

Gurus—Not Teachers

The following discourse was given by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai in January 1974, where He has clearly shown the path that the Gurus should take. He has enunciated what and how they should teach the children to give them maximum benefit.

Education confers humility; endows one with an authority to command that will entitle one to affluence. With the help of this affluence, charity and compassion can be made fruitful, and by this means, happiness in this world and peace in the next can be won. Education is thus a great constructive force for mankind. But reformers and reconstructionists have tinkered—so much with the process of education that it has now been reduced to a caricature of itself. The effectiveness of the educational system, and the boons it could confer on man have been ignored and neglected; the name is now given to the art of collecting information of the objective world. The far more important task of transforming the nature of man into the divine is given up, as beyond its ken.

The difference between the ancient ideals of education and the modern practices is appalling. Today, the educational process is denied to the aspirant, if he fails to pay his fees; the teacher too feels that he has no duty to teach, if in a certain month he is not paid his salary. Students pay for being taught; teachers are paid for the teaching they do. Money decides what is taught and how it is learnt. "Pay and receive; be paid and give." That is the bond between the teacher and the taught. "Love, reverence, affection"—these have no place in the transaction. How then can education be fruitful? Gokak [a devotee] said just now that when teachers love the children, they will be rewarded by the love of the children who sit around them. Now they are loved for the sake of the money they bring, and so, the relationship is artificial and without roots in the heart.

Heirs to the richest cultural heritage

The teacher and the pupil will both be immersed in joy only when love that does not calculate the reward binds them together. When material gain is the goal, the joy based is on matter and does not thrill the mind. It cannot be pure, steady, and sincere.

As teachers of the *Bala Vikas* classes throughout the country, you do not look forward to monetary or material benefits, and so, you have ample opportunity to make the child's heart and intellect blossom, through the rays of love. Let Me tell you that most teachers today have specialized in western types of training, and so,

they have lost their moorings in our own culture, and so are unaware of the deeper springs of the spirit.

They have been rendered materialistic, worldly, and egoistic. They are caught up in the pursuit of sensual pleasure and in earning money. They do not know that real education consists in helping the child to manifest the Divinity latent in him. Remember that the children who come to you are all heirs to the richest cultural heritage that the world can give. They are the 'Children of Immortality' extolled as such in the ancient texts by sages and scholars of this land. Do not turn them into experts in mathematics, unable to add up a simple domestic bill; scholars in the geography of America, but, unable to direct a pilgrim who desires to know in which direction Kashi [a place in northern India] lies; prodigies in algebra who are helpless when asked to define the area of their own rooms; past masters in drill and gymnastics, but, all at sea, when requested to sit in the *Padmasana* posture; proficient in Botany, but, ignorant of the uses of the common *Tulasi* plant, found in the courtyard of every Indian home! They can draw realistic pictures of dogs and foxes, but their handwriting remains an illegible scribble. How can we expect that Indian culture will be preserved and fostered by these products of our educational system? The teachers who have brought them to this pass, and the educational administrators who devised the system are both equally to blame.



Be aware of the high purpose of education

Correction of these faults must start with the teachers; they must become aware of the high purpose of education, and the goal to which it must guide the children of the land. I know that great enthusiasm prevails today among both the pupils and teachers of our *Bala Vikas* classes, for the spiritual ideals cherished in this land since ages. Nevertheless, I must say that there is a great and urgent need for you teachers to receive training in the methods of child education. For example, when teaching the recitation of *bhajans* or poems or hymns, you have to pay attention to the

correct enunciation of each sound, the correct pronunciation of each letter; for, otherwise, the meaning is liable to be warped out of recognition.

The three R's are most neglected today

In olden times, teachers took particular care to explain to the pupils the origins and roots of each new word, even of words like *Sah* and *Twam*. They taught, not only the meaning of the word, but, delved into its roots, and opened up before the pupil a vast vista of related words and a huge expanse of meaningful vocabulary. Since words in Indian languages get transformed when written or pronounced in conjunction with other words, there is a duty cast on you to teach how they are to be separately recognized and identified. Boys may write *Ramunithoka pivarudu itlaniye* (meaning, "Rama's tail, Pivara spoke thus,"—which is absurd), instead of *Ramunitho kapivarudu itlaniye*, meaning, "With Rama, the Lord of monkeys spoke thus,"—which is quite correct).

The word, *santha pakodilu*, which I once used to indicate the error involved when people desert the true path and pursue degrading objective pleasures, which I compared to the *pakodilu* (type of savories) sold in *santha* (village markets during fairs and festivals), for they attract by their color, have ruinous components and destroy health. Kasturi who did not know much Telegu, divided the word into *santhapa* and *kodilu*, making the meaning absurd, for *kodilu* means fowls, and *santhapa*, like *pivarudu*, has no meaning at all, being a mere jumble of sounds! Unless training is given in reading aloud, with concurrent attention to the meaning of the words and phrases, such mistakes are bound to recur. The three R's are the skills most neglected today.

Writing has also to be taught well, for the knowledge of the correct form of each letter has to be mastered by all. Or else, even here, a tiny slip might change a sublime idea into ridiculous jargon. *Rishikoti*, when written wrongly in Telugu, as a consequence of the omission of a single upward curve was once mis-shaped into 'bush coat' and the whole sentence was rendered ridiculous thereby! Scrupulous care and steady attention alone can make the pupils avoid such errors.

Study of books that is worthwhile for children

One point I have to emphasize here is, that you should be careful, while handling some books being published for school use by so-called scholars, at the present time. They cast doubts on the truth of great epics like the *Ramayana* [the epic] and assert that Dasaratha [Rama's father] and Ravana [the demon king] did not exist in authentic history. They characterize them as representatives or symbols of opposing Cultures, the Aryan and the non-Aryan, and sow the seeds of factionalism and hatred. By such writings, children begin to doubt the very foundations of goodness, truth, and beauty; they are confused while deciding on right conduct and behavior, right ideals and ways of living.

You must examine every story or account that you place before the children from the point of view of individual faith and social harmony. Does this lead the child to a

better, more harmonious, a more God-oriented life? That is the question you should ask yourself. Prahlada has beautifully summed up this principle, in the verse he utters, in the *Bhagavatha*, while advising his playmates on the disciplines that should be welcomed. "The study of books that describe the glory of God is the study that is worthwhile. The preceptor who tells us about the glory of God is the preceptor to be sought after and revered. The father who directs you to approach God is the father who deserves the reverence and obedience of the children, not the others."

Hills and mountains are overlaid with rock and boulder, the sculptor gathers them, and shapes each of them into something useful and beautiful, depending upon the nature and characteristics of the stone. Out of one boulder, the artisan might carve a huge mortar and pestle to be kept in the corner of the kitchen of a populous home. Out of another the sculptor might produce a rough-hewn gargoyle being incorporated into a building as an eerie object to ward off the evil eye! A third stone might get transformed into a charming little danseuse to embellish the shelf of a museum. Another stone, catching the eye and attention of a skilled sculptor might be elevated into the idol of a Divine Manifestation, fit to be installed in a temple where it receives the adoration of millions for generations.

Parents have important roles in children's education

Though they were the progeny of one peak, each has a different destiny, depending upon the care and consecration bestowed on it by the sculptor. Teachers are the sculptors who shape the rocks into things of beauty and significance, of utility and inspiration. They study the pupils, their nature and equipment, and decide on their roles in society, their paths and the stages in their progress.

But it must be pointed out that the sculptor or teacher is not the only factor, to be reckoned with, in the process of education. The mother and father of the child too have important roles in the process. The positive and the negative must both meet in order to produce the electric current; even God needs the yearning and the endeavor of the devotee to fulfil His will to save him from perdition. You may have flowers, a length of string, and a needle too; but, without the garland maker, how can the flowers be strung on the string? You may have a lamp, oil, and wick; but you can get light only when someone strikes a flame and lights the lamp. So, too, the teacher and the pupil have to be brought to each other and encouraged to learn and teach, to share lovingly their knowledge and experience, by the parents, so that education might proceed and the child inherit the heritage left by its forefathers.

The teacher must win the reverence of the pupil by showering on him his love; the pupil must win the love of the teacher by showering on him reverence and affection. It is a mutual transaction, a sharing of the emotions of the heart. How can a proper congenial atmosphere for study and teaching be built on a foundation of doubt and hatred? Nowadays, the atmosphere is polluted by the teachers' fear and suspicion, and the hostility and audacity of the students. There is no love to lubricate the relations between the teacher and the taught.

The *Guru* is equal to God Himself

We have heard the *Guru* being praised as equal to God Himself. Gokak quoted the *shloka* (verse) where the *Guru* is referred to reverentially as Brahma, the first of the Trinity entrusted with Creation; as Vishnu, the second of the Trinity entrusted with the preservation and protection of Creation; and as *Maheshwara*, the last of the Trinity, charged with destruction and dissolution. This description is symbolically correct, as we can see when we analyze the work that the teacher or *Guru* is expected to carry out. The *Guru* sows the seeds of virtue, of wisdom, and of faith in the heart of the pupil. He is, therefore, *Brahma*, of the nature of the Creator. He is like the farmer who plants saplings in the well-prepared soil of his field. But the farmer does not sit with folded hands thereafter. He takes incessant care to see that the saplings grow vigorously and well, and he is vigilant to water the growing crops and feed them with fertilizers at the appropriate stages of growth. This is the role of Vishnu so far as education and the educator are concerned. The *Guru* cannot sit back and silently watch the fate of the pupil, after the first few lessons. He has to guide the pupil at every step, foster and encourage good habits, sound reasoning, and valid emotions, thus act as Vishnu, the second of the Trinity.

Teachers must inspire high qualities in their pupils

The *Guru* has also the duty cast on him, to watch every step of the pupil, and warn him off, when he takes false step, or develops a bad habit, or entertains a deleterious doubt. Like the farmer who has to be vigilant against the growth of weeds or the upsurge of pests, the *Guru* too must be ever alert to destroy the pests of vice and the weeds of sloth and unsteadiness. The word 'teacher' cannot denote these high roles; it can mean only those, who transmit information, and train in skills. I direct that *Bala Vikas* teachers should hereafter be known by the vastly more appropriate name of *Guru*, so that you may be conscious always of the spiritual role that you have taken on, and its responsibilities and value. You are the lamps from which their tender hearts must receive light and love. By your adherence to truth, righteousness, peace, and love, you have to inspire these qualities in the children that come to you and the homes from where they come.

There are many who shiver at the prospect, when they contemplate the future of this great country. You should never entertain such doubts and fears, for you are the builders of that future and you know that it will be glorious. The *Bala Vikas* children, whom you are guiding and inspiring, will be the leaders of tomorrow in this land. The virtues you implant in them, the counsel you are providing them and the examples you place before them will remain carved in their memories and transform their outlook and behavior in the days to come. Ask anyone assembled here whether they can bring back to memory the book that he read this morning; ninety-five per cent of this vast gathering will fail in this test. But ask them to repeat from memory any one *stotra* (hymn or moral verse) that their grandfather or grandmother taught them when they were little children sitting on their knees, and I am sure most of you will be able to recite the *sloka* or *stotra*. The things learnt

during those early years stick in the memory and act subtly and silently on the growing mind to modify and purify the conduct of later years.

Spiritual education must start early in life

Some shortsighted critics declare that spiritual matters should not be communicated to children, for they are too young and inexperienced to benefit by the instruction. But, if a thing deserves to be done, the sooner we set about it the better. The slogan, "Start early, drive slowly, and reach safely" applies not merely to journeys by road or rail; it applies also to the journey from untruth to truth, from darkness toward light, and from death to immortality. The unrest, anxiety, fear, and hatred that torment the world now is largely due to the neglect that kept off from the growing child the disciplines that can regulate the passions and emotions of man.

We postpone this essential task of education at our peril; for, when children are equipped with the discipline to secure balance, equanimity, harmony, and peace, they can no more be drawn into wild adventures and barren activities. You have to learn spiritual disciplines along with the information giving subjects of the curriculum. You have to earn the high Diploma that the *Upanishads* [scriptures] offer you, namely, *Amruthasya Puthrah* (Child of Immortality), along with the degrees M.A., B.Sc., etc., which help you eke out a livelihood, up to a certain stage of life.

Everyone must learn the secret of happiness

But remember you cannot take up the threads of *sadhana* (spiritual discipline) all of a sudden after retiring from active service! You cannot learn spiritual *sadhana*, when you are physically debilitated and overwhelmed by the approach of death. How can a man think of God, his Savior, when he himself is overcome by sorrow at the need to depart from this world and when all his kith and kin are weeping and wailing loud and long?

No. Everyone must learn the secret of happiness that consists in refusing to shed tears for anything less than God. You have won this human body, this human life, as the reward for many lives spent in acquiring merit. You have won this chance, this unique good fortune of being able to get *darshan* (sight or audience) of Sai. Plunging deep into the waters of this tumultuous ocean of *samsara* (worldly life), you have heroically emerged from its depths, with this rare Pearl in your hands—the grace of Sai. Do not allow it to slip from your clasp and fall into the depths again. Hold on to it firmly. Pray that you may have it [the grace] forever and be filled with the joy that it confers. That is the way by which you can render this life fruitful.

Instruct the children of the *Bala Vikas* to revere their parents. This is the first thing to do. It is a simple act of gratitude, for those who endowed them with the material instrument for life. But, mere possession of the human body, however wonderful it may be, is not enough, for one's peace and joy. One must know how to unravel its mysteries and how to regulate one's own impulses and hungers. This process is accomplished by the *Guru*, and so the pupils must be instructed and encouraged to

revere the *Guru*, in gratitude for the service he renders. Education must aim at providing the child, not livelihood, but a life worth living. For this, the acquisition of skills in doing or reasoning is not enough. Faith in one-self and in the Divinity of one-self are absolutely essential. That is the precious treasure of wisdom, stored in our ancient scriptures and in the experience of the saints and sages of all countries and faiths.

There is only one religion, the Religion of Love

There is one more point, which I wish to emphasize. Some teachers have asked Me whether the *Bala Vikas* classes, can serve children of all faiths or whether they can admit only children of the Hindu faith. The question has arisen because the questioners do not know the very fundamentals of the Hindu faith. There is only one religion, remember, and that is the Religion of Love; there is only one caste, and that is the Caste of Humanity. You must be careful not to encourage or entertain the slightest trace of 'difference' on the basis of religion, caste, creed, or color, in the *Bala Vikas* classes.

Do not tarnish the spotlessly clean minds of the children by infecting them with a sense of distinction between one child and another. Impart instructions and inspiration equally to all. Select stories from the scriptures of all faiths to interest the children in the values of good life. Speak to them of the moral heroes of all lands, the Saints of all faiths. For, they are all of the same stamp. No scripture enjoins violence or lays down untruth as a way of life. All religions extol truth, righteousness, peace, and brotherhood, and love. All saints are embodiments of service, compassion, and renunciation.

Do not compare the various manifestations of the Divine and pronounce judgement, declaring that Rama is greater than Krishna or Shiva superior to Vishnu. This line of thought is poisonous and harmful to the devout aspirant. You do not know your own self; but yet, how dare you pronounce judgement on personalities and powers you have never experienced or understood. Rama is as unknown to you as Christ, and so, it is best to keep silent, and revere both with equal ardor. For, all are manifestations of the same Divine effulgence.

I bless you that you succeed in the great task you have imposed on yourself, and that you will be able to light the way for the children of this land into the glorious region of everlasting joy.

Source: *Sathya Sai Speaks* Vol. 12

Those who seek to acquire steadiness of faith must first acquire the strength to bear grief and pain, insult and injury. The succession of joy and grief must help confirm the faith and make it immovable. That alone can evidence true devotion.

~Sri Sathya Sai

He Sings Ever

In His discourse on Krishna Janmashtami, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba emphasized that Krishna had to encounter obstacles from cradle to the finish of His life on earth. Personal spite, false slander, unfounded abuse, and defamation followed Him at every step. But ultimately truth triumphed, and falsehood stood exposed and disgraced.

Krishna is the One name signifying all names, the One thought comprising all thoughts, [and] the One deed encompassing all deeds. Utilize this festival that commemorates the advent of Krishna for developing *bhakti* (devotion to God). *Bhakti* is defined as the means of discovering the Divine Reality within each being. Four steps are laid down in the scriptures to help man succeed in this effort: discrimination between the permanent and the impermanent; withdrawal from the process of catering to the senses; positive control of the feelings, thoughts and pursuits; incessant yearning for liberation from all bonds.

Bhakti is the urge that manifests as all these four endeavors. But that word is applied to all sorts of desires and disciplines, so widely and so indiscriminately that it is identified even with Epicureanism! *Bhakti* is derived from *bha* or *Bhagavan* or God. It directs man to have God ever in [his] mind and to cultivate love for God within him. It advises him to rid himself of egotism and to curb sensual desires. And to rise to the height of one's aspiration and achievement.

Bhakti leads man on to the wisdom arising from the realization of the unity called God. Just as childhood grows into old age and gets fruition thereby, devotion grows into wisdom, that is, *bhakti* grows into *jnana* (spiritual wisdom). There are some who deny the need for *bhakti* and assert that *jnana* can be won without the preliminary stage of *bhakti*. But *bhakti* is as necessary and as inevitable a process as childhood.

Devotion is the most precious treasure

Devotion fosters the highest virtue; it is the most precious treasure; it is the truest path, the only way to God. Man must live in *bhakti*, for *bhakti*, through *bhakti*. For, *bhakti* is love of the purest and the noblest variety. Such love is the breath that sustains life, that supports the soul in the effort to merge in the Super-soul. The years of life spent without the light of love are years of ruin, of dust and disease. One could as well be dead, and decay forever.

Love can transform man into a Divine Being; it helps him manifest the Divine that is his core. Love can tame even the most ferocious of beasts. It prompts man to fill even the world with joy and to partake of that joy. It implants a deep distressing thirst for that exultation, that elevation of the spirit. The *Avatar* (divine incarnation) of the Lord as Krishna and the career of Krishna on the earth were for the propagation and promotion of this Principle of *Prema*—Divine Love), by precept and example.

Prema (the highest love) transcends the ego; it is pure; it is sweet, it is sacred, and sanctifying. Prahlada had that *prema*; so, whatever befell him—pain, grief, torture, disgrace—he bore them all, for he was unaware of anything except God whom he had enshrined in his heart. Meera too was so hungry for God and so agonized by separation from Him that she was always singing only of His charm, His might, and His mystery.



God is the nearest and dearest kinsman for man

You must yearn to be blessed with that earnestness, that dedication and that devotion shown by Prahlada and Meera. That alone can give you the Supreme bliss. But now, though many declare their desire to earn that state of mind, their efforts are all toward exhibitionism and elaborate self-aggrandizement! Those days, the *sadhana* (spiritual discipline) was silent and subdued; now, it is all loud and lavish. *Bhakti* reveals to you that God is in every one; so, the love that surges in your heart toward God must flow toward all, for, all are embodiments of the self-same Divine.

God is bound to you by the closest bonds of love. Parents might fall out; brother might take up arms against brother; sister might slip away without recognizing sister; children might not revere or even recognize their parents. Those are but

'social or economic ties,' they might declare. But God will never desert you, or deny you, or turn away from you.

God is the nearest, the dearest, the most loving, the most eager companion, comrade, and kinsman for man. This is demonstrated fully in the acts of Krishna, as related in the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavata* [the scriptures].

Creation posits a Creator; nothing can happen without the Will to make it happen. Before the beginning of things, there must be some Will that willed them to become. It can only be He that has become all this, whatever be the name or form that these have assumed. That Will is love, it is wisdom, it is power, and it is bliss. Each one of you must 'insure your lives' with That. Like other Insurance institutions, this One cannot suffer loss or liquidation. It can never fail or falter. Pay the premium regularly as per the rules and you can claim the '*amount*,' and receive it.

Peace will dread the company of the egotist

The premium you have to pay is the 'love' that springs from your heart toward all beings. Liberation from pain and grief, the bliss everlasting, is the '*amount*' you get. Or we can picture the process as a tree; which yields fruit at the end of a long process of cherishing care. Truth is the seed, faith in the Self, faith in the loving care of God—these are the roots that hold it firm and, feed it; the recitation of the Name, singing of hymns and psalms, meditation on the glory that encircles and elevates—these are the showers that feed the tree. Bliss is the fragrant flower; *jnana* (the wisdom that liberates) is the fruit.

When man neglects this duty to himself, he suffers grief. He is denied peace and security; he is restless and afraid, peace will dread the company of the self-centered egotist, the hard calculating miser, and the sharp heartless demon. It keeps close to the stage, the generous giver, the virtuous earner, and the wise seer. You must long to be of such type that peace can approach you and award you its presence.

If, on the other hand, you stray away from the path of love, not only men but even nature will throw obstacles that hinder your progress. For, the evil in you will manifest as obstacle in your path. They are not laid there by your enemies, but are set there by your own feelings and impulses. Think good, feel good, act good, speak good—the path will be free and fair, easy and effortless. Think evil, plan evil, do evil—the path will be strewn with fear and failure.

Krishna taught his message by precept and example

The mind has to be cleansed for the path to be rendered smooth. Devotees do not deserve that status, merely by doling out charity or visiting holy places, or attending religious discourses; fill the mind with love, remove hatred and envy; adopt straight thinking and planning, that alone can justify the status of devotee. Walk steadily and silently toward the goal, merging with God. This day, being the day reminding you of Krishna and His birth in human form, it is best to remember that He taught this Message of Love by precept and example, throughout His earthly career. The

Bhagavata and *Mahabharata* are full of lessons for you in the cultivation of *bhakti*—one-pointed love for God and all God's creatures. The Pandava brothers and their consort were devotees of this high status. When Droupadi their Queen, was humiliated and publicly dishonored by their cousins in the Royal Assembly Hall, she did not call upon her spouses, the redoubtable heroes of many a battle, armed with heavenly bows and maces; she called upon Krishna, for she knew that He was her closest kinsman, shield, and sword.

Many years later, she quipped Krishna for responding rather late on that occasion, with His succor, but, Krishna asked her to repeat the words with which she called Him then; she said that she had called out, "Oh dweller in the hearts of the *gopis* (cowherd girls)! Oh wanderer in the floral bushes of Brindavan! Oh resident of Dwaraka!" Then, Krishna explained that the delay was caused by the wrong address to which the prayer was directed. He said, "Your words forced Me to move on to Brindavan and Dwaraka, before I could come to where you were! If only you had cried, Oh dweller in my heart, I could have appeared before you at that very moment."

Develop the inward vision, taste the bliss it gives

So, you should endeavor to install Him in your heart and be ever aware that He is there. Radha alone had that consciousness and the uninterrupted bliss derivable from that knowledge. Cultivate that knowledge, that closeness. When you are aware all the time, only of the body and its clamor for attention, how can you ever concentrate on the Dweller within? Develop the in-look, the inward vision, and taste the bliss it gives, at least for half a minute every day; that will surely confer on you great strength and security. Radha prayed that Krishna must keep her in the cool shade of His presence so that she might be saved from being scorched in the arid desert of earthly life.

Embodiments of the Universal *Atma*! Scriptures are endless; *sadhanas* (spiritual disciplines) are countless; opportunities are few; time is already overstocked. But you can easily win the baffle of life, in spite of these handicaps, provided you arm yourself with love, which is the essential teaching of all scriptures, the goal of all varieties of *sadhana*, the best use to which all opportunities can be put and the most profitable way of utilizing the precious capital, time. The simple men and women who tended cattle in Gokul where Krishna spent His boyhood years knew no *sadhana*, learnt no *shastras* (spiritual sciences), observed no vow, visiting no temple; they just kept the Name and Form of the God they moved with, ever in the shrine of their hearts. And they were saved.

Embodiments of love! You are agitated, I know, since the world today is tossed on waves of unrest and insecurity. But do not blame the world for it. The unrest is but the image of your own unrest, which you have projected on the world. The insecurity is fuming in your minds; the fear is raising its hood in your heart. The forces of the world, the beings in nature are all unaffected, unchanged! You have changed; you are nervous; you are afraid, you have no peace!

Try to subsume the many in the One

You wear colored glasses and see everything through those glasses. Correct your vision; the world will get corrected. Reform yourselves; the world will get reformed. You create the world of your choice. You see many, because you seek the many, not the One. Try to subsume the many in the One; the physical bodies of yourself and others, the family, the village, the community, the state, the nation, the world, thus progressively march on toward more and more inclusive loyalties and reach the stage of unity in thought, word and deed. This is the *sadhana* of love, for, love is expansion, inclusion, and mutualization. The individual has to be Universalized, expanded into *Vishwaswarupa* (Cosmic Form).

When you enter upon this *sadhana*, you have to suppress all tendencies of hatred, greed, envy, and malice, and concentrate on expanding love toward all, at all times. You might have to encounter opposition from all sides; but consider these as tests of endurance, of sincerity, and steadfastness. Your own parents, brothers and sisters, wife and children, kith and kin, friends and favorites, countrymen and others might try to turn you aside by ridicule and threats. You might even develop dislike for God for putting obstacles in the way; atheistic ideas might sprout in you trying to scotch the faith; but you must overcome these with courage and confidence.

The good are always the target of malice and envy, slander and abuse from the wicked. Be assured that your goodness can be made tough enough to stand these ordeals. *Avatars* (divine incarnations) too are not exempt from the attentions of these wicked forces.

Forces of evil dig for their own downfall

Krishna had to encounter these obstacles from the very cradle, right up to the finish of His life on earth. Personal spite, false slander, unfounded abuse, and defamation followed Him at every step. Demons who could not tolerate the light and the love that He cast around Him conspired to tarnish His Name and obstruct His mission. They tried to bind Him, to fail His plans and pervert His instruments. But truth triumphed and falsehood stood exposed and disgraced.

Truth may be clouded for some little time by the fog of slander but, victory is certain. The forces of hate will be defeated by their own wiles; they dig for their own downfall; their action results in reactions, ruinous for themselves. In the Court of Dhritarashtra, the Kauravas planned to bind Krishna and put Him out of action, when He went to His Court on the mission of peace; but what happened? The stratagem recoiled on themselves, and they were destroyed. Krishna was unscathed by their wiles and their campaign of defamation. When the Kauravas were indulging in their campaign of slander, many devotees were greatly distressed. For example: Sahadeva, the youngest of the Pandava brothers, welcomed Lord Krishna back to their camp, with the words, "I am not concerned at failure of your mission; I know that it is all part of your plan. But I am overjoyed that you have returned unharmed, from that nest of demons."

Krishna is undefeatable, ever pure, ever bright, and ever effulgent in renown. Those who try to fail Him are forever tarred by their own blackness. The malignancy of those who cannot bear His glory will cause their eternal disgrace; it cannot affect Him in the least. His glory will increase a hundredfold with every challenge from these peddlers of slander. Wicked men tried to bring the Lord into disrepute by persecuting and torturing devotees like Prahlada; but, when they stood up to every challenge with joyful fortitude, they failed ignominiously. Prahlada gained vaster glory and the Lord's truth was magnificently vindicated.

Even Avatars have faced campaigns of slander

Persons who cannot tolerate the Glory of the *Avatar* have indulged in such campaigns, in every age! They have contributed to the heightening of the splendor and the spread of the message, in every age. Their activities are all instruments to the propagation of the glory throughout the world.

Even today, such things happen; but all of you must recognize their inevitability and their fundamental falsehood and carry on your *sadhana* in full faith and assurance, with undiminished enthusiasm and joy. The Sai Principle, the Sai Divinity can never be affected by any slander; it can never be shaken by any tactics; its progress can never be halted. Do not pay heed to the barking you hear.

A stray dog stops and looks at its own shadow in the stream; it mistakes the shadow for another dog and starts barking aloud. This sets all the dogs in the neighborhood, and later in the region, bark in unison. The reason why the first dog barked is its own ignorance of fact. The reason why the other dogs followed suit is that the first dog called the tune. A huge scare is built on a patent falsehood. Thus, the story goes on, adding one thing to another.

Just as devotees remained unruffled in the Age of Krishna, you too must stand firm and be unaffected. Faith must endow you with courage and calmness. The life of Krishna teaches you this lesson more than others' do not lend your ears or mortgage your minds to purveyors of scandal or lies.

Devotion to the Divine will give you prosperity

Krishna had to meet these traducers and destroy them one by one, through His life. His parents, His companions, His devotees, no one had peace from this tribe. The message of this Festival is that you must see the truth that is covered by all the tales and legends that tarnish the Name. Devotion to the Divine will give you bliss, and prosperity, and peace. It cannot inflict pain, perturbation, or personal anxiety. It fosters love and brings all together as one band of brothers. The *Avatar* will not be affected in the least by these trivial tactics. It is love itself; so, it is always bliss, always happy in song and dance.

Krishna lived all His years singing and dancing in the ecstasy that was His very nature. He was humming a tune within Himself all the while, whether He was on

flower bed or a battlefield. I too am unaffected by praise or blame. My *ananda* (bliss) never suffers diminution. Where there is love, there is *ananda*; where there is *ananda*, there is music. That is the reason why Krishna sang the *Bhagavad-Gita* (the Celestial song) while the clarion calls to start the holocaust were rising from the serried ranks, eager for the fray.

Love knows no fear, no untruth, no anxiety, and no grief. I am love; I shower love; I share love; I am pleased with love; I bless that you have more and more of love to more and more Beings. Love is God, Love is Love—that is the message of *Sri Krishna Janmashtami*.

Source: *Sathya Sai Speaks* Vol. 12

How Krishna Saved Pandavas during Difficult Situations?

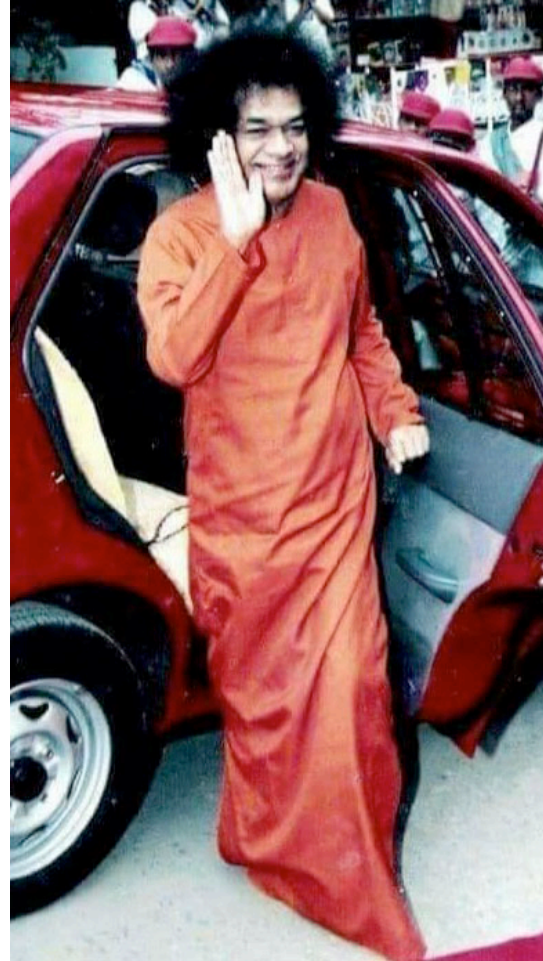
In one of His informal talks to the devotees at Trayee Brindavan on 4th April 1986, Swami illustrated the inexplicable and unique ways of the Divine by referring to episodes in the *Mahabharata* in which Lord Krishna saved the Pandavas from many a difficult situation. He said:

The ways of the Lord in granting relief to devotees in distress or trouble are infinitely varied and often baffling. On one occasion, the Pandavas during their exile from the kingdom, had strayed into the forest of Romarishi. He was a sage whose body was covered with hair so long, that it spread as a carpet into the surrounding forest. There was a holy tree in that forest, yielding a very special fruit. The unique quality of that fruit was that once it was tasted one would not have hunger for years and years. But that fruit should not be plucked; it should be eaten after it dropped by itself. So, waiting for the fruit to fall, Romarishi was doing *tapas* there.

One day, when Dharmaraja and Draupadi were on a stroll in the woods, Draupadi happened to look at this particular tree and saw the luscious big fruit hanging from it. "Can we not take this," she said to her husband, "so that all of us could share it today?" Then Dharmaraja shot an arrow and the fruit fell to the ground. Holding his bow in his right hand, he went to lift the fruit with his left hand. It was so heavy he could not move it. Draupadi also tried to help. Dharmaraja used both his hands, still the fruit would not move. In the meantime, Arjuna also came there and all three—Arjuna, Dharmaraja and Draupadi—tried to lift that fruit, but it would not move. The two younger brothers also came and tried to help lift the fruit but however hard they tried it was no use; it would not move. Finally came the strong man, Bhima. He asked the others to move away and said, "I will lift this." But even Bhima could not succeed.

Meanwhile the hair of Romarishi, which had spread over all that area, began to stir. Because these six people were trampling about trying to lift the fruit, Romarishi felt the disturbance as strands of his hair were being trodden and pulled. He realized that there was someone trying to steal the fruit and he became very angry. Immediately his long hairs started to come together and coil round the Pandavas and tie them up.

Draupadi realized the danger, and immediately prayed to Lord Krishna. Draupadi called on Lord Krishna whenever she sensed any trouble. Krishna appeared before her. Draupadi fell at His feet and prayed to Him for help to protect the Pandavas from the danger that was about to engulf them. Krishna told Draupadi that there was nothing He could do, since Romarishi was a great sage. As Lord, He resided in the hearts of all *Rishis* [sages], including Romarishi; so how could He do anything against the wishes of that *Rishi*? But Draupadi held on to His feet and said, "You alone can save us. You can do anything you wish to do, in all the three worlds!" Then Krishna said, "All right, I will help you, but all of you should be totally silent, not say a word; you should do exactly as I tell you. Do not have any doubt or hesitation but do exactly as I direct."



Draupadi promised that they would obey Krishna's orders. Krishna went to each of the Pandavas and whispered His plan, in their ears. He told them, "I will now go to Romarishi's *Ashram*; a little later, you must follow me there." In the meantime, Romarishi was furious with anger. He was about to curse the poachers. At that very moment, Krishna entered the *Ashram*. Romarishi fell prostrate at Krishna's Feet. He was overjoyed to see Him and asked Him, "What is it I can do for you, Lord?" Krishna kept Romarishi occupied, making a few casual inquiries, till the Pandavas arrived.

As soon as the six reached the *Ashram* and entered it, Krishna fell at the feet of the Pandavas. The Pandavas were feeling very embarrassed, but remembering Krishna's command, they said nothing. Romarishi, seeing Krishna fall at the feet of the visitors, also fell at their feet. Then Krishna introduced the Pandavas to the Rishi. As Romarishi listened to the words of Krishna praising the greatness of the Pandavas,

he totally forgot his anger. When Krishna explained that these were the people who were tempted by the fruit he awaited, Romarishi was so transformed that he said, "Let them take the fruit. I would like them to have it." By eating that fruit the Pandavas were able to live without hunger for a long time.

Soon after the Battle of Kurukshetra Krishna used the good offices of the Sage Durvasa to keep in hiding the Pandava brothers, whom Ashwathama had vowed to exterminate, before the dawn of another day. Krishna approached the Sage, who was reputed for his quick temper as well as his adherence to truth and told him about the peril confronting the Pandavas and requested him to keep them hidden in a cellar under his seat. The Sage told Krishna that he would not be able to utter a falsehood if Ashwathama came to him enquiring about the whereabouts of the Pandavas. Krishna suggested that the Sage could tell the truth in a tone that would deter Ashwathama from questioning the Sage further.

The strategy was eminently successful. When Ashwathama, after a futile search for the Pandavas, came to Sage Durvasa and requested him to reveal to him their whereabouts, the Sage said gruffly, "The Pandavas? They are beneath me!" The roar rattled Ashwathama so much that he did not dare to pursue the matter further, lest the Sage lose his temper and curse him. And the Pandavas 'beneath him' were saved!

Source: *Sri Sathya Sai Digvijayam (1986-2005)*

Dhyanadarshana- Part II (Theory and Practice of Meditation)

Compiled and translated by B. Srinivas Murthy from Bhagavan's Divine Discourses.

Meditation is conquest of mind

The *sadhana* of *dhyana* starts at the lowest level of sense data. The way of knowing called sensationism is the most primitive faculty of living organisms. The organization of sensations into perceptions is known as empiricism. The generalization of perceptions into conceptions is known as rationalism. Intuitionism and mysticism are suprarational ways of knowing. That is why, *indriyas* (sensory and motor organs) have to be harnessed by controlling *manas* (mind) that is their master. If the master is controlled his servants can be easily snubbed. Mind is vicariously response for the erratic behavior of sensory and motor organs. The sense data supplied by eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin impinge on mind that selects some sensations and then organizes them into perceptions and conceptions. If the mind is mastered all *jnanendriyas* and *karmendriyas* can be conquered.

Millions of soldiers are deployed in war. Each and every combatant need not be captured and killed in order to win the war. If the commander-in-chief is captured the army will surrender unconditionally. A country can be conquered by capturing its king.

Psychosomatic relationship

Manas or mind is the master of *jnanendriyas* or sensory organs and *karmendriyas* or motor organs. Hence, it should be first conquered in order to transcend our sensations and suspend our metabolic processes. Intelligent diplomacy is needed for the conquest of the mercurial human mind. It should be conditioned and disciplined with the aid of spiritual practices. It should be clearly recognized that mind and body are normally inseparable. They interpenetrate each other. Mind is an embodied form of the personal self. It is a unified structure of the energy of consciousness. It may be regarded as superphysical energy or parapsychical matter. It cannot express itself without the material medium of a gross physical body.

It communicates with the external world through its five doors of perception. A disincarnate mind cannot have meaningful intercourse with the material universe. The well-known psychosomatic phenomenon pertaining to the intimate connection between psyche and soma or mind and body is of supreme importance for spiritual aspirants. A subtle personal self manifests itself as mind in a gross human body, expresses itself in various ways and communicates with other human minds or embodied selves. In other words, a material body is essential for the self-manifestation and self-expression of a personal self and its communication with other embodied selves.

Meditation is not self-mortification

On account of this phenomenal psychosomatic relationship a *sadhaka* should always keep himself physically fit and mentally alert. An optimum psychosomatic euphoria is essential for maintaining steady and sustained spiritual advancement. The physical body should be neither pampered nor mortified. Mortification of the material body does not lead to intellectual illumination or spiritual enlightenment. Self-mortification results in physical senility and mental deterioration. Mental equanimity cannot be achieved without physical euphoria. Hence, a *sadhaka* should avoid self-torment and self-punishment. It is necessary to reiterate that the human body should be preserved like a temple of the living God.

Life is yoga

The paramount importance of correct posture cannot be overstressed. You should always sit straight or stand erect wherever you happen to be. The mental equilibrium and physical discipline acquired through meditation should be transferred to everyday life because all life is *yoga*. A *sadhaka* should keep his body

straight and his limbs supple. He should always try and sit straight. Wrong postures and awkward gestures debilitate the body and enfeeble the mind.

Hence, a *sadhaka* should not bend his backbone and subject his body to all sorts of ugly contortions. A sound mind cannot be developed without a sound body. An emaciated, enervated and emasculated individual cannot do any serious *sadhana*. A *sadhaka* must be straight and supple like a reed. A correct and beautiful posture can be acquired by regular practice. A perfect posture facilitates meditation.

Significance of *jyoti*

A *jyoti* is the most suitable object to be meditated upon. It should be a steady lambent light or a gently glowing flame like a candlelight or the flame of an oil lamp. A flame has profound physical and spiritual significance. The biopsychophysical human body is in a state of dynamic equilibrium. Every person is surrounded by his own individual bioplasmic aura. A flame is not a solid, liquid, or gas. It exists in the fourth plasma state of matter. There is a significant resemblance between the dynamic equilibrium of a human organism and a glowing flame, and between a bioplasmic human aura and the plasmic state of a shining flame. Meditation on a flame is tantamount to meditation on the bioplasmic aura of the personal self-identified with the immanent and omnipresent Cosmic Self or God. A *sadhaka* should sit in front of a *jyoti*, relax his body and fix his attention on its lambent light.

Preparation for meditation

Gaze steadily at the gleaming *jyoti* before you. Stare at it steadily. Stare as long as you can. Then, close your eyelids slowly. Visualize mentally the *jyoti* before you. During this process of imaginative re-collection and re-creation of the previously perceived *jyoti* you should neither shut your eyes nor keep them open. If you keep your eyes open your attention will be distracted by extraneous sights. The span of your attention will be extended and your *ekagrata* or one-pointedness will become *anekagrata* or many-pointedness. Your latent *rajoguna* will flare up. But if you shut your eyes tightly you will fall asleep. Squatting in front of the *jyoti*, fix your attention on its golden flame. Then, begin to gaze at the tip of your nose with ball-closed downcast eyes.

From attention to concentration

Your mind has a tremendous capacity and a gargantuan appetite for work of all kinds. It requires proper food for thought. There are various types of food. The most wholesome food for thought is provided by the divine pabulum of spirituality. Contract the span of your attention by making it one-pointed. Then, extend the duration of your one-pointed attention until it becomes steady concentration.

A slothful mind tends to become sinister. You might have seen a monkey tamer in your village. He exhibits his monkey at country fairs. He fixes a long pole on the

ground and commands his monkey to climb the pole. As long as the monkey clammers continually up and down the pole it has no time for mischief. Man's mind is a monkey. If it is idle it becomes a devil's workshop and resorts to all kinds of monkey tricks.

`Soham'

You must make your mind do work that is stimulating, illuminating, and enlightening. The most congenial, appropriate, and inspiring work for your mind is provided by the repeated practice of `*Soham*'. The two syllables `*so*' and `*ham*' represent the act of controlled breathing. `*Soham*' is an esoteric *mantra* or occult incantation for harnessing and disciplining the monkey mind of man.

The practice of `*Soham*'

`Soham' is practiced in the following way: Inhale air through one nostril. This is `*so*'. Then, exhale air slowly through the other nostril. This is `*ham*'. Practice the slow inhalation and exhalation of air steadily for a couple of minutes before the commencement of concentration. Repetition of slow inhalation through one nostril followed by slow exhalation through the other nostril to the accompaniment of `*Soham*' disciplines your body and tranquillizes your mind.

Cover the right nostril with the tip of the right-hand thumb. Cover the left nostril with the tip of the right-hand middle finger. Put the tip of the index finger at the centre of the forehead between the eyebrows. Uncover the right nostril. Inhale air through the right nostril keeping the left nostril closed with the tip of the right-hand middle finger. This act of slow and steady inhalation through the right nostril is accompanied by the utterance of the primary sacred syllable `*so*'. After inhalation retain the breath for some time before exhalation. Uncover the left nostril. Then, exhale air through the left nostril, keeping the right nostril closed with the right-hand thumb. This act of slow and steady exhalation is accompanied by the utterance of the secondary sacred syllable `*ham*'.

Repeat these slow and steady acts of inhalation followed by exhalation for a couple of minutes. During these rhythms of inhalation and exhalation the tip of the right-hand index finger should touch the center of the forehead between the eyebrows. This exercise of regulated breathing is known as `*Pranayama*'. Regular and systematic practice of *Pranayama* purifies your body and tranquillizes your mind. It rejuvenates the psyche and regenerates the soma. It gives the wealth of health and the benediction of bliss. Personal guidance of a master is absolutely essential for *Pranayama*.

Meera's devotion

Meera was an ardent devotee of Lord Sri Krishna. She used to meditate continuously on the physical form of Lord Sri Krishna. Her ignorant husband and shrewish mother-in-law misunderstood her devotion to God. They teased, tortured, and tormented her in all possible ways. She expressed her love for the Lord by

composing and singing devotional songs of great fervor and piety. But her husband and mother-in-law were too brutal to appreciate the divine love described in her sweet songs. They had filthy and vulgar minds. They mistook her divine love for physical infatuation, carnal lust, and voluptuous passion. Her husband turned her out of his house. She did not know what to do or where to go. It was in that hour of extreme distress that she composed the classic lines: '*Chalore man, chalore man Ganga Yamuna teer chalo* [Oh mind lets go to the banks of River Yamuna.]'

She exhorts her mind or inner self to concentrate its attention at the center of the forehead between the eyebrows. It is the place where the third invisible eye of wisdom is situated. Prayag or Allahabad is situated on the banks of Triveni, the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna, and the subterranean stream of Saraswati. Allahabad is really 'Ahlbad' that literally means the city of bliss.

Another line from Meera's song has great significance: '*Ganga Yamuna nirmala pani* [the water of Rivers Ganga and Yamuna are very tranquil]!' The clear waters of Ganga and Yamuna stand for the regulated process of controlled inhalation and exhalation. It is a symbolic representation of the concept of '*Soham*'.

There are some more magnificent lines in Meera's song: "*Moramakuta pitambaradhari Kundala rajatashareeri chalo.*" In these lovely lines there is an implicit allusion to '*kundalini shakti*', the primal energy latent in man. '*Raja tashareeri*' is an individual glowing with argentine effulgence, the luster of silver. He is a holy man who finds his ultimate spiritual fulfillment in the gradual awakening of *Kundalini Shakti*.

Pranayama

During *Pranayama* or regulated respiration, inhalation and exhalation are accompanied by the subconscious and sub-vocal incantation of '*Soham, Soham,...*' A *sadhaka's* mind should endeavor to listen to the repeated utterance of '*Soham*'. All his thought waves have to converge on '*Soham*'. His mind should become obsessed with '*Soham*'. He should limit his span of attention to '*Soham*'. Concentration is attained by reducing the span of attention. The *sadhaka's* mind should act as a vigilant sentry of '*Soham*'. It should become a master of the situation. It should intensify its concentration on the gleaming *jyoti* for at least a couple of minutes. Extension of the duration of concentration leads to the altered state of consciousness known as contemplation.

The *sadhaka* should continue in this state of profound contemplation for some more time. In deep contemplation the *sadhaka* destroys the dichotomy between the *jyoti* and all other objects in the world. The *sadhaka* and the *jyoti* alone exist. The next step is absorption in the *jyoti*. The *sadhaka* enters a state of empathy. He identifies himself with the *jyoti*. He interiorizes the external *jyoti* in his own inner self, which is transfigured and transformed by the radiance of the *jyoti*. In a state of deep absorption, the dichotomy between the *sadhaka* and the *jyoti* does not exist. The *jyoti* is visualized as an integral part of the *sadhaka's* body. After the successive

states of self-induced motivation, one-pointed attention, intense concentration, prolonged contemplation, and deep absorption are gone through real meditation begins. The altered state of consciousness leading to non-dualistic meditation is picturesquely described as 'the blossoming of the lotus of the heart'.

Interiorization of the *Jyoti*

The interiorized *Jyoti* is consecrated in the tabernacle of the *sadhaka's* heart by a sustained effort of imaginative empathy. The vision of the *Jyoti* is retained in the lotus of the heart that has blossomed spiritually. As soon as the holy *jyoti* is installed in the lotus of the heart the blissful state of '*tamasoma jyotirgamaya*' is attained. The darkness of spiritual ignorance is dispelled by the eternal *jyoti* representing the lambent light of wisdom. The golden glory of the *jyoti* reaches the *sadhaka's* throat. From the throat it reaches his hands. From the hands it reaches his stomach. From the stomach it goes down to his legs and feet. From the feet it rises up to his cranium. From the cranium it reaches his *Sahasrara chakra*, the crown plexus known as the thousand petalled lotus. Finally, it emerges at the center of his forehead between the eyebrows. The *jyoti* emerges as an aureole or halo around the *sadhaka's* head. It radiates from the *sadhaka's* body as a divine aura. The interiorized argentine effulgence and golden glory of the divine *jyoti* will illuminate every limb of the *sadhaka* who has reached the acme of spiritual ecstasy.

The *jyoti* spiritualizes body and mind

When the spiritual effulgence of the divine *jyoti* is reflected in the *sadhaka's* eyes they are purified and sanctified. His looks beam with benevolence and become a potent antidote to the malevolence of the notorious evil eye of vicious people. His eyes sparkle with love and compassion. When the interiorized *jyoti* penetrates the *sadhaka's* tongue his speech is sweetened and made as mellifluous as the manna of Gods. He is no longer influenced by evil talk and malicious gossip. When the interiorized *jyoti* enters his ears he will begin to shun slanderous speech. When the divine radiance of the *jyoti* illuminates his hands he will refrain from evil actions. When it reaches his feet he will seek the company of virtuous people. He will no longer haunt places of vice. When the celestial '*jyoti*' illuminates the *sadhaka's* brain all vicious thoughts and evil desires vanish. The *sadhaka's* stomach filled with the spiritual glory of the *jyoti* will discard evil food. Thus, the interiorized divine *jyoti* transforms the physical body of the *sadhaka* into a temple consecrated to the Cosmic Self.

Exteriorization of the *jyoti*

Then, this spiritual splendor should be transmitted to friends, relations, foes, and wild animals. The *sadhaka* discovers his kinship with the entire creation. His passion for all becomes universal compassion. He experiences the divinity of humanity and the humanity of divinity. The interiorized *jyoti* is ultimately absorbed as the celestial light of cosmic consciousness. Its astral projection within and without the *sadhaka's* body may be continued for nearly half an hour. During this

interval the doors of his perception will be cleansed by a spontaneous sublimation of his animal instincts.

Imagine a huge tree among whose sprawling branches thousands of birds have built their nests. As long as the birds perch on its branches the ground under it will be made dirty by their droppings. You may sweep the ground every morning but it becomes dirty again as soon as the birds arrive in the evening. When you are sweeping the ground the droppings will fall on your body also. That is why you will have to drive away the birds permanently to keep the ground clean. The place becomes clean as soon as the birds fly away.

Bio-psycho-physical catharsis

Thus, if the *sadhaka's* mind galvanized by self-motivation follows the arduous path of undivided one-pointed attention, intense concentration, continuous contemplation, and deep absorption culminating in the interiorization of the effulgent *jyoti* whose lambent light illuminates every *indriya* of his body, then the next step will be spiritual realization through profound meditation. Purification of mind and body, purgation of malevolent emotions, and the cleansing of the gates of perception are desiderata for all types of meditation. It is only after this biopsychophysical catharsis that it will be possible for a *sadhaka* to consecrate himself to the life divine.

Sense subservience to sense transcendence

The infra-sensory or subconscious mind 'below the senses' is essentially instinctive and habitual. The suprasensory or superconscious mind 'beyond the senses' is mainly transcendental and supramental. Subservience to senses is an essential characteristic of motivation, attention, concentration, contemplation, and even absorption. Transcendence over the senses leads to the altered state of consciousness known as supramental meditation. A *sadhaka's* mind should liberate itself from its bondage to senses, rise above them, and attain the ineffable state of *dhyana*. This *sadhana* will not be possible unless it is backed by powerful self-motivation for achieving spiritual experience.

Sense-independence

While progressing from a state of sense-subservience to a state of sense-transcendence, a *sadhaka's* consciousness passes through a state of quiescence, comparable to a common overlapping zone of neutrality. This is a sort of buffer state between the two states of sense-subservience and sense-transcendence. At the frontiers of this no man's land the passport of sense-independence should be shown. This intervening state of consciousness is the overlapping zone of contemplation and absorption.

Salokya, smeepya and sayujya

The primary state of sense subservience encompassing the mental activities of motivation, attention, and concentration is known as *salokya* that corresponds to

the universe of pluralism or the world of names and forms. The secondary state of sense-independence encompassing the mental activities of contemplation and absorption is known as *sameepya* or proximity that corresponds to the universe of dualism. The tertiary state of sense-transcendence is meditation. It is *sayujya* corresponding to the ineffable experience of oneness with the Cosmic Self. It is a non-dualistic state of consciousness in which the personal self is immersed in cosmic consciousness.

Love is a rose

Consider the example of a rose plant. It has branches, twigs, leaves, and flowers. You may be lured by a beautiful rose. It has a thorn like every other rose. You are motivated by a desire to have a rose. You have to fix your attention on the branches, twigs, leaves, and thorns also because you must distinguish the rose from other parts of the plant. Then, you have to concentrate on the rose and pluck it cautiously from the plant without getting pricked by the thorn under the rose. If you are a devotee, you will most probably offer the flower to God.

Human love and Divine love

Man's life is like a rose plant. His relations and friends are branches and twigs. His thoughts are leaves. His animal lust is the thorn under the rose. His selfless divine love is the rose flower. It is said that every rose has a thorn. There is no rose without a thorn. Likewise, there is no 'human' love without animal lust. What should man do in order to extract 'divine' love from human love? He must pluck the 'rose of immaculate love' without getting pricked by the thorn of voluptuous lust.

Love is your offering to God

Man's heart is a flower of love blossoming in the bog of sensual desires and mundane aspirations. This immaculate flower of divine love should be separated from the plant of profane life. The flower is a *naivedya* or an offering to *Paramatman*, or the Cosmic Self. The pure, holy, untarnished, and unselfish love in the human heart is an immaculate blossom. It should be offered at the altar of God conceived in any form you like.

Meditation on a personal God

If you feel that a *jyoti* is too impersonal to rivet your attention you may visualize any other divine form in the *jyoti* but not apart from it. You can mentally exteriorize on the center of the *jyoti* any deity or personified abstraction of divinity that you might choose. Some people are naturally anthropomorphic. They cannot think about *nirguna-brahman* or God without name and form and attributes. An abstract or non-anthropomorphic God cannot be visualized by many people. They cannot help visualizing God in human form. They regard God as an embodiment of all human excellences. They are free to do so because anthropomorphism is always preferable to atheism and agnosticism.

Humanized religion is more popular than abstract religion. There is no harm in meditating on a personal God if you cannot visualize *nirguna-brahman*. You may be a devotee of Sri Rama. Then, you may visualize Rama's form in the *jyoti* before you. If you love Sai you may imagine His presence in the *jyoti* . If Vighneswara [Lord Ganesha] is your favorite deity, you may imagine the likeness of Vighneswara in the *jyoti* . You may choose any deity you like from the vast pantheon of the world's religions and meditate on that deity's form in the lambent light of the *jyoti*

Paranjyoti

But one thing you must not forget. It is the fact that the entire creation is bathed in the divine-light of *Paranjyoti*, the Archetypal *jyoti* . You can visualize all ephemeral forms of the kaleidoscopic panorama of the universe in the eternal effulgence of the comprehensive and cosmic *paranjyoti*.

Meditation on Sai

If you can afford to devote more time to meditation, here are some more hints for you. You may imagine the physical form of Swami. Shut your eyes for a minute. Imagine the thick kinky mop of hair framing Swami's head like a divine halo. Imagine His long saffron robe. This will not take you more than a moment. Keep this form before your mind's eye as an impressionistic outline to be filled in with more minute details. This bare outline may make only a momentary impression on your mind. Your mind may be able to retain this form for a split second. But, you should not stop with this. You have to fill in all the details from head to foot by exercising your imagination.

Begin with the head. Imagine the visage and profile of Swami filling in as many details as you can recall. Visualize the eyes, the nose, the mouth, the ears, the lips, and every feature of Swami. Thus, imagine the form, step by step from the face downwards. Visualize every aspect of the form of Swami. Then, mentally retrace your path of visualization slowly from the feet upward to Swami's head of thick curly hair. This will take you another ten minutes. You will have already spent twenty minutes in meditating on Swami's physical form.

Sakshatkara

In this practice of meditation based on imaginative visualization there are three stages. First, you start with an imaginatively visualized representation of Swami's form. Second, this abstract form becomes a concretized thought form. Third, this thought form is revealed as a vision. This is known as the spiritual experience of *sakshatkara*, the final consummation of meditation.

Many people think that meditation is an occult faculty. It is not. It is a natural faculty of the human mind when in a state of perfect inner tranquility. The tranquillization of the mind has to be practiced slowly, steadily, and spontaneously. The advanced *sadhaka* will experience the self in its disincarnate state, the noumenal subsistence of the soul apart from the phenomenal existence of the physical body. It is an

overwhelming experience in which the personal self transcends the barriers of the spatiotemporal continuum.

No man becomes a saint in his sleep. A *sadhaka* cannot overnight attain the highest altered state of consciousness. The *sadhana* of *dhyana* is a slow, steady, and spontaneous spiritual exercise. Nevertheless, a *sadhaka* should start early, drive slowly, and reach safely.

But *dhyana* without *daya*, or meditation without compassion is a negation of religion. Spirituality without love is an exercise in futility. Your thoughts, words, and deeds should be inspired by pure selfless love—'Start the day with love, spend the day with love, fill the day with love.'

—*Sri Sathya Sai College, Brindavan*
Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, April 1980

The Super-Emperor

Shuka was unattached to the world around him he was aware of the immanent *Brahman* from the very moment of his birth, and he was steadily fixed in that awareness throughout [his] life. He can be said to be the greatest *jnani* (spiritualist) in history. Yet, he declared that the story of the *leelas* (Divine sport) of Krishna, the *saguna* (endowed with divine qualities) incarnation of the divine principle, gave him inexhaustible joy. He said that the Krishna-principle was beyond the ken of his analysis; it could only be experienced and tasted. No words can spell it out to another. *Rasa* (sweet essence) that is the true characteristic of the Divine. He tastes inexplicably sweet, everything related to Him, concerned with Him. That is the reason why Sri Ramakrishna declared that he did not desire to merge in the Divine; he was content to taste the sweetness of the Divine.

This is the path of *bhakti* (devotion). Through listening to the glories of the Lord, you become avid to praise Him; serve Him and His devotees, worship Him as if He is present before you, and be in His company all your life, with no other thought than that joy. For such dedicated seekers all else will seem bitter and unattractive.

God gives *darshan* to a sincere devotee

There was a Sultan once who ruled over the region of Mathura, Brindavan, and other places on the river Yamuna. During his reign the Emperor of Vijayanagar came on pilgrimage and stayed at Brindavan for some days. He paid homage to Krishna in the temple. The Sultan argued that he must have come so far only to pay respects to someone greater than himself. He was determined to see that One, come what may. So, he went late one night and called out before the closed doors of the temple. "Who is inside?" He heard a voice that gave the reply, "Govind Maharaj and Radha Rani."

The Sultan was now sure that there were two living persons inside, a Super-Emperor and His Super-Empress. He was filled with an agonizing yearning to see the distinguished occupants of the temple. He waited outside the door, without moving, without food or drink, for three full days. He was overcome with hunger and thirst; but he did not stir, for he was afraid the Imperial Couple may emerge any moment and he might miss the *darshan* (sight).

That night, when the town was asleep, just before midnight Govinda Maharaj and Radha Rani emerged from the temple. They signed to him to follow them. They were magnificently dressed and had elaborately bejeweled headgear, necklaces, wristlets, and ornaments for the hands and feet. They moved on until they reached the banks of the Yamuna, where thousands of *gopas* (cowherd boys) and *gopis* (cowherd girls) were gathered to welcome them. There was music and dance in the bright moonlight. Heavenly joy shone on every face. At 4 a.m. they returned to the temple and before they passed through the closed door, they gave into his hands the *kankanas* (bracelets) they wore on their wrists, for safe keeping! Before he could say anything, they had gone.

Implicit faith in God gives unlimited bliss

A party of priests came along at that time, and seeing him, asked him, why he was standing there, and what he had in his hands. They had come to open the locks of the outer and inner doors and inaugurate the ceremonials of the day, with *Suprabhatam* (awakening hymn) and *Nagarasankirtan* (moving choir). The Sultan said, "Govinda Maharaj and Radha Rani have just gone in; I was with them at the Yamuna



bank from midnight till a few minutes ago. They gave me these *kankanas* for safekeeping. I don't know why." They surmised he was a thief caught in the act and therefore, spinning a yarn; they bound him and beat him. But they found the locks unbroken; everything was intact. Only the idol of Krishna had no gold *kankanas*! They were convinced that the man outside was a great *bhakta* (devotee), who had the unique vision of the lord. They honored him and craved his pardon for the wrong perpetrated in ignorance. Such is the reward for sincere yearning; unlimited *ananda* (bliss) can be earned through implicit faith in God.

Source: *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. 8

Taming the Mind

Q&A

WITH BHAGAVAN

Devotee: Baba, what is concentration? What does it mean? How is it different from meditation?

Sri Sathya Sai Baba: Concentration is the fixation of attention on one point, on one act or thought, or subject, the attention of the senses; meditation comes in, when the senses are transcended, all desires are purified and overcome. In meditation, there is only you and God. Intense faith and exclusive contemplation produce successful meditation. Ramakrishna Paramahansa had such faith and *sadhana*; meditating on Hanuman, the form of God as Monkey, he even grew a tail.

Devotee: Does it come naturally to man, or has it a method?

Sri Sathya Sai Baba: Concentration comes naturally to man, but meditation does not. It has a method: Ramakrishna had a succession of *Gurus*, who guided him.

Devotee: My 'meditation' is enquiry "Who am I?"

Sri Sathya Sai Baba: It must be combined with meditation on Light, or Sound, or OM. You have to retire into the 'forest' inside you. It is 'for-rest'. Go in—that is the invitation.

Devotee: Does Swami direct us to 'go in' from time to time?

Sri Sathya Sai: Early morning is the best time. The mind would be quiet then, and there is no pressure of responsibilities. It is difficult during the day; people are around; work has to be attended to.

Devotee: Swami has said once that people make a mistake; by not paying heed to the 'Soham', that is repeated every time we breathe. How does one do it?

Sri Sathya Sai: *Sa* is He; *ham* is I. *Yogi X* advised you to repeat only *Sa Sa Sa* all the 24 hours; for, according to him, since *ham* is not uttered that I will automatically subside. It is an extremely difficult method; in sleep it is impossible.

Devotee: *Yogi X* says, he does it.

Sri Sathya Sai: He does not! Of what use is it to struggle with a *sadhana* like that?

Devotee: Putting *Yogi X* aside, I want to accept your advice and say *Soham* with every breath. What is the technique?

Sri Sathya Sai: You need not `say' *Soham* with each breath! The breath is always saying *Soham*; become aware of it, that is enough. Realize that it is there, and feel it. At night, during sleep, when there is no consciousness of I and He, of any duality, the *Sa* and the *ham*, the breath repeats *Om*; that is all.

Devotee: *Sa* is He and *ham* is I; is there a particular point in the body where the I or *atma* is to be meditated upon? Where is the *atma* seated?

Sri Sathya Sai: The *atma* is everywhere. But, for the purpose of meditation the `life principle' or *jivatma* can be considered as located ten inches (an inch is the thumb-width at the first joint) above the navel at the centre of the chest.

Devotee: The mind, which is our instrument for *sadhana*, has the power to lead us into illusion also; it is therefore very dangerous, isn't it?

Sri Sathya Sai: The mind should not merge itself with the physical senses; it has other senses of its own, with which it should be concerned. If that happens, there is no danger at all. They are: truth, awareness, peace, love, and bliss. As long as the mind is engaged with these, all is well. But, when the mind, as soon as it thinks of the `theatre', picks up the body and carries it to the theatre with all the senses of the body alert and awake; it becomes involved with the picture, the people, the emotions and the concepts; peace is lost. The mind should not engage itself with the body senses; body senses should serve the needs of the body only.

Devotee: But, Swami, it is always said that all troubles arise from the mind.

Sri Sathya Sai: From desires, to put it more correctly.

Devotee: That means, one should control one's thoughts?

Sri Sathya Sai: Thoughts and desires are not the same. There are many thoughts that are not desires. If there is a desire, there was a prior thought; but not all thoughts are desires. Dark clouds bring rain; but there can be clouds that do not bring rain. When there is a strong desire for God, bad thoughts, even if they arise, just pass through the mind and are not held on to.

Devotee: Swami! The flow of thoughts interferes with meditation; how can we diminish and dry up the flow?

Sri Sathya Sai: The habit of thinking is a long-standing one; even when it is broken, it will continue for some time! The fan continues to revolve, doesn't it, for some time, even after the current is switched off? The best method is to train the thought on to a spiritual goal-perfection, God, Rama.

Devotee: That means Rama must be always in our consciousness?

Sri Sathya Sai: There are four levels of consciousness in you: in the Unconscious, there are no impressions at all; in the Subconscious, the impressions are all in a jumble; in the Conscious, man is afflicted with doubt, indecision, wills, and won'ts, the entire mass of duality. In the Super-Consciousness or Divine Consciousness, there is the impression of only ONE.

Devotee: When one is wholly absorbed in God, who will take care of the body?

Sri Sathya Sai: Who takes care of the body in deep sleep, when you are not aware of it? It is God who takes care of it then, as well as at other times. When one half of the body is paralyzed, can you make it move? Or make it whole?

Devotee: Swami! Can *mantras* [divine formulas] help, if they are repeated and meditated upon?

Sri Sathya Sai: Yes. Even westerners have found the *Gayatri mantra* to have great power. It must be repeated by persons well practiced in spiritual life and *sadhana*.

Devotee: Swami! You do not give *mantra* to aspirants, it is said. When devotees are ready for *mantra*, should they ask Swami? Or will Swami Himself say when they are ready

Sri Sathya Sai: *Avatars* have never initiated aspirants into the recitation of *mantras* or formulae, for helping man toward the realization. To hear the *Avatar*, to have His *darshan*, to understand His directions and to act accordingly, that is the *mantra*. Krishna gave no *mantra* to Arjuna; He said, "Do this." That was enough *mantra*; when Arjuna did as he was told success was assured.

Devotee: Is the world today without Saints who have direct and deep God-experience?

Sri Sathya Sai: Why do you ask so? There are people, even today, who have the genuine experience of the vision of the Divine, of Self-Realization. But they do not travel hither and thither, building up a following of disciples. If you find such a one and ask for guidance, he would not be interested in you.

Those '*gurus*' who are moving about in the world are caught in the bog as deep as you are. They have various desires and so, various problems. Their knowledge is from books or from others; they have no full and real experience of the Divine of whom they speak. How can they pull you out of the bog onto firm ground? God is the only genuine *Guru*. Call on Him, He will guide you. He is in your heart; He is ever ready to help, protect and guide you.

Devotee: Baba's teaching carries the ring of truth; His words carry into action, almost by themselves. Their authority does not even depend on whether Swami is an *Avatar* or not.

Sri Sathya Sai: Don't doubt about this *Avatar*, as Swami.

Devotee: When the mind is not busy, I keep it engaged in repeating Sai Ram. Is this all right?

Sri Sathya Sai: Quite all right.

~From the Notebook of an American
Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, June 1974

Thought of the MONTH

Excellence of Aspirants

Elation at profit, joy, and cheer; dejection at loss and misery—these are natural characteristics common to all mortals. What, then, is the excellence of aspirants? They should not forget the principle: Be vigilant and suffer the inevitable gladly. When difficulties and losses overwhelm you, do not lose heart and precipitate some action, but meditate calmly on how they came to be. Try to discover some simple means of overcoming or avoiding them, in an atmosphere of peace.

When the blow is directed to the head, see that the turban alone gets it—this is the mark of keen intelligence. Peace is essential for this sharpness of intellect. Haste and worry confuse the intelligence. Peace develops all the beneficial characteristics. Even farsightedness grows through peace, and, through that, obstacles and dangers can be anticipated and averted. Aspirants have to pay attention to some subtle points here. They have special problems, viz. their failings, mistakes, drawbacks, etc. The will power can be so purified and strengthened that these failings will never more be recollected. If thoughts run after the failings and begin to dwell on how they came about, when they came about, etc., the aspirants are prone to commit a few more.

Once they have been recognized as failings, why worry about their birth and ancestry? Instead, allow the mind to dwell on good things. Of what profit is it to spend time on things that are no longer necessary? Do not think of them anymore. The aspirant will find this attitude useful. If aspirants are unsuccessful in following one discipline, they have to seek and know the cause of their defeat. This analysis is necessary. They must then see that, in the second stage, the trait is not repeated. They should try their best to guard themselves against it. In such matters, one must

be quick and active, like the squirrel. Agility and vigilance must be combined with sharpness of intelligence, too. All this can be earned only through peace.

Steady and undeviating earnestness is very important for avoiding and overcoming conflicts in the mind. One has to be calm and unruffled. Courage, wise counsel, and steadiness—these make the will power (*icchashakti*) strong and sturdy. Luster in the face, splendor in the eye, a determined look, a noble voice, large-hearted charity of feeling, unwavering goodness—these are the signposts of a developing and progressing will-force. A mind without agitations, a joyous and unblemished outlook—these are the marks of a person in whom peace has taken root.

~Prasanthi Vahini, Disc. 6

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

Practice the Presence



“Practice the constant presence of God and, learn to offer all your activities at the feet of the Lord as an act of worship. Then they will be free from fault. *Krishna* advised Arjuna to enter the fight and, at the same time, told him not to have 'hatred' towards 'enemies.' These may appear to be two irreconcilable attitudes, for war is rage (passion, attachment) and renunciation of hatred is *vairagya* (absence of *raga*). Arjuna asked *Krishna* how he was to reconcile these two attitudes. *Krishna* said, 'mām anusmara yudhya ca' [B.G. 8:7] (keep Me ever in thy mind, and fight. Do not cultivate the egotistic feeling that it is you who is fighting. I am using you as My instrument).”