



The Victory of Victories

In His Divine discourse on Mahashivaratri 1977, Swami guides us in realizing: "Awareness of the One ensures unshaken tranquility." Swami further explains the significance of observing this sacred night with spiritual practice: "In this way darkness can be turned into light . . . This ratri (night) can be sublimated into the heavenly splendor of Shiva."

The spiritual path is the path of detachment, of sense control, of rigorous mind training. Parvathi sought to win Shiva first by the glamour of physical charm; she had the stratagems of the God of Love, *Manmatha*, to support Her allurements. However, Shiva reduced the God of Love to ashes and rejected Her advances. Thereafter She entered an arduous period of ascetic austerities and through them was able to win Shiva's grace to such an extent that She became the left half of His sacred body. Man must first decide, after vigorous self-examination and continuous inquiry, the path that he wishes to traverse. *Moksha* (liberation) means the removal of the bonds of ignorance that cloud the truth and create a mirage of untruth. In fact, living is only another name for alternate misery and happiness, hunger and contentment, illness and health, desire and fulfillment. The moment one desire is realized man reaches out with a new one. He is ever struggling and ever unhappy for he does not seek the eternal, the lasting, the source and the substance. He is content with the transient, the trivial, and the temporary.

Derive joy from making others happy

Use the body as a chariot for reaching liberation through truth. It is your duty to see that on the four wheels of *sathya*, *dharma*, *shanti*, and *prema* (truth, righteousness, peace, and love) the chariot moves along the road to the goal. It will move on that road only if it has less luggage in the form of desires, worries, and fears. Desires, worries, and fears are multiplied when man thinks he is the body with all its appurtenances, and not the owner of the body. *Karma*, *bhakti*, *jnana*, (action, devotion, wisdom) are the three paths to God. However, through *kama* (desire), *karma* is warped; through *lobha* (greed), *bhakti* is vitiated; through *krodha* (anger), *jnana* is obscured. By means of *prema* (love) one can easily conquer desire, greed, and anger.

Learn a lesson from the insignificant ant. When an ant spots a lump of sugar it does not hide the fact and seek to consume it alone. Instead, it collects its friends and kinsmen for it loves to share with others the feast it has found. The crow, a bird that is despised and often outcast, caws repeatedly until its kith and kin gather at the

place, when it discovers a little heap of food. What is shared is tastier; what is held back is bitter stuff. Life is short and full of misery; do all you can to derive joy from making others happy. If others are miserable, how can you be truly happy.

The greatness of man lies in the fact that he can remove the evil in him by conscious effort. In the case of some animals however, as much as they may be subjected to training and education, their base instincts will only lie low ready to spring up at the slightest provocation.

Shivaratri (night of Shiva) declares that spending one full night in fast and in vigil is symbolic of conquering the senses by sleeplessly watching their antics and preventing them from inflicting harm. In this way darkness can be turned into light; *shavam* (corpse) can be sublimated into *Shivam* (God).

There is a purpose behind all activities of the Divine

Why should man, endowed with extra sensitivity to share sorrow and joy with others, be born in this changing world of time and space? Nothing that is born can escape death; nothing that is built can withstand disintegration. Why then has man been sent onto this stage of fleeting experiences? There is a purpose behind all the activities of the Divine. Man must manifest the Divine in him and lead all living beings in that adventure. He has to liberate himself by his efforts and liberate all life by his example. He must become free and secure in his Source. This is what is called *moksha* (liberation). He is liberated from littleness into vastness, from bondage to boundless bliss.

The ego alloy enters man only when he is misled by the apparent diversity to posit multiplicity in creation. The Reality that is misconstrued in the dull dusk of *ajnana* (ignorance), is God. To see through the illusion that projects many where there is only the One, is the purpose of all spiritual *sadhana* [spiritual effort]. If even after years of spiritual discipline, which every religion prescribes, the *sadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) continues to see differences, distinctions, and diversities, we can conclude that he has a long way to go before he can fulfill the aim of this human existence.

Awareness of the One ensures unshaken tranquility. When the One is realized there can be no fear, for how can the One fear itself? There can also be no desire, for when there is no second, how can the desire to possess arise? Neither can there be envy, hatred, greed, pride, or any of the evil passions that torment man and allow him no peace. The awareness of the One ensures unshaken tranquility, *Prasanthi*. The One (call it God, *Paramatma*, *Brahman*, or the Universal Absolute), is all love, knowledge, wisdom, sweetness. *Raso vai sah* (He is sweetness) say the *Upanishads*. How can there be any bitterness in Him or in man's real nature, when man is manifested by Him, from Him, and for Him.

A goat cannot be born of a tigress. What emanates from God must be Divine. Hence the appellation, *amrithasya puthraha* (child of immortality) is given to man in the *Upanishads*. Hence the *atma* (soul) in him, which has come from the *Paramatma*

(Supreme Self), is also immortal. Sparks emanating from the flames of fire have the same incendiary quality as the fire. The body is a temple of God and has been organized for the sake of the God who installed Himself therein. Until man realizes the God within and comes to understand that He is the mystery that evaded him while he wandered in the wilderness of the world, he must attend assiduously to the upkeep of the body.

Strive, yearn, and struggle to merge with the Source

He can earn that awareness only by leashing the wayward mind and directing it inward. *Shivaratri* is a reminder to all mankind of the goal of mind control. The moon is the presiding deity of the mind according to the sages; even modern science has discovered a subtle relationship between the mind and the phases of the moon. In the dark half of the month the moon is seen less and less as the days move forward; symbolically it may be inferred that the mind too is undergoing a process of decline. This is the fourteenth night and there is little left of the moon to influence the earth or the mind of man. A spurt of spiritual effort by way of vigil, *bhajan* (congregational chanting) and fasting done on this *ratri* (night) or period of ignorance, will result in the extinction of the mind and the conquest of all the tendencies and attitudes in which it has entangled man. This *ratri* can be sublimated into the heavenly splendor of Shiva.



Strive—that is your duty. Yearn—that is your task. Struggle—that is your assignment. If only you do these sincerely and steadily, God cannot long keep back the reward of realization. The river strives, yearns, and struggles to merge with the sea from which it came. It has that consummation ever awake in its consciousness. It attempts to make itself pure and pellucid so that it may be welcomed by its source. It overcomes every obstacle of terrain in order to journey successfully toward its goal. Man too, must utilize all the physical, mental, moral, intellectual, and material endowments that God has granted him so that he may journey to the goal of realization.

Love can never entertain the idea of revenge

Do not be misled by the belief of the existence of two **entitles**: this world and the next, here and hereafter. Realize the hereafter here; this world is interwoven with the next. There is no truth in the disparity between the secular and the spiritual, the

godly and the materialistic, the heavenly and the earthly. In all the worlds, it is His command that reigns. Not even a blade of grass can quiver without His will guiding the wind and agitating its position. The bulb of life is illumined by the current coming from the eternal, universal powerhouse, *kaivalya* [solitude], working according to His laws and drawn through the cable of love.

When that *prema* (love) is tainted by selfishness, it cannot illumine at all. Self is lovelessness; love is selflessness. Self gets and forgets; love gives and forgives. Love can never entertain the idea of revenge for it sees the oneness of all. When the tongue is hurt by the teeth, do you seek vengeance against the teeth? No, for they both belong to you and are integral parts of your body.

So too, when some other person insults you or inflicts pain, allow wisdom to have mastery over you. Discover the truth and do not rush to conclusions; always keep love as your guide.

Of course, it is a difficult task but not beyond the capacity of man. A task that can be finished without struggle and sustained effort is not something to be proud of. It is the difficult task that provides the challenge and brings forth the best and highest in man. When we embark upon this task with ardor and faith it will be sweeter. Once victory is achieved, the rest will be added unto you.

Source: *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. 13

The Gopis [mailkmaids] knew the secret of spiritual surrender. Their worship was not tainted by any bargaining spirit. For those who bargain and crave for profit, reverence is equated with returns; they sell homage at so much per unit of satisfactory response. They are like paid servants, clamoring for wages, overtime allowance, bonus, etc. They calculate how much they are able to extract for the service rendered.

On the other hand, be a member of the family, a kinsman, a friend. Feel that you are the Lord's own. Then the work will not tire you; it will be done better and yield more satisfaction. And the wages? The master will maintain you in bliss. What more can anyone aspire for.

~Sri Sathya Sai

True Bliss Lies Within

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The great sage Veda Vyasa's heart was full of anguish at the fratricidal carnage going on in the battlefield of Kurukshetra [in the *Mahabharata* epic], for were not both the warring groups of his lineage? Sad at heart, he was walking on the blood-

soaked plains of the battlefield, where another day's slaughter was about to begin. He spotted a spider scurrying along the ground. "Hey! Why so fast?" enquired the sage. The spider scurried off the path, climbed up an anthill and from that eminence it replied, "Know you not that the war chariot of Arjuna [one of the Pandavas] is about to pass this way! If I am caught under its wheels I am done."

The sage laughed and said, "No eye gets wet when you die! You leave no vacuum when you disappear." Shaking with rage, the spider replied, "Oh bloated sage, you feel that if you die, the world will suffer a great loss whereas I will not be missed at all. I too have a wife and children whom I love; I too have a home and a store of food and cling to life with as much tenacity as you folk; I also have hunger, thirst, grief, pain, joy, delight, and the agony of separation from [my] kith and kin."

Sage Vyasa hung his head and moved on muttering, *Samanyam Etat Pasubhir Narani*, 'for man and beast these things are common'. He added to himself, however, "Only man is capable of yearning for beauty, truth, and goodness, inquiry into the ultimate and attaining awareness of the underlying unity. These attributes are the unique treasures of mankind." Saying thus, he went his way.

"It is indeed difficult to obtain a human birth and he, who having obtained the same does not exert himself to realize the highest truth, verily commits suicide by clinging to things unreal." (*Viveka Chudamani—Vedanta*) Do we really know the answers to the most fundamental questions of life? Alternatively put, have we made an effort to subjectively experience the absolute *Truth*.

Truth is not at all what we see and experience. Truth is internal (*nivritti satyam*—inward truth). Truth is that which is untainted by mind and speech, beyond the categories of time and space, transcending cause and effect, ever the same, the very foundation of this universe. *Vedanta* describes it as *Ritam*, synonymous with the eternal Brahman. ~Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

There is another reason why inquiry into the ultimate gains urgency. From cradle to grave, every man, every being, seeks only one thing: peace and joy without end. All seeking is a manifestation of this primordial need of man to be 'happy' always. A desire satisfied produces pleasure; a longing unfulfilled creates sadness. Between the mental crests of happiness and sadness are the troughs of boredom. But true bliss is not pleasure, pain, or indifference. It is ever new joy experienced subjectively in the still depths of the soul, buried deep beneath the exciting mental waves of pleasure and pain. This supreme bliss is revealed only in the quietness of the soul that is a result of an intense inner effort of the mind to commune with the Absolute. But very few people can actually tear themselves away from the attractions of the world and make a decisive turn toward self-inquiry. Man is engaged in an eternal quest for that 'something else' he hopes will bring him happiness, complete and unending. For those who have sought and found God, the search is over: He is that Something Else.

'Don't allow the mind to run after fleeting pleasures. Direct it toward the permanent bliss derivable from the knowledge of the immanent divinity. Keep before the mind's eye the faults of sensory pleasures and worldly happiness. Whatever the crisis, however deep the misery, do not allow your grip over the mind to get loose; tighten it further, fixing your eyes on higher values. Do not allow the mind to stray away from the holy tabernacle of the heart. Make it bow before the *atma* within.' (Jnana Vahini).

The aim of our life is to realize our true selves as the imperishable divine essence, the very soul of the universe, so that when we 'die' we don't perish. Any other desire in our bosom is at best a distraction and deserves to be renounced with earnestness. 'As fog before the sun, ignorance melts away before knowledge. Knowledge is acquired by uninterrupted inquiry. One should constantly engage in the inquiry on the nature of the Self. As you remove the husk that covers the rice, so too the ignorance that adheres to the mind has to be removed by the frequent application of the abrasive *atmic* inquiry.' (Jnana Vahini).

The success of any endeavor in any sphere of life largely depends on the physical and mental equipment the seeker has at his disposal. This applies equally, if not more to the inward journey, a seeker of truth undertakes. The scriptures declare that to entitle one to embark on the inquiry into the *atma*, one must be endowed with the *Sadhana Chatusthaya* or the four qualifications. They are *viveka* (discrimination), *vairagya* (renunciation), *shad-sampat* (six allied virtues), and *mumukshatwa* (desire for liberation).

The settled conviction that the Seer alone is eternal and the seen is transient is called *viveka* (discrimination). Once having discriminated between the real and the unreal, dispassion for the transient fruits of one's action here and hereafter is termed as *vairagya* (renunciation). The six allied virtues are: turning the sense organs away from their objects; detachment from sense enjoyments by continuously observing their defects; withdrawal of the mind from the arena of sense pleasures; bearing afflictions without anxiety or lament; faith in the scriptures and the words of the *Guru*; and the concentration of the inner faculty on the Self.; and, finally, the seeker must have intense yearning for liberation. Once the inner instrument has been thus prepared by adequate disciplines it can now enter into the extremely subtle process of Self-Inquiry.

What is the nature of this inquiry?

Can fire burn itself? Can water feel wet? No, because heat is the very nature of fire, and dampness of water. In the same way my true nature can never be known to me, for whatever is known cannot be Me. The seen cannot be the Seer. The Seer sees the seen and is always distinct and untouched. I am the Seer, the eternal subject. The seen has no separate identity at all, for does not the very existence of the seen entirely depend on the seeing of the Seer. In other words, all that seems to exist, exists only because the light of awareness 'falls on it' and illumines it. Is anything

perceived in deep sleep? Does a dream have any separate existence from the dreamer? Is not the dream entirely wound up, without a trace, once the dreamer wakes up? Therefore, I am the eternal witness, ever witnessing the objective world of thought, emotion, feeling, and perception. What follows from the above line of argument is the grand declaration of the *Upanishads* that all that ever existed, exists, or will ever exist is the *One Self* alone.

If I am not all this, what am I? What is my nature? And how can I arrive at a subjective experience of my real nature. As long as I am aware of the existence of the world and lend it my attention, it exists. But when I draw myself 'in' and become solely aware of awareness itself, I abide in my own true nature as *Absolute Consciousness-Existence-Bliss*. In other words when the attention is 'outward', the world is perceived and when the attention is on the Self and Self alone, one exists as the Self itself. This state of firm abidance in the Absolute is called *samadhi* in Indian spiritual literature.

Let us consider three of the profound lines of inquiry that the *Upanishads* offer in the light of Bhagavan's discourses and writings. The *Kenopanishad* asks, "Who impels the mind? Enjoined by whom does the vital force proceed to function? At whose behest do men utter speech? What intelligence, indeed, directs the eye and the ears?" All the inner instruments, from the senses to the discriminatory functionality called the intellect, are inert. What is that conscious force that activates the inner instruments? Being themselves devoid of intelligence how are they able to perform intelligent function. The answer is: Due to the presence of the Self and the reflection of its effulgence on the inner instruments. Just like the sun illumines the world and makes it active in a thousand ways, yet light itself does not involve in any activity, the Self, though the uncaused cause of everything is itself ever agitation-free, still, and devoid of activity. *Kenopanishad* appropriately calls the Self, the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear and the mind of the mind.

Let us now turn our attention to the *Mandukyopanishad*, which according to Swami is the chief and the most profound among all *Upanishads*, the very kernel of *Vedanta*. Man's life is divided into three states: The wakeful state (*jagrat*), the dream (*swapna*), and the deep sleep (*sushupti*). In the wakeful state man leads his life under the thralldom [the state of being under bondage] of the manifold pulls and attractions of the sensory world.

In the dream, man follows his impulses and derives satisfaction in the process. In deep sleep all the impulses are suspended and though they still persist, they are not manifest or active. In deep sleep, the mind is latent; in dream, restless and in the waking stage, active. Although the mind is 'absent' during deep sleep, the blissful experience and the rest of a peaceful sleep is not lost on us when we wake up. Thus, the *Mandukyopanishad* argues that there is a fourth state, distinct from these three, permeating all the three, ever aware and witnessing all the other three states. The glory and the splendor of this 'state' cannot be expressed by words or imagined

by the mind. In fact, 'the fourth' is not actually a state in the strict sense of the term but our own immutable, eternal reality.

The *Taittiriyaopanishad* talks about the five sheaths (*koshas*) that 'cover' the self. The grossest one is the food sheath (*annamaya kosha*), perceived as the physical body, a transformation of food. The vital airs form the next and subtler sheath (*pranamaya kosha*), enabling all the physiological functions of the body. Weighing between right and wrong, good and bad is the sheath of the mind, the *manomaya kosha*. The fixation upon a step with a purpose in view is the functionality of the *vijnanamaya kosa*. When the joy of achievement is tasted, the *anandamaya kosha* functions. In the depths beneath and transcending the five sheaths shines the all-pervading, all-permeating *atman* or the Self with the effulgence of a 'thousand suns'. To subjectively realize that Self, which is subtler than the subtlest, the very core, the essence as our own reality is the very purpose of human life.

The food sheath (*annamaya kosha*), the vital air sheath (*pranamaya kosha*), the mental sheath (*manomaya kosha*), the intellect sheath (*vignanamaya kosha*) and the innermost bliss sheath (*anandamaya kosha*) are all in *Brahman* and so, *Brahman* is inherently *Ananda* [bliss]. Each *kosha* [sheath] is subtler than the other and they all together can be taken as the body of *Brahman*. Analyzing the nature of the 'I', laying bare the enveloping sheaths, the *pancha koshas*, through concentrated discrimination, directed inward, penetrate the secret of the *atma*. (*Sutra Vahini*).

Who can ever describe or comprehend the Self? It is 'That' in the light of which expression and comprehension happen. Even scriptures with the most expressive diction can at best give us only a set of pleasant contradictions rather than a sustained intelligent description. It can only be experienced subjectively in the absolute quietude of the mind and the intellect brought about by intelligent and intense human effort and the blessings and grace of a *guru*.

Atmic inquiry is not the only way though. Total surrender to the *guru*, who is the very embodiment of God, done in the fullness of love and reverence will definitely lead one to the most blessed state. Once you have secured a *guru*, leave everything to him, even the desire for liberation. He knows you better than you know yourself. One must with unrestricted renunciation and sincere earnestness follow the instructions of the teacher and smother the tendencies to drift away from him. This is real *tapas*. This *tapas* leads one to the highest stage.

~Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

A man used to live by begging, standing at the same place, day after day, month after month. The man spent his entire life begging. When he finally died, the citizens decided to bury him on the same spot where he had spent his life begging. When verily a few feet were dug, a huge treasure was found. Standing on wealth immeasurable, the man had spent his life begging in abject, self-imposed penury! How pitiable is our state! Being the inheritors of bliss infinite, we spend our life begging from the world little sense pleasures! If only we stop running after the

world and dig into our 'selves', all our suffering too shall cease forever. Nobody pointed out to the beggar his folly. We have our Swami, not only showing us the way all the time but assuring all the help and guidance, and much more. 'Take one step toward Me and I shall take a hundred toward you' says He, 'you do your best, I will do the rest.' Time to stop 'begging' and start 'digging'. Now!

Source: *Sai Sparshan 2006*

Humble Prayer

Baba please do light my path
So that I may not stumble
And complete my journey to the last,
Without a groan or grumble.

Baba, please grant me the sight,
To see my real self;
And equip me better, **them** to fight,
These worldly *mithya* [false], pomp and pelf.

My Baba, to you therefore, I pray,
To guide me through this mire,
And let me sore above the fray,
To know and behold The Godly Fire.

Baba, please hasten the day,
When on me your light will shine,
Knowing truly throughout the way
That I am Yours and You are mine.

Baba please, let this be
My humble prayer to Thee,
My good actions the only fee
For You becoming my Sarathi.

~K. D. Bhatia

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, Oct. 1962

To submit articles or photos, please email them to "editor@SaiSarathi.com."

"Should I create something in order to show you a miracle?"

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We are always thrilled when we witness a miracle of Bhagavan or for that matter even hear about it. That is why whenever we talk about Bhagavan, the first thing that very often comes to our mind are His miracles. Miracles reveal His omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence and thrills us, fascinates us and leaves us amazed. These 'visiting cards' of His have been drawing so many people to Prasanthi Nilayam from all parts of the world. In fact, how we came to Bhagavan is quite miraculous [in itself]. Let me narrate to you how my father came into Bhagavan's fold or rather how Bhagavan got him into His fold.

It was way back in the year 1987 when my father came to know that there was a person by name Sathya Sai Baba. He knew nothing more and he never bothered to know anything more. One day, he was returning home in the train, as usual after the day's work. A stranger, sitting opposite my father, for no apparent reason, suddenly took out a photo of Bhagavan and gave it to my father. My father did not understand but nevertheless he took the photograph. He asked my father, "Why don't you attend *bhajans* [devotional singing]?" My father was taken aback because he had never attended any *bhajans* till then. The man told my father that there was a doctor in my father's locality who was a devotee of Swami and advised my father to go there. When my father's destination arrived, this man who was supposed to go further down got down with my father.

Even though he was a chronic asthma patient himself (as he mentioned to my father) he took the trouble of taking my father to the doctor's place and introduced him to the doctor. My father didn't understand what exactly happened and he took it lightly. The following Sunday my father did not go for the *bhajans*. But the next Sunday, my father, out of curiosity, went for the *bhajans*. At first, he felt it quite strange that one person was leading, and everybody else was repeating, but nevertheless he liked it. From that day he started attending the *bhajans* regularly and developed more and more interest in Swami and soon became an ardent devotee of Bhagavan. The whole incident is so mysterious and miraculous even though it looks very normal. The slow transformation and the difference in the outlook was greatly influenced by Swami's impact. After all everything is His will.

Speaking of miracles, I am reminded of what Bhagavan once said to Dr. Osis who had come to meet Bhagavan and to investigate into His miracles. Bhagavan said, "I do not perform miracles to procure certificates from anybody. So it is not possible for Me to do anything just for the purpose of your investigations. I perform the so-

called ‘miracles’ only to show My love, protect My devotees in distress, and to reveal the extra-ordinary powers of the Supreme.” Many a time, we have seen our Lord creating material objects and presenting them to His devotees for their protection. But it does not necessarily mean that creation is necessary for protection. Let me tell you the experience of my mother in which the Lord proved to be her Savior in dire need. The experience shows how Bhagavan responds to every little prayer that emanates from a pure heart.

My mother is a chronic asthma patient. It so happened that my grandmother, who stayed with us, wanted to meet a few relative’s and was very adamant in visiting those relative’s house. Now, she was dependent on my mother to take her to the relative’s house. But it was impossible for my mother to take her out because it would be quite a long journey and my mother already had a slight wheezing problem and over exertion would make it severe. My other had no choice but to take her. So, my mother went and prayed in front of Bhagavan’s photo and totally surrendered at His feet. When she left home, she had slight wheezing that to her surprise stopped as she got down the stairs. She took my grandmother, left her in her relatives’ place and returned home after three hours and believe it or not, for those three hours she had no wheezing at all!

There are so many people around the world who seek the Lord’s help in their dire needs and He readily responds. His is a 24-hour ‘Help-Desk’; you can call up anytime and He is there to respond in a flash. Bhagavan moves among us, talks to us, and laughs with us in such a humanly manner that we tend to forget that He is the Supreme One. But sometimes in order to reveal His supreme power, the Lord performs miracles, which stun the people who watch them and even those who hear of them.

In those good old days, Swami used to go to the banks of River Chitravati with His devotees. One day, Swami was seated on the riverbed with His devotees. The sun had set and the full moon in the sky had filled it with its cool radiance. Swami looked at it for some time and asked if the moon looked like His face? As He moved His fingers on the Earth, an extra-ordinary phenomenon took place in sky. A halo appeared around the moon like Swami’s hair! That was not all. The pointed fingers of Swami wrote something on the dark dome. Then there appeared on that heavenly hair-do, a *Shankha* and a *Chakra* (Lord Vishnu’s conch and disc) streaked in lightning. With a further wave of His hand, the conch of lightning dived into Swami’s hand itself and converted itself into a conch shell as found on earth. Swami then poured *amrit* [nectar] from it into the mouths of more than hundred devotees. All the devotees who watched the whole scene were stunned.

All these miracles are very fascinating, but Bhagavan performs them with a purpose and not for our entertainment or to please us. Once, a group of college students had come from Bangalore to Puttaparthi to have the Lord’s [seeing Him]. They all were pleading with Swami to take them to the hilltop near the Chitravati with the hope that Swami would perform miracles by materializing different objects from the

Kalpavriksha [the wish fulfilling tree]. Prof. Kasturi was also there joined in the plea. Swami was determinedly silent for a while. A little later He said sharply, “Do I require that particular tree? Any tree will do, will it not?”

They were filled with the hope that Swami would give them objects from some tree. But no, instead He continued, “Why do you imagine that I want a tree? Is not the sand bed good enough?” They now thought that Swami would give them something from the riverbed as it was off-season, and the flow of water was reduced to a trickle in the river. Soon they were disillusioned, for He continued, “Why do I need the sand of the riverbed? Will not any sand do?” At that time building construction was in progress in Prasanthi Nilayam and noticing a sand pile nearby, Prof. Kasturi suggested to Swami that they could sit on that sand pile itself.

Swami retorted, “Do you think that creation out of sand alone is a miracle? Is sand so essential?” They were stumped and did not know what to say. Prof. Kasturi just then recalled that Swami had created objects from a wave of His hand. Meanwhile Swami continued, “Should I create something in order to show you a miracle. Is not your existence itself a miracle of Mine?” He then walked away leaving them stunned with the revelation that He is none other than the Supreme Creator Himself. Only mere creations are not revelation of Bhagavan’s Godhood; there is something deeper and that is His boundless love. His love is not only confined to Prasanthi Nilayam but envelopes His entire creation and that is why what we have to really try and understand, and experience is His greatest miracle, His miracle of transformation.

Today the world has reached such a miserable state that love has dried up in the hearts of man. His mind is totally corrupt with ego and selfishness is ruling over him. Man is killing himself and that is why the Lord has to come to transform the whole world. Transformation is His mission and with His love He has been tirelessly transforming us every moment from bad to good, from good to better, and from better to best and He will continue to do so till this world becomes the best place to live in.

Oh Lord! Please bless us with Your grace and strength so that we may form ourselves into what You want us to be and thus experience Your greatest miracle.

Source: *Sai Nandana* 2005 (80th Birthday)

Yoga and Moksha

Q & A

WITH BHAGAVAN

Q. We commit many sins and do many meritorious deeds with this body and this mind, Swami! They bring about grief or joy; now, this “I” of which you are speaking, is it the doer, consumer of the grief or joy?

- A. Not for a moment. He who does is the doer; doing is a modification. Doing is producing a modification, is it not? So, the person appears as if he is modifying. But the “I” is modification-less. ‘He is the fixed, so he is not affected at all. Doer-ism is the quality of the *anthah-karana*. So, the “I” takes on the appearance of the doer and the gainer of the fruits of the deed.
- Q. If so, how can we know about the entry into this world and the exit from this world into another?
- A. It is the *anthah-karana*, the *lingadeha* [ethereal body], that moves from this world to another, from one birth to another, according to the accumulated merit. It is the limited *lingadeha* that has the entries and exits. You, who are like the sky, omnipresent and unaffected, have no arrival into this world or departure to another. You are not of that nature.
- Q. Then what is the means of gaining *moksha*?
- A. *Vijnana* is the means.
- Q. Some great men say that *Yoga* is the means. Is that true?
- A. That is also true. There can be two roads to a place, isn’t it?
- Q. Which is the better road?
- A. Both are good and important. Both take you to the same goal; only, you cannot travel on both at the same time. People can choose the road that suits their inner promptings and do the *sadhanas* [spiritual practices] of that path. Both release the *sadhakas* [seekers] from bondage.
- Q. Swami! Is *jnana* acquired by *Yoga* or is *Yoga* acquired by *jnana*?
- A. *Yoga* gives *jnana*; that *jnana* confers *moksha* easily. This is the correct position.
- Q. What is the effect of *Yoga*? How does it benefit?
- A. *Yoga* is like fire; that is why the word “*Yogagni*” is used. It burns all sins away; so, the *anthah-karana* is rendered pure. When that happens, *jnana* is born there. The splendor of that *jnana* dispels the darkness of ignorance and delusion; that is liberation.
- Q. Has *Yoga* got so much potentiality?

- A. Why ask if it has...it has. However learned a person is, however great his detachment, however deep his wisdom, unless he conquers his senses, he cannot qualify for *moksha*. Without *Yoga*, all these cannot rid themselves of sin. Unless they clear themselves of sin, their *anthah-karana* does not become pure. Without a pure *anthah-karana*, *jnana* cannot be acquired; and without *jnana*, there can be no *moksha*. So, *Yoga* is the very foundation.
- Q. This is rather hard to follow. Swami! Give me some illustration to make it simpler, even for the unlearned.
- A. When a storm is blowing, can anyone light a lamp? So, too, when the sensual desires are blowing strong, the *jnana*-lamp cannot burn; it will go out soon, even if it is lit.
- Q. What are the gains from *Yoga*?
- A. It destroys all impulses and urges toward the sensual world. It puts down the mind and its agitations.

Source: Prashnottara Vahini

Thought of the MONTH

Speech and Silence

Speech is produced cheaply, but it has high value. It can elevate as well as demean man. Listening to a speech, a zero can rise into a hero or a hero can collapse into a zero. Speech can inspire or plant despair. It must be true and sweet, not false and pleasant. Man must endeavor to acquire speech untouched by subterfuge, limbs untouched by cruelty, hands free from violence, and thoughts free from vengefulness. Frenzy, fanaticism, and gusts of anger have to be controlled, for they lead to disasters whose range is beyond calculation. By constant practice, these can also resort to the vow of silence. The mind too must desist from wandering when the tongue is desisting from talking. Otherwise, the vow cannot be fruitful. Be conscious that every word we utter or hear will leave an impression on our consciousness and provoke reactions that may or may not be beneficial. This is the reason why the company of God and godly people is to be sought.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume XV, Chapter 42: "The Triple Purity"

The effect of excessive speech on the behavior and mental faculties of people was the subject of research at Columbia University. The experiment was conducted in a primary school for twenty-five years. The students were grouped separately in

batches of ten. Those students who spoke the least were offered prizes. Tests were conducted on students indulging in excessive talk and those observing silence or reticence. It was found over the years that the intellectual abilities of students observing restraint in speech were of a high order. There was purity in their speech. They had a broad outlook. They developed enquiring minds. They had a high degree of discrimination.

In the case of students indulging in excessive speech, it was found that their memory power was weak. They were narrow-minded. They lacked discriminating power. The result of the experiment testified to the wisdom of the ancient sages who went to the forest for silent contemplation. Every one of the practices of the ancient sages was designed to lead men to the highest stage. Remember that through restraint in speech you can develop mental agility.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume XXII, Chapter 10: "Vidya and Samskara"

The ancients practiced three kinds of silence. The first was silence of the tongue, the second one was silence of the mind, and the third was supreme silence. Silence in speech meant confining one's speech to the limit and the needs of the occasion. By this discipline, excessive talk was avoided. As a result, the power of their speech was conserved and enhanced. Discipline in speech also resulted in truthfulness. Speaking the truth served to purify their thoughts. By this means they acquired the highest wisdom. Therefore, purity in speech is vital. It has to be achieved by restraint in speech.

Then, there is silence of the mind. The mind is a bundle of thoughts and fancies. These thoughts have to be reduced gradually. When thoughts are reduced, the mind naturally comes under control, like a clock that is unwound. When the activity of the mind is reduced, the power of the *atma* manifests itself. As a consequence, intellect becomes more active than the senses. When control of speech and control of the mind have been achieved, the state of supreme silence is easily realized. Students should strive to reach the third stage by the disciplines of the first two stages.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume XXVII, Chapter 7: "Imbibe Bharat's Ideals"

What does the word "solitude" mean?... Solitude means to be in communion with God, wherever you may be—in the bazaar, in a meeting, or in the midst of a large number of people. Wherever you are, your mind should be focused on God without being distracted by worldly and family matters. Solitude is total communion between you and God. Nothing else should divert your attention from God. That is the real meaning of solitude. Whatever you may be doing or even when traveling in a bus or train or plane, always keep your mind firmly fixed on God. While doing meditation or contemplating on God, do not allow any other distraction to divert your mind. Only then can you have the experience of Divine light.

*Sanathana Sarathi, September 2011:
"Lack of Values is the Cause of Violence in the World"*