

Athi Rudra Maha Yagna Fosters the Divine Nature of Humans Sathya Sai Baba

Dasara, Prasanthi Nilayam
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Sai Baba gave this discourse during the *Athi Rudra Maha Yagna*, a great rite (*maha yagna*) performed over 11 days (9-19 August 2006) for world peace and prosperity. *Athi* means ultimate and *Rudra* is a name for Siva, so this *athirudra* is the highest form of worship of Siva.

During the rite, 132 priests chant and perform oblations around 11 fire-pits. The chanting consists mainly of many repetitions of *namakas* (because each verse ends in *namah*, meaning "name") and *chamakas* (because each verse ends in *cha me*, meaning "and to me [may this be granted]") from the *Vedas*. The *namakas* praise Rudra and describe His attributes; the *chamakas* ask for blessings.

For a detailed report, visit media.radiosai.org/journals/Vol_04/01SEP06/CoverStory_Army.htm

The day when people were engulfed in fascination
of the English language,
Knowledge of one's own religion and language
declined;
When knowledge of one's own religion and lan-
guage declined,
The cultural outlook disappeared;
When cultural outlook disappeared, righteousness
declined on the earth;
When righteousness declined and disappeared
from the earth,
The exalted position of Bharat was shattered.
Oh! *Bharatiyas*! Open your eyes and be alert to the
situation, at least now.
Oh! Men of noble qualities!
What more can I explain and exhort?

(Telugu poem)

The land of India (Bharat) is very sacred. It is
the land of sacrifice. It is a holy land. It is the land
where a number of chaste women took birth.

Savitri, who brought her deceased husband back to
life,
Was she not a chaste woman of Bharat?
Chandramati, who by her power of truth could
extinguish the wild fire,
Was she not a chaste woman of Bharat?
Sita, who for establishing her character entered the
fire and came out unscathed,
Was she not born in this great land of Bharat?
This great land of Bharat is surrounded by an
ocean of pure (*sathwic*) quality.

The Indian race (*Bharata Jathi*) is resplendent
with character and purity.

Bharat is an extremely fertile land of noble
feelings.

Is it not true that this great land of Bharat is a
world teacher?

(Telugu poem)

Is there another country in the entire world
where a woman of character could bring her de-
ceased husband back to life? This land of India
(Bharat) gave birth to many such women.

In the *Ramayana*, the demon King Ravana ab-
ducted Sita, the chaste wife of Rama, and kept her
in confinement under a tree in Ashokavana in
Lanka, guarded by the demons. He used to entreat
her daily to come under his fold. But, during the
10 months when Sita was under confinement in
Lanka, she never raised her head and looked at his
face even for a second. Such was her purity and
chastity.

The land of Bharat is like a teacher to all the
countries in the world. Though not all men in this
country are suffused with great and noble feelings,
every woman here is certainly chaste, truthful, and
righteous. Even when their husbands returned
home, the women in Bharat would greet them
only submissively. Where else would Lord Siva
incarnate, except in such a sacred land as Bharat?

God cannot be manifested merely by offering worship, performing disciplines of worship, or by conducting rituals like sacrifices (*yajna*). Only by developing purity of heart and noble qualities can one have the vision of God.

All objects in the world are created by the omnipresent and omnipotent Lord, who is the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of the universe. Every object in this universe is a gift of God. God is immanent in every object.

It is said, God is the indweller of all beings (*Easwara sarva bhutanam*) and the entire universe is permeated by God (*Isavasyam idam sarvam*). Hence, whatever object you come across, consider it as an embodiment of Divinity.

People say, this is a cloth (showing a handkerchief). It is not really so. It is a piece of cloth made by weaving together a number of threads. But that is also not a correct description. It is a manifestation of cotton. From cotton come the threads, and the threads are woven together to make a cloth.

What is the nature of Divinity? God is attributeless, pure, the final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free, and the embodiment of sacredness (*nirgunam, niranjanam, sanathana niketanam, nitya, shuddha, buddha, mukta, nirmala swarupinam*).

Divinity is given different names by different people, but God is beyond name and form. He is all names and forms. He is all-pervading. That is why He is described as: With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe (*Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham, sarvatah sruthimalloke sarvamavruthya tishthati*).

You are concerned with the human body, but it is like a water bubble. The mind is a 'bundle of thoughts'. Hence, one should not lead one's life reposing full faith in the body and mind. No doubt, the human body is a gift of God. In fact, we are born to offer everything that has been given by God to God Himself.

Lord Krishna declared in *Bhagavad Gita*, the eternal *Atma* in all beings is a part of My Being (*Mamaivamsho jivaloke jivabhuta sanathana*). He

said, You are all part of Me (My *amsa*). Hence, you are not a mere human being.

The name given to you in this objective world is the one given by your parents. In fact, at the time of your birth you had no name at all! Humanity is associated with Divinity, which is pure and sacred. It is only to foster such a sacred nature in human beings that God incarnates from time to time. Whenever righteousness declines, God incarnates to uphold righteousness, in keeping with His declaration:

When there is a decline in *dharma* and rise in *adharma*,
I incarnate Myself for the establishment of *dharma*.

*Yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati Bharata,
Abhyutthanamadharma-sya tadatmanam srujamya-
ham.*

In today's world, righteousness has declined and truth has gone into the oblivion. The whole world is filled with injustice, indiscipline, and evil behaviour. In such a chaotic state, faith in God is the only lasting remedy. Truth is the only refuge, for truth is God. Love is God, live in love. Devoid of love, one cannot live. Hence, one has to love God to receive the gift of love from God. It is only by love that God can be attained.

As stated by the pundit who just spoke, the 'Athi Rudra' consists of many Namakas and Chamakas. They sustain human life. From where did this power come? The Namaka and aka are taken from the *Krishna Yajur Veda*. It is an all inclusive *Veda*, from which the other *Vedas, sastras* (scriptures), *itihisas* (ancient legends) and *puranas* emanated.

Unfortunately, today, the *Vedas* have lost their pre-eminent position due to poor patronage. People who take to a serious study of the *Vedas* and chant the mantras contained in them regularly have become rare. A regular study of the *Vedas* and practice of *Vedic* injunctions confer all forms of wealth on human beings. The fundamental principles governing human life and destiny are contained in the *Vedas*.

The *Vedas* are the gift of God for the welfare of the entire humanity. The *Vedas* make no distinction whatsoever on the basis of religion, caste, nationality, etc. The *Vedic* mantras can be chanted

by one and all. (Swami then called two boys from abroad studying in Prasanthi Nilayam and asked them to recite *Sri Suktam*).

It is Swami's wish that the *Vedas* be spread to every country, so that every human being regardless of religion, caste, nationality, etc., learns the *Vedas* and chants them.

Some people from Iran and Iraq came to Puttaparthi, the day before yesterday. The devotees from Iran are still here.

We are making efforts to teach *Vedas* to all people. The *Vedas* remove all types of sorrow. The ritual (*yajna*) that is being performed now is different from other rituals like *Puthra Kameshthi yaga* (a ritual performed for the sake of having a child) or horse sacrifice (*aswamedha yaga*). It is for the welfare of entire humanity.

A few fortunate ones are learning the *Vedas* and propagating them. But, unfortunately, many people are making no efforts to teach the *Vedas*, though they have studied them. Today, all the students in Sri Sathya Sai educational institutions are being taught the *Vedas*. As a prelude to the learning *Vedas*, one has to acquire knowledge of Sanskrit, the language of the *Vedas*.

Nowadays, people of every country are making efforts to learn the *Vedas*, especially the *Rig Veda*. Along with it, they are also learning the *Yajur Veda*, *Sama Veda*, and *Atharvana Veda*.

Vinay Kumar has been appointed as the youth leader of Karnataka State. He is entrusted with the responsibility of bringing together all the youth in Karnataka on one platform and make them learn the *Vedas* and spread the message of the *Vedas*. Similarly, youth leaders have been appointed in all the states of India like Andhra, Kerala, etc. Not only that, youth leaders have also been appointed in the Sathya Sai Seva Organisations in all countries of the world for the propagation of the *Vedas* and *Vedic* chanting.

The *Vedas* are not to be neglected. The secret of the entire creation is contained in the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* establish the goal and purpose of human life. Everything concerning creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe is contained in the *Vedas*. The four stages of life (*asramas*) — student, householder, hermit, rununciant (*brahma-*

charya, *ghrihastha*, *vanaprastha*, *sanyasa*)— are rooted in the *Vedas*.

People are able to realise the glory of the *Vedas* now. Wherever you go, even in the villages, you will find the ladies also chanting *Vedic* mantras. There may be difference in the body structure between the males and females, but, as far as *Vedic* learning is concerned, there is hardly any difference.

The *Veda* is very sacred. Especially, the *Athi Rudra* part is a very important section. “*Rudram*” is generally understood as a synonym to Lord Easwara. In fact, it is the essence of all the *Vedas*, namely, *Rig*, *Yajur*, *Sama* and *Atharvana Vedas*.

Another important feature of *Rudram* is the oneness (*ekathwa*) between the two parts, namely *Namaka* and *Chamaka*. The *Namaka* emphasises the aspect of detachment whereas *Chamaka* stresses the aspect of desire. But the essence of both aspects is one. What is to be discarded and what is to be desired? Evil is to be discarded and good is to be desired. Both are essential. Whereas *Namaka* lays stress on detachment, the *Chamaka* speaks of desires for this and that.

People generally think that giving up of family life, house, land, and other forms of wealth as sacrifice (*thyaga*). But that is not a sacrifice at all! That can be done easily. What is required is, sacrificing the resultant desires. That is the real sacrifice.

One has to realise the purpose of human life. We are not born merely to eat, drink, and make merry. Human birth is given to us to help our fellow human beings. Help Ever, Hurt Never. We should not cause harm to anybody. We should not speak harsh words. In fact, such noble qualities are inherent in us.

The human body is made up of the five elements, namely, earth, water, fire, air and space (is *panchabhouthika*). It consists of five senses (*panchendriyas*), which crave to fulfill desires.

However, certain values like truth, righteousness, peace, love, and nonviolence (*sathya*, *dharma*, *santhi*, *prema*, and *ahimsa*) are also hidden in the core of our personality. These have to be brought out and manifested in our daily life. This process is called *educare*.

Today, the knowledge that is acquired from the study of books is called *education*. This is not the real education that we have to acquire. Real education is *educare*, by which the noble qualities that are inherent in us are manifested in our daily life. This can be done by self-effort without someone spoon-feeding us with some externals. Thereby one can lead a sacred life. It can be attained only by God's grace and by no other means. In keeping with the saying, "Always, at all times, under all circumstances contemplate on God (*Sarvada sarva kaleshu sarvathara Hari chintanam*)", one has to constantly contemplate on God. That is the real devotion.

Ornaments are many; gold is one; cows are of many colours, milk is one. Divinity is one, by whatever name we call (Rama, Krishna, Yesu or Allah). These are all different names ascribed to God. It is said, "Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (*Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanthi*)." Hence we should never make any distinction in respect of God.

If you desire to know the secret (essence) of God, develop an "open heart". You may contemplate on God by any name of your liking. There is nothing wrong in it. But, it is wrong to worship one name and form while reviling other names and forms ascribed to God.

Some people like the name *Narayana* but don't like *Siva*. This is wrong. Easwara and *Narayana* are different names by which the same God is worshipped. The one God is worshipped with many names and forms. He who realises this oneness will have peace of mind.

To love one form of God and hate another form is not good. You will not be able to fulfill your desire by doing so. Not only the youth, everyone (young and old) have to realise and follow this principle. In fact, only Divinity is protecting the world now. The name of God is more powerful than nuclear bombs. God's name protects the good and punishes the evil. Hence, if you continue to worship God, surely the world will be protected.

This holy ritual (*yajna*) is being conducted for the welfare of the world. It has a very important aspect. The *Athi Rudra Maha Yajna* protects and fosters the divine nature in human beings, while

rejecting and diminishing the demonic qualities. Thus, it works for the welfare of humanity. This ritual can be undertaken by anyone interested in the welfare of humanity.

The material and other resources for conducting this ritual have been arranged by the efforts of Vinay Kumar alone. He undertook the job lovingly and performed it almost single-handed. Several people had come forward to donate rice, fruits, vegetables and other materials, but he did not agree to their requests.

The expenditure for conducting this ritual involves a large amount of money. He went round all alone and arranged for the materials for conducting this ritual. I wish that every state should have such dedicated service leaders. He is doing a lot of service. I am very happy about his service. He spurned all offers of help for conducting this ritual, saying "Sai is with me; He alone will help me." He was married ten years ago. Both he and his wife are in the service of Swami.

When the proposal to conduct this ritual was placed before Me, I asked them "Dear ones! You propose to conduct this *Athi Rudra Yajna* in Prasanthi Nilayam. Do you wish to have a son?"

They replied in one voice that that was not their desire and motive for their prayer.

I asked what else they wished to have. Their reply was "Swami! We want you only!" I have not heard such a reply so far from any couple.

True to his name, Vinay Kumar is doing a lot of good work, with love and humility. His father was an Income Tax Commissioner. He was a colleague of Laxminarayana. Even now, Vinay is associated with Laxminarayana. Vinay Kumar treats him as his own father.

There should be many more such souls, which should be increasing. When the leaders are good and competent, the whole world will run smoothly. Unfortunately, today, the world has come to this sad state due to lack of proper leadership. There should be good leaders in all fields —education, politics, religion, spirituality, etc. But, nowadays, you rarely find good leaders in any field. Wherever you look, every human endeavour is polluted with the craze for money. Everything is business.

However, the Sri Sathya Sai Organisations have no such problems. Everything is free in our organisations. Education from 1st standard to the Ph.D. level is totally free.

The same is the case with our hospitals. Our general hospitals and super speciality hospitals are providing medical services totally free of cost. The hospitals outside charge three to four lakhs of rupees to perform a heart operation. How can the poor people mobilise such a huge amount? It is beyond their means. The medical services, including the specialist services, are totally free in our hospitals. The poor people come to our hospitals for treatment, having not even a rupee in their pockets, and return to their places completely cured of their diseases. We should render all services free of cost.

I wish that all our *sevadals* and college students should render free service. Then only will they be able to attain Swami's grace. A word of caution: You may forget anything else, but never forget chanting the divine name.

Embodiments of Love!

The *Athi Rudra Maha Yajna* is great, most sacred, and highly efficacious. The lives of the people who perform this ritual will be sanctified. Eleven priests (*rithwiks*) will be performing the rituals at each fire-pit (*homakunda*). There are eleven such fire-pits. Thus, there will be 121 priests, in all, performing the various rituals in this ritual (*yajna*).

For each fire-pit, one person will be in charge, to look after everything concerning the rituals. All people connected with the ritual work in unison to make the ritual a success.

Only by unity can anything can be achieved. From unity comes purity, and Divinity manifests from purity. Hence, all should conduct themselves as brothers and sisters.

If, for any reason, you get angry on a particular occasion, consider anger as your enemy and get rid of it. Desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, jealousy (*kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, and matsarya*) are the six enemies that trouble the human being.

Embodiments of Divine Self!

You are not ordinary human beings, you are Embodiments of the Divine Self, verily. Each individual is given a particular name for the purpose of identification, but you are all Embodiments of the Divine Self, not mere human beings. I wish that all of you should lead a happy, peaceful, contented, and blissful life. You will not be able to lead such a life if you are not really devoted. Hence, develop devotion golden ones (*bangaru*)! You must be immersed in devotion, not deep ocean. It is only such devotion that takes you to the Divine.