



How to be Near and Dear to God

Of what avail is it to be a scholar or clever intellectual

If one does not practice even a fraction of what one knows?

*Not all the luxuries and pleasures of the world will give a man contentment and peace
Only when he realizes the truth of the spirit will he experience true peace and contentment.*

Dear Students!

Embodiments of Divine Love! Whatever a man sees in the world rouses fear in him. Detachment alone can free him from fear. Failing to grasp this profound truth, man is allowing his desires to multiply.

As long as man is attached to the body, he cannot get over the desire to possess the objects that attract him. A man afflicted with the acquisitive impulse (*mamatwa*) can never get rid of worries. To overcome this attachment and possessiveness, the ancient sages, from *Vedic* times, pursued their studies. The sages believed that self-control promoted humility and that humility was the true index of right education.

Control of the senses is essential for realizing humility. Education should be pursued for achieving control of the senses. The ancients esteemed only that system of education that promoted control of the senses (*indriyanigraha*).

Control of the senses is called "*dama*" (in metaphysical parlance). The vicissitudes of time, place, and circumstances have resulted in the term "*dama*" getting reversed in today's student community into the term "*mada*" (conceit). The reason is the disappearance of humility and reverence from the students. Indulgence in sensory pleasures has become their primary concern.

Students should regard control of the senses as their foremost guiding principle. In the old days, students who achieved self-control received a diploma called "*sakshara*". The inner significance of this title is that the recipient is one who has mastered his senses and recognized his inherent divinity. When "*dama*" (self-control) turns into "*mada*" (conceit), "*sakshara*" gets reversed and we have "*rakshasa* [demon]" in its place. Consequently, the student who practiced "*dama*" and displayed humility and reverence was regarded as "*sakshara*" and the student who was filled with arrogance and egoism was characterized as a "*rakshasa*" (a demon).

Humility and reverence

It is not enough if one becomes a mere scholar. Even if one has mastered all the scriptures, if he lacks humility and reverence and has no self-control, the ancients regarded such learning as demonic knowledge (*rakshasa vidya*). During *Vedic* times, the people believed in human values, had faith in God and led pure and sacred lives. The advance of science and technology has enabled man to produce weapons of mass annihilation. Scientists who can manufacture such destructive weapons are unable to secure peace of mind. A scientist who has acquired mastery over the elements is unable to get rid of the fear that haunts him. The scientists do not enjoy the sense of peace and security experienced by common people and are wasting their lives.

The educational process is more concerned with imparting bookish knowledge, while education itself is sought only as a means for earning a living. This link between education and employment should be severed. Education should be the means for acquiring wisdom (*vijnana*).

The world today consists of two types of people: those who are consumed by excessive desires and those who have no desires. The desireless person treats with indifference all worldly things. The desire-filled man will not be satisfied even if he is offered a mountain of gold (the Meru Mountain). (In this context Swami related the story of a demonic character in the Ramayana named Kabandha, who had his head in his stomach and who used his long arms to catch whatever object he could to fill his stomach. Swami said most students seemed like Kabandha to be concerned only about earning a living).

The primary object of education is not to ensure how one can fill his stomach. The Lord, who gave a stomach, will not fail to provide the necessary sustenance. Man, who should seek the *atma*, is searching for food (*annam*). In the world today, three-fourths of the people appear to be Kabandhas and not truly educated persons. In all their actions—whether in sports or other fields—they are concerned with only selfish interests.

Rights and responsibilities

There are today two aspects relating to man that have to be considered. One relates to a person's rights. The other relates to one's duties. Most people are concerned only about their rights and engage themselves in struggles to secure them. But they do not recognize their responsibilities. In all the different fields—social, political, economic, and even spiritual—men do not recognize their responsibilities and duties. They want high positions and emoluments. The entire life is wasted in the pursuit of such desires. No one considers whether he is performing the quantum of work for the salary he receives, whether he is discharging his duties properly and fulfilling his responsibilities.

Such an attitude is prevalent not only in mundane affairs, but also in the spiritual field. Everyone says, "I want God. I want liberation (*moksha*). I want to ensure my

well-being here and hereafter (*yogakshemam*).” But he does not make the necessary effort to achieve these desires. “I have no time for *bhajans*. I can't do any *sadhana*. I have no time to think of God”—this is his attitude. But still he wants God.

With such a narrow outlook, how can a man know what his rights are? To get anything you want from a shop, you have to pay the price. But man today wants God to ensure his well-being, but is he prepared to pay the price for getting it? Is he prepared to offer to God the sacrifice he has to make to secure his “*yogakshema*”? Does he offer the love that has to be given to secure peace, prosperity, and security? Man today seeks to get something without paying the price for it. But the Lord cannot be deceived. He offers the appropriate reward for each action according to its nature—whether it is gain or loss, good or bad. We will be entitled to expect what we desire from God only if we make the appropriate offering to God. No one is prepared to offer anything to God, but every one is eager to get something from God.

Practice and precept

People go about preaching to others. How far are they practicing what they preach? Many call upon others to make sacrifices. What sacrifice are they making? People expect others to be grateful to them for what they have received. How far are they themselves grateful to those from whom they have received benefits?

There is no point in investigating all kinds of things in the world. The first thing one should do is to enquire into the truth about himself. Only then he will be competent to enquire into the conduct of others.

The devotion and faith of devotees today can be compared to a dried leaf that can be blown away by a slight breeze. A true devotee, on the contrary, will remain unshaken like a ball of iron whatever the trials or tribulations he may have to face. Many devotees, who are voluble in their speech, ostentatious in their display of devotion, are swept off their feet when they encounter any adversity. When their expectations are not realized, they develop all kinds of aversions. They make no efforts to recognize their own faults.

Students, for instance, nourish a grievance that Swami is not smiling at them, that Swami does not talk to them, but they do not enquire within themselves why Swami is acting in this manner and in what way they have violated Bhagavan's injunctions. If they examined their own conduct in this manner, there would be no room for them to entertain such thoughts about Swami.

Not human to err

Many feel that it is human to err and that Bhagavan should forgive their lapses. In fact, if they are truly human, they should not commit mistakes at all. Even if sometimes a mistake is committed, wittingly or unwittingly, it should not be repeated again. It is a grievous error to think that it is natural for a human being to err. Such feeling should not be entertained at all by anyone. Every man should

realize, "I am not weak. I am not an animal. I am not a demon. I am a man." When a man has this conviction he will not commit mistakes. When a man is described as "*nara*" it means that he is the very embodiment of the spirit (*atma*). The *atma* cannot be affected by any taint. It is the attachment to the body that is the cause of bad thoughts, bad desires, and bad actions. It is the one who is a slave to his senses who is a prey to such impulses. To follow the directives of the senses is a mark of the animal. To be guided by the *atma* is the sign of the human. No one should attempt to justify his weaknesses and lapses as natural to a human being. They should be regarded as signs of mental debility. You should continually strive to master your senses. When you have truly acquired sense control, you will experience the power of the divine within you.

Captor and captive

There is a story that illustrates what happens when the agency intended for control of the senses becomes itself a victim of the senses. Once upon a time the government of a country set up a border force to prevent the entry of hostile foreign elements. A camp was set up on the border. A soldier who was keeping vigil caught an enemy intruder entering the country. After catching him, he shouted aloud that he had caught an enemy. The captain, who heard his shout from his tent, asked the soldier to bring the captive to his tent. The soldier said that the man was refusing to come. Then the captain asked the soldier himself to come. The soldier said that the intruder would not let him go! This illustrates the plight of educated students today. Education, which should enable them to acquire mastery over the senses, has made them captives of the senses.

Students should not give way to such weakness. They must develop spiritual strength. They must keep out the bad qualities that afflict them. Those who cannot do this can never become good students.

Men should regard the senses as potential enemies. They should not be allowed to have their own way. They should be subject to one's control and direction. What is the easiest way to achieve this mastery? Only the spiritual path.

Let conscience prevail

If there is real faith and devotion in a man, the senses will be powerless against him. It is the decline in faith and devotion that has led man becoming a slave of the senses. Students should, therefore, examine before they do anything whether it is good or bad, right or wrong, and act according to the dictates of their conscience. Even in respect of the conscience, certain facts should be borne in mind. The promptings of intellectual reasoning should not be identified with the dictates of the conscience. The directives should come from the heart. When you dive deep into a problem and enquire whether what you should do is in the interests of your friends and society in general, your conscience will give you the right answer. You should not be guided by intellectual reasoning that has a selfish element in it. You should be guided by a concern for the collective interests of society at large. That alone is the

true voice of conscience. This kind of broad social conscience should be developed through education.

Life is a game: play it!

Students! You have performed a variety of gymnastic feats. You have distinguished yourselves in a variety of games and sports. Although these games have a value of their own in the physical field, there is something greater than all of them. Life is a game, play it! Treat life itself as a big game. To achieve a good name and success in this game, you have to cultivate good habits. Good thoughts, good speech, and good actions are the disciplines required in this game. When so much practice and effort are required to achieve success in games like tennis, how much more effort is needed to succeed in the game of life! In this game, if you wish to achieve a good name, uphold your ideals, and realize the Divine You have to observe in your daily life right thinking, right conduct and right attitudes.

Longevity and the good life

Students! You have to take a resolve today to restore the ancient culture and tradition of *Bharat* [India]. Life is wasting away every moment. People are growing older every minute, forgetting their duties. In this situation, what is it that you have to achieve? All that you wish to accomplish, you must set out to achieve now itself when you are in the vigor of youth. Man's life span, which should be a hundred years, is shortened by the misuse of the body. The length of a man's life is determined by his own actions. A man's bad thoughts, his hatreds, his jealousy, and bitterness are shearing his life into bits every moment. Anger shortens a man's life. This can be seen from everyday experience. When a man gets angry, his temperature rises. The blood gets heated up. In the process the nerves get weaker and as a consequence all organs in the body also get weaker. This weakness may last for six months. One moment of anger will deprive a man of the energy got from six months of food. Every fit of anger shortens a man's lifespan. Whatever temporary satisfaction a man may derive by the display of anger, it causes greater damage to the individual concerned than to others. Likewise, hatred and envy are equally debilitating in their effects. Egoism and attachment also have similar deleterious effects on man's life.

Body, mind, and atma

Man is made up of three constituents—the body, the mind, and the *atma*. Man needs the body for performing actions. But if the actions are done without using the discriminating power of the mind, man will be behaving like an animal, which acts on impulse. Moreover, if the mind, without relying on the eternal and ever pure *atma*, follows the demands of the body and the senses, the actions will be demonic. The combination of mind and body leads to demonic qualities. When one is installed in the *atmic* principle, transcending the body and the mind, he attains the Divine.

The ancient sages divinized their lives by control of the senses, by observing spiritual discipline and by successfully carrying on their daily avocations. These are

the means by which men can transform themselves into sages. For effecting this transformation, students will have to cultivate faith and devotion.

Spiritual education is greater than all other types of education. This was declared by Krishna in the *Gita*. Rivers are distinct in their names and forms, but when they merge in the ocean, they become one. Likewise, all kinds of studies and practices, when they are merged in the ocean of spiritual knowledge, become one.

The Lord's offer to man

Make your heart pure so that it becomes a worthy abode of the Divine. What should be an ocean of milk (*Kshirasagara*) has been turned by man's misdeeds into an ocean of brine. Sanctify all your thoughts, words, and deeds. Only then you will deserve the title "*sakshara*".

The Lord made three declarations: "Son! I shall give you what you ask. If you search for Me, you shall find Me. When you knock at My door, I shall open it." But man today asks for favors not from God but from nature. He searches not for God but for worldly pleasures. He knocks not at the doors of liberation but at the gates of hell.

What you should ask for is the grace of the Divine. What you should search for is God. And you should knock at the doors of the gate to liberation. Man is acting contrary to God's injunctions. If only man followed God's commands he would be divinizing his life.

"Near" and "dear"

Man's frailties have made him distant from God. A student (in his speech earlier) said that to be away from God was a "living death." Man should strive to be "near and dear" to God. Many who are "near" to God are not "dear" to God. For instance, here in Prasanthi Nilayam you see devotees who have come from distant countries like Argentina, Australia and America out of their love for God. Many who are near Swami may meditate on God but they do not dedicate their lives to God. Only by dedication they can become "dear" to God. Students should strive to be both near and dear to God.

Outsiders coming to Prasanthi Nilayam, on seeing the students, feel: "How lucky are these students! Swami is always talking to them and moving with them." But they are not aware who are really "near" to Swami. The saint Thyagaraja's experiences provide an illustration of the dilemma confronting devotees. Once while experiencing troubles and undergoing indignities from others, Thyagaraja wondered whether the troubles he had to go through were due to deficiencies in his devotion or whether Sri Rama was not potent enough to help him. Convinced about his own devotion, he attributed his troubles to Rama's inability to relieve him. Such doubts often arise in the minds of devotees. After meditating over this matter, he realized that Rama's power was limitless and that the defect lay in his own devotion. He composed a song that described how devotion to Rama had enabled Hanuman to leap over the ocean and how it had enabled Lakshmana and Bharata to perform

heroic deeds. (Swami sang the song mellifluously). Thyagaraja confessed that in doubting Rama's powers he had been guilty of weakness in his devotion.

No place for doubt

If Swami did not possess such power, is it conceivable that people would come seeking Swami's grace from distant countries like Argentina and Australia? No one issued any invitations to them. Are they less intelligent than any of you? The fact that they have come here at great expense, prepared to put up with many inconveniences, shows the depth of their devotion.

Therefore, you should not entertain complaints against God or blame Him for your difficulties. If Swami did not have the power, would people of different faiths and from different countries come to Him and experience their oneness? What is the Will that is able to accomplish this? If you enquire along these lines, you will discover the jejuneness of your attitudes. It is your small-mindedness, which accounts for such reactions. Therefore, develop a broad outlook and a wide vision.

All the students of our Institute of Higher Learning should prove themselves to be ideal men wherever they go. You should earn a good name from everyone.

Students who have won prizes in sports should realize that by their conduct they should earn the esteem and love of Swami. All kinds of titles are conferred on people today. But the title which all of you should aim at is that you are 'Children of Immortality' (Amrutasya Putraah). Install God in your hearts and make Him the basis for all your actions. Then all your actions will become sacred. Bring a good name to your parents, to your society and to the land of your birth.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Hari bhajan bina sukha santhi nahi.*"

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, Feb/March 1992

"How Many Friends Do You Have?"

Before joining the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning by the grace of our Lord, I had received a few chances of experiencing minute drops of His Divine *leela* [play]. Here, I wish to share with you one such drop that had a profound impact on me.

The event took place, this year, when Swami was in Madras [Chennai]. Swami went straight to a young boy and asked him, "*How many brothers have you?*" The boy said, "*Swami, I do not have brothers and I am the only son.*"

Immediately, Swami pointed to the people who were present there, asked the boy, "Are they not your brothers?" Swami went and asked another boy the same question and the reply Swami got was the same.

The innate imitateness in me made me think that if Swami comes and asks me I should say that all are my brothers. The next day the Lord came near me. His nearness made me completely forget myself, and I was inches above the ground. The omniscient Lord in His sweet voice asked, "Where is your brother studying?" "He is studying in Swami's college," I said. Then Swami asked, "How many brothers do you have?" Quick came the reply, "One, Swami." With a mischievous smile Swami asked, "Are the people who are standing here not your brothers?" Completely flabbergasted, I had nothing to say except nodding my head.

To prick my imitative bubble a little more, Swami went a few steps, then turned back and asked, "How many friends do you have?" My foolish mind equated at lightning speed that if all are to be my brothers why not all be my friends, and I blurted out, "Swami, all are my friends."

The Lord looked directly into my eyes inquiringly and asked, "What! All are your friends?" Before I could answer Swami continued, "What do your so-called friends do when you are in trouble? They will be with you until they see no money in your pockets. The moment they come to know that you are penniless, they quietly vanish, like the frogs going away from a dried up pond. But Sai is not like that. Whatever may be the trouble, Sai will not forsake you. He is always for you, with you and in you. **Your one and only friend must be Sai.**" Overwhelmed completely, I could do nothing, but watch the Lord moving slowly away and away from me.

Let us ponder for a while. What a revelation! Arjuna had Krishna as his one and only friend. The Lord Himself asks us to keep Him as our one and only friend. But, what a pity that we out of our ignorance, add on to the unending list of friends, leaving the Lord all alone without any friends.

~C.N. Kshetrajna

Source: Sai Nandana 1985 (60th Birthday Issue)

"Baba is God"

The Lady with the Rosary

It was a lovely cool morning in *Prasanthi Nilayam* [the abode of everlasting peace], in the second week of May 1964. The time was about 6:40 in the morning. The sun had risen and devotees were slowly proceeding towards Prasanthi Hall, one by one, for the morning *bhajan* [devotional singing]. Some were reverentially looking up to the balcony with folded hands, yearning written on their faces, for the sight of the

God they loved, and looked up to for help in their distress. A few were circumambulating *Prasanthi Nilayam*.

I was standing under a tree on the left side of the Yoga Kamala Circle. This was my first trip to Puttaparthi. My mind, which was 'educated,' was the mind of an enquirer. Devotion was not one of its attributes then. I watched keenly all those that happened to be there at that time. While I stood watching and wondering, two feet away from me quietly came and stood a graceful lady, tall, well built, aged about seventy. She was very fair with lovely blue eyes. Her grey hair was tidily knotted at the back. Dressed in a spotless white sari and blouse, she was standing erect with a rosary of black beads in her right hand. Her palms had crossed to touch her shoulders. Her expression of serene calmness, of the peace that reigned on that wrinkled yet beautiful and dignified face, has been deeply engraved on my heart. Her thin lips—reddish, like sprouts—were whispering in a hushed tone "Baba is God; Baba is God!"

The Train of Thoughts

And a train of thoughts started in my doubting mind. For the first time I realized the necessity of fully understanding and determining what the concept of God meant. I felt that more 'opinions' of great men should be gathered about what was styled "divinity." Is God an infinitely strong Being who judges mankind, who has created men and matter, who punishes the wicked and rewards the good, or, is He someone sitting on a throne in heaven as is propounded by Christianity and Islam to judge whether beings are to be sent to heaven or hell at the end of a certain period or at the end of eternity?" These thoughts also reminded me of my son's question at *Kathgodam* [a town in north India] when he had the first sight of the majestic Himalayas at the age of five. "Who made this mountain, mum?" he asked. "God" was my automatic answer. "From where did He bring the cement and stones to make this mountain?" was his next query. Finding it impossible to satisfy his curiosity the only effort that could be made was to divert his attention to a beautiful stream that was flowing close by.

When we speak of A or B, I thought, it is not his body that we usually refer to. When a certain A or B is a good or a bad man, in our opinion, it is the 'feeling and thinking being' behind the body of A or B that is referred to; in short, it is a part of his inner consciousness. So, when one speaks of Baba as God it has reference not to His body but to His consciousness, to the inner reality of which the outer is only a tabernacle.

In fact, all those who are not animals or "animal like" are aware of some power manifesting through not only every animate being but also through the in-animate molecules which sustain this visible world. They worship this power in awe and are ever anxious to try to understand the mystery that underlies this great universe.

We Hindus are fortunate to inherit our knowledge through *Upanishads* [ancient sacred texts] and other scriptures that make it clear that every manifested molecule is not without its "atom" or '*atman*' [universal soul], and thus indirectly teach us to

see God in everything, may it be inanimate stone or lump of earth. Hindu religion is not a collection of dogmas or tenets dictated by a single prophet. It is a philosophy of life, a history of experiments in consciousness performed by high minds. They have not forced us to accept the results reached by them, but have left it to posterity to examine their findings, to judge and to realize the truth.

I was fortunate in the next few days to get an interview with Baba. The first time He granted it, He precisely put down the definition of a *Hindu*. He said, "He is a *Hindu* who believes in (i) the theory of *karma* [causes and effects of all actions], (ii) the theory of reincarnation, and (iii) the theory of *Avatar* [divine incarnation]."

Thus we *Hindus* who are born and bred in this philosophy should not indeed find it difficult to understand the idea of God, which is divine consciousness descending on earth and taking a human form. We can then well believe that this power manifested itself through a pillar of stone for *Prahlada* [child devotee of Lord Vishnu]. There are innumerable references to *Avatars* in the *Tantra*, *Mantra*, and *Shakta* books [pertaining to the divine mother, Vedic hymns, and the Goddess Shakti] and *Puranas* [ancient narratives] in Sanskrit literature. Indeed there is not a single word for God in Sanskrit, an artistic yet scientifically meticulous language, which cannot be etymologically explained, and therefore even satisfies the faculty of 'reason' in a human being. The most common words out of these are *Bhagavan* [Lord] or *deva* [divinity]. *Bhagavan* is one who possesses "*Bhaga*". In fact it is a degree that adorned many a great sage, e.g. Bhagavan Panini, or Bhagavan Vyasa. *Bhaga* is the collective mastery of six qualifications as it were: *aishwarya*, *virya*, *yash*, *shri*, *dhyana*, and *vairagya* [abundance, strength, popularity, wealth, contemplative nature, and detachment]. *Deva* is derived from the root *div* to shine, which connotes self-luminance and consequently absence of darkness, shade, or illusion, that is, *maya*.

Avatar is derived from the root "*tri*" with prefix "*ava*" that means descent. *Bhagavad-Gita* [the Lord's song] says, "*Yadayadahi Dharmasya glanirbhavati Bharata, Abhyuthanamadharm asya tadatmanam, srijamyaham.*" Apart from the authority of *Bhagavad-Gita*, a modern English Yogi can be profitably quoted here: "Sometimes an advanced God-like being from another planet has deliberately reincarnated himself on our earth so as to help its benighted humanity, before, during and after a critical time: this happens when human character sinks into deep materialism and has to endure its attendant sufferings. Such an act is necessarily wrapped in a mantle of mystery."

The Mystery that is Baba

The mystery that is Baba, or that was Sri Krishna or Jesus Christ is before the world to perceive, examine, and see for itself. The Being who is a perfect Being can thus consciously manifest itself through a human form. The *Yogi* further says, "It represents a tremendous sacrifice, a veritable crucifixion of consciousness". If the sacrifice of limiting his own consciousness and taking a body out of compassion for humanity is to be understood, Baba's own statement in *Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 1* can

serve an excellent purpose. "The Lord cannot come down with His *Mahashakti* [supreme divine energy] unimpaired. He has to come with diminished splendor and limited effulgence so that He can become the object of *bhakti* [devotion] and of dedicated service."

But to realize the truth of this statement or the statements in *Bhagavad-Gita*, a human being must possess some faculty higher than reason, the sixth sense, or faith. Recently an article written by a famous Western scientist appeared in a local newspaper explaining how a human being must develop intuition in order to rise higher than more intellect.

Turn Within

The flights of reason and intellect are indeed majestic and the altitude that they can achieve is amply evident from the creation of supersonic jets and atom bombs. But as man cannot live by bread alone he can neither live "without" only. There comes a moment in some one of his numerous lives when he yearns to turn 'within' and instead of 'expanse', he longs for depth. It is a turn-back of consciousness from the empirical existence toward the source of all. Freud, Jung, and other psychologists of the West have evidenced this yearning for turning within. Jacob has put forward this idea in his book "Western Psychiatry and Hindu *Sadhana* [spiritual effort]". Many Western Scholars and scientists have independently experimented in the laboratory of their 'within' and have expounded their own findings. Their attitude toward the subject of their investigation and discovery is strictly 'scientific' in the modern sense of the term. P. D. Auspinsky, Gurdjieff and several other known and unknown European *Yogis* are referred to here.

The great *Upanishadic* sages of this ancient land performed all these psychological and para-psychological ex-periments and their findings are noted in the scriptures. Unfortunately the knowledge remained locked from us for a long period of two centuries of foreign rule. As Baba says, "The aim and goal of the present educational system is *bhukti*, enjoyment or earning of livelihood, and not *bhakti* or *mukti* "devotion" or "salvation". While the knowledge of words and of material science may also be given a place of due honor, this information-cum-knowledge was put in the category of "*Apara Vidya* [lower knowledge]" and thus Swetaketu [son of a sage Uddalaka from the *Upnishads*] who knew not the *Para Vidya* [higher knowledge], was challenged by his father, when he came home after a 24 year course of *Apara Vidya*, whether he knew "that, by knowing which one, knows all". "*Sa vidya ya vimuktaye*" proclaim the ancients.

A great set-back

Thus the children of this great land have suffered a great setback on the path of evolution. We have started walking hand in hand with westerners. It was not until the beginning of this century that westerners turned within and began to see that education was much more than inculcating habits of thought and behavior in a child. An example would be of interest here. Sir P. Nun, in his book "Principles of Education", has devoted a whole chapter on 'Nature and Nurture', the share of

heredity and environment in the building up of human personality. Yet the question of heredity was itself so puzzling. Experiments of glandular extracts and temperamental observation must necessarily have taken many words, and much time—while I as a student, wondered, whether *Bhagavad-Gita* that is supposed to be composed about 3000 years ago had not solved the question completely when it said "*Tatra tam Buddhi samyogam labhate poorva dehikam* [on taking such a birth, he again revives the divine consciousness of his previous life]."

All these experiments are performed scientifically by the sages but the difficulty is that one has to turn inward to test their authenticity. If one has not got the capacity of experimenting, "faith" is of great help. It is a very arduous and difficult path; as the *Kathopanishad* [a scripture that unveils the mystery of death and the meaning of life] says, "the razor's edge is sharp and difficult to cross; wise men say it is difficult to tread upon this path."

At this point, again, faith is of very great help. Faith is the companion of intuition and is placed beyond reason that in its turn has to be used to pierce intellect to go to the path of intuition. *Katha*, speaking about Nachiketas, says, "*Shradha tam Avivesha.*" That is a reference to the moment when intuition is unfolded. Whether this is purely the outcome of the grace of God, or the ripening of that layer of consciousness as a result of '*sanskaras*' [mental impressions] from the past is for the Master to say. But there is some ultra-voluntary or supra-mental condition involved in such a moment. This is the humble reading of the present writer from a sentence in the same "Upanishad", "*Atma eva vrinute* [Indeed it is the choice of God]."

Reason and Tolerance

All this leads to only one conclusion, that each individual has for himself a unique and personal point of consciousness and has it strictly reserved for himself in the infinitely great expanse of this cosmos. All points of view such as pantheism, monotheism, atheism as well as the principles of *Charvakas* [that there are only four independent elements of fire, earth, air, and water]; *Naiyayikas* [that valid knowledge is obtained by perception, inference, observation, and study]; Buddhists, Muslims, and Christians were all generously accepted and tolerated by the Hindu religion. Religion is a matter of inner consciousness of a man regarding the relationship between him and the ultimate reality. Any religion based on reason cannot but point to tolerance and thus Baba always asks people to leave others to themselves and never ridicule those who think or feel differently.

Thousands of fortunate men and women have come under the protective wings of Baba. Many of them have a personal story to tell about their experience of "miraculous" that has come their way. To them Baba has come a veritable divine consciousness limited by the frame of a body made up of the five elements. It requires a divine eye to realize His Divinity, even as intellect is required to appreciate intellectual feats. Yet, reason can guide us to find out some fraction of the mystery that is Baba. If omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience are taken to be divine attributes, even the few incidents described in Baba's life-story can give

proof of Baba having them. *Sathya, dharma, shanti, and prema* [truth, right conduct, peace, and love] are Baba's principles and Baba's nature. His universal love is to be witnessed in order to be believed.

Mahatma Gandhi in his article "God is" describes God as 'the greatest democrat'; Baba also receives all alike, rich and poor. Indeed, of the thousands that go to Puttaparthi, each one feels Baba loves him the best and cares for him the most. He showers His grace on all alike as the sun sheds its light equally on all. However, even as we admit the light to the extent we keep the door open, our own individual distance from Him varies.

Physics and Metaphysics

Little do we realize that Baba is master of metaphysics and alchemy. It will be a great moment for the modern world when physics joins hands with metaphysics. Yet the addicts of physics are cynical and skeptical. This article is not a challenge; it is a humble request to go beyond mere intellect that can only analyze what science calls "matter." Despite all his discoveries, the scientist has found it impossible to substitute even two centimeters of this vast cosmos. Baba is the embodiment of love, peace, and happiness and urges all to acquire them. He extols our ancient scriptures, profusely quotes from them while He speaks, but warns us, that at the most, they are useful only as maps or guidebooks. They cannot substitute experience and in order to achieve it one must perform *sadhana* [spiritual effort]. He awakens us spiritually and makes us realize our own divine nature.

The Avatar

It is easy for some to believe in Krishna as an *Avatar* because he lived in the distant past, but they cannot believe in Baba as He came in 1926 and as they can see Him in 1966 with their material eyes. If Baba is an "*Avatar*" why does He not solve the problems of India, some people ask; God solves all problems of well being, but as Baba explained to the present writer quoting the couplet from the: "*Ananyaschintayanto mam ye Janah paryupasate, tesham nityabhiyuktanam yogakshemam vabamyaham* [But those who worship Me with devotion, meditating on My transcendental form-to them I carry what they lack and preserve what they have]." We are apt to forget the condition precedent for the solution of problems, of contemplating upon God, and that too unyieldingly.

In fact such questions arise from the impulsive and illogical belief that God acts capriciously toward mankind, distributing favors to some and special misfortunes to others, or that God is temperamental and a contradictory mixture of likes and dislikes. Every human being is only a manifestation of consciousness at that particular point; so, no two human beings are at the same point; therefore they differ in thought, feeling, and action. To some Baba is God, but to others Baba is a mystery. *Sadhana* and disciplined penance are required to understand even a fraction of that mystery. Baba often says, "India has lost the spirit of *sadhana*, and therefore her children are immersed in poverty and suffer starvation. To day the cry

is "Savoham" "I am dead", instead of "Sivoham" "I am Siva" that once resounded in this great land.

The Double Spectrum

Those who have faith in the manifestation of divine consciousness through human form necessarily believe in the infinite and the immutable. It has no form of its own but it can and does make token gestures to aspirants to indicate its existence and these gestures may take a personal form. It is true that such personal appearances are transient images. It is the mental attitude of the seeker which is of the utmost importance. Says *Sri Bhagavad-Gita* "Ye Yatha man prapadyanto Tanstathniwa Bhajamyaham [In whatever way men identify with Me and worship Me, in the same way do I carry out their desire]."

Mind alone is thus the double spectrum that gives the owner the view of the empirical world as well as the inner reality. The *Chandogya Upanishad* [one of the oldest and longest Sanskrit scriptures] says "*Mano Brahma iti upaseeta*" [All this (that we perceive through the intellect) is indeed the Absolute]. When Baba sanctified this great city of Bombay last June, His visit invoked different reactions. One went so far as to warn the "intellectuals of Maharashtra" to 'awake' and not follow like blind sheep this 'man of miracles'! Yet, strange is the diversity in this unity! The same incident struck a different note in thousands of others: "Baba is God!" "Baba is God!"

~Dr. Damayanthi Doongaji, M.A., LL.B., Ph. D., Bombay
Source: *Santhana Sarathi*, Jan. 196

The Sarathi

The *Sarathi* calls on every heart
Offering His equestrian art;
He will curb the fiery steeds
Of tongue, the eye, and ear;
He will overwhelm your wily foe
With His will, though He holds the whip.
He will teach you all the stratagems
To foil the furious fate;
He will warn and wake, alert, advise
And prompt, each movement from within!
When the fog of fear, the ego cloud,
The dust of 'mine', 'my kith and kin'
Does clog the eye and smog the mind,
When pseudo-wisdom prattles on the tongue,
He cures, consoles, conferring courage, faith!

He sings the song that opens wide
The gates of light! He is the ancient *Sarathi*
Who leads all beings in the fray,
Seat Him on your heart,
Let Him lead you where He will
You sure can win the victory—
'Tis your due, soon or late.

~Tarakadas

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, March 1969

Q & A with Bhagavan:

What is Spiritual Hunger?

Sai: Who are you? Who are you?

Hislop: I am the accumulation of all my past, all my ideas.

Sai: Who is that 'My'? Who is that 'My'? Who is that 'My' who is claiming? Between the love and yourself there is this claim. What is love and who are you?

Hislop I am that which I am, the accumulation of all these...

Hislop's wife: The accumulation is the idea that you have, but according to Swami, you and the love are the same thing. You are the one who makes the separation.

Hislop: Yes, I am the one who puts the separation between us. I am the ego.

Sai: Ego is untruth.

Hislop: Ego is untruth, then I...

Sai: But you are not ego. You are truth. Ego is not truth. Any amount of arguments and discussions like this is just words. You will not get this without spiritual practice, without *sadhana*. An example: Someone asks us what sugar is. We say it is brownish and sort of sandy, because we know sugar. But the sweetness has no form. Like that you can describe sugar, but you cannot picture the taste, because the taste has no form. Even pertaining to the world, there are so many things we do not know, and we don't imagine or worry about it. We should feel intensely for God instead of so much discussion and reading books. We must get into the field and try it out. Even if someone writes a book, it is *his* spiritual experience. You love your wife and

she loves you. But if she is hungry, you cannot eat for her. And if you are hungry, she cannot eat for you despite the fact that you love each other dearly.

Spiritual hunger is like that. Each man must seek and appease that hunger according to his faith. Even though Swami tries to explain, you do not grasp it. It is only through experience you must come to it. When you start to learn to drive, you must have an open space for practice; but once you learn, then even on a narrow road you can go with confidence. It is just like in a school. Gradually you go and you understand. If big words are used, the child does not understand them when he is still learning the A B C's. In the beginning, we do not understand things of the world and do not even understand ourselves, so how can you understand that which is beyond you? So, first you try to understand yourself by doing spiritual practice, by doing *sadhana*. First 'I,' next 'You.' 'I' plus 'You' equals 'We.' Then 'We' plus 'He.' Then only 'He.'

Hislop: No. I don't understand that.

Sai: First 'I,' then 'You.' First 'I'; that is life. Next 'You'; that is the world. 'I' plus 'You' is 'We.' 'We' plus 'He' is God. Then only 'He.' There is love, the person who loves, and the person you love. And when all get together, it is bliss. You see, there are three blades in the fan. The three blades represent the three *gunas* [qualities]. Only when the blades circulate together in harmony do you get the air. When they move in the same direction they bring the cool air. Within us, the three *gunas* are going all in different directions. When you turn them in the same direction, all going around together, then you will get the one-pointedness and you will be enabled to know.

A Visitor: Could it be like this? It is the experience of a number of people, including myself, that one does *sadhana* gradually. But then suddenly comes such an experience that ordinarily would have taken an immense time. Does it come suddenly because of Your grace?

Sai: Another example: In a house, each one does a particular job and divides the work. In the evening when the family has finished the work, nobody says, 'Father, I did such and such work and you must pay me.' It is one house, so you don't ask for payment, you just do the work. But when people from outside come to do work, you fix the rate and pay accordingly. When you pay them that shows they are outsiders. But when they are your own, you don't have to pay them. They work with interest and no pay is expected.

Similarly with God, when you think God is the nearest and dearest to you, like one family, you don't ask for pay. The one who surrenders like that, he is My own, he does not have to look for payment. But the one who says, 'I have done so much *sadhana*,' and barter with God and says, 'I have done so much *sadhana* and you should give me such and such a reward,' then that is the difference; he is an outsider. The child who is small does not ask the mother, 'I want milk, I want to be changed,' and so on, but the mother looks after every need of the child without its

asking. When you have surrendered yourself completely to God and become God's child, you don't have to tell God what you want. He will give even more than you have asked for. But it is only by love that He is your dearest. Do your *sadhana* and there is closeness to God; then you don't have to tell Him that you want this or that. Because you are like a little child, He will come and give you more than even what you ask for. Ego is what prevents us from getting close to God. It is that ego: 'I' have to do this, 'I' have to get all this. You must see that 'I' am only the instrument of the Lord. Like the fan is an instrument, you are an instrument of the Lord. Now, is the fan making the fan rotate, or is the current making the fan rotate?

Hislop: The current is making the fan rotate.

Sai: The current is God, so you are only the instrument. Even the fact that we think that our eyes see things and our ears hear things, that is not correct. My eyes are here, but the mind is in Bangalore, thinking of this or that. My eyes see, but my mind is somewhere else. Mind is important. The body is like a flashlight; the eye is the bulb; mind is the battery cell; intelligence is the switch. Only when the four work together do you get the light.

Hislop: Surrender to God is everything, of course, but . . .

Sai: The word, 'surrender,' in English, is not quite correct; it is not the right word. It does not quite explain. When you say, 'surrender,' you are separate and God is separate. That is the meaning you get. But God is not separate.

Source: *Conversations with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

Thought of the Month:

Who are you?

Most people today have no real idea of what is devotion and what is spiritual discipline. Different forms of worship, pilgrimages, meditation, and the like are equated with devotion. These are not the indices of *bhakti* (devotion). They are all actions that can confer some mental satisfaction. To realize your inner nature, your efforts must be directed internally. As long as you think God is somewhere outside you, you cannot qualify for Divine grace. The true mark of devotion is to recognize that God is within you and around you, everywhere. You must develop the faith that you are a manifestation of God. The scriptures call upon everyone to find out, "Who are you?"

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 24, P. 244

Today we are forgetting the truth of the Spirit. We are immersed in things unspiritual. What is the *sadhana* (spiritual discipline) that men have to practice? Is it *dhyana, japa, yoga, yaga* [meditation, chanting the name, union of the body & mind, and ritualistic sacrifice], or rituals? None of these.

... All these exercises are performed through the mind. How can such exercises control the mind? Can a thief catch himself? Likewise the mind cannot undertake to control itself. The mind has to be negated (*amanaske*). Amanaska means freedom from thoughts. As thoughts are minimized, the mind loses its power.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 24, P. 96-97

Man should endeavor to know that by knowing which everything else is known...

Every man has to understand the inner significance of the "I". He uses the expressions: "This is my body; this is my house," and so on. But who are you? Without knowing who you are, how have these relationships arisen? When you say, "My body," the body must be different from you. It follows that you are not the body. The body is *drishya* (an object of perception). The senses, the mind, the *chitta* [will], and the *antahkarana* [the inner motivator] are all the *drishya* (the seen). The "I" is the seer. This is the truth proclaimed by *Vedanta* [scriptures].

Recognize the fact you are the seer. This *drishta* (seer) is known by many names. In the waking state, he is the cognizer in all beings, and hence is called *Viraata Swaroopa* (the cosmic Person). As he is engaged in a variety of activities, he is also termed *vyavahaarika*. On account of the attachment to every object in the world, he is also called *Vishwam*. In the dream state also, the "I" is known by different names. He is known as the creator of dreams. As the mind alone functions in this state, he is known as *Pratyagatma* [the knower of body, world, and mind]. Moreover, as he is seeking to attain a higher state by a process of enquiry and questioning, he is also known as *chitta-ekagratah* (the one-pointed enquirer).

In the deep sleep state, because of the potency of the *antahkarana* the "I" is liable to comprehend everything and therefore is called *taijasah or prajna* [higher wisdom]. Although the universe is filled with innumerable objects, with different forms and names, the one thing that is present in all of them is the "I." The "I" principle is omnipresent.

Vedanta has declared that constant integrated awareness in all the states is realization of the Self. The wisdom that "I am the *atma* [soul]" should blossom in every human being. It is only when this wisdom dawns that man can have direct experience of the Divine. Therefore, everyone should try to manifest the divinity within him.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 24, P. 232-234