence, Krishna had gone to their houses to steal their hearts.

Krishna is referred to as “*chora*” (thief). What does He steal? He steals the butter-like hearts of the *Gopis*, hearts which are pure, soft and sweet. If you address someone as *chora* (thief), he will be annoyed. But if you call Krishna as “*chiththa chora*” (stealer of the heart), He will enjoy this appellation. That is why, devotees sing in praise of the Lord most endearingly “*Chiththa chora Yashoda Ke Bal! Navaneetha chora Gopal! Gopal, Gopal, Gopal! Govardhanadhara Gopal!*” (“Oh! Yashoda’s little Krishna! Oh! Gopala! Stealer of butter! Oh! Gopala! Lifter of the Govardhana mountain!”). The song thus sung melodiously with *bhava*, *raga* and *thala* will be liked by everyone. Great Singer-saints like Thyagaraja made sweet offerings to God in the form of *kirtanas* suffused with *bhava* (feeling), *raga* (tune) and *thala* (beat) and won His grace. There is so much sweetness in such devotional songs. God’s grace can surely be obtained by such devotional singing. You cannot win the grace of God by empty rhetoric. It is only through devotional singing suffused with *bhava*, *raga* and *thala*, that divinity can be attained. God will be moved by such *sankirtan*. Even the *Vedas* have extolled the efficacy of devotional singing. Even by chanting the *Vedas*, God cannot be attained. There are several hymns in praise of God in the *Rig Veda*, *Yajur*

Veda, *Sama Veda* and *Atharvana Veda*. But, not even a single individual chanting those hymns could obtain divine *darshan*. However, when these hymns are set to tune and sung with devotion, they could experience divine love. That is why God is extolled as ‘*ganalola*’ and ‘*ganapriya*’. Therefore, you pray to God with devotional singing. You can easily win the grace of God. Some people may have a doubt, “We cannot sing well; we have not learnt the art of singing. How can we please God?” Do not worry. You may not have knowledge of music or a mellifluous voice. It does not matter. Sing the glory of God with intense love, in some tune which you know. That is enough to move the heart of God. What is music? It is not necessary to make a special effort to learn music. A simple song with intense love and yearning will move God. For example, you recite a poem, “*Rama! Nannu Kaapadu*” (Oh! Rama! Please protect me). There will be no sweetness in the poem. It is simply a literary rendering of your feelings. Similarly, if you make an appeal to God saying “*Rama! Nannu Kaapadu*”, it becomes an empty repetition of words. The same feeling, if it is expressed in a song set to a beautiful tune, “*Rama ...! Nannu Kaapadu...*”, it will be so sweet and endearing to divinity. There is so much sweetness in music. Therefore, if you want to attain God, you have to do it only with devotional singing.

Sing Soulful Songs

You need not be disappointed if you have not learnt music. Why disappointment? If there is an appointment, there will be disappointment. Therefore, do not make an appointment, in the beginning itself. You sing the glory of God in your own way. That is the easiest way to attain God. The divine bliss enjoyed by the *gopis* in Krishnavatar in *Dwapara Yuga* is unparalleled. Therefore, remember that divine bliss and try to please God with your love and devotion.

In no *avatar* devotees have merged in the divine love to such a great extent as in *Krishnavatar*. Thousands of devotees have merged in Sri Krishna during His *avatar*. Hence, if you want to merge in divinity, devotional singing is the only means. God is said to be *ganapriya* (pleased by devotional singing). *Krishnavatar* is the best example for this statement. One simple name 'Krishna' sung by a devotee is enough to move Him. The *leelas*, *mahimas* and the miraculous deeds performed by Lord Krishna during His *avatar* are unparalleled.

Dear students! You are singing several *bhajans*. All of you are participating in the *bhajans*. But, each one is singing in his own way. This is not proper. If all of you sing in one voice and one tune with divine feeling, God will surely install Himself in your loving heart. *Krishnavatar* is the only *avatar* that had granted *darshan* to different people in different ways, clarified their doubts about His divinity and merged them in His

own Self. *Krishnavatar* is the only *avatar* that made everyone happy and blissful by His sweet and loving words.

Embodiments of Love!

There is nothing superior to devotional singing. What a great joy and happiness you derive by singing the song "*Nanduni Yinta Gopaludanta Deepaana Kanipinchenanta*" (It seems Gopala has appeared in the flame in the house of Nanda). Therefore, sing such soulful songs with *bhava*, *raga* and *thala* to please God and obtain His grace. You may sing any number of *bhajans* and songs, but it is only when they are suffused with intense love, devotion and sweet and soft feeling (*bhava*) you will derive immense happiness and joy.

[*Krishnashtami, 6-9-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam*]

God Protects Those Who Protect Sathya And Dharma

No visit to any pilgrim centre, no penance, no Yogic practice, no study of sacred texts nor charitable acts will help you in crossing over the ocean of Samsara, but the service rendered to the noble. (Sanskrit sloka)

Embodiments of Love!

YOU would have read in sacred texts that Ravana was a master of four *Vedas* and six *Sastras*. Having learnt these sacred texts, was there any transformation in him? No. Instead of developing *daivatva* (divine qualities), he developed *danavatva* (demonic qualities).

Practise What You Preach

The ten heads of Ravana symbolised four *Vedas* and six *Sastras*. In the decisive battle, Rama severed Ravana's heads since he did not put into practice the knowledge he had acquired. Mere learning of sacred texts and chanting of *Vedas* will not bring about any transformation. In order to drive home this message, Rama cut off with his arrows Ravana's ten heads. It is only right at the end. Just before his spirit left his body Ravana did recognise his faults and repented for them and became sacred thereby. All that God preaches is for the benefit and welfare of humanity. Therefore, it is enough if one puts into practice at least one of the teachings of the *Vedas*. It should be a natural trait for everyone to put into practice the divine teachings.

In Prasanthi Nilayam, you find that even the Primary school children join the senior students in chanting *Vedas*. They know all *Vedas*, but they do not have the required knowledge to put them into practice. Mere recitation of the *Vedas* is of little use.

Only God exists everywhere and at all times. The world is but an illusion. The sacred teaching that God exists everywhere should be propagated to everyone. You find many *sadhakas* (spiritual aspirants) chanting and teaching the *Vedas*. Consider this example: a cassette tape or a disc merely plays, but does not experience the melody. It would be fruitless if one does not practise what he preaches. So, one should recognise, understand

and practise the sacred teachings. Lord Krishna put into practice what He propagated and also insisted that everyone should follow suit. You find many elders in the *Mahabharata* who were great scholars themselves, but, failed to put into practice the knowledge they acquired. The same is the position today. God has no preferences or dislikes whatsoever. All are equal for Him. But, He watches to see how much a person puts into practice what he has learnt. Many people study sacred texts, go on pilgrimage, perform penance, repeat God's name, but what is the use? Many ask Me for a *japamala* (rosary). Is it to adorn your neck for publicity or is it for spiritual experience? One hand is enough for one who wants to practise this *sadhana*. (At this point, Swami demonstrated with His hand as to how one should do *namasmarana*.) The five fingers of the hand contain nine *aksharas* (letters) which are further divided into twelve *Brahmas* and this makes up to hundred and eight beads of the rosary. Chanting the name of Rama nine times twelve will make up to one hundred and eight. This *sadhana* requires neither a *japamala* nor a fixed place. It can be done while walking or even while lying down till you go to sleep. When there are such easy and sacred paths, why should one go for strenuous *sadhanas* foregoing sleep?

Droupadi is known for her chastity. She has protected her husbands in many ways. After the gruesome massacre of the young Pandava children, Arjuna tracked down Aswatthama, the perpetrator of

the atrocity, and dragged him before Droupadi. Instead of cursing the evildoer and pronouncing punishment for him, she fell at the feet of Aswatthama, the son of her husbands' most revered *Guru*, and said:

It is at the feet of your father, Dronacharya that my husbands have learnt all that they know. Being the son of Dronacharya, was it proper to kill my children. How could you have the heart to kill them who were unarmed, young, quietly asleep, were not having any grudge against you, and were not contemplating any harm to you?

(Telugu poem)

When Droupadi was praying like this, Bhima could not bear to see this. Exploding in anger, Bhima roared:

This Droupadi is a stupid woman, for she pleads for this wretch's freedom. She feels no anger against this murderer of her sons.

(Telugu poem)

Practise Forbearance

When Arjuna was about to kill Aswatthama, Droupadi fell at his feet and reasoned with him thus: "Arjuna! Will my sons be revived by killing Aswatthama? His mother too would experience the same kind of sorrow that I am undergoing at the loss of my sons. Having studied the *Vedas* and *Sastras*, how is it that you are not able to maintain your tranquillity?"

The body is made up of five elements and is bound to perish sooner or later, but the Indweller has neither birth nor death. The Indweller has no attachment whatsoever and is the Eternal Witness. Truly speaking, the Indweller who is in the form of the Atma is verily God Himself.

(Telugu poem)

Thus, Droupadi pleaded with Arjuna to forgive Aswatthama for his heinous act. Arjuna replied, "You are preventing me from keeping up my vow." To this Droupadi said, "Tonsuring his head and removing the crown jewel from his head is equivalent to killing him." Arjuna paid heed to Droupadi's advice and as a token punishment shaved Aswatthama's head, took his crown jewel and sent him away.

What is *papa* (sin)? Hurting, abusing and killing others is sin. What is *punya* (merit)? Helping others is merit. Therefore, one should not retaliate to an evil act with an evil act. Instead, one should be magnanimous in forgiving the offender. There are many such sacred teachings in the *Mahabharata*.

There are many such noble women like Droupadi. She stands as an ideal for all women. Why are we forgetting the teachings of such great women? Today, women are treated as mere puppets. But they are full of courage, valour, sacrifice, determination and righteousness. Have you ever cared to recognise the power latent in women? Men do not possess such valour

and courage of women. It is because of such great women that our *Bharatiya* culture is held in high esteem. Otherwise, it would have declined long ago. Did you ever recognise the fact that women are endowed with such great powers as courage, valour, determination and righteousness? These qualities are not to be easily found in men. Why? Most of them are afflicted with the disease of anger, which is ruining them.

One with anger will not be successful in any of his endeavours. He will commit sins and will be derided by one and all. (Telugu poem)

It is possible that women may also succumb to anger and indulge in sinful deeds, now and then. Such people should be pardoned and encouraged to make amends, not denounced and condemned. The quality of patience and perseverance in women is great. In fact, it is the quality of equanimity in times of difficulty that was characteristic of Droupadi, which saved the Pandavas. There are several such women even in present times. The bad qualities of anger, passion, jealousy, envy and pride are more prominent in men. Women are able to control such evil qualities from overtaking them. Under the circumstances is it not our duty to encourage and honour such women who preserve and promote peace and harmony? On the contrary, women are belittled and slighted. No, no, this should not happen. Such women with noble qualities deserve to be encouraged and upheld.

A few days ago, you had witnessed a function in this Hall, where the glory of womanhood was highlighted. A playlet was put up in this Hall by Chethana, in which the greatness of mother Sita, as the ideal woman, was presented. Sita and Droupadi were great *pathivrathas* (women of chastity). Such efforts to highlight the greatness of women need to be encouraged.

Protect Sathya And Dharma At All Cost

Sathya and *Dharma* (truth and righteousness) are the greatest characteristics of Indian culture. If these two are protected, the country can be saved from degeneration. If you want to protect your country, you need not join the army and fight a battle. If truth and righteousness that are inherent in you are protected, they themselves will protect the country. It is not great to kill the enemies in a war. First and foremost, protect truth and righteousness in you. The country will automatically be protected. Indian culture exhorts *Sathyam Vada* (speak truth) and *Dharmam chara* (practise righteousness). When you do this with perseverance, you will become a great hero. When you protect *Sathya* and *Dharma*, God will, in turn, protect you. Instead of trying to worship God and obtain His grace, if you protect truth and righteousness, God will protect not only your country, but the whole world. Truth is your very life-breath. Righteousness is your armour. Therefore, protect truth; foster righteousness. That is enough. Truth and righteousness are inseparable. One cannot exist without the other.

They are the very life-breath for the universe. Droupadi was assiduously observing and propagating these two.

*Sathya Dharmamu Santhi Premalatho
Nee nithya jeevana yathra saginchu.*

(Oh man! Carry on your life's journey with the help of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, and Love). You must hold on to these principles, come what may. God will always protect such people. History is replete with several examples wherein people held steadfastly to the principles of *Sathya* and *Dharma*, and were constantly protected by God. One such example is that of Pandavas and their chaste wife, Droupadi. You may argue, "Where is *Sathya* and *Dharma* in the present-day world? Whom are they protecting?" This is a totally wrong argument. If you protect *Sathya* and *Dharma*, they will, in turn, stand before you and protect you. They are the very embodiments of divinity. Unfortunately, today, instead of *Sathyam vada* (speak truth) and *Dharmam chara* (practise righteousness), people are following the distorted version *Sathyam vadha* (kill truth) and *Dharmam chera* (imprison righteousness). This is utter perversion. You should lead your lives based on *Sathya* and *Dharma* and consider them as more important than your lives.

When Droupadi was pleading with Aswatthama who killed her sons, Bhima was furious with uncontrollable anger. He clenched his fist and proceeded towards

Aswatthama to kill him. In that uncontrollable rage, he argued with Droupadi, "Are you mad? Why are you trying to save this man who mercilessly slit the throat of your five sons? I will break the head of this child-killer into pieces with my fist. Do not come in my way." At that moment Droupadi fell at the feet of Bhima and pleaded with him to spare the life of Aswatthama. She prayed for regaining his composure. People around, who were witnessing this scene, were wonderstruck. They were wondering whether Droupadi was really mad! In fact, the world will be better if everyone is afflicted with such madness. Thus, when Droupadi pleaded with her husbands for saving the life of Aswatthama, he prayed for forgiveness. Droupadi was happy at the change of heart in Aswatthama and advised him, "Brother! You need not beg for my forgiveness. Instead, you pay your respect and do service to your mother. Do not drown her in sorrow. Never cause her anguish; take good care of her." Even the loss of five sons did not make Droupadi shed tears of sorrow.

Several women come to Me with a heavy heart and tell Me "Swami! My husband's death has caused me deep sorrow and anguish. How do I bear this calamity?" Then I would respond saying, "Oh! Your husband died? Very happy." They feel very unhappy with My attitude and question Me, "What is this Swami? Are You so happy on hearing the news of my husband's death?" What am I to say? I am always happy. I do not know what sorrow is. I always discharge My duty.

God is the only person who protects everybody. Therefore, pray to God always. Forgetting God and depending on the mercy of human beings! What madness! You must depend on God, for everything in your life. That is real *thapas* (penance).

Respect And Honour Women

Since ancient times, women have been the very life-breath and foundation for Bharat. They are the very embodiment of truth and righteousness. How much respect and reverence we must show towards such noble women? On the contrary, there are several people today, who put them to untold suffering. Due to bad habits and bad company, people lose their sense of discrimination and torture the women. No woman should be put to mental and physical torture, whatever be their nature. They must be revered and respected and protected in all ways. Women in Bharat have always been held in high esteem. There are several chaste and noble women in Bharat and still *Bharatiyas* are undergoing difficulties. What is the reason? Whose fault is this? It is only because the *Bharatiyas* are not giving proper respect and place to women in society. The fault lies squarely on the men.

Forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land of Bharat. Of all the rituals, adherence to truth is the greatest penance. (Telugu poem)

The truthful character of women is really their *tapas* (penance). Therefore, such noble women must

be encouraged and honoured. If you can put this one great principle into practice, your life will be sanctified. Those who ill-treat their wives can never be happy and prosperous. If men cannot protect their women who are prepared to sacrifice even their lives for the sake of their husbands, what for is their existence? Women are really the presiding deities of their homes. Our primary duty is to protect them. Never let your women shed tears. If women shed tears, such homes will be ruined in no time. Women are ideals to the society. Never cause them distress.

Men should lead a life of truth and righteousness. Only then can they protect the country and become worthy of being called real men. Otherwise, how can they become heroic men? Several people go to temples. When they visit a temple, they must make a vow that they would respect and protect the women. Only then will they be protected. It is only when the women are safe, the whole world will be happy. Therefore, if you wish to protect *Dharma* in the world, you must first protect your *Dharma* towards women.

Embodiments of Love!

Imagine a situation wherein you are in the role of women and some men torture you. How miserable and helpless you would feel! Women are prepared to sacrifice even their lives for the sake of their husbands. But, men do not have such spirit of sacrifice. Men should also cultivate such a spirit of sacrifice, like women. Only

then will you be fit to be called men. Otherwise, you will be men only in form, but lacking in masculinity. You consider women as *abala* (weak). But, the truth is they are *Sakthi swarupas* (embodiments of strength and power). Only, I know the plight of women who lost their husbands. It is our duty to protect such women. If you can discharge this duty properly, you will be happy throughout your life.

Embodiments of Love!

You must follow truth even in small matters. There are three letters “*Sa*”, “*Tha*” and “*Ya*” in the word “*Sathya*”. If you reverse the order, it will become “*Ya*” “*Tha*” and “*Sa*”. This means when you do *thapas* with austerities like *yama* (control of the inner senses) and *niyama* (control of the outer senses), you will have the divine vision of Sathyaswarupa (embodiment of Truth). You have to thus recognise the inner meaning of every word and follow them meticulously.

King Janaka, a great renunciant king, used to propagate truth and righteousness among his subjects by his own example. His daughter, Sita, also led a pious life based on truth and righteousness. You are not studying the life history of such ideal women. Instead, you are reading trash. No. No. This is unbecoming of you. You should study the ancient history of Bharat, which is so sacred. The character and morality of women in Bharat are very sacred. You will become worthy of being called men only when you undertake to protect such great

women. By mere sporting a moustache or growing a beard, will you become men? Moustache and beard are not the real signs of masculinity. You must protect ladies and uphold the dignity of the family. Only then can you become great heroes and men of character.

Embodiments of Love!

Consider women as embodiments of truth. Even if some minor faults are noticed in them, do not give credence to them. Respect and revere them. Do not use even a single word that would offend them. If they really wish, they can achieve any great task. You should be even prepared to lay down your lives for the sake of protecting and fostering women. At least from today, all of you should come forward to protect the honour and dignity of women in the world. Women also should undertake a vow to contribute their mite in this great task of protection of *Sthri Dharma*. As regards men, there is nothing great or new in trying to protect women. That is your duty. Her duty is to foster and maintain the entire family as a unit. If women are protected, they in turn will protect the entire world. Never belittle women and treat them as mere playthings. I hope all of you men will, at least in future, undertake to protect the dignity and honour of women and thereby protect your own dignity and honour. I conclude My discourse blessing you all.

*[Krishnashtami Message (Evening), 6-9-2004,
Prasanthi Nilayam]*

Teachings Of Noble Souls Essential For The Young

Neither by penance nor by pilgrimage nor by study of scriptures nor by Japa can one cross the ocean of life. One can achieve it only by serving the pious. (Sanskrit verse)

Several noble souls have worshipped God in different ways some by doing penance, some by charity, some even by sacrificing their lives. Some others dedicated their lives for teaching and propagating the sacred scriptures by touring the entire world. Nevertheless, they could not win God's grace and love. Why? *samsara sagaroththara sajjana sevanam vina* (one cannot cross the formidable ocean of *samsara*, except by serving the noble souls). It is only by serving noble souls and great men that one can attain the power of penance. No *sadhana* other than selfless service will enable one to attain Divinity.

Love Is The Royal Path For Man's Liberation

The *punya* (merit) of our students is indeed great. They have been able to have the *darshan*, *sparshan* and *sambashan* of several noble souls and obtain their grace. In fact, many people in Bharat sanctified their lives by such *darshan*, *sparshan* and *sambhashan*. (Referring to Sant Asaram Bapu, Swami said) He has taken a lot of trouble to come here all the way from Gujarat to address our students. It is their good fortune. He has a kind and loving heart. His teachings are very essential for our students. When faith and devotion have eroded and atheism has become the order of the day due to the effect of *Kali Age*, such teachings are very much necessary, especially for the students to keep them on the right track.

Cultivate Universal Love

Dear Students!

You cannot get fulfilment in life if you have only *darshan* or *sparshan* or *sambhashan* of noble souls. You will attain peace and bliss only when you have all the three. In order to sanctify human life, *Navavidha Bhakti* (nine forms of devotion) are very essential. They are *Sravanam* (listening), *Kirtanam* (singing), *Vishnusmaranam* (contemplating on Vishnu), *Padasevanam* (serving His Lotus Feet), *Vandanam* (salutation), *Archanam* (worship), *Dasyam* (servitude), *Sneham* (friendship) and *Atmanivedanam* (self-surrender). Man can sanctify

his life by *sravanam*, *mananam* and *nidhidhyasanam* (listening, recapitulation and contemplation). The modern generation of students is very intelligent. But it is only when they put their intelligence to proper use can they redeem their lives. And, spirituality is the only path that can make one's life sanctified! Today's students are, however, putting their intelligence to wrong use and are wasting their time engaging themselves in vain argumentation. God's grace can be obtained only through love and by no other means. It is the only *Raja Marga* (royal path). Students should develop the faith that their lives will be sanctified by treading that royal path.

Dear Students!

Education is not mere reading of books. By reading books, we can only acquire bookish knowledge. Whatever knowledge has been acquired must be put into practice. If you want to earn God's grace, love is the royal path. Man has been able to acquire several powers by love. It is by love alone can one win the minds of others. He can even gain control over nature. Spiritual *sadhana* can also become fruitful by love alone. The mind can never be controlled by bad qualities, bad thoughts and bad company. Human nature can be sanctified only by divine and selfless love. The only property and power that will never diminish in any human being is love. You may share it with any number of people, yet it does not diminish, but will continue to grow. The reference in

this context is not to worldly love, but to transcendental love. We must love God in the same way as we love our own father and mother. It should be so natural and spontaneous. You cannot find a parallel to such love. Therefore, every individual, from the time he gets up from bed till he goes back to bed, must strive to make his life sanctified by love. You must love your fellow human beings, treating them as your friends. By cultivating such universal love, the whole world can be united as a single family. It is not possible by any other means. Therefore, develop such universal love.

Dear Students!

You are struggling a lot to acquire education. By this education, you may perhaps read some textbooks, appear for examinations, pass them and secure a degree. But, all this education is negative in character. You must acquire positive education which would bring out the latent qualities in you like divine love, peace, compassion, forbearance, etc. You must cultivate those qualities assiduously by constant practice. Several people of the older generation sanctified their lives by fostering such noble qualities. If human mind is to be transformed, it could be done only by love, nothing else. Mind...mind...mind. You know how it works. It is always changing and very powerful. It cannot be controlled by any power, except love.

God Can Be Attained Only Through Love

Dear Students!

Dedicate your love only to God. There are people in the world who dedicated their love for different purposes, for example, for acquiring education, for acquiring proficiency in various arts, sports and games, for the sake of certain individuals, etc. Could they attain divinity? No, No. You must realise the truth that it is only by constant contemplation of God with single-minded devotion that one can attain divinity. Therefore, dear students! You realise the truth that God cannot be attained by any other science, except the science of love. God gives Himself to love easily. Hence, attain divinity through love. There is no force greater than love in this world.

Everything In This World Is A Worry

To be born is a worry, to be on the earth is a worry; world is a cause of worry and death too; entire childhood is a worry and so is the old age; life is a worry, failure is a worry; all actions and difficulties cause worry; even happiness too is a mysterious worry. (Telugu poem)

If you are able to win the grace of God, all your worries will be removed. You may pursue worldly education; nothing wrong in that. But, you must be prepared to sacrifice your life even, for attaining Divine love, which is permanent, changeless and eternal. Several great and noble souls have travelled throughout the world

and strove to uplift the world by their sacred teachings. What would have been the fate of the country of Bharat, if such great souls were not born! Every individual should, therefore, strive to emulate the ideals of such great souls and elders. Whatever they say, must be taken as an authority of the scriptures. You may perhaps think that you are able to speak eloquently in English and therefore feel proud that you know everything. Pride and arrogance are most reprehensible qualities. They land you in abysmal depths. It is only by the quality of love does a human being become great.

Dear Students!

You should therefore, cultivate love and strive to attain the grace of God and sanctify your lives by humility, devotion and faith in God. Love is the sole refuge for a human being, which will take him to God. Several elders have reached their goal only through love. You follow their example. Never lose your wealth of love. Make love as your primary objective in your life. Love may appear to be very simple thing to you. But there is no force greater than love. Love is God, God is Love and therefore live in Love. That is what you have to learn.

*[Divine Discourse (When Sant Asaram Bapu visited),
15-9-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]*

18

Obtain Divine Grace By Obeying Your Parents

*The moon illumines the world at night and the
sun during the day.*

*Righteousness illumines the three worlds, and a
virtuous son illumines his entire lineage.*

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

A VIRTUOUS son is greater than even those who have acquired *jnana* (knowledge), *vijnana* (wisdom), *sujnana* (higher levels of consciousness) and *prajnana* (constant integrated awareness). Lord Vinayaka is such a virtuous son. Every individual has a *Guru*. But, Vinayaka has no *Guru* at all. He is the *Guru* of *Gurus* and the leader of leaders. He is called by the name “Vinayaka” since He has no leader above Him and

He is the leader for all.

Embodiments of Love!

Whenever a new task is undertaken, it is customary to perform *puja* to Lord Vinayaka to invoke His blessings for the successful completion of the task. Even while starting a musical concert, the singers pray to Lord Vinayaka with the *kirtan*, “*Vinayaka nannu brovara*” (Oh! Lord Vinayaka! Please come to my help). It is only when you thus pray to Lord Vinayaka and seek His blessings, will all your task meet with success.

Lord Vinayaka has an elephant’s head and trunk. It denotes that Vinayaka can be compared to an elephant in intelligence, which always thinks twice before setting its foot forward. Similarly, it is only after intelligent discrimination that Vinayaka moves forward. The four letters in the word Ganapathi (*ga*, *na*, *pa* and *ti*) denote that Lord Vinayaka is full of *vijnana*, *sujnana* and *prajnana*. People today forget the underlying meaning in the name ‘Ganapati’ and engage themselves in mere rituals. You may not perform any rituals, but, never give up worshipping Lord Vinayaka. Especially, it is the foremost duty of the students to come under the leadership of Vinayaka, who is a leader unto Himself. You would not find a parallel to Lord Vinayaka. When you take such a Lord as your ideal and pursue your studies, you will be able to master all branches of education. Vinayaka has a big tummy, which is full of *jnana* (wisdom). That wisdom is His power. We should

worship such a powerful Lord. No one can comprehend the true nature of Lord Vinayaka, fully.

Lord Vinayaka is the leader for one and all. He is the divine father and mother to everybody. In accordance with the prayer *Twameva matha cha pitha twameva, Twameva bandhuscha sakha twameva, Twameva vidya dravinam twameva* (He alone is the father and mother, friend and relation, wisdom and wealth to every individual). No one else can be compared to Lord Vinayaka in terms of power and prowess in this world. The world is unable to recognise the true nature of such a divine leader. We are, today, prepared to accept the leadership of ordinary mortals. This is an unfortunate situation.

Today is the holy day commemorating the birth of Lord Vinayaka. In fact, He has no birth at all. He created the entire universe. All the *Vedas* are the result of the divine *sankalpa* of Lord Vinayaka. All forms of knowledge have originated from Vinayaka.

God Only Feigns To Be Angry

Embodiments of Love!

Lord Vinayaka does not know what anger is. He is the embodiment of love. Where there is love, bad qualities like anger, passion, conceit, etc., cannot gain entry. You might have witnessed the facial features of Vinayaka. Did His face ever reflect anger? No. He will

always be smiling. Vinayaka is omnipresent. People attribute a particular place as the birthplace of God and consider it as a *Kshetra* (a sacred place of pilgrimage). But, no single place can be ascribed as the birthplace of God. He is *Swayambhu* (Self-emergent). There is no specific place which can be ascribed as place of birth, place of upbringing, etc., for God. He is omnipresent. God will manifest in such a place where people get rid of their bad qualities and sincerely pray to Him with devotion. He is *Gunatheetha* (beyond attributes). He is *Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathanam, Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam* (God is attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness).

God appears to be angry at times. But, that is not real anger. In order to put the devotees on the right path, He pretends to be angry. If He does not pretend so, there is no chance for the devotees to change their behaviour. His pretending to be angry is just a drama. God has no trace of anger in Him. When we commit mistakes or tread the wrong path, we are afraid that God will be angry with us. But, God only pretends to be angry on such occasions so that you become aware of your own faults and deficiencies. For example, when Swami keeps Himself away from you, you feel very sad and think that Swami is not talking to you because He is angry with you. In fact, Swami does not know what anger is. He is the embodiment of love. He is full of love. However, on some rare occasions when He speaks

harshly, it might be misconstrued that He is angry. This is quite natural even in our day-to-day life. When you call somebody, "Son! Please come here," it sounds that you are calling him with love. But, if the same words are uttered with a raised voice (in an angry mood), it looks as though you are angry. Therefore, all these are variations in expression and nothing else. The same was the case with Sage Durvasa, whose expressions revealed anger and thus became synonymous for anger. But in fact, Sage Durvasa had no anger at all!

During the Mahabharata war, Aswatthama, the son of Dronacharya, took a terrible vow to annihilate all the Pandavas. Having come to know of this, Droupadi prayed to Krishna to save the Pandavas. The *leelas* of the Lord are not only wonderful but also mysterious. God enacts dramas and even changes the scenes in His play for the welfare and safety of His devotees. In this instance, the Lord saved the Pandavas with a delicate touch of humour that He alone is capable of.

He went to Sage Durvasa. He was immensely delighted to receive Krishna. The sage asked, "Lord, what brought You to my humble *ashram*?" Krishna smiled and said, "I have a small job for you." The sage was happy and said, "I am at Your service. You just have to command." Krishna then said, "Good! Tonight, you have to save the Pandavas." Durvasa was puzzled and asked, "Lord, it is You who protect everything in creation. Who am I to do that job?" Krishna replied, "That

is a different matter. But for this job, you will be My instrument. I extend protection in many different ways. On this occasion, you have to do something specific as per My instructions.” Durvasa wanted to know what it was and Krishna continued, “Dig a pit, ask the Pandavas to hide themselves in it, cover it with planks, grass and mud, and then take your seat on the shelter so prepared. The enemies of the Pandavas may come and ask you about the whereabouts of the Pandavas. They may say, “You know the past, present and future. Please tell us where the Pandavas are hiding.” Durvasa intervened and said, “Lord, I cannot tell a lie.” Krishna countered, “Did I ask you to utter falsehood? I am Myself the Embodiment of Truth, and I will always ask you to speak only the truth. However, you are at liberty to change your voice suitably to achieve the desired result. I am sure you understand.” The sage nodded and smiled.

Some time later, after the Pandavas were hidden, Aswatthama came there, exactly as Krishna had foretold. Durvasa was sitting with his eyes closed. Bowing to the sage, Aswatthama enquired, in a most humble manner, about the whereabouts of the Pandavas. Durvasa slowly opened his eyes; which were like flame. Angrily he roared, “Yes, the Pandavas are here, right below me.” Aswatthama was frightened because the sage was well known for his bad temper and his propensity to curse those whom he is angry with. Promptly, he fled from the scene, and the Pandavas were duly saved. All *Avatars* employ such techniques, and Swami too does the same

when required.

The sages and saints, *yogis* and *jnanis* for ages have been providing *rakshana* (protection) and *sikshana* (correction) and make people tread the right path. Sage Durvasa did the same thing. Ignorant people accuse him of being one of anger in spite of being a great *tapasvin*. But, those people who are able to understand the real intention behind his apparent anger realise the truth. God has no anger. In fact, one who has anger is not fit to be called God at all!

Parents Are The Very Embodiment Of Divinity

Once Mother Parvati and Easwara called Vinayaka and His younger brother Subrahmanya, and advised them to go round the world. They also told them that whoever came first would be given a *phala* (fruit) as reward. This competition was intended to demonstrate the greatness of Vinayaka to the world. The younger brother Subrahmanya immediately plunged into action. He mounted His vehicle, the peacock, to fly round the world. But, Vinayaka did not move and sat in His own place. Easwara then enquired, “My dear son! Why did You not start on Your journey round the world?” Vinayaka laughed at this question and replied “Oh! Father! I need not go anywhere. The fruit of all My journey round the world is right in front of me.” So saying, Vinayaka made a *pradakshina* (circumambulation) round His father and mother (Lord Easwara and Mother Parvati) and sat down

calmly. He claimed victory in the race. In the meanwhile, Subrahmanya came there, after completing His journey round the world. He was very much tired and reported to His father about His successful completion of the task. Lord Easwara then declared Vinayaka as the winner in the race and handed over the fruit to Him. The place where this episode took place is called Palani, in the State of Tamil Nadu .

The underlying meaning in this story is that the parents are the very embodiment of divinity and it is enough if one does *pradakshina* to them in reverence. That would be tantamount to the *punya* (merit) acquired by visiting all the holy shrines in the world. Without the parents, there can be no son at all! If children are to be virtuous, it is the parents who have to take care of them. The parents are responsible for the success of their children in all the endeavours.

It is common practice for students to visit temples during examination time and pray for success in the examinations. They offer coconuts in the temples with the pocket money given by their parents. These are all external practices, which have little to do with sincere devotion. If they really wish to achieve success in their endeavour, it is enough if they please their parents and obtain their blessings. If they are satisfied, you are sure to succeed. In order to drive home the point that children should strive to please and satisfy their parents first, Lord Easwara and Mother Parvati arranged this competition of going round the world for Lord Vinayaka

and Lord Subrahmanya. If you want to obtain the grace of God, it is enough if you obey the command of your parents lovingly. There is no greater divinity than the parents who are present right in front of your eyes. They have struggled hard in several ways to bring you up to the present state. They made a lot of sacrifice, so that you may come up in life. No parent would ever like to displease his children. They appear to be angry sometimes and may even give some punishment, but that is only outward. In their heart of hearts, they have abundant love for you. Even if they pretend to be angry, it is for your own good. The stream of infinite love ever flows in their hearts. Here is a small example: When the child does some mischief, the mother gives a beating. But, how? The beating merely produces sound but does not cause any pain to the child. Her anger is borne out of love only. On certain occasions, they may show anger, but it is only temporary. It is never permanent. You may think that your parents are angry with you. But, that is your own misunderstanding; you may not be able to understand their love, which is lying dormant. Even if they show anger and say "*chee*" (an expression in Telugu to indicate one's disapproval), it is only out of love. Students shall, therefore, try to understand the real nature of their parents.

In fact, one's anger is his own enemy, and happiness, his heaven. One should always be happy. A person with anger and irritable temperament can never achieve anything. Vinayaka is one who always obeyed

his parents' command. That is why it is said that there is no leader above Him. Students sometimes ask for money from their parents to go to a cinema. When parents refuse, they think that the parents are angry. These are trivial issues. The parents, especially the mother, will be even ready to sacrifice her life, in order to save her children in times of danger. Unfortunately, today there are sons who even go to a court of law against their mothers. It is, therefore, essential that they change their attitude towards their parents and realise that they are verily embodiments of love.

Any number of diversions or silly thoughts may arise in children, but the parents' love towards their children remains unwavering. There are several sons in the world who are angry with their parents, but relationship of the parents and their children is one of love only. The son may go to the court of law because of some differences with his mother. On being asked by the judge, he tells his mother's name as so and so. He utters the words, "My mother". Similarly, the mother tells her son's name as so and so. She says, "My son". Such is the intimate relationship that exists between the mother and son. Whatever differences that may arise between them are only temporary. Lord Vinayaka is the embodiment of love. He always showers love only. When He was acting as a scribe to write the *Mahabharata* to the dictation of Sage Vyasa, he displayed the same attitude of love. Since He was the embodiment of Love, Vyasa selected Him particularly to undertake the duty of a scribe. Throughout

the period of writing the *Mahabharata*, Vinayaka displayed this quality of pure love. That is why you do not find even a single mistake in the *Mahabharata*. Since He was flawless, His word was also flawless. You do not find the bad qualities of anger, jealousy, envy or pride in Vinayaka. They are the qualities of a human being devoid of noble qualities.

Dear students! From today onwards, you give up whatever little anger you have towards your parents and cultivate pure love towards them. Love begets love. Receive love from your parents in abundance and prosper in life.

Today is the festival of *Vinayaka Chaturthi*. It is a very important festival. There is a custom in some families to invite the newly married son-in-law for the festival. Therefore, do not hesitate to go to your in-law's house to spend some time happily with them.

*Oh newly married bridegroom, visit your
in-laws' house,*

*Come, spend your time in fun and frolic with your
brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law,*

*The entire household and the neighbourhood will
honour you with love and affection.*

(Telugu song)

Observe Diet Regulations

When a son-in-law visits his spouse's parents'

house, the entire household gets into a festive mood. One is sure to feel happy and mentally relaxed. There are, however, some stone-hearted sons-in-law, who cultivate ill-feelings towards their in-laws and do not visit their house. Such ill-feelings are the result of food. As is the food, so is the head. The feelings of the heart reflect the thought in the head (mind). Therefore, we must take the right food. You should never take such food as would kindle the flames of anger and envy in you. Since ancient times, sages in India have observed strict diet regulations. They always made it a point to consume *sattwic* food, not *rajasic* food. By consuming *rajasic* food, anger is generated. On the other hand, if you consume *thamasic* food, you will feel sleepy even while you eat. Therefore, both *rajasic* and *thamasic* types of food must be avoided. Only *sattwic* food must be taken. Excess of chillies, salt and sour items must be avoided in food. Before you take food, never forget to offer your prayers:

*Brahmarpanam Brahma havir
Brahmagnou Brahmanahutam
Brahmaiva thena ganthavyam
Brahma karma samadhina.*

(Brahman is the ladle as well as the oblation. He is the sacrificial fire as also the sacrificer. And finally, Brahman is the goal of one who is engaged in the act of sacrifice.)

When you pray in this manner before you partake of your food, God immediately responds thus:

*Aham Vaishvanaro bhutva
Praninam dehamasritah
Pranapana samayukta
Pachamyannam chaturvidham.*

(I am present in all beings in the form of digestive fire. United with the *prana* (inhalation) and *apana* (exhalation), it is I who consume the four kinds of food.)

While taking food, you must always ensure that you take only such items which you can easily digest. Never consume food which you cannot digest. Just as you sit down happily for taking food, so also when you get up after taking your food, you must feel happy and light. Some people sit for food with a light stomach and get up with a heavy stomach after eating bellyful. This is not the proper method of taking food.

Always take light food. These are the habits you must cultivate at least from this auspicious day of *Vinayaka Chaturthi*. If you cultivate these good habits and qualities you can become as great as Lord Vinayaka.

[Vinayaka Chaturthi, 18-9-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]

19

**Your Reality Is In Your Own Self,
Not Elsewhere**

*By which power of love the earth does rotate
without axle or bearing,*

*By which power of love do the stars remain in
the sky without falling on the earth,*

*By which power of love do the oceans confine
themselves to the limits without inundating
the earth,*

*By which power of love does the wind-god blow
cool breeze in all the worlds,*

*That mighty power of love is verily the Atmic
power.*

*That power of love is most wonderful, unique
and all-pervasive.*

The entire creation is permeated with love.

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

MAN need not undertake any special *sadhanas* to visualise the all-pervading truth. We call God by different names like Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. These are the names given by man to God based on some imaginary forms. But, who has actually perceived these forms? None so far. **There is only one power in the world, which is all-pervasive. That is the power of love.**

It is only by love, are human societies formed. There can be no humanity without divinity. It is only when man establishes contact with divinity to some extent, he can acquire a little of that divine power which is omnipotent.

Humanness Contains All Powers*Embodiments of Love!*

In fact, all modes of powers are immanent in *manavatwa* (humanness) itself. It needs no special agent to vest it with any extra powers. The divine power fully manifests itself in a human being. Human power cannot function without the help of divine power. There are four *mahavakyas* in the *Vedas*, namely, *Tattwamasi* (That thou art), *Prajnanam Brahma* (constant integrated awareness is *Brahman*), *Ayam Atma Brahma* (This *atma* itself is *Brahman*) and *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am *Brahman* verily). The essence of these *mahavakyas* is further explained in the *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gita*. But, man is getting deluded as he is unable to understand the import of these

mahavakyas. He is not able to realise divine power which, in fact, is in his own self. The divinity in humanity expresses itself as *Sakthitattwa* (energy). Today, man is striving to acquire several powers and make use of them for getting relieved of his sorrows and sufferings. In fact, these sorrows and worries are the stepping stones to divinity. Man should not give too much importance to these worries. If one analyses carefully, what is there in human existence, which does not cause worry? Man's life from birth to death is full of worries. I often quote a poem to describe this fact:

*To be born is a worry, to be on this earth is a
worry,
The world is a cause for worry and death too;
The whole of childhood is a worry and so is the
old age;
Life is a worry, failure is a worry;
All actions and difficulties cause worry;
Happiness too is a mysterious worry.*

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Some people say they had the vision of the Divine in their dream. Some others say they had it in their meditation. Yet others declare they had seen God through their *jnana nethra* (eye of wisdom). Most of these claims are the result of man's delusion. They are not real. Some people claim to have seen God in their dream. Where is dream? Where is God? In fact, dream experience itself is

not real. It is only an illusion. They are deluded to think that way. The day man gets rid of this delusion, he will acquire divine power. Hence, everyone should come out of such illusion. Some sit in meditation and think they are contemplating on somebody. Some others claim to have seen some effulgence in their meditation. What is meditation? It means *ekagratha* (concentration on the inner vision of the omniseff). It is visualising a *drisya* (scene) in a state of absolute stillness of the body and mind free from illusion. But wherever a man is, there is his mind as well. There is no place in this world without the mind being present. The mind is all-pervasive. It is said, *Manayeva manushyanaam karanam bandha mokshayoh* (the mind alone is the cause for bondage as well as liberation). We say we are happy. Where does this happiness come from? Certainly, it is not from outside. It wells up from one's own heart. The nature of the mind is *chanchala* (fickleness). This fickleness is in our own nature. It has not come from outside. All relationships we maintain in the objective world are only illusory. Supposing you marry a girl. From then on, you maintain a husband and wife relationship with her. Even prior to the marriage both of you were existing in the world, but this relationship was not there. From the moment you both are married you think she is related to you. Thus, it is a mental relationship.

Embodiments of Love!

Even *maya* (delusion) is associated with love. You

do not find anything in this world, devoid of love. Love is in everything in this world. All relationships between people in this world are established and cultivated on account of love. Again, love becomes the cause for separation of two individuals. There are several types of *sadhana* in this world; *bhrama sadhana* (coming out of delusion) is one such. In fact, Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara cannot be visualised in your *sadhana* (meditation, etc.). What all you see in your meditation are only reflections of your feelings. Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara are not really existing in this world. They are only your imaginary forms. What really exists in the world is *manavattwa* (humanness). Unable to believe the humanness that is present right in front of your eyes, if you contemplate on divine nature, how can you find it? The name and form that you attribute to divinity, namely, Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara are not real. They are only a mirage born out of your delusion. Everything is contained in the human being. You are Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara and every conceivable name and form attributed to divinity. When you begin to believe that you are everything, there can be no cause for any kind of worry. When you are able to realise *Aham Brahma, Aham Vishnu, Aham Easwara* (I am Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara verily), there is no scope for any doubt. All these names and forms are products of your own imagination. **There is no power greater than humanness in this world.**

Embodiments of Love!

You say that Swami appeared in your dream last night. This is not correct. I do not appear in anybody's dream. When you intensely desire that Swami must appear in your dream and constantly think of the same, that intense desire will assume a form in your dream. God does not assume a form or change into another form. Some people think that God is angry with them. This presumption is also not correct. God has neither love towards somebody nor anger towards another. All these presumptions are of your own making. You attribute anger or other feelings to God. Instead, if you live in love constantly, you will not find anger in others. In fact, love is your true form. Man is born out of and brought up with love. Not only a human being, but every living creature experiences love right from its birth. There is no force more powerful than love in this world. No power on earth can change love. Do not get deluded by the thought that you have acquired this power and that power. All these are only illusions (*bhrama*). *Bhrama* is not *brahman*. Nor can *Brahman* be equated with *Bhrama*.

Embodiments of Love!

What is meant by *divyatma*? It means divine *atma*. *Atma* is nothing but consciousness. And, that consciousness is all - pervading. You do not find a place where there is no consciousness. Consciousness is omnipotent. There is one aspect to be borne in mind

in this context. Consciousness is movable. But we are deluded to think that it is static. In fact, the real power is within you only. That is *Atma Sakthi* (*atmic* power). We have already known that *atma* is consciousness. Therefore, *atma sakthi* is *chaithanya sakthi* (power of consciousness). This is all-pervading. This enables you to witness different forms. The immense power in humanness is divine in nature. It confers peace and happiness. You may think that divine power is some special power. It is not true. Your own power of contemplation assumes the form of divine power. Therefore, first and foremost you realise your own innate divine nature. All that is written in the books or read by you are not in fact true. There are some kinds of power which are temporary. They are not eternal. Such transient powers should not delude one. You are learning the *Vedas*. Every sound that emanates from the *Vedas* emerges from the navel only. We are experiencing the sound emanating from our own navel. Supposing you go to a hill and shout "Oh!" the sound comes back to you as resound. Similarly, good and bad emanates from you only. They do not come from somewhere and get into you.

As You Think So You Become*Embodiments of Love!*

For example, you go on repeating loudly a

particular sentence taken from a book. After sometime, you will get it by heart. But, the sentence memorised by you is not yours. It is only a resound. In God's creation, everything is reaction, reflection and resound. **All that we experience in the outside world is only a reaction, reflection and resound of the inner being.** We are, however, deluded to think that this reaction, reflection and resound are real ones. Whatever feeling comes out of your heart and takes a shape outside is the real form. It means that, that form has already been conceived by you. Supposing you imagine a particular form for Lord Rama. Then, contemplate on that form, closing your eyes. You can visualise the same form, as a reflection of your inner thoughts. All that is manifested in the outside world is only a reaction, reflection and resound of your inner being.

Embodiments of Love!

You yourself are Rama, Krishna, Easwara, etc. You think that you are Easwara and contemplate on that form. You will become Easwara, verily. *Yad bhavam tad bhavathi* (as you think so you become). Similarly, you think that you are Rama, Krishna, etc., and you will become Rama and Krishna. Today, people sit in meditation. It is only for developing concentration, not with a view to contemplate on God. People mistake concentration for meditation. This is not a correct method. All these exercises are reaction, reflection and resound. Only you are real, you are the truth. You are

able to visualise God only in human form. Man cannot conceive or visualise anything greater than him. You are everything and everything in creation is immanent in you. Unfortunately, man today is forgetting his real nature and is imagining something which does not exist. This is the result of delusion, which, in fact, is of his own making. It is only when man comes out of this illusion that he will be able to realise Brahman.

Embodiments of Love!

Love is the most important factor. If you pray to God with intense love and devotion, your prayers will certainly be answered. Such is the power of love. Devoid of love, nothing can be achieved even in this mundane world. Love is God, live in love! The whole world becomes a vacuum, without love. That love alone assumes a form. Realise this truth. You sit in your so-called meditation, and try to forget yourself through imaginary experiences. If you forget yourself, how can you visualise the truth? Constantly live in the awareness "I am God, I am everything and I am the reality. All forms are subject to change". For example, an infant at the time of birth will be small in size. Then it will grow into a child, a boy, youth and an old person. In all these different stages of life, man alone is the reality. "All are one, be alike to every one". This is the lesson one must try to learn.

Embodiments of Love!

Let the flame of your love be steady, not flickering. There is no greater *sadhana* than love. That is the spiritual practice you have to adopt. That is the divine practice. Divinity is omnipresent. You have to realise that omnipresent divinity within your own self. It is present in all the three states of consciousness, namely, dream, wakeful and deep sleep state. One has to strive to experience that divinity constantly. That is *Prajnanam Brahma* (constant integrated awareness is *Brahman*). That is *sakshatkara* (vision of divinity), an experience which transcends all the three states of consciousness.

Embodiments of Love!

You are worshipping several forms of divinity. However, you cannot afford to forget your own innate divinity. In fact, you yourself are ascribing umpteen number of names and forms to divinity. But, divinity is only one, which is changeless. That changeless eternal divinity is immanent in you. All external forms and names are like fleeting dreams. And those dreams are not real. Hence, strive to come out of that *bhrama* (delusion). It is only when you come out of that *bhrama*, you will be able to realise *Brahman*. You have witnessed something in your dream. What is it? It is your own self, nothing other than that. You are visualising your own self in the dream state. Your real nature is love. Hence, you manifest your real nature. There are several aspects which you have to learn in future. What is future? Future is uncertain; past is past; only present is what matters.

Both past and future are contained in the present. You alone are present in all the three - past, present and future.

Visualise Your Own Innate Divinity

Embodiments of Love!

Divine powers and Divine manifestations are immanent in the human being; they are not to be sought from elsewhere. By constant *sadhana*, man can realise this truth. Your reality is in your own self, not elsewhere. In order to visualise that reality, one has to turn his vision inward. Reaction, reflection and resound - all the three are existing in your own self; they are not external. Supposing you have a brother who earned a good name and fame. Who is he? He is your brother. He represents a particular form. From where did this form come? It came from reality. And that reality is his true nature. Thus, a form that manifested from reality deludes us from visualising the reality itself.

Dear students!

If you wish to understand certain aspects more clearly, I will explain in greater detail after sometime. The kind of meditation you are doing is not correct. You are keeping one form in your mind and contemplating on that. Where did this form come from? It is of your own making. You are deluded to think that God is confined to only this form. Thus, right from the beginning you are with a deluded belief. If only you come out of this

delusion, can you visualise the truth. Do not ever be under the illusion that God is somewhere in a distant place. **You are, in fact, God verily. Your own form is Divine. Your bliss is Divine. Your reaction, reflection and resound are Divine in nature. Never deviate from the firm faith that you are God. Always contemplate on one aspect: *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman).** What is the meaning of the *mahavakya Tattwamasi* (That thou art)? *Tat* is that. *twam* is this. Together they become *asi*. They become one. Thus, all these four *mahavakyas Tattwamasi, Prajnanam Brahma, Ayam Atma Brahma* and *Aham Brahmasmi* lead you to the same truth, that is, you are God verily. Adi Sankara had expounded and explained this great *advaita* philosophy in ever so many ways and ultimately merged himself in that great truth. Thus, reality is not somewhere in a distant place. It is within you. Your very nature is reality. How can you realise this truth? Only by cultivating pure, selfless and Divine love. Without love, nothing can be achieved in this world. Love is the source and sustenance for the entire universe. Love is God and God is love.

Embodiments of Love!

All of you are embodiments of divinity. Your forms are divine. You and God are one. You are not different from God. Experience this unity. *Ekam sath* (truth is one). Unity is truth. Unity is divinity. God is not separate from you. God is manifest in you. Unfortunately, you are forgetting this truth. If you forget your own nature, it amounts to forgetting everything else. Never forget

your reality. Without forgetting that reality, meditate on it. Always remember one fact: **wherever I am, I am always Divine. Hold on to this firm belief, steadfastly.** That is the truth contained in the *mahavakya Tattwamasi*, the inseparable and non-dual nature of divinity. Do not be under the illusion “Rama has appeared in my dream, Krishna has appeared in my dream, Swami has appeared in my dream”. This is a sign of ignorance. All these are dreams only. How can a dream be called a reality? The very word “dream” explains its nature. As long as you are in sleep, this experience may be true. The moment you wake up, the experience vanishes.

Embodiments of Love!

Keep your love securely. Never give up love under any circumstances. There is no God other than love. Love is God, verily. Love is your path, and goal. Never deviate from this path of love. If you find any difficulty in treading this path or if you have some doubts to get clarified, I am always there to help you. Try to reduce your doubts. These doubts will lead you to delusion. Always get yourself firmly established in the truth *Tattwamasi* (That thou art). It is a mistaken idea to think that this form has visualised that form of divinity, for you and God are not separate. Brahman is very much immanent in this body. *Brahman* and *Aham* are one and the same. Undertake *sadhana* to realise the oneness of these two. That is the ‘Pathway to God’. If you wish to meditate on God, never allow your thoughts

to be disturbed by worldly objects. You meditate on your own real nature, which is divinity. In that divinity, everything else is contained. If you thus meditate on your own innate divinity, you will realise your unity with divinity. In fact, that unity is Divinity.

The four *Mahavakyas* *Tattwamasi*, *Prajnanam Brahma*, *Aham Brahmasmi* and *Ayam Atma Brahma* are *Vedic* declarations which emphasise the oneness of the individualised soul and the Supreme Soul. They exhort the individualised soul to realise this truth. Therefore, one has to strive to attain that state of unity. As you gradually progress in that *sadhana*, you will ultimately reach that goal. Supposing you want to learn the spelling of a word; just think how many times you will be repeating that spelling. In the same way, you must set out on this path of *sadhana*. This is a sacred *sadhana*. If you are able to know the true meaning of these *mahavakyas*, you will be able to realise the truth.

[Divine Discourse, 25-10-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]

20

Experience Divinity Within In Total Silence

Embodiments of Love!

YOU are very well aware of the present condition of the world. There is no scope for talking about God. Today *dhanam* (money) is considered as *daivam* (God). In such a situation, how can *dharma* (righteousness) prevail in the world?

Principle Of Love Is Changeless

Embodiments of Love!

There is no other path except that of love to attain God. Love is God, God is love. But people do not understand what love is. They consider attachment to all that is worldly and material as love. Out of their selfishness, they love worldly objects and materials. So, man's love today is tainted with selfishness. There is

selfish motive behind whatever he does. How can then man have the vision of God who is the very embodiment of selfless love? Love is present in all beings, right from a *pamara* (ignorant person) to a *Paramahansa* (realised person). How can one describe such a principle of love?

Ego and pomp have become rampant today. Desires have become limitless. Man's heart is filled with selfishness, and compassion has no place in it. That is the reason why he is unable to have the vision of the *Atma* and experience bliss. I always speak about the principle of love. I do not know anything other than love (*loud applause*). When divinity is uniformly present in all, how can you share your love with some and deny it to others? How can anyone say, "Love this and not that"? God has no specific form. But if you firmly resolve to see God and make sincere efforts, God will assume a form and manifest before you.

There is love in everyone of you. What is the form of love? What is the nature of love? When we analyse carefully, we will realise that love is not limited to human beings alone but is present in all living beings. Every being is endowed with the quality of supreme divine love. One has to give up enmity and cultivate unity and purity in order to understand this truth. Love cannot be explained in words. How can you describe it? It can only be experienced and enjoyed. The experience of love confers bliss on us. Hence, we can say that bliss is

the form of love.

Embodiments of Love!

Everything in this world is bound to change except the principle of love. Love is the only true and eternal path which will lead you to divinity. Divinity pervades each and every limb of the human body. It can be visualised only when we understand the principle of oneness. People attribute various names and forms to God. In fact, God should not be confined to a particular name and form. God is beyond all attributes and transcends all names and forms. Divinity is present in all in the form of love but each one experiences it in his own way. People imagine a particular form of divinity. They think divinity is limited to a specific name and form. That is why they are unable to experience it.

One whose heart is filled with love will see the manifestation of divinity everywhere. It is a mistake to think that Nature is different from God. People give various names to divinity based on their own experience. Jewels are many but gold is one. Likewise, names and forms are different but divinity is one. Where does gold come from? It comes from the earth. Similarly, God manifests in human body. *Daivam manusha rupena* (God incarnates in the form of a human being). Hence, consider everyone as divine. *Sahasra seersha Purusha Sahasraksha Sahasra pad* (The Cosmic Being has thousands of heads, eyes and feet). All heads, all eyes

and all feet are His. Such transcendental divinity can be experienced only in absolute silence and in solitude. There lies hidden sacred divine power in the depth of total silence. The tongue is given to you not to indulge in vain gossip. That is why the ancient sages and seers practised *mounam* (silence). It is possible to experience God only in the depth of silence. However, we should understand the true meaning of silence. Silence does not mean merely refraining from speech. It is much higher than that and includes the mind also. The transcendental nature of divinity cannot be described in words. It is beyond the grasp of the mind.

Focus Your Mind Only On God

Whatever you see in this world is the manifestation of truth. When divinity is all-pervasive, how can there be untruth? But you are unable to realise the all-pervasiveness of divinity. Turn your vision inward and observe absolute silence. Only then can you realise the all-pervasive divinity. Mere intellectual exercise will not help you in this regard. Whatever you see, hear and experience is the manifestation of divinity. Only God exists everywhere. Such being the case, is it possible to attribute a particular name and form to Him? He is present in all forms. When we experience the principle of oneness, we will be immersed in bliss. Hence, we can say that bliss is His form.

Nityanandam, parama sukhadam, kevalam Jnanamurtim, dwandwateetam, gagana sadrisham,

tattwamasyadi lakshyam, ekam, nityam, vimalam, achalam, sarvadhee sakshibhutam (God is the embodiment of eternal bliss, He is wisdom absolute, beyond the pair of opposites, expansive and pervasive like the sky, the goal indicated by the *mahavakya Tattwamasi*, the one eternal, pure, unchanging, the witness of all functions of the intellect).

Embodiments of Love!

When God is all-pervasive, where is the need to go in search of Him? You should make efforts to experience your innate divinity by observing total silence and turning your vision inward. You can experience divine bliss only in absolute silence. That is why it is said, "Silence is golden".

God is present in all forms. All names and forms are His. The *Vedas* state the same principle when they declare: "*Sahasra seersha Purusha...*" Various types of jewels are made out of gold. Likewise, God has assumed all the names and forms that we find in the world. Hence, you should develop faith in the existence of God. If you make sincere efforts, you can certainly realise Him. Many spiritual aspirants in the past could have the divine vision by their intense *sadhana* and by going into total silence. One has to annihilate the mind in order to have the vision of God. You cannot experience divinity until and unless you transcend the mind.

Today people conduct enquiry and research into

various aspects of the world. But divinity cannot be experienced with such enquiry and research. Select a divine form of your choice and contemplate on it. When you focus your mind on the divine form, your mind gets transformed completely and becomes one with divinity. Today man's mind keeps wavering from moment to moment. Do not rely on such a wavering mind. Instead, rely on divinity which is steady and changeless. Once you fix your mind on a divine form of your choice, never change it. Close your eyes and contemplate on it. Only then can you experience divinity.

Understand The Principle Of Unity

People use the word "divinity" without really knowing its meaning. The *Vedas* declare, *ekameva adviteyam Brahma* (God is one without a second), *ekatma Brahma* (*atma* is *Brahman*). You may call Him by any name. He has thousands of heads, hands and eyes. Wherever you see, there is God only and no one else. The same primordial principle pervades everything. Contemplate on Him with single-minded devotion.

Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathana Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam (God is attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness). Divinity is present within you. Unable to realise your innate divinity, you waste your time searching for God outside. Whatever you see and experience in the world is only the reaction, reflection and resound of your

feelings. Do not get deluded by the reaction, reflection and resound. Turn your mind inward and contemplate on the reality within you. You will certainly be able to experience divinity. You should have divinity as your goal and nothing else. Divinity is one without a second, and is all-pervasive.

Understand the principle of oneness and install God in your heart. Without the principle of unity, there can be no multiplicity. If you do not understand unity, you cannot understand the multiplicity of Nature. Nature is the best preacher. Follow the ideals demonstrated by this preacher with *preeti* (love). The more you develop love, the sooner you can see God. Body attachment is the cause of all differences. You will understand and experience unity in diversity only when you give up body attachment. Once you are free from body attachment, you can experience God in a moment. Whatever you see is the manifestation of God. The principle of unity in diversity is divinity. But you are unable to understand and appreciate this truth. In order to understand this truth, there should be total transformation in your feelings. As is the colour of the glass, so is the colour of the scene outside. Remove the colour glasses of body attachment and see the reality.

Make Your Mind Steady

Embodiments of Love!

Hold on to the principle of love firmly and you can achieve anything. When you fill your heart with love, you will be protected wherever you go. Love is the

reality and everything else is only reaction, reflection and resound. In order to experience the reality, you have to cultivate steadiness of mind in the first instance. How can you make your mind steady? You have to contemplate on one name and one form. Be firm in your chosen path. Do not get deluded by what appears to the physical eyes. Open the eye of wisdom and see the reality.

Embodiments of Love!

Consider everyone as the embodiment of divinity. God is the mother and father of all. That is why, we pray: *Twameva mathascha pitha twameva, Twameva bandhuscha sakha twameva, Twameva vidya dravinam twameva* (Oh God! You alone are our father and mother, friend and relation, wisdom and wealth). Have firm faith that God is your everything. Do not entertain any doubts in this regard. It is because of doubts that man's mind is in a confused state. Many people ask Me about the proper way of meditation. I always tell only one thing, "Meditation does not mean merely closing your eyes and imagining anything and everything. Choose one form, install it in your heart and see that it is steady. Have total faith in one name and one form and contemplate on it incessantly. That is true meditation. If you follow this practice earnestly, you can experience divinity."

Embodiments of Love!

There is no greater *sadhana* than following the path of love. Your love should flow only in one direction,

and not in many directions. Your love should constantly flow towards God. Only then can you have the vision of God, who is the very personification of love. If you are unable to visualise God, it only means that you have not directed your love towards Him.

Make your mind steady and fix it on God. Mind is the cause of everything in this world. Mind by itself does not go anywhere. It is we who direct it and divert it in different ways according to our whims and fancies. We are responsible for its unsteadiness. When you keep your mind steady and focus it on God, you will find the brilliant and blissful form of God wherever you see. You are unable to see and experience God because you doubt His existence. First of all, develop unwavering faith in God. Your faith alone will protect you. Do not follow the vagaries of the mind. You should be the master of your mind and not its slave.

Embodiments of Love!

People talk about meditation. Meditation is very simple. Meditation is not mere concentration. Concentration can never be equated with meditation. With unflinching faith and unwavering mind you should let your love flow towards God. If there is unsteadiness in your mind, it is reflected outside. All unsteadiness comes from within you. I am rather surprised to note that man's mind is wavering every moment. Why should the mind waver? It has no such power. *Manas* (mind) and

Manishi (man) should be one. When you achieve this oneness, you can experience the principle of unity.

Embodiments of Love!

You must firmly resolve to hold on to the principle of unity and divinity. What is the purpose of human birth? Is it to spend your time in eating and drinking? No, no. You should make efforts to understand the underlying principle of unity of five elements, five senses of action, five senses of cognition and five life sheaths. If you make sincere efforts, you will certainly be able to experience the principle of unity. Among all the living beings, only man is endowed with the ability to understand and experience unity and divinity. In fact, the very purpose of human birth is to experience unity in diversity. Hence, make every effort to experience unity and sanctify your lives. It is possible only by following the path of love. There is nothing superior to love in this world.

Today I have awarded the gold medal for all-round excellence to a girl student from Anantapur Campus. She has been a diabetic right from her childhood. Her parents and doctors have been trying their best to control her diabetes but all in vain. However, she has unflinching faith in Swami. That is why she had no problem at all in spite of her blood sugar level being very high. She is not worried at all. In fact, when her parents get worried, she infuses courage in them, saying, “Don’t worry. God is with me.” In this manner, she has spent sixteen years.

She has studied in Puttaparthi school and Anantapur college. Sometimes, her blood sugar level is very high. No medicine can control it. Her father becomes anxious. But she is protected by her steady faith. Swami told her firmly, “This disease cannot harm you. Have total faith in God. Do not pay heed to what others say.” She forgets her *badha* (suffering) remembering Swami’s *bodha* (teaching). She has followed Swami’s words implicitly and has remained steady in her faith. That is why she has come up in life.

She devotes all her time to studies. She will pursue higher studies. She has absolutely no worry even if her blood sugar level shoots up. She says, “It comes and goes. I have nothing to do with it.” She has faced her health problem with fortitude. In this manner, one should never be afraid of problems. This body is a storehouse of dirt and a den of diseases. One should never rely on such an ephemeral body. The body may have to undergo suffering on account of some diseases. But whatever may be the problem, one should not worry about it.

Her father is teaching in Puttaparthi college. Sometimes, he gets phone calls from his daughter’s teachers in Anantapur Campus, telling him, “Your daughter’s blood sugar is very high today. She is unable to attend the classes. What should we do?” He comes to Me for guidance and I tell him not to worry. I infuse courage in him, saying she would be all right. Because of her devotion and steadfast faith, she is maintaining her health and carrying on her studies without any

hindrance.

Having resolved, what ought to be resolved, hold on to it till you have succeeded. Having desired what ought to be desired, hold on to it till your desire is fulfilled. Having asked what ought to be asked, do not leave the hold till you get it. Having thought what ought to be thought, hold on to it till you have succeeded. With heart mellowed, the Lord must yield to your wishes or forgetting yourself, you should ask Him with all your heart. Persevere, be tenacious, and never give up, for it is the quality of a devotee never to retreat, abandoning his resolve. (Telugu poem)

She is leading her life with such unflinching faith and determination. Sometimes, she becomes very weak because of anaemia. Even in such a condition, she continues to do her work. That is true devotion. She is leading her life with total faith in Swami. She has stood first in her studies and has also achieved excellence in co-curricular activities. That is why she has been given the gold medal for all-round excellence.

[Benedictory Address, 23rd Convocation of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, 22-11-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]

21

Dedicate Your Life To Serve Society

All your education, all your positions of authority, all your acts of charity and service have little value without the four virtues of Sathya, Dharma, Prema and Santhi (truth, righteousness, love and peace).

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

YOU are all forgetting the purpose for which you have come into this world. Wherever you are, you must remember three things, namely, Where did we come from? Where are we at present? and what is the purpose of our coming here? Supposing you are dropping an envelope or letter in a post box; it should have the “From” address and “To” address written thereon. If these two addresses are not written, where

will the envelope or letter go? It will go to the “dead letter office”. Similarly, you are in the world now without these two addresses. You can very well imagine what will happen to such an individual. You must therefore find out yourself an answer at least for one of the three questions. Otherwise, your life itself will become a waste.

Here is a small story. The business people in the delta areas of East and West Godavari districts in Andhra Pradesh cross the river on boats. Once, a businessman was travelling in a boat. There was no one else in the boat except himself and the boatman. Usually, people would like to engage themselves in conversation with somebody during travel in order to forget the tedium of the journey. Therefore, he started a conversation with the boatman to while away the time. He asked the boatman, “Do you have a newspaper?” The boatman replied, “Sir! I don’t have a newspaper. I cannot read and write.” To this, the businessman commented, “Alas! If you cannot read and write, one quarter of your life is consigned to the waters of Ganga.” The boatman felt sorry for his pitiable condition and kept quiet. After a few minutes, the businessman enquired again, “My dear! Do you know the present prices of gold and silver in the Bombay market?” The boatman replied, “Sir! I do not have any experience in gold business. Hence, I do not know the prices of gold and silver in the Bombay market.” Then the businessman commented, “If you do not know about gold business, half of your life is consigned to the waters of Ganga*.” The conversation continued. Observing the

wrist watch worn by the boatman, the businessman again enquired, “My dear! What is the time now?” Though the poor boatman had a watch on his wrist, he did not know how to read a watch. The businessman again asked, “Why then did you wear a wrist watch?” The boatman replied, “Though one does not know how to read a watch, it is a fashion nowadays to wear a wrist watch. That is why I am wearing one.” Then, the businessman commented, “If you do not know even to tell the time from a wrist watch, then three-fourths of your life is consigned to the Ganga.” Meanwhile, a gale started with great force raising high waves in the river. The boat started tossing up and down and became unsteady. The boatman then asked the businessman, “Sir! By the way do you know swimming?” The businessman replied, “Alas! I do not know swimming.” Now it was the turn of the boatman to comment, “Then, your entire life is about to be consigned to the waters of Ganga.”

Today, we are all in the same situation and are tossed in the river of this world. But, unfortunately we are not making any effort to know why we are here, what have we to learn in this world, where do we have to go and by knowing what we could reach there, etc. Thus, by being ignorant of these aspects, our entire life is being consigned to the Ganga. Therefore, we have to

* Note : The expression consigned to the waters of the ganga is a colloquial way of saying that something is totally wasted.

first try to find out answers to the queries of: Why have we come here? What are we supposed to know? and Where do we go from here? If we are not able to know the answer to at least one of these queries, our life's journey will be without a purpose. It is only when we are aware of the "From" address, "To" address and the "present residential" address, our life will be meaningful and sanctified.

You Must Have Unflinching Faith

Dr. Michael Goldstein (Chairman, Prasanthi Council and a devotee of Swami) and his wife visit Puttapparthi often. When I was going to the college one day, he approached Me and requested, "Swami, if You kindly permit me, I will accompany You to the college." I told him to come. While we were travelling in the car, I asked Mr. Goldstein, "What is your programme?" He replied, "Swami, I have to start my journey back home today." Then I advised him not to leave on that day. He again told Me, "Swami, I shall go today, but I shall take the next day's flight from Bombay. "Thereupon I told him firmly, "You do not talk to Me about all those things. If I say don't go, it is final." Goldstein could not realise that his life itself would be in great danger if he decided to start on the same day. At last I told him, "Okay, you can go, if you so wish." Then he returned to his room, packed up his luggage for the Bombay flight. Thereafter, he boarded the plane for USA. Soon after the plane took off, it was realised that there were some

hijackers in the plane. The entire atmosphere in the aircraft was extremely tense. Two hijackers stood guard at the entrance. Another two were roaming about in the aircraft with fully loaded guns pointed at the passengers. It is then that Goldstein realised why Swami wanted him not to board the aircraft on that particular day. He could not do anything in the situation and was praying to Swami as his sole refuge. His wife is a great devotee of Swami. She started chanting Swami's Name, "Sai Ram, Sai Ram, Sai Ram". When the aircraft gained some altitude, the hijackers started shooting the passengers. The passengers were struck with terror not knowing what to do. As the hijackers opened fire, the aircraft was strewn with dead bodies. He and his wife were seated on the front portion of the aircraft. The hijackers started shooting the passengers around them. They thought it would be their turn next. Goldstein then told his wife, "Swami advised me not to start on this day, but I did not follow Swami's instruction completely and that is why we are in this situation." Meanwhile, one hijacker set his eyes on the couple. Goldstein's wife, however, had been chanting the Name of Swami incessantly forgetting everything. The chanting of Swami's Name worked wonders and Goldstein's wife was spared. Goldstein then got up and stood at the entrance of the aircraft. The hijackers, however, could not notice him even though he was such a hefty person. Thus, the life of Goldstein was saved by Swami's grace. They remained on the plane as hostages for a long time without food, water and

sleep. They were very much depressed. Goldstein's wife has intense devotion for Swami. Normally women are more devoted than men. It is not that men do not have devotion, but they do not show it outwardly. Goldstein's wife advised him, "You do not worry, contemplate on Swami." At this point the hijackers began to shoot men, women and children mercilessly. Goldstein and his wife, however, continued to pray to Swami, "Sai Ram, Sai Ram, Sai Ram". They silently prayed to Swami closing their eyes. In the meantime, all the ammunition in the guns of the hijackers was exhausted. The police caught the hijackers. Goldstein and his wife were released and put on board on another aircraft bound for America. However, the ordeal that they underwent continued to haunt them. After a few days, the police came to enquire about the incident. Goldstein was offered some compensation, but he did not accept it. After two or three months, Goldstein again came to Puttaparthi and had Swami's *darshan*. Now he realised through his own experience that he had not to fear anything under any circumstances if he did *namasmarana* (chanting of God's Name). After he had Swami's *darshan*, calmness was restored in him. From then on, when Swami would enquire about his return journey he would leave it to the Lord's Will. He realised that it would be better to leave the matter in Swami's hands. From then on Goldstein developed unshakeable faith in the words of Swami and stood firmly by them.

People today are unable to realise from where they came and where they would go. It is only after people have undergone such experiences that they realise the strength of faith. They have come into this world and somehow spend their time. When someone questions them how they spend their time, they reply that they have come into this world for enjoying food and comfortable sleep. However, it should be understood that man has taken birth in this world not merely for enjoying food and drink. The same truth has been explained by Adi Sankara in his famous *Bhaja Govindam* song thus:

*Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam
Govindam bhaja moodha mathe
Samprapthe sannihithe kale
Nahi nahi rakshati dukrun karane.*

(Oh foolish man, chant the name of Govinda; the rules of grammar will not come to your rescue when the end approaches.)

Realise The Purpose Of Life And Sanctify It

When people are questioned why the human birth was given to them, most of them would reply that it was for *khana* (food), *peena* (drink), *sona* (sleep) and *marna* (death). This assumption is totally incorrect. There are several things in life that one has to achieve. The purpose of a human birth is not for enjoying food and comforts. It is not even for pursuing education. The purpose of human birth is totally different and the people

have forgotten it. You have to fulfil your life and sanctify your birth. The body comes, grows and dies, and finally undergoes decay. Before the body dies, one has to fulfil the purpose for which he has come into this world.

Embodiments of Love!

There will be several trials and tribulations in the journey of life. One has to acquire the power by which he can courageously encounter them. That is the power of spirituality. One should not become diffident and withdraw from his effort in the middle. In this *Bhavasagara* (ocean of life), there will of course be, turbulent waves which will toss your boat up and down.

*Punarapi jananam punarapi maranam
Punarapi janani jathare sayanam
Iha samsare bahu dustare
Kripayapare pahi Murare.*

(Oh Lord! I am caught up in this cycle of birth and death; time and again, I am experiencing the agony of staying in the mother's womb. It is very difficult to cross this ocean of worldly life. Please take me across this ocean and grant me liberation.)

The purpose of human birth is not to be born again and again from the womb of the mother, spend the life aimlessly and finally depart from this world. There is a specific purpose why one is born in this world. Therefore, one has to realise the purpose and sanctify his life. Our

education, our work and the money we earn, all these must be spent in a purposeful way. The students of the present-day are pursuing education to make a living. They are acquiring degrees with the sole purpose of earning money. What is so great about struggling for filling one's own belly? Even dogs and foxes fill their bellies. You might have observed in the circus that even the monkeys learn several types of feats and display them. You, who are born as human beings should not behave like dogs, foxes and monkeys. If you do so, of what use is your education? The education you acquire must be put to proper use. Only then will it become meaningful and will give strength to your personality. The purpose of your life is not merely pursuing education and acquiring degrees. Of course, you may study, but it is not enough if you simply study for acquiring degrees.

Can you call all those who know how to read and write educated?

Can one be called educated merely by acquiring degrees?

Can you call it education which does not confer virtues?

If education is just for a living, don't we find birds and beasts carrying on their lives?

(Telugu poem)

It is only when you keep education for both life and for living as your goal, your education will be meaningful. Therefore, every human being must keep

the purpose of life in view. Of what use is it, if you exult in your success thinking, “I have passed MBA; I have acquired several degrees.” Those degrees must be put to proper use. Only a human being has the power to realise the purpose of his life. If one is satisfied thinking, “I am born, I am educated, I earned money, I have sufficient bank balance, I have got my children educated and sent them for higher education to foreign countries”, that is not the sole purpose of life. You should never forget the purpose why you were born in this world. Unfortunately, today, you have forgotten the purpose of your life and are indulging in futile activities. As long as you live you must experience peace until your last breath. You should attain true and eternal bliss.

Acquire The Spirit Of Sacrifice

Mahatma Gandhi went to London and was conferred with the degree of Bar-at-Law. He wished to fulfil his life by utilising his education in the service of society. Therefore, after his return to his motherland, he joined the Indian National Congress. He sacrificed his entire life for achieving Independence for the country. He started wearing a simple *dhoti* and a piece of cloth to cover the upper portion of his body. He underwent several difficulties in the north Indian States during the freedom struggle. He was beaten by the police with *lathis* (baton) in Lucknow. However, in spite of undergoing several difficulties and physical torture at the hands of the police, he did not give up his resolve to attain

Independence for the country. He started practising Law. Even then, his life did not go smoothly. He joined the Independence movement on behalf of the Indian National Congress and underwent great torture at the hands of the British. Nevertheless, he did not lose heart. His wife Kasturba was a noble lady. She always served her husband with great devotion, even when Gandhi was in jail. Simultaneously, she was also engaged in service to the country. It is only her spirit of service that protected her throughout. During the days of their involvement in the Independence movement, there were occasions when the husband and wife got separated. But Kasturba was reconciled to the situation that whatever happened was for her good only. Thus, people who serve others with a noble heart will always see good only. At last, the country attained Independence and Jawaharlal Nehru became the first Prime Minister.

Subhash Chandra Bose was another great leader of the freedom movement who was good at heart and was a great patriot. It is only because of the efforts of such men of sacrifice, the country could attain Independence. However, it is not merely *Swatantrya* (Independence) that we have to wish for. We must attain *Swarajya*. That is great. *Swatantrya* is a temporary phenomenon of freedom from foreign rule while *Swarajya* is concerned with and attained by the heart.

Dear Students!

You must be prepared to sacrifice even your life for the country. You are not the body. The body is only an instrument and a means for achieving something higher and noble. The body has to be put to use for achieving these higher and noble aims. The body is like the dress we wear. One day or the other the dress is bound to decay. Till then the body has to be maintained properly. It is only by sacrifice one can attain *yoga*. That is what the *Veda* has proclaimed, *Na karmana Na Prajaya dhanena thyagenaike amrutatthwamanasu* (immortality is not attained through action, progeny or wealth; it is attained only by sacrifice). Having been born as human beings we must dedicate our lives in the service of God and in the constant contemplation of God. If you do so, none of the physical ailments will trouble you.

Give Up Attachment To The Body

A small example which I would like to narrate to you. When I was in Bangalore sometime back, this body fell in the bathroom. There were two students by name Satyajit and Achintya who used to attend to My needs. They did great service to Me. I told them “I have no body attachment. You may conduct an operation on this body, but I have nothing to do with this body. I am not this body. As long as the body is there, I have to do My work.” The doctors wanted to put Me in bandage, but I did not agree. They advised Me to undergo an operation so that the fracture would be healed quickly. I placed this body in the hands of the doctors and let them

do whatever they wished to do with it. I continued to walk which I am still doing. I have no pains or suffering. Several devotees are anxious that Swami is walking with great difficulty and perhaps is undergoing great pain. I would like to reiterate that I do not undergo any pain or suffering. Till today, I did not undergo any body pain whatsoever. If you thus sacrifice your *dehabhimana*, you can achieve anything in life. Whatever I do, I tell the same thing. One has to do what he says and say what he does. That is what is meant by

*Manasyekam vachasyekam karmanyekam
mahatmanam*

*Manasyanyath vachasyanyath karmanyanyath
duratmanam*

(Those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones; those who lack harmony of these are wicked.)

That is the real *manavatva* (human nature). I can stand for any length of time though the doctors advised Me against it. Even now I have been standing for a long time. I have no suffering at all. I don't take even a single tablet. I don't put on any bandage. Mine is *atmabhava* and *atmabhava* alone. I set an example by My own actions.

Dear Students!

The body may undergo any amount of suffering. It is like a water bubble. The mind is like a mad monkey.

Therefore, we should not follow either the body or the mind. We must follow our *antharatma* (conscience). We must develop *atmabhimana*. If *atmabhimana* is developed, no pain can trouble us. It is only for teaching you about this *atmabhimana*, I am undergoing all this trouble. I don't feel any pain at all. I am telling you the truth. I am not suppressing the facts. In fact, I don't know or feel what pain is. We must face the difficulties courageously. It is only to teach you this steadfastness and courage, I have taken upon Myself this pain. You must follow My ideal. Do not ever give importance to the suffering of the body. Give up *dehabhimana*. However, engage the body in proper activities. Engage the body in the service of God. Our body is a gift of God. For what purpose has God given us this body? It is only for dedicating it in the service of the Lord.

Embodiments of Love!

The body has been given to you for performing sacred *karmas* (actions). Several people wonder why Swami does not feel tired in spite of undergoing so much physical suffering. Especially, the ladies can observe the signs of weakness quickly. I want to assure you that I am maintaining a constant body weight and good health throughout. Neither I have put on weight nor become weak. I can walk swiftly, but I am desisting from doing so only to satisfy the doctors. The doctors are particularly pressurising Me not to walk swiftly. They advised Me, "Swami, please do not walk fast. You always keep two

students with You to help You." It is only to please them and satisfy them that I am keeping these two students with Me. I am not causing any inconvenience to these boys. Both these boys, Arun and Prusty go to their offices and work there besides attending to My needs. The moment I call Prusty, he immediately rushes in. I ask him to get Me a glass of water and I drink the water given by him. Similarly, both these boys constantly attend to My needs. They are serving Me with great devotion and love. I do not cause any inconvenience to anybody.

Embodiments of Love!

Today you are celebrating Swami's birthday. In fact, it is the body that has a date of birth. This body has already passed 78 years and has entered the 79th year. But do I look like a 79 year old man? No. No. Not only now, even after 80 or 90 years of age, I will be like this only. I will never depend on anybody. My eyes and teeth are in perfect condition. Normally, by the time a person attains 79 years of age, all his teeth will be lost. His eyesight will be affected by cataract. His skin will have wrinkles, but I have no wrinkles at all. I will not have old age. In fact, I have no old age. Similarly, you also develop such courage and confidence. You will certainly feel good. Not only Myself, all of you should be in sound health. But you are spoiling your own health. You are misusing your physical strength in so many ways. If you put your body to proper use, you can come up well by Swami's grace. You can serve any number of

people with a healthy body and a sound mind. Therefore, you have to maintain your body in healthy condition in order to serve others, not to show off your beauty. Even for Me, this body is required for serving others. In the service to humanity, I am prepared for anything, even to sacrifice My life. Similarly, you must also be ever ready to serve others. Do not ever consider that the body is very important. Neither, you fritter away the physical strength. You must make proper use of the physical body. You must also gain enough mental strength. You must come up well in your educational career and make your life sanctified in the service to humanity. You must always be ready to face any situation in life boldly. That is the real nature of humanity. Whenever your services are required, you must respond immediately, saying, “I am ready, I am ready, I am ready.” Develop such a courage and confidence and set an ideal to the world.

This body is a den of dirt and prone to diseases; it is subject to change from time to time; it cannot cross the ocean of Samsara. It is nothing but a structure of bones. Oh mind! Do not be under the delusion that body is permanent. Instead take refuge at the Divine Lotus Feet. (Telugu poem)

You seek refuge in the lotus feet of the Lord. Do not mind any amount of suffering of the physical body. You serve the country to the extent you can. Utilise every small opportunity to serve the country and society. Even a small help done to an old woman that you come

across on the way is service. Do not ever think, “What do I gain by helping this woman?” There is great merit even in such a small service. Therefore, continue to serve. There is no greater *sadhana* than service to the fellow human beings. *Seva bina nirvan nahi* (there is no redemption without service). You should not mind any inconvenience that you may undergo while serving others.

I have no intention of celebrating My birthday on a grand scale. My only intention is that the body should be maintained in a proper condition and through the body service should be rendered to others. You must always be prepared to dedicate your life to serve society. That is the real service.

[Divine Birthday, 23-11-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]

My Power Is The Power Of Love

How is it that the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening with utmost regularity everyday? How is it that the stars twinkle beautifully in the sky at night and hide themselves during the day? How is it that the wind blows incessantly and sustains the living beings without taking rest even for a moment? How is it that the rivers flow perennially making gurgling sounds?

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

JAGAT denotes that which is subject to creation, sustenance and dissolution. God, who is responsible for these phenomena, has no specific form. He pervades the entire world in the form of the five elements, namely, space, wind, fire, water and earth.

Food And Water Are The Gifts Of God

In man, these elements connote the faculties of *sabda, sparsha, rupa, rasa, gandha* (hearing, touch, sight, taste, smell), respectively. There is no place where these five elements are not present. *Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham, Sarvatah sruthimalloke sarvamavruthya tishthati* (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). That is why it is said that all hands, feet, eyes, heads, mouths and ears are His. The elders in the past therefore declared that God is present everywhere; there is no place where God is not present. How can we comprehend the principle of this all-pervasive divinity? People attribute various names and forms to God. They celebrate the birthdays of their chosen deities, worship them and derive joy therefrom. But it is not possible for anyone to fathom fully the nature of divinity. It is not possible to attribute any form to God. He is beyond all names, forms and attributes. God has neither birth nor death. How can anyone give a specific name to God who is all-powerful and all-pervasive?

God is eternal without birth or death. He has no beginning, middle or end. He is omnipresent and is the eternal witness. (Telugu poem)

When a child is born from the womb of its mother, it starts crying. However, it stops crying the moment you put a drop of honey or milk on its tongue. From this, we can deduce that everyone is born with hunger. What

type of hunger is that? Is it worldly or spiritual? It is difficult to judge who is born with what type of hunger. Though food is of various kinds, hunger is common to all. Food is essential to satisfy one's hunger. So, every individual has to eat food. It is also his duty to share it with others.

It is the earth which provides food to man. It absorbs rainwater and supplies it to the crops. In this way, we grow crops. Thus, mother earth sustains our life by providing food to us. Water is also very essential for our survival. One may live without food for a few days, but not without water. Water is very necessary for growing food also. It can be acquired only through prayer and not by any other means. People perform worship and offer special prayers to invoke divine grace for water. Everyone should pray to God whether one is a pauper or a millionaire, for it is God who provides food and water to man. Food and water are the gifts of God. Man cannot create food and water by himself. He does not even know what type of food is essential to lead a healthy life. He should, in fact, make efforts to understand this.

Anything Can Be Achieved Through Prayer

Whatever God does is for the welfare of the world. You must understand that world is the very form of God. The Creator and creation are not different from each other. We should not worship God for the fulfilment of worldly desires. We should pray to God to attain Him. He showers His grace on all. It is God who gives

us everything. He alone knows what is good for us. Everything that we need is provided by Him. However, it is not the quality of a true devotee to feel disappointed and to blame God if his desires are not fulfilled. It is our duty to find ways and means to earn God's grace and make efforts to attain Him. Nobody can understand or explain divine plans. God alone knows His plans and He only can reveal them. No one can comprehend the ways of God as stated by Thyagaraja:

*Not even a blade of grass will move without
divine Will,
Right from an ant to Brahma, God pervades
everything,
But some people do not understand this and take
pride in their intelligence,
But no one however mighty knows what is going
to happen in the next moment.*

(Telugu poem)

No one can predict when God will shower His grace on an individual. Only God knows the answers to the questions like who, when, where, why and how. If one forgets God and gets carried away by ego and sense of doership, one will not meet with success in one's endeavours. Anything can be achieved through prayer. There is nothing greater than prayer. Hence, everyone must necessarily offer his prayer to God. However, one should not pray for worldly gains. "Oh God! I want Your love and nothing else." This should be your constant

prayer. Once you become the recipient of God's love, you can conquer the entire world.

Do not pray to God for the fulfilment of your worldly desires. Instead, leave everything to God's Will. Have full faith that He will do what is good for you. Pray to Him, "Oh God, please take care of us every moment of our life." When you discharge your duties surrendering everything to God's Will, you will certainly achieve success in all your endeavours. But God's Will takes shape at the appropriate time without any prompting or planning.

All Are The Children Of God

Any mighty task can be accomplished by prayer. Hence, pray to God silently. Do not pray for the fulfilment of your petty desires. Give up all desires and pray to God wholeheartedly with love. You will certainly find fulfilment in life. You can understand and experience divinity only through love. Nothing can be achieved without love. Love makes all your tasks successful. Some people complain, "Swami, we are making fervent prayers but our prayers are not fruitful." I tell them, "The mistake lies in your prayer and not in God." If your prayers are sincere, they will certainly be answered. There is nothing that God cannot accomplish.

*The stories of the Lord are most wonderful and
sacred in all the three worlds. They are like
sickles that cut the creepers of worldly bondage.*

They are most ennobling and elevating. They confer bliss on the sages and seers doing penance in forests.
(Telugu poem)

Today we are celebrating the sacred festival of Christmas. We should celebrate it in the true spirit without entertaining petty desires. Jesus was the son of God. While he was being crucified, he said, "Oh Father, Let Thy Will be done." When you surrender yourself to God's Will, He will take care of you. Do not develop pride. Give up ego and ostentation. Pray silently and sincerely. Then your prayers will surely be answered. God is not confined to a place somewhere in a distant corner. He always resides in your heart. He can accomplish anything. He is ever ready to perform any task, big or small, for His devotees. All are His children. Hence, He will certainly answer your prayers. Jesus taught, "All are the children of God." When you have such firm conviction, you can accomplish any task. You need not read voluminous books. Fill your heart with love and leave everything to His Will. You will certainly achieve success in all your endeavours.

Embodiments of Love!

Love is the quintessence of My teachings. My power is the power of love (loud applause). There is nothing greater than love. When you develop love, you can easily face the challenges of life and emerge victorious. God will always be with you, in you and around you and will take care of you. Any mighty task

can be accomplished through prayer. However, your prayer should be sincere. Say what is there in your mind. Swami is within you; He knows your thoughts and feelings. Develop unity of thought, word and deed. Have faith that Swami is in you, and He always listens to your prayer. If you think that Swami is outside, how will your prayer reach Him?

Embodiments of Love!

It is only love that will help you to achieve success in your life. Hence, develop love. That is the true prayer God expects from you.

[Christmas, 25-12-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]