



SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER LEARNING

(Deemed to be University)



**P R A S A N T H I
V I D W A N M A H A S A B H A**

... ————— 2013 ————— ...



Dedicated with Love to our Beloved
Revered Founder Chancellor

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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Vidyagiri, Prasanthi Nilayam – 515134, Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh, India

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PRASANTHI VIDWAN MAHASABHA

8-14 October 2013 | Prasanthi Nilayam

Preface

Dasara or Navaratri is a ten day festival, usually falling in the month of October, and is celebrated all over India in the worship of the Divine as the Mother principle. Bhagawan Baba has explained that the festival of Dasara is a celebration of the triumph of good over evil, signifying the vanquishing of the 'six demons' of lust, anger, attachment, greed, pride and jealousy within us.

Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yagna

Since the early sixties, the festival of Dasara in Prasanthi Nilayam has been closely associated with the 'Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yagna'. This yagnam is a week-long worship conducted in the Divine Presence at the Poornachandra Auditorium each year for the welfare of the whole world. The Yagnam commences on the fourth day of Dasara and concludes with the 'Poornahuti' – the final oblation that is offered on Vijayadashami, the tenth day.

The most important component of the Yagnam is the Rudra Yagam where the oblations are made in the Yagna Kunda to Lord Shiva while chanting hymns from the Sri Rudram. In addition to this, other rituals like Surya Namaskara, Sahasralinga Archana, Srimad Bhagavatha Parayana, Ramayana Parayana and the Devi Mahatmyam are simultaneously performed.

The students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning take active part in the Yagnam by chanting the vedas, reading the scriptures and performing other parts of the worship along with the learned pundits.

Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha

The evening programmes during the seven days of the Yagnam are held in Sai Kulwant Hall, under the auspices of the ‘Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha’, where many speakers—primarily students and functionaries of Bhagawan’s institutions—address the gathering on topics concerning spirituality and philosophy, Bhagawan’s teachings and experiences of devotees.

This book is a compilation of all the talks delivered during the Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha in 2013, that took place from 8-14 October 2013. Relevant transcripts of excerpts from Bhagawan Baba’s Divine Discourses are also included.

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Bhagawan on Dasara

On several other occasions of the Dasara festival celebrated in Prasanthi Nilayam, Bhagawan Baba has given Discourses, clarifying the purpose and importance of the festival, and highlighting the inner meaning of the celebration and of the worship of the Divine Mother. Following are some excerpts from these Discourses.

Purpose of Dasara

Festivals like Dasara are designed to make man aware of his divinity, to endow him with purity, to become aware of its holiness, and to imprint on his heart the wisdom won by sages after years of yearning. The sages who have decided on these festivals have a high purpose. They want us to imbibe the inner meaning and use each day as a step in *sadhana*, as a reminder of the journey, which each person has to undertake alone to the Feet of the Lord. Dasara is the festival that celebrates the victory of the forces of the good over the foes that resist the progress of man towards light. The forces of good (Devas) are combating with the forces of evil (Asuras) in every living being and if only they rely on Mahashakti, the great Divine Force that fosters and feeds the Universe, they can easily win and reach goal. Festivals like Dasara at Prasanthi Nilayam bring together *sadhakas* from all the continents, irrespective of religion, caste, creed, and colour. They are motivated by the same urge, to involve themselves more and more in attempts to realise their innate divinity. They have met here to enjoy the supreme delight in the holy presence of the Lord and to recognise the unity of all in the Divine atomic splendour. It is to give *ananda* (bliss) to the *bhaktas* (devotees) that I arrange this festival. I have no other wish. Do not muddy the pellucid waters of your faith by the slightest trace of doubt.

Importance of Dasara

During the Dasara festival, the three Goddesses—Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati—are worshipped according to certain traditional practices. The

tenth day of the festival is celebrated as the victory. The celebration has its roots deep in the ancient history of Bharat. In the Dwapara Yuga, when the Pandavas had to spend one year incognito, they hid their weapons (on the advice of Krishna) in a Jammi tree which is thick in foliage and whose branches are filled with latent fire. Vijayadasami was the day on which they retrieved their weapons from the tree and used them to win victory over the Kauravas. In the Treta Yuga, Sri Rama's coronation, after his victorious return to Ayodhya from Lanka, was also performed on Vijayadasami day.

Inner Meaning of Dasara

The term 'Devi' represents the Divine power that has taken a *rajasic* form to suppress the forces of evil and protect the *satvic* qualities. When the forces of injustice, immorality and untruth have grown to monstrous proportions and are indulging in a death-dance, when selfishness and self-interest are rampant, when men have lost all sense of kindness and compassion; the Atmic principle, assuming the form of Shakti, and taking on the *rajasic* quality, seeks to destroy the evil elements. This is the inner meaning of the Dasara festival.

Inner Meaning of Devi Worship on Dasara

When the Divine Goddess is in a dreadful rage to destroy the wicked elements, she assumes a fearful form. To pacify the dreaded Goddess, Her feminine children offer worship to her with red *kumkum* (sacred red powder). The Goddess, seeing the blood-red *kumkum* at her feet, feels assured that the wicked have been vanquished and assumes her benign form. The inner meaning of the worship of 'Devi' with red *kumkum* is that thereby the Goddess is appeased. During the ten days of Dasara, the demons (*rakshasas*) in the form of wicked qualities have been routed. *Rakshasas* do not mean demonic beings. The bad qualities in men are the demons. Arrogance is a demon. Bad thoughts are demons.

Introduction

Prof. A Anantha Raman

Professor (Hon.), Dept. of Management Studies, SSSIHL

Legend has it that Dasara signifies the victory of the *devas* over the *asuras*, which metaphorically represents the triumph of righteousness over unrighteousness. In this regard, Prasanthi Nilayam would reach the heights of grandeur when, on the ninth day of Navaratri, the Veda Purusha Himself accepted the *Purnahuti*. It is now the third year that we are performing this Veda Purusha Saptaha Maha Gyana Yagna in the physical absence of that Veda Purusha, who presided over it from 1961 onwards. Right from that time, each year, Bhagawan—in addition to the Yagna—prescribed evening sessions of Prashanti Vidwan Maha Sabha, of which this is the first session today and this session will continue for next seven days. This was an archetype assembly of the learned and the devout, who came to present their spiritual and practical wisdom; and it started originally in the palace of Raja Venkatagiri, several years ago.

Initially, for the first 15 years, it used to be a series of speeches by learned men, with the added bonus of Swami's discourse. When the event restarted 1993 after a gap of about five years, Swami gradually inducted students, senior staff and senior devotees in the category of speakers and this was predominantly the category of people who spoke in this Vidwan Maha Sabha. The event continued to be called Prasanthi Vidwan Maha Sabha, despite the fact that most of the people who spoke were His students and faculty members. And Swami Himself provided an answer to this puzzle - why would he still call it a Vidwan Maha Sabha when predominantly His students and faculty were speaking on that occasion? Swami's answer was, 'For me, my students and teachers are not only *vidwans* (scholars), they are *Asthana Vidwans*. Swami's unfettered love for His students and the feeling He had about their role in His mission has been rendered in prose and poetry.

Swami's love overflowed the universal boundaries and fell on everybody. While it did that, His love for His students was something to be watched and admired because of its sheer intensity. Those of us sitting on the sidelines,

have watched (sometimes with envy) this love which is evident particularly when Swami use to wait up late on Grama Seva days—sometimes very late—for all His students to return from the service that day. I have seen the love reflected in the limpid eyes of a school child as the school child got up to present a flower to Swami. I have seen it in the palpable excitement of the students when they lined up the streets with conch shells to coronate the arrival of Swami, whenever Swami returned from His visits elsewhere. We have seen this love in the pride Swami used to exhibit whenever He asked one of His students to sing after the performance of a maestro, almost as if in competition, after any performance in Sai Kulwant Hall. These were the times, when the coordinates of love and longing truly met. And such love is probably at the center of all that is happening at Prasanthi Nilayam starting from Grama Seva.

A few years ago, during one of my earlier outings at Grama Seva, I was waiting to board the bus on the way to return and at that time a wise and old man, bent with age, moist with tears, reached me at the bus stop and ambled on to me. Fortunately he could speak in Kannada, which I could understand. And when he spoke, he said it all. He had a tremor in his voice, when he said “God always looks after all of us.” In the Grama Seva exercise, with one stroke Swami fulfills several simultaneous objectives.

Students are taught the basic principle of how to manage a team. They are given first hand exposure to the rural landscape, the jewel of India. They are also shown how to respect what the poet Thomas Gray called, the short and simple annals of the poor. And they carry from God a message to His creation- that He cared.

I teach theories of strategy to business schools in India and abroad but I have no theory to explain the strategy of this master strategist. And such game changers are at the root of Swami’s mission. Through the initiatives He started

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and the institutions He founded, Swami has given to the world a framework that combines science and spirituality, institutions and values, modernity and tradition. His institutions create scientists who work with nature, managers who create values, doctors who heal the mind rather than mend the body and teachers who transform rather than inform. The core of all His institutions is His love. Swami's concept of Medicare is love that heals, His Educare is love that inspires, His Sociocare is love that transforms. At one level, Swami's colleges, hospitals, schools, water project- are all examples of efficiency, speed and good governance. At another level, they are also examples of how to integrate education with values, healing with compassion, and service with selflessness. Together they have redefined the philanthropy of public service. Not only this, they also talk about governance and management.

For the last three years, as one who has had the task of communicating to the media, I have been privileged to have a ring side seat and observe all the happenings of the Sai mission all over the world, and frankly I am wonderstuck at its size and vista! Never in my forty years of sojourn with Swami, have I ever realized the might and sweep of this mission. It is like sitting deep inside a mountain, unaware of its majesty. It is like squatting at the bottom of the ocean completely ignorant of its depth. At the floods ravaged Laos, Sai volunteers rebuilt shattered homes. In Italy, Sai brothers cared for the physically challenged. Sai volunteers also helped in the Christchurch earth quake in New Zealand. These were all events that took place in the last one year. In Darjeeling, Sai workers cleaned the drain of filth, mud and excrements. fifty youth from twenty-two cities of Russia attended a camp in Edinburg and discussed Swami's life and philosophy. Forty-five Sai volunteers from Malaysia and neighboring countries walked to the rain forest of Borneo to implement a village integration program. In the city of Hanvella in Sri Lanka, Sai volunteers run a hospice for terminally ill cancer patients. Kazakhstan held an Education in Human Values (EHV) seminar. Forty children sleeping on the platform of Dum Dum metro station in Kolkata, that have no one to care for them; have the West Bengal sevadal wake them at 6:30 in the morning, brush their teeth, bathe them and conduct classes for them on the railway platform. Sathya Sai Sanctuary in Iceland, offered peace

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and refuge to neglected and abused animals. Medical camps were arranged in Kuwait, Bahrain and Dubai. Sai Volunteers provided emergency relief to hurricane victims in the east coast of USA. In Vishakapatnam, every Sunday, Sai youth collect some homeless, derelict humanity, which you and I would avoid; cut their nails, trim their hair, wash their wounds, bathe them, dress them in a new set of cloths and then release them back into their world. Elsewhere, Sai devotees wash a leper's wound or the feet of an autistic child. Never in the history of humanity has so much been achieved, by so few, in so little time!

What kind of an organization do we have that inspires people to perform this kind of a service? This is the message of Navaratri today. When elsewhere in the world, young men spend their time in the malls and multiplexes, these Sai youth spend their time to make life just a little better for their lonely and lost brethren. In Swami's system of Sociocare, there is no giver and no receiver. Service is simply an exchange of love from one manifestation of the divine to another without any boundaries of race, nationality, caste or creed. All these points unerringly affirm to humanity, what the Avatar declared - I will succeed, I will not be limited, My will shall prevail.

Sometimes, staying within the cocoon of Prasanthi Nilayam, we do not realize the might and sweep of the Sai mission, the extent of this movement spread all over the world. A few years ago, I had an opportunity to present Swami's Anantapur water project at the 3rd Water Forum in Osaka, Japan. One morning, as I was having refreshments in the canteen, I noticed an African gentlemen at a nearby table. After sometime, he came up to me and asked, "Are you a devotee of Sathya Sai Baba? Startled I said, "Yes, but how do you know? He said, "I recognized you by your green ring." He then introduced himself, " I am the prime minister of Burkina Faso." He held out his hand and showed me a green ring! And as the conference progressed, we found that in this international assemblage of presidents, kings, ministers, bankers and beauracrats, there were eight of us who were the proud owners of this green ring! I have seen Sai devotees in the jungles of Africa, I have seen them at the mountains of Andalusia in Spain, I have seen them skiing

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the slopes of Saalfelden in Austria. Once, I was startled to hear the melody of Sai Bhajans being played by a lonely trucker in the Grand Canyon. It is a majestic sweep covering *Loka Samastha*.

Another evidence of the dynamism of this organization is that ever since Maha Samadhi, not one function, not one regimen—from the pre-dawn *Nagaranankeertan* to the evening closing *arati*—have been missed at Sai Kulwant Hall. Devotees continue to come from all over the world to Prasanthi Nilayam; and at least 30% of the devotees who come are those who have come for the first time; thereby confirming to the vitality of this movement and organization.

When I asked a couple from Bangalore, one hundred miles away, who came for the first time, “Why is it that you did not take the 3-hour bus ride from Bangalore to Puttaparthi, while Swami was here in His physical form?”, they sheepishly turned their faces away. But finally the wife found the courage to ask me, “What did we lose by not coming here while Swami was in His physical form?” I told them that I cannot say what they missed. I can only tell them what we gained. *Darshanam Papa Nashanam, Sparshanam Karma Vimochanam, Sambhashanam Sankata Nashanam* (The vision of the Lord destroys all sins, His touch destroys the bondage of karma, conversation with Him destroys all troubles). These are the things we could gain. I could see their eyes were turning moist.

It is a privilege to be a part of this mission. No other leader of any other movement in history has left behind; such an organizational structure with so many trained and committed people. Jesus Christ had twelve apostles, if you consider Matthias, who replaced Judas. Half of them were illiterates and of a doubtful character, yet they changed the world. We have here a massive functioning organization and a structure of committed young men and women. Can we not usher in a completely new order which will take us from ignorance to knowledge, from darkness to light, from the transient to the eternal? That should be our dedication today.

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The path of Service

Sri Mani Krishna Anand

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There are many paths available for spiritual *sadhana*. There is the path of meditation - *Dhyana marga*, the path of devotion- *Bhakti marga*, the path of Knowledge- *Gyana marga*, the path of work- *Karma yoga*, and so on. As students of Sai, we are fortunate to have the unique opportunity given by Swami to tread one of these paths and progress on our spiritual journey, that is the path of *Seva* or Service. One thing that the path of *Seva* offers that is quite different from the other paths is the fact that we realize our own divinity by seeing *that* and serving *that* spark of divinity in others too.

*Asthadasha Puranesu Vyasaysya vachana dwayam
Paropakaraya punyaya paapaya parapeedanam*

Sage Vyasa condensed the wisdom of the eighteen puranas succinctly into two lines. One attains merits by serving others and one commits sin by hurting others - which is essentially Swami's aphorism of Help ever, Hurt never. Our *sadhana* therefore can be to train ourselves to become instruments to transmit God's love.

Swami has said that at the end of one's earthly sojourn what matters is not the number of degrees or professional accomplishments but how much love one has shared with all of creation; that is essentially what Grama Seva helps us to do - share Love, from Love, to Love, with Love.

There is an incident that happened in the early years of Grama Seva. While serving at one of the villages, a few students noticed a small hut on a hillock, quite a distance away and realized that it was not covered by the Grama Seva area. Remembering Swami's instructions to serve each and every one in the village, these students took a few packets of food and clothes and went to the hut to see who was there. What did they see? They saw an old woman, crouching in the corner of hut. They went to the old woman and said, "Amma, Bhagawan has sent Prasadam, please do take it." Listening to these

words, the old woman broke down into tears and said, “I have not had food for two days and was fervently praying to Bhagawan to save me from this predicament. Swami, through His students has promptly responded.” The message from this story is that Swami is the giver and He is the act of giving, we are but part of the process, if we choose to be. That is our spiritual *sadhana*.

Swami’s mission will continue irrespective of anything. It is His *Sankalpa* (Divine Will). Therefore, it is up to us to decide whether we want to be a part of it or not. One of Swami’s instructions while doing Grama Seva is to chant *Om Satchitanandaya Namaha* while giving packets of food and clothes. This is to serve as a constant reminder that Sat, Chit and Ananda, which are present in everyone and everything from the ant to elephant, from the atom to the entire cosmos, is also present in the one who is giving the service and in the one who is receiving the service.

Swami has also said that we must have *daya*, compassion and not pity. There is an example in this context. Once a calf was stuck in slush, and was desperately kicking, trying to come out of it. A few street urchins were delighting and taking pleasure out of the pain of the calf. An ascetic who was walking past saw the calf and was deeply pained by the calf’s plight. He immediately jumped into the slush and pushed the calf to freedom. Now the street urchins were quite irritated at the fact that they have lost their source of entertainment and they asked him as to why he did it.

The ascetic replied, “When you saw the calf, you only saw the pain of calf and you chose to derive pleasure out of that pain. When I saw the calf, I could feel its agony and I alleviated my own suffering by saving the calf.” That is compassion. Understanding and feeling others pain and alleviating one’s own suffering by removing the pain of others is compassion. Hence, when somebody suffers, you suffer. When somebody else is happy, you are happy. It is the same spirit in all, and the same indweller in all beings. With compassion, the realization dawns that while the *dehas* (bodies) are many, the *Dehi* (Indweller) is one. We need to use this *deha* in service of that *Dehi* who is the *Deva* (God) in all.

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If we practice the attitude that we are merely delivering God's Love, the sympathy and pity that we feel will automatically get transformed into compassion. Swami has given the concept of Narayana Seva to us for our redemption. Narayana is the supreme Godhead. When serving God, we do not have pride or ego or a sense of superiority. We do not expect gratitude in return for the service done. When the indweller is the same in everyone, where is the sense of gratitude, where is the question of ego, superiority and pride? The one who gives is Swami, the one who receives is Swami, the act of giving is Swami, the object being given is Swami; hence where do we come into the picture? We are but mere witnesses, who must realize that Seva is an opportunity to progress in our spiritual journey to find out and realize where we have come from and where we will be go.

On this auspicious occasion of Navaratri, just like mother Kali destroyed *mabhasura*, we must destroy *dehabhimana*, the identification with the name and the form of the body and cultivate *Atmabbhimana*, the identification of oneness with the spirit. It is like the balloon. When filled with air, the balloon is big. The balloon represents the identification with the name and the form of the body. With the prick of divine grace, when the balloon bursts, the realization dawns that the air inside is same as the air outside and that there never was any difference to begin with! This is the true essence of Dasara-conquering the negative qualities of selfishness, laziness and apathy and engaging in the service of our fellow men.

I would like to conclude my talk with the excerpt from a poem titled service to God:

Let this chant ring out the cosmos through
He as the indweller of every heart, shall be the cue
Care for life, concern for nature, respect for all of creation too
Let Seva be a bridge, never a wall, a true response to the Divine's call.

Samastha lokaha, sukhino bhavantu.

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Seven Steps to Happiness

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Bhagawan has said, to give *ananda* (bliss) to all mankind is My work. These words of Bhagawan, remind me of an incident. A teacher once asked a group of nursery kids, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” He immediately got a variety of answers. Some shouted the names of their favorite superheroes or actors. The more serious ones said, doctor, engineer, etc. The teacher noticed that one small girl was silent. So he went up to her and asked her, “Tell me what do you want to be when you grow up?” The girl looked up at the teacher very seriously and said, “Teacher, I want to be happy when I grow up.” The girl’s answer only reinforces the fact in my mind, that there is no greater success than happiness.

Today I will be talking about the seven steps to happiness. The number seven has a very special significance in creation. For instance, there are seven seas, seven worlds, seven notes of music, seven colors of the rainbow, etc. The Veda Purusha Saptaha Gyana Yagna, according to Vedic injunctions, if performed for seven days, can confer upon man the ability to get rid of the seven veils of ignorance and ascend seven stages of spiritual knowledge.

The first step to happiness is faith. Faith is the battle between the mind and the heart. Looking back at my own life, until the year 2011, I feel that I survived on what I call, borrowed faith. I use this term borrowed faith, because faith is an intensely personal experience. But my faith was based on my mother’s simple assurance in my childhood that Bhagawan is God. Post April 2011, however, I had to fight many doubts and obstacles to the path of faith. But with Bhagawan’s grace, I was accepted as a student at SSSIHL; and today my faith is built on the strong foundations of my own experiences. These doubts and obstacles are very necessary for us to develop strong faith and a strong foundation.

The second step to happiness is to accept the problems and obstacles that we face in life. Richard Bach, in his book *Illusions* says, “We seek the problems

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we face in life, because we need the gift that they have to offer. This gift is the lesson we learn from them. But sometimes, we face the same kind of problem again and again.” A few months ago, I was going through a very difficult phase in my life. While sitting in the prayer hall, I demanded an explanation from Bhagawan. That night, I got a strange dream wherein I was standing in front of a college notice board, looking up at a big white paper with a list titled Supplementary Examinations. I got a big shock, when I noticed my name right at the top of the list. I awoke with a start, and later realized that this was Bhagawan’s answer to my question. Problems recur in our life when we have failed to learn the lesson we were supposed to learn. With this perspective, that problems are very necessary for progress, we can remain unaffected by them.

The third step to happiness is to realize that suffering is Grace. How can suffering be Grace? In one of His Dasara discourses, Bhagawan talks about a guru, who teaches his pupil- *Janma Dukham, Jara Dukham, Jaara Dukham punaha, punaha* - meaning birth is misery, life is misery, wife is misery again and again. But for those of us who can merge our will in God’s will, suffering becomes Grace. Suffering is something that causes pain. But Bhagawan says, “Walk with me and I shall lead you.” With Bhagawan’s soothing presence by our side, the pain and suffering vanishes. The suffering minus the pain is like victory without struggle.

The fourth step to happiness is understanding. Understanding God is beyond us. During one particular session of study circle, my teacher asked, “Do you wonder about your relationship with God?” Now this question really struck me. Who am I to God? All of us pray for recognition in Bhagawan’s eyes and pride ourselves when we get it. Pride comes with a fall. Bhagawan answered this question of mine, in a way that really humbled me. After Bhajans, as students were dispersing, one girl came up to me and placed a dead butterfly in my hand, leaving me perplexed. A few minutes later, another girl came and

placed a flower in my hand from Swami's foot stool. Looking at the butterfly and the flower, I understood that this was Bhagawan's answer. We are mere seekers of the Divine nectar that is Bhagawan's Love. Once we understand the humble nature of our position, our pride naturally lessens, leaving the pathway to God very clear. That is why Bhagawan says, 'Ask not what is the role of your life in my mission but instead ask what is the role of my mission in your life.'

The fifth step in happiness is focus. As long as our focus is on God, everything remains in the right perspective. But the moment that focus shifts, things start to go wrong. This lesson was taught to me back in the year 2002. Bhagawan was at Whitefield and the famous Australian devotees—the Pink Sisters—were also present. Having read the book about them, I was fascinated to see them. I was in my IV Std. I kept staring at them. Bhagawan came at around seven in the morning, walked up to them, spoke to them and blessed them. I was still staring at them. I had not realized that in the meantime, Bhagawan had walked along our block and had come to a standstill right in front of my row. I suddenly felt a painful nudge on my ribs and I turned to find myself looking straight into Bhagawan's beautiful eyes. At that moment, however, the stern expression in His eyes silenced all my thoughts. The message in his eyes was silently loud and clear - Look at me, focus on me. Up until today, I remind myself of this beautiful lesson.

The sixth step to happiness is objectivity. My Balvikas teacher asked me, "Why are we unhappy?" I replied, "Because we have desires." She then asked, "Why do we have desires." I said, "Because we are dissatisfied with what we have in our lives." She smiled and said, "We are dissatisfied with what we have because we do not look at life objectively." The main reason for our unhappiness is that we do not look at life as it is, but always compare it with an illusion of what life ought to be according to us. Only when we can break through that illusion of what life ought to be, can we appreciate what we already have in life.

The seventh and final step to happiness is involvement. Most of us interpret detachment to be detaching ourselves from our own concerns. But detachment is true involvement. Detachment is the enlargement of the Self to encompass the concern of others. Bhagawan says - expansion is My life. Gram Seva and service activities are an expression of that expansion. Expansion of the Self and enlargement of the Self to encompass the concerns of others. There is a difference between participation and involvement as taught to me by my one of my teachers. We can be participants by merely witnessing something and not doing anything about it. But involvement means putting our heart and soul into the work.

The second verse of the Ishavasya Upanishad states that for those who cannot take the difficult step of renunciation, righteous actions are prescribed. Thus, engaging ourselves in service activities and putting our heart and soul into the work, we can derive the sense of fulfillment and satisfaction that makes us happy.

Prayer is not asking. It is submission. I would like to conclude with a prayer of submission, in the words of Tagore:

In one salutation to Thee my God,
Let all my senses spread out and touch this world at Thy feet.
Let all my songs gather together their diverse streams into a single current
and flow to the sea of silence in one salutation to Thee.

Deeper significance of the Yajna

Sri Rajeev Rajan

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This morning we witnessed the commencement of the Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yagna. We saw the arrangements, the rituals, the chanting and the oblations. What do we make of all this? How do we relate to this Yagna? How do we understand it? Is it just about the arrangements, the rituals, the mantras, the offerings- or is there something deeper than what appears? For example, I could lift my hand and there could be various intentions- different feelings behind the lifting of this hand. I could lift my hand, for seeking permission, “Madam, can I speak?” or I could lift my hand to bless a younger one or I could lift my hand to strike someone or I could lift my hand just to exercise. Similarly, behind the act of performing the Yagna, could there be a deeper meaning? Back in 1962, when the first Yagna was conducted in Prasanthi Nilayam, Swami re-emphasized that He has come for *Dharma Staphana, Veda Poshana, Vidwath Poshana* and *Bhaktha Rakshna*. He very emphatically stated that if dharma has to be reestablished, it is very essential to nourish the Vedas, which is at the root of dharma. It is very essential to nourish the Vedic culture and the Vedic scholars. Since then, we have seen yagnas being performed year after year, including the historic Ati Rudra Maha Yagna conducted in 2006.

What do we make of all this? Some say it is a big waste of money. In fact, we have seen (many a time) Swami materializing the *navaratnas*, the nine precious gems and offering them to the leaping flames during *Purnahooti*. Is Swami being wasteful? With those nine precious gems, we could have performed some life-saving operations on some poor deserving patients. No! There could have been a deeper purpose. Some lament at the waste of *ghee*, grains and food. With all the food we could have served a million hungry stomachs. But there is a deeper purpose. There is some meaning behind that. That deeper purpose, that deeper meaning could be revealed to us at different times, in different ways, and at different levels.

For instance, lets us take *ghee* (clarified butter). *Ghee* is a product that comes

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out of a long process of refining. Milk is first boiled, then it is curdled and churned with a lot of effort to give us butter. This butter is then clarified, i.e., heated to produce the ultimate product- *ghee*. If you look at it this way, *ghee* is the most sublime, most pure and supreme expression of milk. We offer that special *ghee*—special because we have attached a special meaning to it—into the fire. This (again) in spiritual parlance could indicate to us that when we offer something to God, with a pure heart, He accepts it completely- just as the fire burns everything into ashes, without leaving anything behind.

When I was a small boy, I would suffer from wheezing whenever I was exposed to dust and smoke. However, whenever I performed a small Yagna, or participated in one, that smoke would never affect me. How can we explain this? It was a miracle. It was not a one-off incident. We have seen during the Yagna, one of the pundits performing 108 Surya Namaskars every day. In an attempt to help us understand the significance of this activity, within the confines of our existing knowledge, scientists and researchers have studied the Surya Namaskar and have told us about the benefits of this activity for our body. If that were the case, we could have as well gone to the gymnasium for bodybuilding. We also see the pundits performing a lot of *mudras* and actions with their fingers and hands. Why? Even those boys and girls can perform *mudras*. When the teacher has strictly instructed the students to maintain pin drop silence, one student sitting in one corner of the room would be busy conversing with another student sitting in the opposite corner of the room in absolute silence using sign language.

But if we ponder over this for a moment, if these students could exchange a whole lot of information by employing these *mudras*, can we not understand that the pundit possibly must be using these *mudras* as prescribed in the scriptures and *sastras*, to communicate with the Divine at a totally different level? But let us leave all this to pundits and scholars with the intention of not to dismiss them. In fact, Swami always stressed that every injunction mentioned in the scriptures and *sastras* should be followed to the last word. The pundits and scholars were wonderstuck at the superior knowledge of Swami. But how can we ordinary people relate to and participate in this

yagna? For instance, we can think, what can I offer into this yagna. Is it *ghee*, gold and grains? Even if I offer these things, it is not my offering, it is not something that I own. Whatever I offer to the Lord, it is something He has created and I am offering it back to Him. We should offer it with that feeling. When I say I am offering, there is a bit of *ahankara* (ego) involved in it. I should offer into this Yagna, my bad quality of *ahamkara*. In this way, we can participate in this Yagna in spiritually meaningful ways.

Swami thundered in one of his Navaratri discourses in 1962, “I observe that many of you are getting active to procure from Bangalore or Anantapur (in time for the *poornahuti*) articles like sandalwood, gold and precious stones to put into the sacrificial fire. I am not permitting anybody to do that. It is easy to spend a few rupees and purchase a few material objects from some shop and throw them into the fire and go about saying you have done a big act of sacrifice. I am going to set you a more difficult task. You cannot escape by doing the easy thing. I want that when the *poornahuti* is offered into the fire on the final day, you should all stand up and reverentially offer into the sacred fire every one of the bad qualities that you have. The faults, the failings, the temptations, the transgressions. Search, search for these today. Bring them with you here, nicely packed and with one final heave of mental exertion throw them in, when the flames of the *poornahuti* rise aloft. This is the share that you have to secure in this Yagna. Nothing more and nothing less.”

What a powerful message, what a spiritually insightful message. Now that we have offered, whatever we have to offer, with the right feeling, what is it that we can seek from the Yagna in return? Is it wealth or health? Sri Adi Sankaracharya in his Bhaja Govindam has said:

Maa Kuru Dhanajanayauvanagarvam
Harati Nimeshaatkaalah Sarvam
Maayaamayamidamakhilam Hitvaa
Brahmapadam Tvam Pravisa Veditvaa

Do not boast about wealth, health, friends and youth. All of this could be destroyed in a moment. Instead try to come out of this illusion of *maya* and strive to attain the timeless truth.

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The same Bhaja Govindam says:

Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam
Punarapi Jananeejathare Sayanam
Iha Samsaare Bahudustaare
Kripayapaare Paahi Murare

Born again, dead again and back you find yourself in the womb of your mother. It is very difficult to cross over the boundless ocean of *samsara*, hence O Lord, please redeem me through your mercy.

At this point in time I remember a Malayalam song that I like for its beautiful meaning:

I will consider all my travelling as *pradakshina* or circimbalation around You. I will consider all my singing as *mantra japa* or chanting. I will consider whatever I eat as *naivedyam*- an offering to You. I will consider my sleeping as *shastanga namaskaram* or prostration at Your feet.

O! Mother Devi, O! Goddess, You who shine with the effulgence of a thousand suns, I stand before You. O! Mother like a pining soul, please remove all that is unwanted in me and rock me to sleep on Your lap which is as soothing as the cool moon.

O! Goddess, I will consider all my acts as the *pooja mudras* that we do during worship, I will offer my heart to You as *dakshina*, I will do Bhajans and wave the camphor, the *arati* of a soul's worries.

O! Mother goddess, You who shine with the effulgence of a thousand suns, please emerge in all Your grandeur and bless me with purity, make me pure and grant me the *prasadam* of Your grace.

To conclude, let us connect with our Lord every moment of our life. Let us extend this yagna to our daily life on a daily basis, let us connect to our lord in our own personal, yet uplifting way. May Swami bless all.

Excerpts from Bhagawan's Discourse

*Brahmavidya nu goorchi bahula pracharambu salupu vaaru kalaru chala mandi
Kaani aacharinchu vaari ganulu ila leraya sathya maine maata Sai Maata*

There are many people who propagate the knowledge of the Self, but there are none who practice this is the word of Sai which is all Truth. Embodiments of Love!

The heart of Bharatiyas is pure and steady. It is the conviction of Bharatiyas that all are essentially divine. *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma* - Everything is divine, *Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagath* - The entire cosmos is divine, *Ishavasyam Idam Jagath* - God pervades the entire universe. These Vedic dicta convey the noble truths. People practicing these sacred dicta, this sacred path are fast declining. Though they declare that the entire cosmos is divine, they don't believe it in their heart in practice. They simply say for namesake that God is present everywhere but don't realize it in practice.

Such noble truths are there in large numbers in Indian culture. The culture of Bharat is infinite but such a divine and noble culture is being forgotten these days. What is the reason? It is because you have distanced yourself from the latent divinity. The immanent human values are being forgotten. Truth has originated from man. Do you find any man practicing these eternal truths which have come out of him?

God is truth. This truth is in everyone uniformly. Man is not able to realize this divinity and is getting carried away by imaginations. From time immemorial, Bharatiyas have been worshipping trees, anthills and also the lifeless stones. The result of this worship is born out of their true faith. Many consider this as an imagination and treat Bharatiyas as fools and propagate this to other people. But this is not a proper understanding.

In this world, there is nothing without divinity. In these circumstances, what is wrong if one worships soil, tree or stone? This worship demonstrates the basic truth that everything is Divine. The God present everywhere is also present in these objects of worship. Man today is not able to understand

this principle of oneness. The Bhagavad Gita also repeatedly stated that this oneness is the very philosophy of Atman. But among Bhartiyas, some people don't believe in this principle of oneness.

It is said- Brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God. The Bhagavad Gita contradicted this view. The spirit of oneness is the eternal truth. This culture of Bharat can't be found in any country at any point of time. We should not criticize anybody. If you accuse anybody it is amounting to accusing your chosen deity. If you worship anyone, it amounts to worshipping the Divine. There is spiritual content in every object of this world. We don't try to understand the spiritual content of this material world but we go on criticizing everything.

The Bhagavad Gita exhorted that we should not hate anybody or criticize anybody. This is because God is present in all. This is oneness. The social culture of Bharat is the noblest. We have to develop this social justice more and more. We have to nurture this social justice with full faith. This is the basic philosophy of Bhartiyas. This sort of social justice is not found in any religion or any country. This social justice transcends the principle of oneness.

How can man understand this sacred principle? In human life, if we investigate and explore, we can experience divinity in every aspect. In sand, diamond, stone, frog, mound, tree or an anthill, the principle is the same. This is the emphatic teaching of the Bhagavad Gita. Our ancients worship trees. In every house one will find a Tulsi plant and other trees that are worshipped. They had full faith that be it a Tulsi leaf or a Bilva leaf, their offerings reach God.

For Bhartiyas, everything is divine. Whatever we speak, see, think, comprehend or worship is divine. There are many great luminaries who realized this sacred principle. Tyagaraja propagated the principle of oneness through music. He prayed to Rama, "O! Rama please bless me with that which is present in an ant, in Brahma and also in Shiva and Keshava." He had full faith that God is there in even an ant. God has given mighty power to an

ant. When such a small ant bites, even a big human being has to feel the pain.

The culture of Bharat, the sacredness of Bharat and the faith of Bharatiyas is not being understood by anybody all over the world. Even Bharatiyas themselves are not able to understand this culture in full. Right from a small being to a gigantic being, you will find divinity. This day of Dasara embodies in itself the principles of Mahalakshmi, Mahakali and Mahasaraswati. These three are one; Mahakali is energy aspect, Mahasaraswati is the aspect of speech and Mahalakshmi is the aspect of bliss. All these three are present in every one. We don't need to search outside; the human quality is verily divine.

Hence Man is God. Consider Man as God and inculcate divine qualities and enjoy the divine bliss.

Follow the Master

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A few weeks ago, a thought struck my mind that each and every moment that we experience in life is ephemeral and there are many defining moments in our life. These moments are cherishable if we think of them to be sweet. On the contrary, the very same moments can turn out to be really horrific experiences if we think of them as really bitter pills to swallow. This is the importance of being physically, mentally and emotionally present at such crunch moments of life.

As I was pondering over this thought, a few questions arose in my mind as to what is it that causes such a drastic impact in our life? What is the driving force behind all our actions? Is it our own effort or is it the conscious will power which causes an action? Soon I realized that it is nothing but the creator of these thoughts, the fickle mind that wanders here and there. It is so quick to react to any situation that finally, man succumbs to it and becomes its ultimate prey. What I personally feel is that there are two kinds of people on this earth. The first category are those people whose mind keeps wandering and they become victims of their own inability to make decisions for themselves. The second category of people are those who have complete control over their mind because of a divine connection and this connection leads them to constantly think about God and surrender each and every activity to Him.

At this juncture I would like to narrate a small example- a small incident that took place in my own life. This reflects my own wandering mind. It was May 2011, a period of time when each and every outside student who is a devotee of Swami would be eagerly waiting to join His institute and be proud to call himself a Sai Student. I was one of those outsiders who was at Prasanthi Nilayam (at the time). I had applied for the B.B.M. and B.Com. Programmes at the Institute. The entrance exam and the interview went on very well. The next day, I headed towards Bangalore from where I would be boarding a bus to Mumbai. The journey in the bus would take around eighteen hours.

The journey started and half way through the journey, many thoughts were running in my mind; whether I will get a seat in Swami's hallowed Institute or not. I was analyzing the various possibilities of my future.

As these thoughts were running in my mind, I just casually asked my mother as to what are my chances of getting a seat in Swami's Institute. She immediately replied that it is nothing but Swami's Divine Will that which will eventually prevail, and that how much ever you try, His Will can't change. As I was trying to understand what she said, I just closed my eyes and I don't know what prompted to suddenly open my eyes after two or three seconds. As soon I opened my eyes, they fell on a green mango box that was situated right at the top of the baggage area. I thought to myself, 'What does this green mango box signify to me?' But one word which was inscribed on the outer part of that box had a very deep impact on me. The word was selection, which was an indirect indication from Bhagawan Himself; that He knows each and every thought that was running in my mind. That was the moment with which my conviction in Bhagawan grew slowly but surely and that's when I started my spiritual journey in life.

Life is a journey that takes us to some remote corner of the world. But one fundamental question arises in everyone's mind- is that destination the ideal place where you want to be, or is it just an unexpected incident? The answer to this question lies in our understanding of life. Many people consider themselves to be mere instruments in the divine hands. But, it is ultimately up to us to follow our conscience, make an effort to have a big impact on the course of life. At this juncture, I get reminded that there is a very big need for self introspection. The kind of introspection that will lead a person to know his life better and ask what genuinely makes him happy. This is when we become true warriors of life.

Any commoner can have a cubic centimeter of a chance which would pop out in front of his eyes from time to time. And here in lies the underlying difference between a commoner and a warrior. A commoner just admires the cubic centimeter of chance even without using that opportunity. But on the

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other hand, the warrior utilizes that opportunity, is ever alert and deliberately waits. When this cubic centimeter of chance comes his way, he picks it up with both hands. This is one of the greatest hallmarks of big leaders today. They seize the moment at the right time; *carpe diem* as it is called. One of the greatest English poets Robert Frost talks about walking the unknown path in his poem, 'The Road not Taken'. He had two paths in front of him. One was the path that was very common and was for also-rans and the other path consisted of dense bushes and thorns; and yet Robert Frost chooses the path to explore the unexplored destination, which is the unknown path.

Sometimes I feel that having joined Swami's Institute, I have taken this unknown path of life. It would have been so easy for me to join any reputed college in Mumbai but what prompted me to come to Swami's Institute? It is merely His Divine grace. When we talk about what we learn at Swami's Institute, we talk about time management, discipline, adaptability, etc. But the most fundamental aspect that we learn is to inculcate this habit of contemplating within and realize our unrealized spiritual potential.

Swami has always emphasized the language of the heart. Many people perceive this language to be unknown, as purity of heart is needed to communicate in this language. Swami has also explained that at each and every moment, a person has to realize that God resides within him. He is just a manifestation in this omnipresent world. This is the only thing that a person needs to realize and when he realizes it, his inner voice constantly guides and protects him at each and every moment of his life. Swami has said many a times: Follow the master, Face the devil, Fight till the end and Finish the game.

What is the underlying principle of this? When we start contemplating and introspecting, we will understand that our Self reflects our true nature and we experience supreme bliss or *ananda*. This level of happiness is way beyond any other materialistic level of happiness. A very famous Russian writer, Leo Tolstoy, once said, "True happiness lies within and the only purpose of life is happiness."

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Why has Swami told us to do silent sitting or meditation for few minutes everyday? It is to purify our heart and cleanse our mind in such a way that all our obstacles will get cleared away. At that level of thoughtlessness and purity in mind, we experience eternal bliss. When we follow the master by following His dicta, He gives us the courage to fight till the end and finish the game.

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God is Love, Love is God

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There was once a small boy who wanted to meet God. He knew that it was a long journey to where God was and so he packed his bag with a few sandwiches and a drink and started out on his journey. After he had walked a considerable distance, he met an old lady who was sitting in the park. He took out his drink and was about to have it, when he noticed that the old lady looked hungry and tired. So he offered her a sandwich. The old lady gratefully accepted it and smiled at the little child. Her smile was so delightful that the boy wanted to see it again. So after sometime, he offered her a drink. The old lady again smiled at him. This filled the boy's heart with joy. The old lady and the small boy sat in the park the whole afternoon eating and smiling. As it grew dark, the boy got up to leave, but after he had taken few steps, he turned back ran towards old lady and gave her a huge hug. The old lady in return gave him her biggest ever smile suffused with love.

When the boy reached home, his mother asked him what made him so happy that day. He replied, "Mother, today I had lunch with God," and added, "You know what? She has got the most beautiful smile I have ever seen." On the other end, when the old lady reached her house, her son asked her, "Mother what has made you so happy?" And she said, "I ate sandwiches in the park with God and you know what- he is much younger than I have ever thought." In this story, this small boy felt the hunger that the old lady had, his concern and compassion for the old lady was given to her in the form of a sandwich. The old lady was moved by the love of the small boy and she gave her love to him in the form of a beautiful smile.

The moral of this story is that both the old lady and the small boy had the wonderful experience of meeting God. The selfless love that they gave each other made each feel that the other was God. One thing that is very evident from this story is that God is a four-letter word: LOVE. This feeling of love is quintessentially an intense thought or feeling of oneness amongst us. To cultivate this feeling of oneness, there is a three-step process. The first is to

pretend, then to tend, and finally to end.

The word pretend here does not mean what it usually referred to as, that is- to deceive someone by acting in a way for your selfish motives. The word pretend here means to change your behavior and actions in a way to replicate the ideal you want to be. Since the ideal here is to develop the feeling of oneness, we must start thinking that there is no difference between others and ourselves. As we develop this feeling of oneness or start ‘pretending’ to feel this, we start ‘tending’ to feel the joys and sorrows of all our fellow beings as our own. Finally, we reach a stage wherein we end up realizing this feeling of oneness in us.

Swami often says that when a thorn pricks your foot, your hand rushes immediately to remove the thorn. In a similar way, when one section of the society faces discrimination, is troubled and tormented, it is the innate responsibility of all the others in the society to rush to their help. This feeling of empathy will come in us only when we cultivate life’s most valuable emotion, love. The ongoing Grama Seva is a practical course in selfless love and its impact on the society. On one hand it teaches students and teachers and on other it elevates the villagers with the feelings of devotion and gratitude.

In a particular year, after the students had finished their service, they were returning to the vehicles. They saw a young man walking on the road and asked him if he had received prasadam. The man replied in the negative. So one student picked up a food packet and a *ladoo* and approached the young man. Immediately, the young man retraced his steps and went back, saying, “Sir, please don’t come close to me. I am a Harijan and outcast.” In response to this the student went closer, put his arm on the young man with all love and affection and said, “Harijan is a man of God, why should I not come close to you?”

Our beloved Bhagawan says that all men are brothers. These words were not from a prepared speech or a rehearsed drama. They were spontaneous expressions of love, from the heart of the student. When the food packet was

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placed in the hands of the young man, he was overwhelmed. He wiped his tears and said, “Sai Baba is God for He alone cares for one and all without any distinction.” This is yet another incident that shows us that God is a four-letter word: LOVE.

In the world today, society is afflicted with multitudes of predicaments. Sisters and brothers, when we walk out in the society as messengers of Sai, we must hold in our hearts the selfless love that God shares with us, as Swami has given us. With this love, we must heal the wounds of hatred, anger and greed. There must come a day when every man in distress no longer looks up into the heaven for God, but finds God amongst his own brethren ever ready to help, to care, to love. It may happen that sometimes we are not able to express our love to all the people who are distressed who are far away. But selfless love can be expressed in the form of a simple prayer, which God answers immediately. Swami taught me this lesson about the efficacy of a selfless prayer.

It was in the year 2011, in the month of March. Swami had not been keeping good health. It pained me extremely to see Swami come this way for darshan. One day in the hostel, along with two brothers, I was going through a book that contained few photographs of Swami. To add to my agony about His ill health, we came across a photograph in which Swami was laughing heartily. We then felt, how long it had been that we had seen Swami like this. We then decided to pray collectively that Swami should smile that evening and when we went for darshan, I saw that Swami was still unwell. With a prayer in my heart and the letter in my hand, I waited for Him. As he came close to me, He looks straight into my eyes and all of a sudden, gave me a beautiful smile! That day, I cried profusely and I realized that a selfless prayer from our hearts will be responded by God immediately, for God is love!

To conclude, I would like to quote Bhagawan’s own words, “God is Love and Love is God. Where there is love, God is evident. Love more and more people, more and more intensely. Transform this love into service, transform this service into worship, for this is the highest *sadhana*.” We tune a radio to

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hear a song to a particular frequency. In a similar way, we must turn the dial of our minds to the frequency of selfless love so that we can experience God. So tune yourselves to love and stay tuned to God.

Swami, I pray, just like the small child in the story- let each one of us cultivate this selfless love and experience your presence in our lives forever.

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The Sai Commandments

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Empty of myself stands before Thee, Thy make, Thy sculpture, Thy grace. In readiness to receive from Thee, Thy breath, Thy command, Thy will. Signs of gratitude puffs up this eye, this vessel, Thee embraceth as Thine. The soul as it bows ever yearns to be Thine.

Sai says 'yes' and all of us nod in affirmation. Sai says 'no' and all of us seize to act. Sai says 'wait' and all of us give ourselves to indefinite waiting and when Sai 'decides' not to say at all, our lives decide not to live. Yes, Sai is, saying all that matters to all of us. Sai said, He says and He will say and His sayings are His messages. His every gesture, His every move, His every stillness, says. He walked the Earth, He said, 'Walk the path of Sathya'. He smiled at us, He said 'Always be happy'. He looked at humanity; He said 'See always good'. He patted us, served the needy and said 'Love All Serve All'. He blessed mankind and said 'Always be mine'. He said it all when He said, nothing at all and now when Sai is instilled, He still says, He says 'Still your mind and see myself in everyone'.

Brothers and sisters, we all are so very specially blessed as we have heard Sai saying, we have seen Sai saying and we can feel Sai saying. His sayings are His messages, His commands which must be very breath of all of us, which we inhale to assimilate and exhale to act on. Sai descended in Kali age, spread His divinity, touched the hearts with His ever encompassing love, handpicked a few, drenched them in His effulgence, guarded them, guided them, transformed their beings and called them His devotees, His only property, His instruments to spread His message. We all are those chosen ones on whom Swami has placed His trust. Swami has constantly worked on us at that time, we were still and now when Swami is instilled, it is our turn to incessantly work for Him to be aware that our lives are already custom-made for His vision and act on His commands.

There was only one Moses whom God handpicked to save His children.

Moses heard God's voice from an orange effulgent cloud of fame. We all have seen the effulgence walking the Earth, we have seen him taking form, clad in saffron hue. Moses found his God on the Mount name 'Sinai', we all live in 'Sai nai ness'. Nai-ness, meaning 'nearness'. Just like Moses received the Ten Commandments, on mount 'Sinai', in 'Sai nai-ness', we also have seen and heard our Sai giving His commandments. Commands meant to acquire Sai nai-ness. So here I am today with an attempt to garner the Ten Commandments of Sai from ten years of my stay in Sai nai-ness.

Ten years ago, when I was just completing my XII Std., in this very verandah my father prayed to Swami, "Swami *bitiya ka kya* (what about my daughter)?" Swami very lovingly patted him and said aloud "*Edhar deta*" (Shall give here). Thereafter, He kept on giving me and He gave me everything. He gave me admission into His University, He gave me admission into His heart and He added mission to my life. But more than anything, He gave me His nearness and Sai nearness brought 'newness' to my life.

I grew up with Sai Sankalpa, in Sai Sannidhi, to undertake Sai Samskaranam and these were the first three commandments of Sai. My first three steps, my kindergarten education in Sai educare, the first three S's, Sai Sankalpa, Sai Sannidhi and Sai Samskaranam. Sai Sankalpa, the very first speaker talked about- Divine will. Yes, for all us, His students, Sai Sakalpa- Divine will, is the very step in His Sai Educare. He willed, "*Edhar deta*" and it happened. So, I learnt, Sai Sankalpa must be my life.

With Sai Sankalpa, naturally flows Sai Sannidhi. Before coming here, God was something very remote and a universal concept for me. But now, God has become somebody my very own; somebody whom I know is continuously thinking about me, and whom I am continuously thinking about. This constant communion is Sai Sannidhi. In Sai Sannidhi, we don't feel any dependence on the material world or the world around us. Sai Sannidhi becomes our solitude and becomes our company. Sai Sannidhi brings to us a very new world in which only we are there with our own God.

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When there is Sai Sannidhi, inner transformation naturally follows, that is—Sai Samskaranam, my third lesson. In His discourse delivered on 15 June 1989, Swami has emphasized the importance of the process of *samskara*, which is to bring about refinement in life. He says even an object needs refinement before a man can use it. He gives an example of paddy, which can be consumed by man only when transformed into rice and then He goes on to say, “If an object needs to acquire higher value, it needs to undergo this process of refinement. Then how much of transformation does man, who is much more important than an object needs? This was my next lesson. Inner transformation is very important and it can come naturally our way, if we are open to it. In Sai Sannidhi, we live in Sai culture, Sai discipline and Sai values—all unawares—and with this Sai Samskaranam becomes a very easy and natural process to us.

With this three S’s, as our ABC base for Sai Educare, I move onto the high school commandments. The next three S’s are Sai Sakhyam, Sai Soukhyam and Sai Sneham. At this level of education, children feel the need for a true friendship, true wellbeing and true love. Sai Sakhyam— Who is our true friend? One who takes care of our spiritual wellbeing, who helps us to acquire and attain higher goals, and one who frees our mind of all its dilemmas. At this stage of my growth, I watched my mind challenging and testing God’s presence in my life. Once, my curiosity led me to question the blue colour of the sky and I went to my friends, my teachers and asked them why the sky was blue in colour? Well, they did give me some answers but nothing really satisfied my soul. After a few days, all of us from Anantapur came to Puttaparthi. It was on the 27th of Sept. 2009, and Swami decided to bless all of us with a discourse. He opened the discourse by glorifying His creation and He went on explaining blue colour of the sky. He said, “The oceans and the sky then became blue. The blue colour is indicative of the vastness of the ocean and sky.” Then He said, “God is also vast, thus, God is portrayed in blue in His appearance.” That was the answer that really satisfied me. That is my true *sakha*, taking care of the most silly of my dilemmas.

From this incident, I understood that He is my only friend and I also

understood why He is my *only* friend? He not only answered my dilemmas, which were mundane and worldly, but also gave me the spiritual edge of every experience, every incident, my reactions and my problems. He gave me deeper insights into life and that is, Sai Soukhyam. My next lesson was: Sai is my only spiritual master. It is very essential in life to train of our minds towards discerning the spiritual and philosophical meaning of every moment that we live. I understood that every moment is His experience. In every difficulty lies our growth. Every uncertainty and delay is His way. In every pain and pleasure is our growth and then I understood to drop the past, live the present and surrender the future. Just yesterday in Swami's discourse, Swami said, "See the divine in every being," and that's precisely what spirituality itself says. It says, spirit + actuality; actualizing our own spirit.

True spirituality is in experiencing, feeling the true spirit and essence, not only in our own selves but in every object, in every experience and in every incident. That's what Sai Soukhyam leads all of us to.

Now this way, spirituality becomes easily attainable when we have the miraculous Sai Sneham. Yesterday, in the introductory talk, it was mentioned that the core of our Sai Institutions is Sai Sneham, Sai Love. It is love that heals, it is love that transforms and love that inspires. Why do we really think that we get consoled when Swami consoles us? Why do we think that we get guided and attracted towards Swami's missions and His inspirations? It is only because He truly loves us and that was my next lesson. Sai Sneham, is a soul force behind, Sai Samskaranam. While Swami's creation of vibhuti, chains, statues, rings, etc. are no doubt His miracles, the greatest of all miracles that the Earth has ever seen is, Sai Sneham, Love, which is same to each one of us: equally unconditional, so pure, so true, unsullied and divine. That is the miracle of the Kali age. It is the miracle of His love that touches our heart and we transform. It is the miracle of His love that many of us who are sitting here without having seen Swami, without having heard Him, without having His physical Darshan, and still believe in His Godhood and willingly adopt to Sai's way. In fact, the Earth won't have ever seen the irony that filled the air on the 24th of April 2011. While devotees from all around the world were

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rushing into Puttaparthi to have Swami's last physical Darshan, here was our Swami who was incessantly taking care of food, water, comfort, lodging and security of the same devotees! That is Sai Sneham. The Kali age would have seen the pure love and the willing hearts to sharing love for their Sai on that particular day and that is the power of Sai Sneham. Sai Sneham is so enticing that inner transformation, Sai Samskaranam just happens.

When inner transformation naturally becomes our choice, then we lead to next higher grade in Sai, Sai Educare and that is the next three S's- Sai Swasham, Sai Sevanam and Sai Samarpanam. Sai Swash- that divine breath is present in every being. In fact, every breath taken as an offering to Sai becomes Sai Namasmarana in itself as every breath is Sai Swash. Now how to really fill our hearts with this Sai Swash? Swami gives a beautiful analogy. He says, to empty a pale filled with dirty water, open a tap of pure water into it. As pure water fills in, dirty water will flow out. So in order to purify our hearts, we just need to fill it with pure love and naturally all *Shadripus* (Six inner enemies) will be cleansed from our heart. As we have already been chosen by Swami as His devotees, this process of purification has already begun. Sai's Love is incessantly flowing into our hearts. Now it depends on us- how soon we empty our pales. After this comes Sai Sevanam. Swami says, Love All Serve All. In fact, loving somebody truly is service in itself and that is Sai Sevanam. Sai Seva doesn't ask anything from us. It needs a ready and willing heart and ready hands.

Our readiness to give our lives in His service is much more important than the measure of work that we do. Swami Himself said, "He doesn't want anything from us but to please Him." That is Sai Service, Sai Seva. We just need to make ourselves available for His work. What is His work and What is our work? In one of the interviews, Swami told my father, "*bahut kaam karta, bahut kaam karta* (you do a lot of work)." To this, my father replied, "*Aap he ka kaam hai Swami, Aap he karte, mai kuch nahi karta* (all is your work and you alone do it, I do nothing)." Swami laughed with compassion and said with a commanding voice, "Yes, your work is my work" and that was my next lesson. Swami's work is our work, offered to Him with pure heart.

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Sai Swasham can be felt within, Sai Sevanam, can be offered only when we are ready to completely surrender ourselves. While Sai Swasham is the surrender of our heart, Sai Sevanam, is surrender of our hands and Sai Samarpanam, is surrender of our mind. I realize all my doubts, my challenges and my trials can be overcome only when I surrender my mind. I also realize that surrendering the mind is not a very easy job. But then, Swami taught me, how to do it so easily. He whispered to me to avoid the six W's and one H. All the interrogatives of English: which, where, why, what, who, whose and how. If we avoid that, we surrender our Self. In fact, when we use all these interrogatives in a sentence, the sentence becomes complex and when we use all this interrogatives in our lives, our lives also becomes complex. When we entertain such doubts, we question Sai Sankalpa. Praying to Swami to help me completely surrender to His will, I now move on to the highest kind of learning in Sai Educare.

Just yesterday in His discourse, Swami asserted that Sai is the only Truth. This is the last and the tenth commandment of Sai Educare, the only S, Sai Sathyam. Sai is the only Truth and everything else is His mere image. Swami taught me that it is not who we speak, it is not who we think, it is not who we act, it is He who is the word, He who is the thought and the deed- we are mere puppets in His hand. Our every stillness and our every move depends on the string that He is holding.

Now the question arises- if everything has to be His will, then where is our effort? Our effort lies in accepting Sai Sankalpa as our ultimate will. In constantly trying to be in Sai Sannidhi and to be open to Sai Samskaranam, our efforts lies in developing attachment only to God for Sai Sakhayam, Sai Soukhyam and Sai Sneham. Our endeavor must be to turn inward and feel the flow of Sai Swasham within and make Sai Sevanam, our way of life. But our rigorous effort must be in surrendering ourselves in Sai Samarpanam. What is our ultimate effort? To realize that *sathyam* in Sai Sathyam.

These Ten Commandments are just a speck in the vast ocean of Swami's teachings. While these Ten S's can become our way of life, we have the three

ultimate S's as the center of our life, that is, Sri Sathya Sai. If He is the center of life, all the S's will just follow. Just yesterday, Swami said in His discourse, that while we have theoretical knowledge of everything, we fail to practice. So here I stand humbled, praying to Swami: Swami, please bestow wisdom on me to live your commandments. Moses was handpicked to show the children of God the promised land. All of us are chosen ones as the torchbearers in the Sai mission to show the children of Sai, their promised land, this miraculous world of Sai. What is required from us is our sensitivity towards Sai's sayings, His commandments and His messages. So let us all see Him say, hear Him say and feel Him say. Let us make Sai sayings our asset, our only property, our purpose and our life.

Oh! Sai, make me live your commands, absorb your sayings and spread your message. Keep me ever in 'Sai nai-ness' always, garnering command after command, making my life worthy of all that you give me, and offering each to Thee as Thine.

Excerpts from Bhagawan's Discourse

*Asthiram Jeevanam loke, asthiram yavanam dhanam
Asthiram dara putradi, dharmam premam dwayam sthiram*

In this world there is nothing permanent. All are like passing clouds. Life, material wealth, conveyances, property, kith and kin- all wither away with time. Human life is highly valuable. It has to be lived well. Man carries on with his life sojourn gifted with the senses and the body. The body is not separate from the mind, it is like an armour for the mind. For every living creature, this body acts like a protective shield. Having been given this body, it has to be used for good practices and good behavior so that the mind enjoys peace. Man has enslaved himself by the misnomer that the mind is imprisoned within the body. In fact, the mind is not imprisoned in the body. To feel that the mind is imprisoned is a sign of ignorance.

Mano moolam idam jagath- the mind pervades the entire cosmos. It can't be bound by anyone- it always remains free. The body is like an instrument of this mind. This instrument has to be used in the right direction and in a proper way. Man thinks that he is the body made of the five elements, he is not able to transform himself into divine principle due to identification with the five sheaths of the body.

Everyone identifies himself with the body and says I, I...But he is not the body, it is just a protective shield, an instrument. To identify yourself with the body is a sign of ignorance. It is something like keeping costly and valuable jewels in an iron safe that has no value. The most valuable virtues are kept safely in the iron safe of the body, which is of no value. This body is not pure, it is full of dirt, full of afflictions, full of bones...it can't cross the ocean, never think that it is permanent. You consider this body true and permanent and struggle hard to take care of it. Man is facing all troubles and difficulties due to his body identification. Man is passing through all types of difficulties to protect and sustain the body.

One has to understand the principle of truth within. Truthful thoughts are the real wealth of a human being. Forgetting these truthful thoughts, man

is going after the temporary, external, worldly aspects that results in karmas. These actions (karma) lead us to attachment to the untrue aspects of life. Due to this attachment, the human being loses his character. Due to this loss of character, he is forgetting his innate divinity. Character is a biggest virtue.

At one time Indra lost his kingdom and approached his preceptor Bruhaspati and said, “Swami, I lost my kingdom, is there a way for me to get my kingdom back? What is the way to attain my kingdom back?” Bruhaspati replied, “Son! Prahlada is performing a Yagna by the name Vishwajit. He has gathered all objects to be given in charity. You don’t go in the form of Indra but go as a poor Brahmin and ask for alms.” Indra disguised himself as a poor Brahmin and went to Prahlada. Prahlada was giving away all that was sought for. When this poor Brahmin went to Indra, Prahlada asked him, “What do you want O! Brahmin?” the poor Brahmin replied, “I want your character.” Prahlada gave a smile and said, “What is the use of taking my character? In this world there are so many sufferings, why don’t you ask for removal of suffering of yours?” the poor Brahmin said, “I don’t want any of those, just give me your character.” Prahlada thought that satisfying the poor Brahmin is his duty and said, “O Brahmin, I am giving you my character.” Instantaneously, a being with Self effulgence came out of Prahlada and entered the poor Brahmin. Seeing this, Prahlada questioned this being, “Who are you? Why are you going? This being replied, “I am your character. You have offered me to the Brahmin, hence I am entering him.” Prahlada permitted him to go. Later, another effulgent being emerged out of Prahlada. Prahlada questioned him, “Who are you?” the effulgent being replied, “I am the servant of character, I am the chief of the army. If the character is not with you, I also can’t stay here, hence I am following the character.” Prahlada permitted him to go. After some time, Prahlada saw that a beautiful feminine form emerged out of him. Even the feminine form started entering into the poor Brahmin. “Mother, who are you?” questioned Prahlada. She replied, “I am Rajyalakshmi, the wealth of your kingdom. When there is no character, when there is no army chief, I will not be protected, hence I am also following them.” Then Prahlada thought over, ‘Character is so valuable, with the loss of character, kingdom is also lost. The chief of army also leaves his place. Since then, Prahlada started

publicizing that character is most important.

Students should understand that youth and money are temporary, the family and children are also temporary. Youth vanishes like lightning. However, safeguard your virtues. That should be your chief aim. This was the message of Prahlada taught to the assembly. Therefore, every man should see that his character is perfect, else the humanness vanishes.

Realization through Surrender

Dr. D N Dikshit

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The speaker extolled Bhagawan in Sanskrit before speaking in Telugu.

I am reminded of an incident that happened in 1968. It was in Mumbai during the National level Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation conference being held in the Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan with dignitaries like then Deputy Prime Minister Morarji Desai and K M Munshi, founder of Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan and a great educationist was present in the gathering. Swami gave a thundering discourse in Sanskrit extolling Sanskrit. He said, "Sanskrit is our national language. This is the language in which our Vedas and Shastras have been written. Telugu is a regional language for me, for someone else Hindi is a regional language but Sanskrit is our national language and we are demeaning it. This language is a matter of pride for our country and also the world."

The real sanctity of Guru Poornima has been taught to us in this instance. These days when everyone is celebrating Father's day, Mother's day, Teacher's day, Swami taught us how to worship our preceptor, our mother and father. He imparted value education through His educational institutions and sending His messengers of peace to every nook and corner of this world.

Today is an auspicious day for the worship of Goddess Saraswati. The Divine Mother in the form of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba confers the wealth of *Mabatwam*, *Kavitwam* and *Patutwam*. The worship in these nine days is done in three parts. Being born as a human being, health is very important for him, which is called *Patutwam*. For this, Goddess Mahakali is worshipped for the first three days. A human being then requires sustenance on this earthly sojourn. He worships Goddess Mahalaxmi to get a means to earn wealth with a sense of sacrifice in the next three days. In the last three days, man worships Goddess Mahasaraswati to gain knowledge and wisdom.

Swami says the balance between worldly and spiritual life is the principle of

the Divine mother. Swami in all His compassion says, “Being in your worldly life, take one step towards me, I will take a hundred steps towards you. You look to me once, I will look after you the whole life.” To have a fulfilling life here and hereafter, take refuge in mother Sai. The easiest and best way for this is doing service. Swami is teaching this to His devotees.

To achieve this, our thoughts and feelings should be pure and unsullied. Goddess Saraswati is shown wearing white clothes to enforce this feeling in us. Once our thoughts are pure, we will have purity in speech.

A crow caws; it doesn't abuse us but we detest its voice, whereas a cuckoo is extolled for its song. In the same way, if someone speaks harshly, we detest him, but we like someone who speaks sweetly. Hence, Swami always stresses on sweet speech. In Lalita Sahashranamam, there is a *sloka* that beautifully explains the principle of Saraswati:

Vaakaadivini Vaamakeshi Vahnimandala Vaasini

To get a sweet and pleasing speech, we need the grace of Goddess Saraswati. One such blessed soul who got such shower of grace was a great poet. It was one of the birthday celebrations of Bhagawan Baba in Prasanthi Nilayam. Stalwarts in the field of poetry, literature and great scholars were present for this occasion. One poet was crestfallen as he had no garland to offer to Bhagawan. Swami looked at him, smiled and said, “Your garland is not in your hand but it is in your throat; please offer that flower garland to me.” Spontaneously, that poet offered a beautiful poem at the lotus feet of Bhagawan:

I wanted to pluck flowers to offer to you but you were smiling in each flower with a look of compassion. How can I pluck the flowers and stitch a garland? How can I pierce a needle through the heart of the flower where you are residing? Is this not the shower of His grace? It is You who speak, it is You alone who makes me speak: the words verily are You which come from deep within.

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This blessed poet, was able to forget himself and was able to have the Darshan of Swami within.

Why has Bhagawan told us to wear white clothes? It is because this is the form of mother Saraswati. We always chant the mantra: *Prano devi Saraswati vajebhir vajinivati dheenama vitrayavatu-* The principle of Saraswati is the principle of constant flow (*Saras iti* Saraswati). Speech, feelings and emotions flow constantly in our body. By the grace of Mother Saraswati, this flow of intellect should be in a proper direction. This faculty of speech should be pure and blemishless- hence we worship Mother Saraswati adorned in pure white garments. She is compared to a Jasmine flower, the Moon and flakes of snow. I feel so happy when I see students of Bhagawan sit here clad in pure white clothes. This is nothing but the form of Mother Saraswati. The Veena in her hand stands for intellect. The thoughts in every individual are like the different frets on the Veena that she plays on and transform them into elevating thoughts, producing mellifluous music.

The mind given to you should be used for doing good deeds. The inspiration to do good deeds is given by Mother Sharada. She controls all the strings of the Veena in the form of *nadis* in our body and inspires us to walk on the righteous path. Saraswati removes the inertia in every soul, helps in inculcating the virtue of sacrifice and makes it to march onward on the path of Self realization. Mother Saraswati is depicted with four hands, which are nothing but Sathya, Dharma, Shanti and Prema. Sathya (Truth) is not just telling the facts, but that which confers auspiciousness to the world.

There is a beautiful story in the Mahabharata. A sage is undertaking penance in the forest. A few dacoits came chasing some passersby who were wearing a lot of ornaments. The passersby came and hid in the hermitage of the sage. The dacoits came and enquired the sage, "We are searching for some people who went this way, did you see them?" The sage thought to himself, 'If I tell them the truth that the passers by are hiding in his hermitage, the dacoits might take a drastic step, but if I tell the untruth that they have not come here, I will be committing a sin of telling the untruth.' He finally decided to

tell the truth to escape from committing the sin of telling untruth. The dacoits caught hold of the passersby, killed them and took all their ornaments. After a long time, the sage left his body and when the messengers of death were dragging him away to hell, he asked, “Why are you treating me like this, I have not done anything wrong?” The messengers replied, “You thought that you have done a meritorious deed by telling the truth, but that resulted in the death of many innocent people. Truth is not to tell the facts but it is to confer goodness to all.” Hence truth is to do good to the society.

The water supply project of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is to quench the thirst of people and hence it is a work full of truth.

When the practice of dharma increases in man, it elevates society. Every man has to undertake his duties sincerely. The practice of dharma makes one attain god. Bhagawan used to address everyone as Embodiments of Love. He once said, “When you see others with the body identification, you see them as mere bodies not as the eternal Atman. But it is not the case with me, I know the past, present and future of everyone. I spontaneously think on how to transform every individual and make him walk the Godward path. I have an Atmic vision hence I address all of you as Embodiments of Love or Embodiments of the Divine Atma. This is my principle of love.” We have to put all efforts to realize that Atmic principle.

Bhagawan always stressed on the importance of *seva* in attaining that pure love. We all have to take up these service activities and march forward on the spiritual path. Swami Vivekananda says, “A real *nayak* (leader) has to first become a real *sevak* (man of service).” Hanuman lived his life as a real *sevak* and epitomized this ideal. He never wished to be a godly person, he always wanted to be a humble servant of Lord Rama. Mother Sita questioned him, “O! Hanuman, how can the army of monkeys win over such mighty demons?” Hanuman replied, “O! mother, I agree that I am a very small person but all the other monkeys are either equivalent to me or even greater than me in prowess.

Excerpts from Bhagawan's Discourse

Every man should have a perfect character otherwise the humanness vanishes. Sacredness is not to hurt anyone, serve everyone and develop divine qualities. You should struggle for the welfare of the community. You are born in society; can't live away from society hence you should work for the upliftment of society. Humanness is greater than creation and also a part of creation. The individual has to wish for the welfare of the community.

In *Prakruti* (nature), creation is very important. In this creation, community is the second thing. The *vyasthi* (individual) has come out of *samasthi* (community). This *samasthi* is a product of the *srusthi*, the creation. This creation has come out of *Parameshthi*, the divine. These four are interrelated—*Paramesthi*, *srusthi*, *samasthi* and *vyasthi*.

How all the body parts together make the body. In the same way, all the individuals should come together for the welfare of society. This is the true meaning of human life. Human life is not for eating, sleeping, making merry and ultimately dying. A human being should aspire for the welfare of the society and undertake social service. Man should not have selfishness. He should give up selfishness and participate in societal work.

The society should move towards the creation. Then we can have the visualization of *Paramesthi*, i.e. the divine. If you forget all your responsibilities and only think about the divine, you will never attain divinity and only have suffering, worry and misery. Human life is ideal and blissful but such sacred life is being put to bondage. The elders are also responsible to create these bondages in youth and make them miserable. You should make an effort to know the present state of our country. There is agitation and restlessness everywhere. There is no happiness anywhere. When there is no happiness anywhere, how can you be happy? See that you find happiness within.

Man is very pure, but when he is a student, he contaminates these pure thoughts by getting into bondage. What is the comfort in bondage? None. When you can't have purity how can you give it to others? First Self-satisfaction is necessary which will nurture the virtue of Self-sacrifice. For

this you have to develop Self-confidence. Unity is very essential. With this unity any big task can be achieved. How can we attain unity? When we foster the purity within us, we get this unity. This in turn will confer divinity. How can one experience divinity by brushing aside purity and unity. This is a just a dream.

Dear youth and devotees- first of all, understand the human quality. Sathya, Dharma, Shanti and Prema are the human values that we have not got from somewhere else. In fact, they have taken birth along with us. It is foolishness to search for them in the outside world. We can achieve anything in this world, which is a form of Samasthi. These human values are in the vyasthi-individual level. If you foster the human values at the individual level, you can achieve peace at the societal level.

Embodiments of Love! You should understand the human values. Human life is not just taking a body, you have to realize the human values immanent in this human life. For this these human values have to be put into practice. How these human values will work for you?

We have a matchbox with number of matchsticks inside. The matchsticks won't catch fire when inside the box. A matchstick has to be removed and stuck against the box then we will get the fire. This matchbox, even being in your pocket, will not harm your clothes or you. Take out the matchbox, take out one matchstick and strike it against the surface of the matchbox- then we will get the flame. Similarly, the matchsticks of human values are in the box of the human body. When these matchsticks of human values are utilized for good thoughts and good actions you get the brilliant light of the divine.

Students are not just like matchsticks but there are like streetlights. What does the streetlight do? It shows light to the light pole and also to the passers by. Similarly, the human values will help you to realize yourself and will also help others. Basing on this, it is said- Help Ever Hurt Never.

If you are betraying your own Self, what path you will show to others? It is

like a blind man showing the path to another blind man. What is happening today is completely wrong. Elders also are leading the youngsters into bondage, which is a sign of foolishness and not wisdom. Hence take up the sacred path and struggle to remove the agitation and wickedness prevalent in the present society.

You have an atom bomb in the hand but you shout Peace, Peace, Peace! How can you get peace? Man is able to reach moon but is not able to get peace. You are having all wicked qualities, then how can you get peace? It is only bondage. To get away from bondage, you have to undertake social service. Once you start serving others, you will be happy. You should make an attempt to enjoy this happiness and share it with others.

Na karmana na prajaya dhanena tyagenayaika amruthatwa manashubu

The students of today don't have this quality of sacrifice. Without sacrifice, how can you expect to be happy? People are having more and more greed and miserliness. Man is not able to get satisfaction and peace after amassing lot of wealth and enjoying it. There is no contentment in man today.

A man of discontentment is always miserable. He ruins himself like Bhasmasura. Bhasmasura had a desire to annihilate anyone he puts his hand upon. Finally, his hand fell upon his head. Hence, do good with these hands.

Hastasya bhushanam daanam- the jewel of the hand is charity. Hands are not given to hit anybody or to do wicked deeds, but to do charity. These hands should be used only to serve and never to harm anybody.

Kanthasya bhushanam satyam- the necklace is truth. When you harm anybody, your life will be harmed and also will spoil others' lives. Dear students and youth! Put your life on a sacred path.

Swami – The Divine Mother

Sri Subrahmanyam Abhishek

XII Standard, Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School

To the one, whose love has no bounds. To the one, who is the form of infinite glory.

To the one, who is Goddess Durga, who blesses her children with the power to fight evil.

To the one who is Goddess Laxmi, who blesses her children, with happiness and prosperity.

To the one, who is Goddess Saraswati, who bestows the greatest value of wisdom upon her children.

To the one, who is Goddess Adi Parashakti.

To that supreme epitome of love and grace, I offer my prayerful salutations.

It is said, love is the form of the formless. Many a time, our Beloved Bhagawan has declared that He is the incarnation of Love, Love and Love alone. Swami's boundless love and grace has transformed many people around the world. I humbly feel that all of us yearn to come to this place, because, this is the very place where our Divine Mother showered Her boundless love and grace on Her children – in physical form.

At this point, I am reminded of an incident which took place in this same Sai Kulwant Hall. Once, after completion of *prasadam* distribution, Swami enquired with the boys whether everyone had received *prasadam*. To this, the boys replied, "Yes, Swami!" Then Swami Himself asked for a packet of *prasadam* and started walking towards the place where the boys were sitting, and to one of the boys' astonishment put the *prasadam* packet in his hands and made a profound statement. He said, "Even your brothers may forget, but your Mother will never forget." This statement has a very deep meaning, as it shows the depth of Love and Grace that our Divine Mother showers on Her children.

In both His incarnations, as Shirdi Sai and Sathya Sai, He has declared many a time that He is our Divine Mother and He is the one who will always

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protect and guide us. Once Swami declared, “Wherever you are, whenever you call for Mother Sathya Sai from the depths of your hearts, she shall manifest there.” This is the truth, truth and truth, forever.

At this point, I would like to share with you all an experience of my parents. About a decade back, my parents visited Dharmakshetra, in Bombay, for the first time. By the time the evening Bhajans ended, the last bus to the railway station had already left. They were helpless, as they neither knew the location of the place, nor the local language. They could not consult anyone for help. Suddenly, a stranger approached my father and enquired about his problem. Knowing my parents problem, the stranger asked my parents to follow him and he took them on a bus and then landed in a market. In the market, he started walking so fast, that my parents had to run behind him. Suddenly, he took a right turn. My parents too did the same. Lo and behold! the person who guided them till that point was not found anywhere, instead, the railway station where they had to reach, was right in front of their eyes. Brothers and Sisters, this experience shows, that if we call for Mother Sai from the depths of our hearts, She will manifest there, to protect us and guide us along the right path.

It is said that it is easy to love God. But, it is difficult to earn God’s love. So, what is the best way to earn God’s love? At this point, I am reminded of an incident which took place in the earlier days of Prashanthi Nilayam.

Once, an elderly woman devotee was waiting for many days to get an interview from Swami. But, Swami was not accepting her request. One day, she took the courage to stand up, when Swami came for Darshan and she said boldly in Telugu, “Swami, *Nuvvu ralla madhyalo puttavu, ralla madhyalanae perigaevu, nee gundae kooda rayae*”, which means, “Swami, you were born amidst rocks, you were brought up amidst rocks, even your heart is a rock.” To this, our most loving Mother, in the most sweet way, replied, “*Amma, idhi*

nijamae, nenu ralla madhyalo ne putti perigaenu, kaani, na gundae rayi kaadhu, na gundae navaneetham. Bhakthulu chesae prarthanalaku karigi pothundbi.” which means, “Amma, it is indeed true that I was born and brought up amidst rocks, but, My heart is not a rock, My heart is butter, it melts to the warmth of a devotee’s prayer.” Therefore, Swami Himself has given us a way through which we can earn His love and grace and that is heartfelt prayer. A prayer which is made with utmost sincerity, devotion and wholeheartedness, will be surely answered by our Divine Mother.

I would like to share with you all an experience of my own. Last year, when I joined XI Std., I intensely prayed to Swami to grant me one darshan while He is seated on the Golden throne in the sanctum sanctorum of the Bhajan Hall. My prayers continued for months. But, there was no reply from Swami. I did not lose hope. Instead, my prayers became more and more intense. A few days before my birthday, in the month of November, I had a beautiful dream one night. In that dream, I was searching for Swami in this very same Sai Kulwant Hall and finally reached the place, outside the interview room. Swami emerged out of the interview room, looked at me, and posed a question in hindi, “*vapas aa gaya kya?*”, “Did you come back?” I could not answer Swami. Looking at my confused face, Swami took me inside the Bhajan Hall and sat on the very same golden throne and made me sit near His Divine Lotus feet, looked into my eyes and gave a beautiful smile, which shall remain in my memory forever and ever, as this is the best birthday gift ever, and that too, from the Divine Mother Herself! The glory of Swami’s love and compassion, cannot be compiled into any number of books, even if we take the support of the best of authors or use oceans of ink, as His glory is boundless.

I recollect one of the interactions between Swami and Narasimha Murthy Sir, the ex-warden of Brindavan hostel. Once, when Sir was interacting with Swami, Swami explained the significance behind the sculptures in Prasanthi Mandir. Immediately, Sir made a request that he would like to compile a book on this, so that the entire mankind would come to know about the glory of Swami’s love and compassion. Swami did not give him the permission,

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saying, “If a mother gives food or clothes to her child, does she expect that it should be published in the newspaper. Similarly, Me and My works do not require any publicity. Whatever I give to the world, I give like a Mother.”

This shows the intensity of Love and Grace that our Divine Mother showers on Her children. Our Beloved Swami is the Mother of the entire creation. He takes care of the well-being and upliftment of all the aspects of creation. I am reminded of yet another experience of a devotee. Once, a devotee went to bed, probing deep into the mysteries of life and death, praying to Swami, to show him a way out of this. That night, Swami appeared in his dream and started laughing heartily. Suddenly, Swami disappeared, and a woman of celestial beauty appeared in His place. The woman started growing in size steadily and she reached the skies. The devotee could see the entire creation in that celestial woman. Then, the voice of Mother Sathya Sai declared, “The entire creation consists of my children. I take care of their well being. They play the game of life and I take pleasure in their game. When they get tired, I take them back into my bosom.” Then, with utmost reverence, the devotee prostrated in front of the Divine Mother. When he stood up, he found Mother Sathya Sai in front of him. The devotee’s question was answered and this also proves, that our Divine Mother, is the Mother of the entire creation. She is *Adi Parashakti* Herself.

Swami always emphasized on educare. Once He said, in the previous yugas, the formless God came in the form of the previous Avatars to kill evil that existed separately from the humans. But in Kaliyuga, evil lies within each and every human; and for one to kill this evil, one has to realize his own Self.

Swami even redefined the M.B.A. Programme. He said, M B A means ‘Mind, Body and Atma’. Mind is what others think you are. Body is what you think you are and Atma is what you really are. When you realize what you really are, you will be able to kill the evil within yourselves and attain God.

Swami emphasized that the medium of instruction in his educational institutions should be love, service and *sadhana*. He said, the goal of today’s

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education should not be to merely give bookish knowledge; instead, it should make man spiritually evolved. Swami always wanted that His students should have the head of Adi Sankaracharya, the heart of Buddha and the hands of Emperor Janaka. So, let us work on this holy occasion to fulfill Swami's wish.

Our Beloved Mother has gone nowhere. She has spread everywhere. She is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. She knows everything. It is for us to experience within us and everywhere around us. We have to feel Her presence everywhere. This should be the main aim for us today. We have to always hold on to our Divine Mother, so as to earn Her boundless love, grace and compassion. I feel myself blessed, to be a student of His, when I can experience Him within me and everywhere around me.

When dark clouds fill your skies, hiding sunshine from your eyes, say His name, see His form, hold on!

Hold on, Sai Ram! Say His name, see His form, hold on!

When things are getting tough and you feel enough is enough, say His name, see His form, hold on!

Hold on, Sai Ram! Say His name, see His form, hold on!

Keep a smile and say I can love your fellow men, say His name, see His form, hold on!

Hold on, Sai Ram, Say His name, see His form, hold on!

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Love of God and Love for God

Sri Rohit Kumar Chawla

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1 4th of June 1999- my first day at the Sri Sathya Sai Primary School. After completing the admission formalities, I was led straight to the dining hall for the evening tiffin. It was mangoes sent for us by Bhagawan.

30th May 2010- even as I entered the Sri Sathya Sai Junior Boys Hostel for my XII Std., I noticed at the entrance, several gift wrapped baskets. Bhagawan had sent mangoes for all of us. Eleven long years had passed. But His Love remained just the same. It is this changeless unconditional love that has nurtured, guided, guarded and moulded us.

Speaking of His love, I am reminded of a wonderful incident, which in fact was mentioned by the previous speaker. But I feel that it is my duty to share it, since I was also fortunate to be a part of it.

It was one of those beautiful Thursday mornings. We had all come for Bhagawan's Darshan from the Primary School. We were seated here and *prasadam* was being distributed. Swami glided and came near us. He enquired from the boy seated in the first row, if we had received *prasadam*. The boy stood up and replied in the negative. Bhagawan immediately called one of the serving boys and himself gave a *laddu* to this little boy. After this, Bhagawan said, "Brothers may forget you, but your Mother will never forget you." This statement and this incident goes a level beyond as this boy was suffering from severe jaundice, and hence he was prohibited from eating oily food items. We, his brothers had completely forgotten that he had jaundice, and that he should not have the oily *laddu* and had passed on a *laddu* to him, which he had, of course, refused. But Bhagawan, the Divine Mother, knew that Her little child was suffering from jaundice and remembered that He had to bless him with the *prasadam*, to recover, even without the boy asking for His blessings. Thus, He blessed him with the *laddu*, made special with His Divine touch. Needless to say, within three days, the boy was completely alright. How true it is, 'Brothers may forget you, but, your mother will never

forget you, for the mother lives only for the sake of her children!’

Throughout His life, each and every day that our Bhagawan lived was only for our sake. Each and everything that He did, was for our happiness. His was a life that epitomized the truth that love never fails, it ever gives. When He gave, He just didn’t give something, He gave Himself completely.

I remember in my V Std., when one fine day Bhagawan decided to distribute torches. A few months before that He had fallen and fractured His hip bone. But, inspite of that unbearable pain, He stood and with a loving smile, personally gave torches, to not one or two of us, or to the students of one or two classes, but, to each and every one of us, right from the I Std. till the VII Std. He underwent the terrible pain just to see that smile and happiness on our little faces.

As I stand here, I am reminded of the wonderful lines of Kahlil Gibran: “Love gives not, but itself and takes not, but from itself. Love possesses not, nor will it be possessed, for love is sufficient unto love.”

As it is said, that the only glory is His story and the only story is His glory. And so, I can go on narrating several such incidents of His love. But, I would like to pause and flip the coin. That is, Bhagawan loves me, but, how much do I love Him?

The omniscient Master that He is, He has already given all the answers to my questions, which are contained in His books, His discourses, or His conversations with His students and the gracious master that He is, He ensures that these answers reach me and so, Bhagawan’s reply to my question, How much do I love Him, is a part of a conversation, which he once had with the students around Him.

Bhagawan asked the students, ‘What happens in a marriage?’ He Himself went on to give the answer. He said, “The bride’s side welcomes the bridegroom’s party. All the guests are cordially welcomed. First, the guests

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are fed. Then, people from both the sides sit down and enjoy the wonderful feast. Realizing that some food is still left, they give it to the workers, to the catering people, to the cleaners and so on. Still, some food is left. With no other option, they throw it in the dustbin. A hungry dog comes there and eats this food from the dustbin.” Bhagawan then says, “Same is the case with your love. You give your love first to your family, then to your relatives and then to your friends, to your colleagues, to your neighbours and to everybody and finally you throw away the remnants of your love; God, in His infinite love and compassion, comes searching for that love, and accepts it.”

When I hear these words, I realize, how true they are, and I am ashamed at my selfishness and indifference. Filled with a resolve to change, I plead, “Dearest Bhagawan, how do I increase my love for you?” and He replies, “To love means to follow. And so, the only way to increase your love, is to express it by following my teachings.” His reply doesn’t end here, for He continues to say, “When you send a letter by Registered Post, the acknowledgement should come back in response that the letter has reached its destination. If that does not happen, how can you take it for granted that the letter has reached its destination? Similarly, when you say, I love You, and I am Yours, I should call you Mine. That acknowledgement should come from Me and that will happen, only when you achieve the state elucidated by Me.” Eager to be called His, and thus, be near and dear to him, I plead, “Dearest Bhagawan, describe to me, the state elucidated by You. The level set by You, for me” and His reply to this, is in the form of a poem inspired by Him. The poem goes thus:

Dear, Dear loved one, you ask, how will you know, when I am near you?

When on a sultry night
Everything is hot and still
The first cool breeze brushes your cheek
I am caressing you
Think of Me.

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When I sprinkle your face with rain
and wash the earth, the dry brown leaves
The first smell of clean rain
I am cleansing you
Think of Me.

Then you ask how will you know when you are near me?

When the burning sun has scorched you and the earth
The sand and dust fill your eyes
Not a silver of shade about
And you love Me.

When loneliness is accompanied by hunger
and not one can be satisfied
And you love Me.

When your lips are cracked
your tongue feels like clay
your throat seals up
There is no water about
Not even a mirage in sight
And you love Me.

When you hold a dying child
with eyes pleading
And you love Me.

When pain becomes unbearable
you smile, and you love Me

When i take from you your most
cherished possessions
On the first loss of your sight

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darkness envelopes you
And you love Me.

For everything you see,
hear, smell, taste or touch belongs to Me

So how can you give to Me what I already have but your love?

And that I gave to you before time began as your sole possession. When you return it to Me, then will I know you are truly Mine and I will dissolve your sorrow and happiness into Me.

Now, I am awed and silenced, for I know that I have miles and miles to travel, on this journey of love And the only thing that can keep me going on this path, is His Grace and his Blessings.

So, I pray to Him, for that, which He has often told, is the only thing, worth praying for. Dearest Bhagawan, give me the strength to love you from the bottom of my heart, until the last breath of my life.

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The Why, What & How of Bhagawan

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*Twamaeva Maata cha pita Twamaeva,
Twamaeva bandhuscha sakha Twamaeva,
Twamaeva vidya Dravinam Twamaeva,
Twamaeva sarvam mama Deva Deva, Sri Sai Deva!*

I would like to dwell upon three fundamental questions, based on why, what and how.

Why? Why is it that Bhagawan incarnated on the Earth? Why is it that He has called us all to his Divine lotus feet?

I understand and I am aware that I am not completely capable of adequately answering this question and hence would rely a lot on Bhagawan's own words in attempting to answer it. We are living in times where we have mastered regions far away in the moon and perhaps beyond the solar system, while remaining slaves to every gust of malice and fear. We are able to travel at over a 1000 miles per hour, but with a mind which is weighed down by the dark impulses of the savage past. We are caught by the tentacles of restlessness, caused by the desire of knowledge of the relative unimportance of worldly things. Swami says, "Knowledge has grown beyond the capacity of character and hence is very dangerously poised."

Swami has come to wake up each one of us. He gives this example: "When a man is dreaming that a cheetah is chasing him, he is extremely afraid. The surest, the quickest and the easiest way to relieve him of his fear, is not to chase away the cheetah, neither is it to help him run faster, but, it is simply to wake him up."

But the irony is- we need somebody who is awake in order to wake up a man who is dreaming and in the present times—when all of humanity is lost in dreams, or perhaps in deeper slumber, the fully awake—the supreme

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consciousness itself had to take a human form in order to shake us out of our false notions of assumed reality. Bhagawan has come for all of us, emphasizing that he has not come on behalf of any one religion and also declaring that He is the supreme One without the second, who is too big to fit into any one name, form or religion. Swami says, “I have come to restore Dharma, and therefore, I will not and do not require your homage. Give it to your Lord, Guru or whoever He is, I am the witness, come to set right the vision.”

Once while referring to the Bhagavad Gita, Swami said, “If you had as much *vishada* (despair) that Arjuna had, then you have the *adhikara* (competence) to receive the teaching that cured Arjuna.

In the modern times, when mankind is steeped in illusion, with an utter inability to distinguish between the right and the wrong, the real and the unreal, and the ephemeral and the eternal- the *vishada* of Arjuna is indeed every man’s grief, only compounded several times perhaps by the complete ignorance of who we really are. This grief of man paradoxically is the reason why God took a human form.

Now, the second part of the why- why is it that Swami called us all to his divine lotus feet?

There have been several answers to this question along the lines of *punya*, *prapti*, karma, etc., but none of which can adequately answer and give a reason to the immensity of the blessings that has been showered on each and every one of us. Blessings, which some of us are yet to understand. Blessings which have been sown as seeds and are sure to blossom at the right time. Blessings, which wear the cloak of difficulties, which only take us nearer to the goal, but, blessings all the same. Why did Bhagawan choose to bless us so much?

In fact, Swami Himself put this question to a group of Kodai boys, whom He had chosen to accompany him in one of the years, and the students also

tried in vain, to answer it along the lines of *punya* and karma and Swami dismissed all of them with a counter question. He asked them, "You know in the Himalayas, there are sages and saints, who are meditating for decades and perhaps for centuries together, to have one glimpse of me. You mean to say, you have done more tapas and have more *punya* than any of these sages?" The students were obviously floored and they waited for Bhagawan's own answer. Swami then went on to say, "It is merely my *Sankalpa* and nothing else."

This has been said about a hundred times from this very stage, but, let us remind ourselves for one more time, that we are here because the Lord has willed it so. Swami also reminds, He says, "to the one whom much is given, much shall be demanded." From each one of us, to whom so much is given for decades together- it is time now for each of us to act in gratitude. And that brings me to the second question, 'What'?

What did Bhagawan do all His life, and what is it, that he expects us to do?

In fact, the second speaker more than adequately answered this question. Bhagawan lived his life like a candle. He shed his light of love on each and every one of us and in the process, He melted Himself. And truly speaking, Swami didn't have to do any of what He did. In a letter that He wrote to his brother as a young boy, He said, "For me, the world is something afar, apart. I have nothing whatsoever to do with it. Yet I act and move out, just for the sake of humanity."

The very descent of the Avatar itself is the assuming of a function and donning of a role by the role-less and the function-less. But yet, Swami called us to Him, spoke to us, laughed with us, took care of us, solved our problems and most importantly, loved us. Loved us like no mother could, no father could, nobody else on this earth could. He loved us so intensely, that we felt overwhelmed by that Love and somewhere along the line, even without our knowledge, He sowed the seeds of change in each of us and in many cases, in spite of us.

Swami says, “I am an example and an inspiration in whatever I do or omit to do.” Having set such a beautiful example, what is it that Bhagawan expects us to do?

The answer however is, Swami doesn’t expect anything of us. If at all He expects anything, He expects that we be happy. Swami says, “I have come to give the key to the treasure of Bliss, for you have forgotten the way to Blessed Bliss. You ask of me for tinsel and trash, petty little cures and promotions, worldly joys and comforts. But very few ask of me the thing that I have come to give, namely liberation itself.”

One evening, Swami had called all the students to the Poornachandra Auditorium, in order to distribute some gifts. All the students had assembled and they were eagerly awaiting Bhagawan and the gifts too. Swami came amidst the students, moved amidst them and then instructed a few of the senior teachers to begin distributing the gifts. Once the distribution started, students quickly figured out, that there were different types of gifts. Some of them were pens, erasers, pencils, the so-called inexpensive gifts and there were the lucky ones who got the electric shavers, electronic calculators, the so-called expensive gifts. This disparity made every student very keen on not just what he is getting, but also keen on what the other person is getting and this comparison soon became a mild commotion; and when the students were so engrossed in the gifts, suddenly a hushed silence descended amidst them. They noticed that Bhagawan—who was until then moving among them—was slowly moving away. Once there was silence, Swami turned back, looked at the boys and asked, “Did everybody get the gifts?” Students gently nodded. Then, with a rather disappointed look, Swami asked, “Now who among you, wants me?” So asking, He walked back to His residence. Indeed a profound message.

When we are caught in a dark room and when somebody brings a lantern along, there are two things that we could do. We could either use the light to collect all our belongings, or use the very same light to find the door out of the dark room and be rid of the darkness forever. Most of us, brothers and

sisters, even as we are with Bhagawan, even as we do Bhagawan's work, sadly belong to the former category. Even as we do all of this, if we closely observe, we are really strengthening the walls of separation. We are strengthening our own identity and we are not breaking the walls of the ego- one of the main reasons for this is doership.

When Lord Krishna gave the Vishwaroopa Darshan to Arjuna, Arjuna saw the entire Kaurava army and the entire contingent, plunging headlong into the fiery mouths of the Lord, meeting their doom and destruction. Arjuna was wonderstruck and Krishna said, "Yes Arjuna, I have willed both the battle and the result. What remains is the mere completion of formalities which shall be done, with or without you."

That is similarly our plight too. But, this level of awareness is not easy to come by, because, it requires that we rise to a level wherein we constantly realize that Bhagawan is the true wirepuller of this Universe and we are mere puppets in His hands. And truly, it is Bhagawan's vision when He says, "Man has to be unmade and remade, which is ego destroyed and replaced with the transcendental consciousness." This is what He has come to teach, and this is what He is teaching each and every one of us, on a one-to-one basis. It is indeed a tough task. Swami Himself says, "I am Nataraja, the king of Dances, and you are all my pupils. I alone know the agony of teaching you every step of the dance." Swami has come to teach us this dance and what he expects of us, is to learn the steps very quickly as a good student.

That brings me, to the last question – How?

How are we to change? All the problems that we see in the outside world are but reflections of the turmoil within the mind of man, and it being so, there can be no answer that can come from the mind to solve this problem, for the mind itself is intrinsically, a part of the problem. The problem is not so much the inability to think. But, it is the inability to stop thinking. But, there is no need to despair, because Swami says, "I shall cure you, slowly and patiently. The more slowly I do it, the more lasting it will be. When you listen to my

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story, you forget the story of the world, and you live in only my story, until there is no other story for you to relate or live for. To make you story-less, is the scheme of my story.”

The answer to the how lies in love. Once Swami Vivekananda was having *satsang* with his disciples and he was spending several hours answering each of the questions of the disciples. He was patiently answering the questions and all along he saw a man who was standing at the corner of the hall and looking at Swami Vivekananda with pleading eyes. Finally, after three or four hours into the *satsang*, this man came up to Swami Vivekananda. He was a Harijan and Vivekananda asked him, “What is it that you want to ask of me?” To which, this man replied, “I don’t have any questions, Swami, but I feel you must be hungry. For the past three hours you have been patiently answering every question. I just got some milk for you to drink.” Swami Vivekananda was extremely touched and he said, “You have love in your heart which is a divine gift and this is more valuable than all the scholastic interpretations and expositions that we have been indulging in for the past three hours.”

When Swami began to say that our lives is His message, we probably didn’t understand the full significance of it. But today every word, action, thought, feeling and most importantly our love will speak of who Bhagawan is.

The answer to the how lies in nearness. Swami Himself says, “Be attached under all conditions to the source, substance and sum of all power. This attachment is called *bhakti*, for it is only when the wood is in touch with live embers, it too can become a live ember. Cultivate nearness to me in the heart and you shall be richly rewarded,” He says.

The answer to the How lies in Oneness. Swami declares, “Do not pose any distance between you and Me; do not interpose the formalities of the Guru-disciple relationship or even the attitudinal distinctions of the God-devotee relationship. Between you and me, I am neither Guru nor God, I am You and You are I, That is the truth. There is no distinction and that which appears so, is the delusion. You are the waves, I am the ocean, know this and be free.

Be Divine.”

In this truly lies the answer to all the three questions of why, what and how. Swami, no doubt came to tell us that He is God, but most importantly He came to tell us that we are God too. That is what He wanted of us. He wanted all of us to understand our divine realities and assert it in our daily lives and living, even as we are alive. And this He says is the greatest duty each man owes unto himself, and is the truest expression of gratitude to Bhagawan, and the truest fulfillment mission of Bhagawan on this earth.

I would like to conclude with a prayer to our dear Lord:

Swami, please bless us all this Dasara, that we not only have the ability to choose the good over the bad, but also have the ability to rise to the level which is beyond both good and bad- to the level of Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram, that we truly are. We thank you Swami for coming amidst us. We thank you Swami for calling us to your Divine Lotus feet and we thank you for continuing to keep us at your Divine Lotus feet. We thank you for everything Swami; we love you so much.

Excerpts from Bhagawan's Discourse

Dear students and youth! Education should be acquired for the emancipation of the country. It should not be for selfishness and self-interest. Such education is demonic and an utter misuse of learning. You should help others. What is the help that you are extending to your fellow beings? You say that you are helping and go abroad. You go to the foreign countries and wash utensils in hotels. Rather than washing coffee cups in overseas countries, clean pots in your own house; that is better.

‘This is my country, this is my mother tongue, this is my religion’, if one can't say so, he is a corpse. A student who can't help others is like a dead person. He is working for his selfish end but not serving others. For this reason, I am sending my students to every village of this district- to satiate their hunger, give clothes to them and impart some education to them for their upliftment. (*Thunderous applause*).

I don't want your claps, your actions will make me happy.

First discharge the duties you are supposed to. You should visit every village and do service. I saw a news item, and a very sad news appeared in it. An innocent and ignorant mother was not able to take care of her three children. When they asked for food, she could not supply. In fact, she fasted and tried to feed her children. Subsequently, she lost the energy to take care of her children. She lost all her energy; hence, she gave poison to her children, drank it herself and died. I saw that news item and thought, “Fie on Bhartiyas, are they so stone hearted and so wicked? Don't they have compassion? It is so unfortunate for Bharatiyas to listen to or see such an incident.” To prevent this, you have to go to every village, satiate the hunger of every villager, give clothes to them and impart some education and also tell the mothers that taking such drastic steps is not correct. If the mother herself takes such a wrong step, who will take care of the children.

I have constructed educational institutions where education is offered free of cost. For the body and the heart, health is essential; for the head, education is essential; for the sustenance of the body, water is essential. I will protect the

small children, give them food, clothing and give them a respectable future. I will make my students teach the village children. Though they are poor financially, they are also human beings. They should be treated as brothers. They should be loved; they also should be made to realize their divinity. We should have the broad-mindedness that all are brothers and sisters.

Hence, take lorries loaded with food, sarees and dhotis for elders and knickers and shirts for children and go from village to village and serve them. This is the real aim of human life. They will not have any suffering throughout their life.

My Sankalpa is Vajra Sankalpa (will as strong as a diamond). My will is only to help everybody; it does not have a trace of selfishness. You all should help your brothers and sisters. You should not go out of the country to earn money. If you go abroad, you turn into a beggar. You have studied here free of cost, if you go out with the sole objective of earning money, what is the use of this education. If you have sufficient money, help others. I will take care of you. There won't be any dearth or shortage of food and comfort. You don't need to worry about your comforts. If you help others, you will never be put to harm by God. Develop broad-mindedness. You should not have contraction love but expansion love. Expansion love will make you a true human being. Don't limit your love by my wife, my children, and my family. These desires are mean desires. These mean desires are equally shared by birds, animals and beasts.

It is a matter of shame that educated students are following this path and are behaving worse than animals? Having heard this for so long, don't become animals. Wherever you go, think for yourself, 'I am a human being, I am not an animal.' Develop such thoughts and grow in humanness. If you all work in an ordinary way, you are in no way different from an animal. Animals have no education, no earning and no struggle for existence. They eat at the appropriate time and work hard. We can feed ourselves if we work hard.

You should help all the children in the villages. They should be given education,

virtues and help them to be ideal citizens. Then this country Bharat will shine forth brilliantly and will be an ideal nation. You should be ideal in every aspect. Bhagawan hopes that you foster this human quality. My students will do this service, I have that faith. Don't have desires, bad thoughts and bad company. Always have good and ennobling thoughts, be in good company and be good men and women. An educated person should have a season and reason for anything. Don't be like the animals which don't have a season and reason.

Don't tell untruth, don't do injustice, don't get into a wrong path; here in lies the idealism of belonging to the Sathya Sai System of education. Bhagawan doesn't want anything from you. Wherever you go, get a good name, have a good conduct and do good deeds. Whatever anyone says, never give up your noble views. You can say, "Sir, I am hearing you, but I won't do that, I am a human being not an animal, I will live like a human being."

Who is a human being? One who is trustworthy, who has sacred ideals and has set high ideals for others and doesn't hurt anyone is a true human being.

Good qualities, good mind, following truth, devotion and duty are conferred by education and should be learnt by an ideal student. Having studied all these qualities, if you forget them and go into the world, what is the use? Whatever is studied should get imprinted on the heart. These virtues that are imprinted on the heart should be recapitulated. You should never be happy seeing the suffering of others. You should try to alleviate the suffering of people in every possible way- physically, psychologically and financially.

These are the ideals of Bhagawan. The students of Bhagawan should follow these ideals. I will send the teachers to help you in developing these ideals. Teachers have to take care of the students as they take care of their children. But what can even the teachers do during vacations?

Love is most important. If you have love, you can do any hard task delightfully. Develop selfless love; then you will have the true love in spirit. Love comes

from one's own heart and not from outside. It wells up from within. Even wicked people seeing our practice of love should transform themselves. First be good and make others good.

Students!

What are you expecting about the future? Sanctify your future by leading a life like this. During this Navaratri festival, grow in the nine forms of devotion. *Sravanam* (listening), *Keertanam* (singing), *Vishnu Smaranam* (chanting), *Pada Sevanam* (Service), *Vandanam* (Salutation), *Archanam* (Worship), *Dasyam* (Servitude), *Sakhyam* (Friendship), *Atma Nivedanam* (Self-surrender). These are the true paths. Enter these nine forms of devotion; develop a new culture and a new order of society. That is what I want you all to do.

Do you think that you are happy doing all these troublesome things? To the extent possible, distance yourself from troubles, realize yourself, help others to know their true nature and get a good name to the country. You should not work for individual gain alone but for your country.

Avadhānam

Sahasravadhani Kadimella Sri Rama Chandra Vara Prasada Rao

Telugu teacher, Taylor High School, Narasapur, East Godavari, A.P.

Avadhānam is a popular literary performance from the very ancient days in India. Avadhānam originated as a Sanskrit literary process and has been revived by Kannada and Telugu poets in modern times. It involves the partial improvisation of poems using specific themes, meters, forms or words.

It requires immense memory power and tests a person's capability of performing multiple tasks simultaneously. All the tasks are memory-intensive and demand an in-depth knowledge of literature and prosody. The tasks vary from making up a poem spontaneously to keeping a count of a bell ringing at random. No external memory aids are allowed while performing these tasks except the person's mind. Avadhānam can be considered as the divided attention (clinical model of attention) as it is the highest level of attention and it refers to the ability to respond simultaneously to multiple tasks or multiple task demands.

Avadhāni refers to the individual who performs the Avadhānam; one of the many individuals asking questions is a Pṛchaka (questioner). The first person to ask the question is called 'Pradhāna Pṛchaka'. He is the same as any other Pṛchaka except that he asks the first question. The questions asked are primarily literary in nature. The Pṛchakas can optionally place additional constraints. Though it is not stated explicitly, conformation to Chandas (poetic meter) is mandatory. The Avadhāni should answer them in the form of a poem. The questions generally consist of a description given in prose and the Avadhāni has to express it as a poem. The additional restrictions placed by the Pṛchakas can be anything like asking the Avadhāni not to use a given set of the alphabet in the entire poem or to construct only a particular type of poem, etc.

Ashtavadhanam is an abstruse scholastic exercise where eight scholars participate in a scintillating scholastic exercise. Sahasravadhani Kadimella Sri Rama Chandra Vara Prasada Rao, an accomplished poet, had conducted over 1500 Ashtavadhanams, twenty Satavadhanams and a dual Sahasravadhana along with many other feats.

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The Avadhani rose to the occasion by composing brilliant verses on the spot while answering the questions posed by the particular scholars. The questions were mostly from the sacred scriptures as well as about the glory of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The eminent Avadhani who successfully answered all the questions magnificently declared at the end: "It is by Sai's grace that I could perform so well today."

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Excerpts from Bhagawan's Discourse

For help received from anyone, we should be ready to help even to the last drop of our blood. We should express gratitude. There is no gratitude these days. For example, when this body (Swami) studied in Urvakonda, three of us used to sit on one desk. Ramesh and Paresh used to sit on my either side. They were of 7-8 years of age but were very weak in studies. When the teacher used to ask a question, I used to write the answer on the desk; and these boys would read what I have written and give the answer. The teachers would appreciate their answers. I used to help these boys in many ways. There was a change in them; they depended only on Raju (Swami). They always repeated Bhagawan's name, Raju, Raju, Raju.... When their mothers made some Pakora or Dosa, they would tie it in a small cloth and get it to Swami. I used to tell them, "I only give but I don't accept. Our friendship will continue only when there is no give and take. If I accept anything from you, I will be indebted to you, so I will not take anything." I am telling these details for the benefit of the public.

It was the time of public examination known as Eighth Standard Public Examination (ESLC). We had to go to Penukonda to write the exam and there was no bus transport those days, there were no bullock carts and not even proper roads. This remote village has now become a town today. We have a university and an airport in this small village. But in those days, if they had to go to Penukonda, they had to pack some rotis, put them on the shoulders and walk to Penukonda. The children used to take rest under the shade of a tree and go playing and singing all along. Ramesh and Paresh were scared of the public exam and said to Bhagawan, "We don't want to write this exam." Bhagawan said, "Don't worry, you have full faith in me, I will make sure that you pass." I told them how to conduct themselves during the examination. I told them, "As soon as you get into the exam hall, you will receive the answer papers and sit at the allotted places. I got the Roll No. 9, Ramesh got the Roll No. 300 and Paresh got the Roll No. 200. But both the boys strictly obeyed my command. They never disobeyed even the smallest of things. There pretended to write something and after the two hours the invigilator started collecting the answer sheets. I wrote the answer for Ramesh and Paresh both in their handwriting and signed on behalf of

them. I wrote my answers in half an hour and wrote both their answers in another one hour. Bhagawan took the three papers and kept them on the table. The other two boys returned. All the boys started asking each other as to why they have written. They told what they have written, they had this virtue that they never told untruth.

The results were out the next day- not like these days where it takes one or two months. In the results, Raju, Ramesh and Paresh passed in first class. We got 98-99% marks. There was no scope of copying, as the Roll Numbers were very distant- 9, 200 and 300. In addition to that, even the handwriting is of the respective students. Then they understood that Raju is not an ordinary boy, He can do anything. All the three boys were taken in a procession through the bazaar. They hung their heads down but I give them the courage and asked them to keep their heads high.

After that, I left the school and the headmaster also left the school. Ramesh and Paresh were not able to bear the separation. Ramesh ran and fell into the well and died. Paresh kept on uttering the name of Raju and finally turned mad. He was admitted at the Bangalore mental hospital. The parents of Paresh requested Bhagawan to visit the boy. Swami said, "That Paresh is different, this Paresh is different, I don't want to come and meet him." He also passed away after some time.

Later, I had a small puppy named Lily and Billy. They got puppies named Jack and Jill who were none other than Ramesh and Paresh. Unable to bear the separation, they were ready to be born as dogs to be close to Bhagawan. I used to stay in a small thatched hut. When I am sleeping they used to sleep with me one at my feet and one near my head. The moment I get up, they used to get up with me.

On one occasion, the Queen of Mysore division came to have Bhagawan's darshan. She was a very orthodox woman. She used to get down at Karnatanagepalli on the other side of Chitravati and would walk and come to Puttapparthi. She used to make sure that no one walks before her. She got two

wooden planks. The wooden planks were put for her and she used to walk on them. She came and had Darshan of Swami and was extremely happy. The driver wanted to go to the car after food. He said, "I don't know the way back, it is so dark." I sent Jack to accompany the driver to show the way. Jack led the way and the driver followed and reached Karnatanagepalli. He thought that Jack to be an ordinary dog. He slept inside the car and Jack slept underneath the car. Next day morning, the driver started the car and went little ahead when the car tire went over the dog. Jack came back crying all the way. It was able to cross the river while crying. There was a person named Chakkali Subbanna who was the caretaker of the Mandir. He said, "Swami, Jack is crying." Bhagawan said, "I know." It was coming to me dragging its back. I went to the gate. It cried and fell at my feet and instantly left the body. I buried Jack behind the Old Mandir and constructed a Brindavan. After a few days, even Jill left the body. I kept both Jack and Jill at the same place and planted a Tulsi plant. This Brindavan was there till recently, but to construct the Kalyana Mandapam, they wanted to change the place. At the time, I was in Bangalore. They broke the entire Brindavan and constructed the present Kalyana Mandapam. Hence, in this manner, Ramesh and Paresh were born as Jack and Jill and followed Bhagawan. They ended their life and merged with Bhagawan.

Those who repose faith in Me will never face any difficulties. Sacred people have sacred deaths. Kondamma Raju, Pedda Venkappa Raju and Eswaramma, all had peaceful deaths. All of them were selected by Swami. These days, the parents select their children, but in those days, Bhagawan selected His parents. This is the Charitra of Bhagawan.

I keep saying that we should sing Sarva-dharma bhajans. There are many devotees who follow different religions. If you sing Vishnu's glory in one bhajan, you should sing the glory of Shiva in another bhajan.

The Act of Life

Ms. J Sneha

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With humility and reverence, I offer myself at the Divine lotus feet of our most beloved Mother Sai and I pray to Thee to speak through me. Sairam and warm Dasara greetings to one and all.

Once there was a boy who wanted to become a Judo player, but as fate would have it, he lost his left arm in a car accident. After he recovered, he approached an old Japanese Judo master to teach him the art. Being very impressed with the boy, the master agreed to do so. By the end of three months the boy had learnt only one move. He asked his master, "Sir, why did you teach me only one move?" His master replied that one move is all that he needed to know.

Several months passed. After a rigorous training, the boy was taken for his first match. Lo and Behold, the boy won! The boy was taken for second match; again he won. He faced a tough opponent in his third match, yet he won! Finally, the boy went for his final match. This time he faced a stronger and bigger opponent who overmatched his abilities. Looking at the boy's condition, the referee of the match called for a time-out, thinking that the boy might get hurt. But the master intervened and said 'no' and asked the boy to continue with the match. The boy continued. During the match, his opponent made a mistake and the boy used his only move to bend down his opponent. The boy won!

He became a champion. He approached his master once again and asked, "How could I succeed by learning just one move?" His master replied, "Firstly, you almost mastered one of the most difficult throws in Judo and the only known defense for that move is to grab your left arm, which you do not have! Secondly, it is your positive attitude that transformed your weakness into strength. *Yad Bhavam, Tat Bhavathi*. Swami says, dust you think, dust you are, God you think and God you are. It is our positive attitude and not our aptitude that determines our altitude.

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We often fill ourselves with doubts such as whether we are capable of doing Swami's work, whether we are worthy of doing Swami's work, whether we would ever get a chance to do Swami's work. This life is God's gift to us. Whatever job we undertake is assigned by Swami. So what is required is positive attitude and the availability to carry out Swami's mission. Swami sees our attitude and availability for Him and not our ability. Attitude has two attributes: the first one is optimism and second one is cheerfulness. Let us consider ourselves to be a lamp. Our mind is the wick and the oil is optimism. The more the oil would seep in through this wick, the more our intellect illumines. On the other hand, we have cheerfulness. If we consider ourselves to be a balloon, the air which fills our balloon is cheerfulness. The more air we fill, the lighter we become. Swami is the oil in our lamp and air in our balloon. Is it not from Swami that we learn the lessons of optimism and cheerfulness?

With positive attitude comes Self-confidence. Swami says- a person without Self-confidence can not achieve victory in anything whatsoever. Swami gives us an analogy of a bird. When a bird sits on a small branch, the branch swings up and down because of the weight of the bird and also the breeze. But the bird is unperturbed. Even if the branch breaks, it does not upset the bird, because the bird depends on its wings and not on the branch. Its wings and not the branch ensure the safety of the bird. We should always be confident that Swami is there to protect us, just as the wings protect the bird. Swami always says- I protect you as the eyelids protect your eyes.

I am reminded of an experience I had in 2010 during the second year of my undergraduate studies. All the Anantapur students had arrived to Puttaparthi to seek Bhagawan's blessings before the commencement of the academic year. It was a time when I learnt that my mother was unwell. I wrote a letter to Swami and I prayed hard that Swami should accept my letter. On His first darshan round, Swami ignored me. I prayed harder to attract Swami towards

me (and my letter). Surprisingly, Swami took a second round, and this time, He came near me and pointed towards my letter. I rose to offer my letter to Him, then Swami came very close and I softly whispered Swami's ear's, "Swami, please take care of my mother." Swami nodded affirmatively and blessed me. The next day we started from Puttaparthi for Anantapur. Even after Swami's assurance, at least hundred times in a day, I would tell Swami to take care of my mother.

One night I had a dream. All the Anantapur students were seated on the darshan grounds and Swami's car came right in the middle. Swami got down from the car and beckoned me to go near Him. When I went near Swami, He placed His hands on my palms and started walking. Then, He stopped, very sternly looked into my eyes and said, "How many times to tell you that I will take care, don't you trust me?"

When I woke up, I was stunned. I realized my mistake. It was only then that I developed confidence in Swami. We say we have faith in Swami and confidence in Swami. What is the distinction between faith in Swami and confidence in Him? Bhagawan says, faith in God means faith that He is Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient. Confidence in God means trust in the work, word and will of God. When we say we have Self-confidence, it means we have confidence in Swami. There is no distinction between confidence in ourselves and confidence in Swami. With positive attitude and Self-confidence comes teamwork. Teamwork does not only mean coordination between groups of individuals, it also means togetherness with Swami. We belong to His team. As Swami always says- you and me make the best You. Being our team leader, He leads us onto the path of eternity. This is the act of life, attitude, confidence and teamwork.

This life is nothing but a divine drama. There are many acts that make up our life. One such act is Grama Seva. Is it not in Grama Seva that we learn the importance of teamwork and also develop positive attitude towards whatever task Swami assigns to us? Yet another act is Veda Purusha Saptaha Maha Gyana Yagna. This Yagna is conducted for the welfare of the world. When

each one of us offer our actions, character and thoughts into this sacrificial fire, it gets purified and comes out in its elemental form. This elemental form is to be offered to Swami. In this divine drama of life, everyone has a role to play. It doesn't matter whether we are the little squirrel who helped Rama or Hanuman in the divine mission. It is not the significance of the role that is important but how significantly we play our roles. This makes up the act of life.

I would like to end my talk by quoting Bhagawan's words, "The play is His. The role is His gift. The lines are written by Him. He directs. He decides the dress and decorations, the gesture and the tone, the entry and the exit. We have to act well to receive His approbation when the curtain falls. We have to earn by efficiency and enthusiasm that right to play higher and higher roles. This is the meaning and the purpose of life, the act of life."

Dear Lord, what we are today is your gift to us. What we become is our gift to you. Jai Sai Ram.

The Divine Mother

Sri Bishnu Prasad Joshi

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Offering my humble pranams at Bhagawan's Lotus feet. Esteemed elders, brothers and sisters, Sai Ram to all of you. Before I begin, I request my brother to sing a few lines in praise of divine mother.

Sai Prema Swarupini

Durgati Nashini

Mangala Kaarini

Jagatparipaalini

Janani

Dehi Sharanam Simhavahini

Dehi Sharanam Sai Naraayani

Navaratri is the time when we worship God in the form of the universal mother. The divine mother assumes various forms to take care of her children. Two of them—Mother Durga and Mother Kali—are often depicted in ferocious form holding the weapons of destruction in her hands. Sometimes we fail to understand the inner significance of this form. The demons she destroys symbolize the animal qualities within us, like anger, pride, greed and so on. We have seen this disciplining aspect of the mother in our Bhagawan as well. Sometimes, Swami would appear as if He is angry with us. He would not talk to us, He would not look at us, but then that was another form of His Love (to correct us). That was the time for us to reflect and contemplate how we could improve. In this way, Swami always taught us discipline by source and not by force. As a result we develop love for God, rather than fear.

In the year 2009, I once bumped into a tantric near New Delhi Railway Station. You know, tantrics are people who do ritualistic worship to fulfill their particular desire. The tantric told me that if I give him a certain amount of money, he would perform a special worship on my behalf to mother Kali and that would solve all my problems. In turn, I asked him, "Why would mother need my money? I believe that the Mother responds to our love and

our prayers, more than anything else.” At this he got angry with me and tried to threaten me by saying, “If you disobey me, mother Kali will be angry with you and you will face dire consequences.” What he didn’t know was that I come from a place where I have seen God face-to-face. Having seen the most compassionate and loving form of mother Sai, Who can be afraid of God anymore? I told him, “Maharaj *ji*, do you really think that the divine mother would harm her children? And what child will be afraid of his/her mother?” Seeing my conviction he realized that he was trying to threaten a wrong person. Finally he changed his strategy and said, “I can see that you have a lot of love for your Divine mother. Won’t you offer some *dakshina* at her altar? Since he asked in the name of the Mother, I gave him some *dakshina*, not out of fear, but out of reverence and love.

The love of the divine mother is incomprehensible. How can we fathom the love of a thousand mothers when we can’t gaze the depth of a single mother’s affection for her child? Sometime back, a documentary film was telecasted on the Animal Planet channel, where a mother leopard had given birth to small cub. One day leaving her small cub in her cave, she goes out hunting. When she reaches 2-3 km’s away from her cave, suddenly a huge python enters the cave and starts attacking the cub. The mother at this point intuitively realizes that her cub is in danger and starts running towards the cave in lightning speed. But unfortunately, before she could reach the cave, the python had already swallowed her cub. When she saw that her cub was missing, she attacked the python and started hitting its head with her paw. The python realized that her fury is not going to calm down until the mother sees her cub. Cleverly, the python vomited out her cub. As soon as the mother saw her cub, she became calm. Lovingly she held the cub in her paw and started caressing it. But the cub didn’t show any sign of movement. At this juncture, she started making desperate attempts to bring cub back to life. She started pulling its leg, opening its eyes and shaking it so that it will come alive. But unfortunately, after half an hour of effort, she realized that her

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cub was no more. With tears in her eyes, reluctantly she dug a small pit next to her cave, buried the cub, covered it with leaves and squatted on top of it for the rest of the day and did not go out for hunting that day. At this point of time, the commentator, Sir David Attenborough, an English broadcaster and naturalist, best known for writing and presenting the nine Life series in conjunction with the BBC, says that it is very difficult to describe how a mother feels in these kind of situations.

Who can describe a mother's love? How much trouble our mothers have undergone to bring us up? Do we try to reciprocate it? Are we at least grateful towards our mother? Last summer holiday, I was back home. I was talking with my friends. They were casually conversing about birthdays. Somebody told me Rajnikanth's birthday is coming and he even told me the date. But I don't remember. Anyway, they were talking about birthdays. So I casually asked one of them, "By the way, when is your mother's birthday?" Surprised by my question he replied, "Oh, I don't remember, you know. If it is a birthday of a friend, Facebook sends a reminder that so and so person has a birthday this week. But since my mother is not on Facebook, how on earth am I to remember her birthday?" If this trend continues, I am afraid a day will come when children staying away from their parents will forget their mother's face if she is not on Facebook.

Sisters and brothers, Swami says "first and foremost, you should show gratitude towards your parents. Your blood, your food, your money, your head, all are gifts of your parents. Therefore, consider your parents as God and serve them." If you honour your mother, the mother of the Universe will protect you. Let me narrate you an incident on how mother Sai assures us of her constant protection. My mother is a diabetic, but whenever she comes to Prasanthi Nilayam, she feels better. Once when she was here, she partook a lot of rice and some sweets to add to it. At this, her sugar level rose beyond normal. Suddenly she had a blackout. The last thought, before she fell unconscious was about my brother and me. She prayed to Swami, "Swami my two sons are studying in your college. Please take care of them." Swami appeared in her vision, holding me and my brother by our shoulder. That was

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a great assurance to my mother that Swami will take care of us. Fortunately, one of our brothers was passing by. He happened to see my mother falling unconscious and immediately attended to her and brought her to us and we put some vibhuti in her mouth and after sometime she back to consciousness and told us about this incident.

How selfless is a mother's heart. When she was herself losing her consciousness, all she could think was about us, her children. Mothers personify selflessness and God always answers prayers of mothers. Swami often recollects the selfless and noble desires of mother Eswamma. When she asked her little Sathya to dig a small well to draw water for village folk of the small hamlet of Puttaparthi back then, Swami responded to this by providing water to millions of people. When she asked for a small dispensary, Swami built Super Speciality Hospitals and when she asked for a mere elementary school, Swami setup systems of education all over the world. And all this in response to a mother's selfless prayer.

Sisters and brothers, can we ever pay back the debt that we owe to our mothers? Swami says, apart from *Deha mata*- the mother who gave birth to us, the Divine mother also should be worshipped in four other forms: *Go mata*, *Bhu mata*, *Desha mata* and *Veda mata*. First, *Go mata*- mother cow. Once a devotee from Bangalore wanted to setup a *Goshala*, to take care of old cows, which yield no more milk and are therefore discarded by their owners. He approached Swami, asking if He would give few old cows from Gokulam to start with. At this, what Swami said, is a lesson for all of us. Swami said, "We will take care of the cows here itself. The cows have nourished us for several years and now when they become old, it's our duty and responsibility to look after them. Will you forsake your mother when she becomes so old when she can't help you in your household work?" At a time when children are sending their parents to an old age home, as they don't have time to look after their own parents, here is Swami setting an example in front of the entire world.

Another instance of His life as His message is- Love doesn't seek any reward. Love is its own reward. Second, *Bhu mata*- Mother Earth. I need

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not elaborate on the consequences we are facing today on account of our over exploitation of Mother Nature. The landslides, the floods, the pollution, the list is long. We have reached a stage where Mother Earth can't protect us unless we protect her. Third, *Desha mata*, motherland. Praising the motherland, Swami would often start His discourse, with the poem in Telugu, "*Khanda Khandantara, Khyatinarjinchina, Mahaniyulanu Ganna, Matrubhoomi.*" Swami says- motherland is not a lump of soil. For a country to prosper, all of its citizens should grow- morally and spiritually. In this age of Kali, the students should rise up like the lion cubs and restore peace and re-establish dharma. Dharma in individual, social and national life. Thus to serve our motherland is our primary duty. Finally, speaking on *Veda mata*, Swami, the Veda Purusha Himself, blesses the annual Veda Purusha Saptaha Maha Gyana Yagna. Swami says it is only in this land of Bharat, where the sacred fire of Yagna and Yaga is present. Thus Bharat is the spiritual engine for entire world. Bharatiya culture is not only meant only for India, it is meant for entire world; to show the path to divinity.

Sisters and brothers, on this eve of Dasara, let us think for a moment what we can do to express our gratitude to all forms of the Divine mother. I am reminded of a Gratitude Programme that we offered this March at Bhagawan's Lotus feet. One of the brothers came to me and asked me if I would like to express gratitude to Bhagawan in a few words and these are the words that sprang from my heart:

How can I, to mother Sai, express in mere words all that my heart keeps.
How can I, to mother Sai, express in mere words all that my heart keeps.
Leaves don't have heart and heart doesn't have leaves. *Alphas Ye Bhayan. Oh Rahmat Hai Sai. Karpana Hai Mushkil. Na Dil Ka Juba Hoti Hai, Na Juba ka Ye Dil.*

Thank you. Jai Sairam.

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The Indweller

Sri Sandeep Kumar Patnaik

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Om Sri Sai Ram. As we culminate at the penultimate day of the Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha, I just look back and I realize that the one underlying theme that has been highlighted by most of the speakers from this very podium over the past one week has been Love. I choose not to digress from this divinely ordained theme and in the next fifteen minutes or so, I wish to take you all along the journey of love that I have been through since my childhood.

In His love we basked. For His grace we craved. One glance at His enchanting form and even lasting agonies withered away in a jiffy. One word in that soft husky tone of His and seraphic marvels were carved out in our hearts. One pat on our cheek from those petal-like hands and our spirits were raised to heights sublime. Love they say is formless, attributeless. Well, not always! For we have actually watched Love walked the Earth on two feet. If today someone was to ask me, who Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was, even before I say, He is God, I would say, He is Love. For that is what describes Him the best. The human relationship closest to that pure unsullied love is perhaps the love of our mother, which the previous speaker was mentioning. And it was therefore but spontaneous and natural that our hearts recognized our beloved Bhagawan as a Divine mother and we often called him, Sai Ma. The first school of a child they say is that the lap of its mother. We too grew up at the lap of our Divine mother and it is there that we learnt the most important lessons for life in the simplest of manners. At that tender age, while the world would have taught us things like 'Baa baa black sheep' and 'ding dong bell', our Divine Mother initiated us into the Vedas! While children of our age would be fiddling around with toys, our divine mother captured our hearts and we were busy competing with one another to sit in the front row and be close to Him. Nothing to our credits though, for it was He who had captured our hearts and stolen our minds and the way He captures hearts is something really unique and marvelous. And each of us would have our own stories to narrate.

It was a few months after I had joined Sri Sathya Sai Primary School for my I Std. One fine morning, it was the games hour and as I went to the rack to pick my shoes, I found my socks missing from the racks. I was sad and I reported this to my teacher. She—perhaps with a desire to instill the seeds of discipline into me—reprimanded me for being careless and as a punishment, she said I wouldn't be allowed to play till I found my socks. It was another fine morning and we were seated in the Sai Kulwant Hall and Swami came out of the interview room, holding a polythene bag. And as He came near us, He started distributing the contents of the bag and guess what the bag contained, yes- it was socks! And the story didn't end there. As He came near me, He very casually dropped two pairs on my lap and silently walked away. And that is so typical of Him. He does the greatest of great things and then walks away silently as if nothing ever happened. That day, I realized and wondered- does giving a pair of socks to an insignificant 5-year old even have to appear in the priority list of the Lord of the Universe? Then I realized that for the mother Divine, every single creature of His creation is significant. And the mother doesn't belittle even the silliest of the needs of her children.

A student once asked Swami, "Swami my faith in you shivers. Please grant me everlasting faith in you." Swami questioned him as to why he prayed thus. And the student replied "Swami sometimes when I see you in your physical frame, my mind starts wondering as to why you do things the way you do and my faith in you shivers." And then Swami very compassionately asked him, "*Bangaru*, do you love me?" He just nodded in the affirmative and then Swami said, "If you love me, it is enough. You need not have faith in me." I was very moved when I heard this word from Bhagawan for it was just love that's Bhagawan was hungry for.

One day when I was studying in my VI Std., one of our teacher was reading out beautiful stories of Swami's childhood. And there came the episode where Bhagawan threw away His books and declared that He was the avatar who had come to redeem mankind. And perhaps the droplets of scientific reasoning and logic are already creating ripples in the still innocent mind of mine. I suddenly got a doubt. I looked at my bench mate sitting next to me

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and I asked him, “Swami studied in a remote village school. That too only till VIII Std. Does He know how to read in English?” And the classmate next to me said that obviously, He is God and He knows everything and the conversation ended there. A few days later, we were seated in the Sai Kulwant Hall and Swami came walking near us. There was a student next to me who was holding an open letter to Swami. It was a beautifully decorated piece of paper, where he was inviting Swami to come to school. As Swami came near me, He loudly read out the contents of the letter, saying Swami please come to school. And then with the most mischievous smile, He said, “8th Class *me chod diya*. (I left in the the 8th Class).” And everybody around me laughed but then I had tears in my eyes, because for everyone else it was just another joke from Swami, but for me, it was the greatest of the great truths revealed in the simplest of simple manners.

I learned three things from the incident that day. Firstly, if Swami were to know the innermost of my thoughts, how close would He be to me? I truly understood the meaning of the words when He says, “*Intane, Ventane, Jantane vunnanu* (I am in you, with you, around you).” Secondly, I realized that every word of Bhagawan is significant. For others, it may look like a joke but for all we know, He will be redeeming someone with those very words which appear as a joke to others. Thirdly, imagine that Bhagawan knows our innermost thoughts and words and He knows all the gibberish and rubbish that goes on inside and yet He loves us with the same intensity. How compassionate, considerate, loving and forgiving is He!

Dear sisters and brothers, today the situation may seem to have changed. The circumstances may seem different, but then just because we can't see the Sun shine forth at night, we can't say that the Sun isn't there. The Sun that shines forth resplendently during the day, chooses to hide itself at night. It is the timid moon that takes up the task of reflecting its brilliance and lighting up the otherwise dark and desolate world. Today as the Sun of our lives has chosen to hide Himself, for whatever reasons, let us be like the moon and reflect His light, His love. Let us cleanse ourselves of ego, selfishness and share the love that He has showered on us.

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Dearest Bhagawan, I know that you are sitting here and watching me talk today. But these human eyes, limited that they are, they can't see you. But then I realize that, aren't you the very light that we see by. We may not be able to hear you, but then I realize that aren't you the very sound that we hear by. We may not be able to understand you, but then aren't you the very Truth that we live by? As I conclude, I have a prayer to make:

Dear Swami, as pure and tender birds we came to you, by the sunshine of your grace, we grew.

And deep in our hearts we knew, that at every time of our despair, You will always be there to care.

And now blossomed into flowers are we, fragrant with our love of Thee.

Bless us dear Lord, that we spread this fragrance of ours, which is the love of Yours, far and wide so that our lives become worthy of being touched by You.

Thank you Swami for this wonderful opportunity, thank you everyone for your patient listening. Jai Sai Ram.

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Excerpts from Bhagawan's Discourse

The delusion that you are a devotee separate from God has to be removed. The six weaknesses within man- desire, anger, greed, attachment, vanity and jealousy are responsible for his bad conduct. These six weaknesses are present in animals also. What is the difference between animals and you? Animals also feel hungry, they eat, and they sleep like a human being. What is the difference between man and animal?

Prajnam Brahma- Man should have that spiritual awareness. When man has spiritual awareness or discrimination he will not be taken over by grief as everything is passing clouds. Why should we worry over these passing clouds? You should catch hold of something that is changeless, that is the principle of Atman- which is divinity. Once you experience divinity, you become divine (*Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati*). You have to know and experience for yourself.

Mamaivansho jeevaloke jeevabhootah sanatanah- All are sparks of the divine. Then where from the apparent sorrow, suffering troubles and miseries have come, when everything is divine? This is because the heart is filled with bestial qualities. You have to distance yourself from these animal qualities. Run away from bad company. Fill your heart with eternal truths.

If there is water in a cup, we can't pour milk in it. First the water has to be poured out for milk to be poured inside. If milk is poured in the cup filled with water, both milk and water would be wasted. Your heart is full of wickedness and cruelty. If you add sanctifying thoughts they also will be polluted. So, distance yourself from wickedness and fill the heart with sacred qualities- then you will become sacred being. To lead a sacred life we have to follow a sacred path. When the heart is sacred, it can be filled up with all sacred thoughts.

You are earning so much money, whom are you sharing it with? Nobody. Ultimately, who will claim your property nobody knows. To fill this little stomach, you earn lakhs and lakhs of rupees. Does all the money earned help in filling your stomach? Not at all. For this momentary life, you face all these

difficulties. This body is impermanent, it is like a water bubble. Mind is like a mad monkey. Don't follow the body, don't follow the mind. Follow your conscience and follow love. You should follow the reality.

You study and study, ultimately to die, study so that you are immortal. What is the use of secular knowledge? It is helpful to fill the stomach so long as you are in this world. Both, the educated person and an uneducated beggar are filling their stomachs. Education should be to fill the heart with love. Love will confer everything else on you. Make every attempt to fill your heart. i.e. compassion (Hru- dayam). Compassion can be filled in the heart with love. Never waste a moment of time. You are going away from love; you are polluting it and ultimately you will get only disappointment.

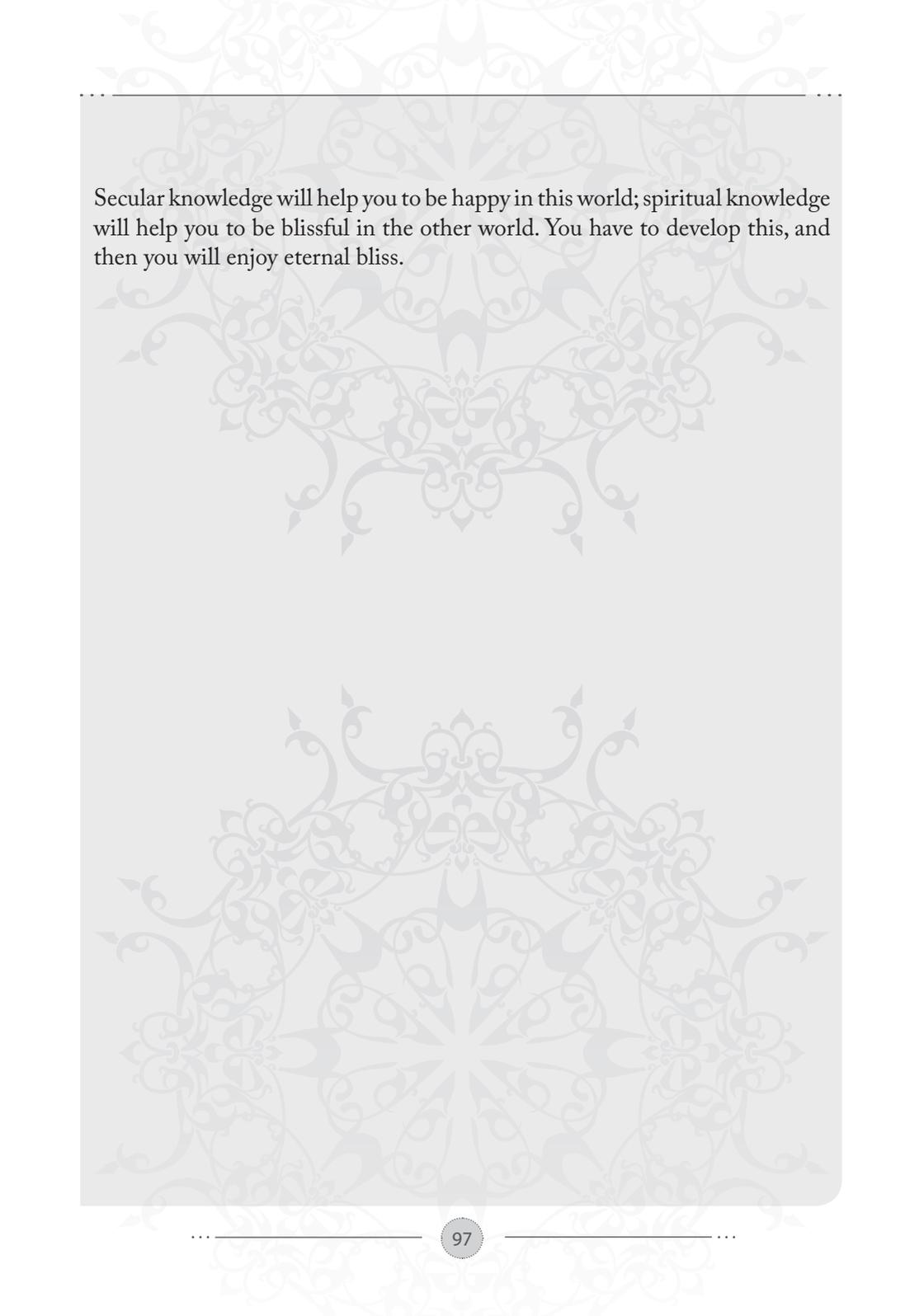
No one is attached to anybody. Attachments and relationships are of your making. Prior to your marriage, who is husband or wife. After death, who is husband or wife? We should view the family life as passing clouds. They come in-between and leave in-between; they are temporary. We should not yearn for these things.

What you should aspire for? You should aspire for attaining ananda (bliss). Attain this bliss and love and share it with others. Man is not sharing his love with his fellowmen; on the other hand, he is sharing his jealousy with others. It is very unfortunate that we are not sharing our love with our fellowmen. This hatred is a very devilish quality. This demonic hatred is on the rise and not love. If there is a fraction of love within you, share it with others. That is your really duty. Do that duty properly and attain the true path.

Dear students!

The subjects that you study are subjects that belong only to this world.

*Ihamunu Sukhiyimpu Hemataraka Vidya,
Paramunu Sukhiyimpu Brahma Vidya*



Secular knowledge will help you to be happy in this world; spiritual knowledge will help you to be blissful in the other world. You have to develop this, and then you will enjoy eternal bliss.

The Inner Significance of Dasara

Prof. Anil Kumar Kamaraju

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This is the concluding day of the Veda Purusha Saptaha Maha Gyana Yagna and many things come to my mind as I think of this day. But yet, I shall give you some random thoughts and share with you those pleasant moments with Bhagawan and what He said on various occasions during Dasara celebrations. This day is called Vijayadasami. Vijaya meaning victory, Dasami meaning ten. What do you mean Vijayadasami? Can there be ten victories? What is ten? What is victory? Ten stands for ten senses of our body, five senses of cognition and five senses of actions- *karmendriyas* and *jnanendriyas*. The ten also mean the ten poles. We usually say *ashta dhik* (group of eight deities that guard the eight directions), but two to be included (in the ten) are the earth and the sky. So, all these ten will have to be sanctified, will have to be glorified from mundane level, from the terrestrial level to celestial heights. That is the purpose, the meaning behind the celebration of Vijayadasami. Vijaya- we are really victorious, when we rise to that level of expectation as prescribed in our scriptures.

What do you mean by Navaratri? Why not ten, why not eight? Nine stands for the nine holes of the body. Through these nine holes of the body, we draw so many experiences in this world, most of which are completely encompassed by ignorance. *Nava Avarana*- *Avarana* meaning encompassing, encircling. *Nava Avarana*, i.e. through these nine holes of the human body—in the dynamics and mechanics of human structure—we draw certain experiences that are full of illusion, delusion, and mistaken identity- *Maya*. A device known as *Nava Avarana yantra* is installed on the first day of Navaratri celebration. *Nava Avarana yantra pratishtha* marks the beginning of the yagna. Bhagawan gave us the significance of the details of all this celebrations. It is not enough if we simply listen and go, if we just participate and leave the premises. It is absolutely important to imbibe and absorb the content and the significance of every festival. In this regard, Bhagawan has given us wonderful literature. He gives us a number of examples.

A child plays with a copy of the Ramayana. How does a child play with it?

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He keeps the book on the floor and sits on it because he does not know the value of the epic Ramayana. Likewise, if we do not understand the depth and the meaning of any celebration, of any ritual of any festival, it is meaningless and useless. Due to the confusion of modern technology, the mind—which is full of conflict and contradiction, disturbance and turbulence—does not understand the inner meaning whatsoever. Due of this confusion, no one understands the scriptures and its depth.

The advent of the Avatar is to reveal the inner significance and inner secrets of all our scriptures. Swami gives an example. The head of the family was doing *Sandhyavandanam* (salutations to twilight or solar noon) every day, keeping a glass of water. He would take a spoon, sip water and chant *Kesava Swaha*. The modern computer wizard boy, watched his father do this ritual, taking sip after sip with a spoon. He says, “Dad, what is it that you are doing? Instead of drinking the water spoon after spoon, why don’t you have the whole glass of water at a stretch? That would be wonderful.” Then the father thought that he should teach a lesson to his son. The next day, this boy was filling his pen with ink. Father asked, “Boy, what are you doing? The boy replied, “Dad, I am filling my pen with the ink.” The father quickly replied, “Why do that? You can pour the whole bottle of ink on that paper instead of the pen.”

Swami gives another example. A young boy happened to go to Banaras along with his friends. He came to his Grandmother and said, “Grandma, I am going to Kasi.” The lady is very excited and said, “O! Boy, I could not go, it is good that you are going. I wanted you to do one little favor. I will give you my ring. Have it on your ring finger and take a dip in the holy Ganges. When you return, give it back to me. I will have the satisfaction of having had a bath in holy Ganges.” The boy went there and was having his bath. Due to carelessness (being a young kid), he lost the ring while taking his bath in the Ganges. He returned home and said to his grandmother, “Grandma, your devotion is so great that the Ganges was immensely pleased and she did not return your ring. She has taken it. What more you want grandma, you will have a birth in Kailash.” She immediately rushes to the altar and finds a container with Ganges water that is to be used in the process of worship. She dips her hand into the container and searches for her ring, all the while

saying, “O! Ganga, have you taken my ring?” Suddenly she gets the ring. Now Swami explains, “Faith is absolutely necessary for the observance of every ritual or every sacred text. Therefore, to explain the inner significance of every festival, every ritual is the purpose of every incarnation. If you read a book- *grantha* but if you don’t get *sowgandha* (fragrance), it is something like a donkey carrying bundle of sandalwood.”

Therefore Swami wants us to know the inner meaning of everything or we will be like the tetrapod animal. Swami has come down on earth, moved amongst us, and explained this inner meaning to give value to the outer ritual. The outer ritual will have its value when the inner meaning is realized, making it spiritual and not a mechanical exercise. *Antar Ardha*, the inner meaning has three levels. *Adi bhoutika*, *Adi daiṅvika*, and *Adhyatmika*. *Adi bhoutika*- At the physical level, the inner meaning is to lead your life righteously. The second is *Adi daiṅvika* which is the spiritual level, which means that with faith you proceed in the righteous way, and the third is *Adhyatmika* which means that leading a life in a righteous way with faith, annihilate the mind and attain liberation.

Bhagawan gives us two examples. In the plantain fruit there is the outer peel and the inner fruit. One eats the inner fruit and not the outer peel. Coconut has a hard part, a fiber part and the sweet kernel inside. This inside sweet kernel is the valuable, edible part. Similarly, the outer meaning has got inner significance. Swami explains the inner significance behind the performance of every ritual in minute detail.

We don’t have an *almirah* (iron safe) made of gold and keep our shoes inside. We keep our jewels inside. Similarly, jewels are the inner treasure, the inner meaning while the iron safe is outer.

What kind of language is Swami’s language? It is nectarine and torrential. No translator has the courage to ask Him to repeat, if he wants to live for another day. He has a melodious voice like *gaana saraswati*. There is a kind of music in His divine utterances that fills the heart of all the listeners with joy. If you ask elderly people, they say they never heard such an interpretation. If you ask a

scholar, they say that they have never seen it in any book. Youngsters feel that this message is meant for them. What is this package deal? It really appeals to people of all generations of all vocations, and professions, giving purpose, meaning and direction to their life.

The surest sign of an Avatar is that He explains the deepest of secrets in the simplest possible way. Whereas we make simple things most complicated. The second sign of an Avatar is the capacity to confer additional Grace, *Anugraha*. When swami sits on the chair, and adjusts his hair, what a sight it is.

Camphor is white, wish-fulfilling cow is white, the star is white and bright, the wing of a swan is white like the smile of Sai. We are very anxious to watch His smile because that smile is a relief and eases us from the tiredness of miles and miles of our journey. Sweeter than sugarcane juice, sweeter than grape juice, more beautiful than the flower are His words, so we come here to listen to him.

There are two sacred texts associated with Dasara Celebrations. One is Srimad Bhagavatam and the other, Sri Devi Bhagavatam. During one of these celebrations of Dasara, all the pundits were standing with Bhagawan when He asked, "What is Bhagavatam?" One scholar said, 'Story of God', another said, 'experience of devotees'. Each one started giving their own interpretation. Baba, finally said, "Bhagavatam means we will become better and better everyday (*Baagavutanu*). Another occasion he said, "*Ba* is *Bhakti*. *Ga* is *Jnana*, *Va* is *Vairagya*, *Tha* is *Thatwa*, *Mu* for *Mukti*. So, Bhagavatam confers *mukti* or liberation-based devotion, wisdom, and renunciation. We don't need to go in search of any other literature. Sai literature is a multivitamin capsule. It contains everything.

What does Baba say about Godhead, Divinity? "I am God and nothing different from that. I am God, I am that infinite Para Brahman. No difficulty, no problem can ever touch me. I am that eternal bliss and not different from that. I always represent the supreme state of divine satisfaction. There is no fear in me what so ever," declared Swami. Satyam Shivam Sundaram (a series of books that chronologically details the life of Sri Sathya Sai Baba) is Srimat

Bhagavatam for Sri Sathya Sai devotees. What is Sri Devi Bhagavatam? Sri is nature and Devi is the effulgence. In Sri Devi Bhagavatam, we see the divine glory, understand the story behind it and get the light. Sri Devi Bhagavatam means to see the creator in nature.

How do we apply this to Bhagawan? It is absolutely important that we remind ourselves that Puttapparthi was a tiny hamlet with a population of 100 without an approach road, electricity, medical facility or a school. Puttapparthi today is a global village. The creator is reflected in His creation, which is His Prasanthi Nilayam with all the beautiful buildings. It looks like another world altogether.

When the hospital building was inaugurated, Swami was looking at the photograph and the plan. Out of ignorance, we said, “Swami, we have not seen such a beautiful building anywhere. He replied, “There should be one in the first place for you to see.” The relationship between the creator and His creation is immortal, nectarine, eternal, inseparable, mysterious. So Sri Devi Bhagavatam means knowing creation. Enjoy the creation and enquire about the creator.

In Sri Lanka, because of the effect of the tsunami (in 2004), Sri Sathya Sai Sevadals were the first and foremost to provide a relief operation. In Indonesia, a Muslim country, about 108 water tanks were built by Sai Youth of that country with the Prime Minister and President attending. In Johannesburg, South Africa *sevadals* go and counsel the poorer sections of the society that are prone to violence and addictions, to assist them in giving up their vices and bring about transformation. That is glory of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Who is Thribuvana Sundari, the name you come across during this holy time of Navaratri? Tribhuvana Sundari represents three aspects. One is the innate deep determination within you, which is called Iccha Shakti. The second aspect is awareness, the knowledge of which is known as Jnana Shakti. And the third is the technique to execute it, which is known as Kriya Shakti or Kathyayini. Therefore, Kameshwari, Jnaneshwari, Kathyayini are Iccha

Shakti, Jnana Shakti, Kriya Shakti.

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the manifestation of these three shaktis. You want to construct a house. That is Iccha Shakti. Complete knowledge of its design is Jnana Shakti. If you have Iccha and Jnana it is not enough, somebody needs to construct it by giving it to a contractor. That is Kriya Shakti. Desire, awareness and action is what we call Kameswari, Jnaneswari and Kathyayini. He further says- the Shakti that you worship during Dasara is Trayee Shakti. She represents all the three- the Brahmi Shakti of Brahma, which is Mahasaraswathi; Vaishnavi Shakti of Vishnu, which is Sri Maha Lakshmi; and Shankari Shakti of Shiva which is Mahakali. They represent creation, sustenance and annihilation, respectively.

Who is Triloka Sundari? She is the most beautiful in all the three worlds. What are the three lokas? Swami says, "One is Jagrat- waking state, second is Swapna- the dream state and the third is deep sleep. Then we have Tripura Sundari. Tripura Sundari represents the three levels of Sthula, Sushma and Karana, i.e the gross body, the subtle body and the causal body. Swami gives the example of the tamarind. The green skin part of it is Sthula, the soft pulp is Sukshma and the hard seed is Karana. But it is also necessary to let you know of certain important data for those who are fresh and have not been exposed to these details.

We were fortunate to hear them from Swami in Kodaikanal. The construction of this Prasanthi Mandir was done using the iron girders. Iron is very heavy and transportation of these girders to Puttaparthi was a big problem. Swami said, "It is so difficult to transport these iron girders, but I willed that it should happen. There was a crane that was going for construction work to a dam project in Penukonda. I called them here and told them to do my job and I will provide kerosene to you." Then the crane brought all the iron girders. Swami posed a question, "Now how to lift them and put them on the roof. The sevadals are skinny people like anyone of us, they cannot lift such heavy weights. I just walked across those beams. They became very light in weight." This is the Durga Shakti of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Excerpts from Bhagawan's Discourse

*Daiivadheenam Jagat Sarvam Sathyadheenam Devatam
Tat Sathyam Uttamaadheenam Uttamo Paradevata*

The whole universe originated from the divine. It is under the total control of truth. It is the truth that will help to experience the divine principle. A man who follows this path of truth is a noble soul.

Many adopt varied practices to attain this exalted truth. One might be wicked but with the blessings of wise men, it is possible to give up evil behavior and evil tendencies. Everything has a basis. When you want to write a letter, you first think what is to be written, to whom it is to be written, in what way it is to be written. In the same way, the *sadbhaktas* have darshan of elders and wise men, listen to their teachings and find fulfillment in life. A wicked man like Ratnakara joined the company of the seven celestial sages, heard their dictums and became a sage later.

Ratnakara was able to transform himself into a pious, noble and ideal sage and ultimately became the composer of the epic Ramayana. Prahlada, the demon prince, followed the path of chanting the glorious name of Narayana and ultimately attained divinity. Prahlada became as brilliant as Narayana himself and became inseparable.

Charles Darwin was a great spiritual aspirant. His disciple Helen tried to follow his master and undertook spiritual practices to attain the brilliance of Darwin. Similarly, many seekers were able to radiate the effulgence of divine by following the path given to them by sages.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna: *Mamaivamsho Jeevaloke Jeevabhootah Sanathanah*- My effulgence pervades all beings. The radiance shining forth in you is also my radiance. God is present in all elements and all beings in the form of light. Having that brilliant God within us, how is it that we are suffering? It is utter foolishness if we start feeling that we are miserable and pass through anxiety, worry and many other problems. Is it not foolishness to feel miserable and sad when that brilliant God inside

your heart doesn't have any worries, anxieties and problems? The spark of the divine within each one of us doesn't get into suffering or misery. God, who transcends all kinds of misery and sadness, resides in you. Then how can you still feel worried? With this, we have to conclude that God is not beyond anxiety and worry. In such a case, there is no scope to declare that you are the spark of the divine. Perhaps the spark of demonic traits and evil propensities must be existing in you.

Having the divine within you, you behave as if you are under the control of a *pishacha* (demon). There are no evil spirits or apparitions within you. Your heart is a seat of only divine. Why are you feeling that such a heart is wicked?

Truth is changeless in all three periods of time. Truth is changeless in the past, present and future. Whatever you said two days ago, what you said yesterday and what you said today are entirely different. Truth should not change in all the three periods of time. How many have recognized that truth today? Are there any who have known the worldly truth? No. You don't even listen to Bhagawan carefully and repeat it.

What is truth? What you don't know is truth. What is the use in repeating such truth? Talk about the truth that you know. Unify the past, present and future. There should not be three different attributes in these three periods of time. There should not be a difference in the three periods of time, three attributes and three states. Hence, the three periods of time, the three sounds and the three types of actions should be united. This is the form of truth. It can't be changed from place to place. That which changes cannot be the truth. We say one thing at one moment and something different at another moment- this is not truth.

Truth is one and not two. It is truth when you have the same sound, same form and same bliss. The Upanishads extolled this truth in different ways. Sathya has no form or description. Ananda (bliss) is the evidence of truth. If you close your eyes and contemplate on Sathya, unknowingly you will start smiling. This smile comes from within. So long as there is a dual mind, there is no bliss. God is the source of bliss.

Happiness is union with God. The happiness you get in union with God is eternal. But the happiness you get otherwise lasts only for a moment. Ananda can't be that which is changing. Sathya is changeless, whether you have recognized it or not. Bhagawan is always blissful and is always smiling. Did you ever see me with castor oil face? I never get such a face, I am always blissful. The source of this bliss is inside.

Some people are blissful at one time and serious at other time. One can notice a change in their behaviour. One should not know about the change within you, that is Sathya. Truth can't be hidden even if you want, it can't be kept at one place, and you can't catch hold of it. It is unreachable and is unattainable. That is true bliss, *ananda*.



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