

## The Immortal Guide to Immortality

**T**hese days when anxiety casts its shadow over the land, the recollection of the birth and achievements of Rama acts as armor to the agitated mind. Rama is in truth the *Vedas* [scriptures] personified. He is *Veda dharma* in human form. Today, what you celebrate is not the birth of the son of Dasaratha called Rama, but the birth of *dharma* [righteousness] itself. You must be happier at that thought; it is a double birthday. When *dharma* declines and the joy of practicing it and living it and saturating thoughts and deeds with it is no longer sought after, when that joy is forgotten and even denied, the Lord incarnates, according to the assurance He has vouchsafed. That is the way of the Lord.

The arena of life is raised on four pillars: *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha* (righteousness, wealth, desire, and liberation). They sustain and support. When the arena loses two and struggles to stand on the remaining two, viz., *artha* and *kama*, naturally anxiety, pretense, grief, and greed afflict mankind. Each pillar must co-operate and complement the parts that the other three play. *Dharma* must sublimate *artha*, that is to say, through moral means alone should the means of living be obtained. *Artha* must be won through *dharma* and used in *dharma*. *Kama* must be primarily for *moksha*; that is to say, desire must be directed to liberation from bondage, not to the forging of new chains or the addition of further links in the chain of birth and death. The first of the four, *dharma*, must interpenetrate and strengthen the next two, so that the fourth may be attained. Devoid of the first and the last, mankind is reduced to the level of beasts and birds.

### **Dharma subsumes all stages of life**

*Artha* and *kama* should not be sought after in isolation. The fact that today there is fear and anxiety in all sections of the people and in all stages of life shows that men are pursuing only *artha* and *kama* and neglecting *dharma* and *moksha*. It was once the pride of India that it was a land of peace and fearlessness, of spiritual effort and adventure, which guaranteed social and individual content. Now Indians must again dedicate themselves to the revival of that way of living, of *dharma* that subsumes all the stages of life. In this campaign, it is the duty of every individual, irrespective of caste, creed, sex, or extent of possessions or learning, to join enthusiastically. For, it comes quite naturally to an Indian since it has drawn out the best in him for centuries and the yearning for it is in his blood.

How are you to adopt *dharma* in the process of living? That is laid down by the *Avatars* [incarnations] like Rama. That is the purpose of His coming. Dasaratha had

four sons of whom Rama was the foremost. They represent the four *purusharthas* [goals of life], *dharma* being the foremost; the other three serve and are strengthened by Rama, who is described as *Vigrahavaan Dharmah*—the very image of *dharma*.

The difference between man and demon (*manava* and *danava*), is just this: *Manava* or man has or ought to have *dharma*, *dama*, and *daya*—morality, self-control, and charity. The *danava* or demon does not have these, nor does he consider them as desirable qualifications. He spurns them and pays no heed to their promptings. These three *da's* are essential components of humanness. There are as many stages of *manavatwam* [humanness] proceeding toward *Madhavatwam* [Godliness] as there are hearts; for all are pilgrims from *danavatwam* or demon-hood to *manavatwam* or human-hood, and thence to *Madhavatwam* or Godhood. The pilgrims move at their own speed and with the Name-Form that inspires them.

### **Religion is a mode of the mind**

There are some who talk of unifying religions; but religion is a mode of the mind and there are as many religions as there are minds. If you can unify minds, you can unify religions; but it is an impossible task. Unless the altars of all hearts are made uniform, this attempt is bound to fail. And it is not worthwhile. *Jeevo devassanaathanam* (the self and God are eternal), said the pundit now. Yes. The *Brahmatatwam* or the Universal Principle is *nirmala* and *nischala* (pure and immovable), but the *Deva* imagines itself to be the *jiva*. *Brahman* feels bound to name-form and so it has to regain the lost awareness. This is done through *dharma*.



Samartha Ramadas appeared before Shivaji with his usual call for alms: *Bhavathi bhikshaam dehi* [please give me alms]. Shivaji realized that the *guru* is God, so he wrote something on a piece of paper and deposited it reverentially in the alms bag of Ramadas. "For the relief of hunger how can paper suffice?" asked Ramadas. Shivaji prayed that the paper may be read. The paper recorded a gift of the entire kingdom and all that Shivaji owned to the *guru*. Samartha Ramadas replied, "No, my *dharma* is *dharmabodha*, the teaching of *dharma*, instructing the people in the right way of life. *Kshatriyas* like you must follow the *dharma* of ruling the land, ensuring peace and content to the millions under your care." Sage Yajnavalkya, too, once refused a kingdom because he cared more for the kingdom of *moksha*, the realm of eternal freedom. Sage Vasishtha is also said to have renounced a kingdom offered to him by Rama.

That was the ideal in the past; it is only now that men pursue paths that lead them away from *dharma*. You have allowed the treasure that the sages gave you to drop from your grasp. Though the medicinal root that you so badly need is lying across your path and has actually tripped your step, you have no eyes to recognize it and realize the value. What a pity this is!

Look at the way that Rama, to carry out the wish of his mother and the plighted word of his father, refused to accept the kingdom out of which he had willingly come, when Bharatha [the second brother] entreated him piteously to take it from him. Rama taught that *artha* and *kama* should not be allowed to overrule *dharma* and the discipline of *moksha*. For, fundamentally, the objects of the world are incapable of conferring joy.

### **Good deeds will wipe out the tracings of bad**

Once when Narada [a sage] was proceeding to *Vaikunta*, the abode of the Lord, he espied a *yogi* who was engaged in severe ascetic practices. The *yogi* prayed to Narada to bring back from *Vaikunta* information about the date of his becoming entitled to entry there. Narada promised to do so. When he stood in the presence of God, he pleaded on behalf of the *yogi* and asked that he may be informed of the date. The Lord replied, "Tell him that he will be coming here after as many more births as there are leaves on the tree under which he is doing penance." Narada felt sad and dispirited when he thought of the grief into which the *yogi* would be thrown on hearing this disheartening news. But he mustered courage to announce it nevertheless since the *yogi* insisted on hearing the news that he had promised to bring.

When at last Narada broke the news, the *yogi* was transported with joy; he was not dispirited at all. He jumped and danced in glee. He was lost in the thrill of his hope being so near fulfilment. All consciousness of the world disappeared from his joy-filled mind. So the Lord himself appeared before him and offered *Vaikunta* immediately. But the *Yogi* said that he would bide his time for he did not like the Lord's word, which Narada had brought, to be falsified! The Lord had to convince him that good deeds and thoughts and feelings will wipe out the tracings of bad; so he had by his enthusiastic acceptance of the Lord's will gotten over the consequences of past actions.

The law of *karma* is not an iron law; by dedication, by purification, which invites benediction, its effects can be modified and its rigor mitigated. Do not despair; do not lose heart. When vices hold sway over your heart it becomes foul and sooty. The flames of *kama*, *krodha*, and *lobha* (desire, anger, and greed) char the heart. Grace is proved by the quenching of these flames. Grace confers *anandam* (supreme bliss), which *kama*, *krodha*, and *lobha* can never confer.

### **Practice the discipline laid down by Rama**

The word Rama itself indicates *anandam*. *Rama* is *Anandaswarupa* [the embodiment of bliss]. In every being, He is the *ananda* in the innermost core, the *atmarama*. How

then are you being affected by grief? Because you ignore the core, you identify yourselves with the shell, the body. Today, the holy day of *Ramanavami*, you should immerse yourself in the *atma* [soul] as *Dharmaswarupa*, as the motivator of the moral life. There is no place where Rama is not; no being to whom He denies grace. He does not arrive or depart; He is immanent, eternal. So, to celebrate a day as the day on which He was born is itself a sacrilege.

Rama for you should mean the 'path He trod, the ideal He held aloft, the ordinance He laid down'. The path, the ideal, and the ordinance are eternal, timeless. Follow the path, stick to the ideal, and obey the ordinance—that is the true celebration. Then alone does your life become fruitful. Now you worship His form, you repeat His name, but you ignore His orders. This is no real *prema* [love] at all. Without actual practice of the discipline laid down by the Lord to purify the mind so that He may be reflected therein, all else is mere show, empty ritual.

### **Godhood can be reached and realized**

Running after momentary joy, people exile themselves from the Kingdom of God. The value of human birth consists in this; it is only from human-hood that Godhood can be reached and realized. Contemplate on this unique good luck today, use it not for feasting but plan your future so that the goal is quickly attained. Such days must be fully dedicated to thoughts of God, thoughts that elevate and inspire. People spend holy days as holidays, when they revel in picnics and hikes, watch films, play games, gamble, and quarrel over a game of cards. This is entirely wrong. Days like *Gokulashtami*, *Shivaratri*, etc., must be welcomed as opportunities to broaden the heart, deepen faith, and enlarge sympathy with fellow beings. To tarnish them by indulging in sensory pleasures is to insult the hoary tradition.

I have heard many complain that it is difficult to achieve *ekagrata* (one-pointedness); even some so-called great men have told me so. But the fault is not with the times, it is in themselves; they have no adequate *shraddha*—faith and steadiness. The steadiness they exhibit in the pursuit of worldly goods and worldly comfort they do not transfer to the pursuit of inner calm. They complain of lack of time, as if all their waking hours are now utilized for worthwhile purposes!

I must also condemn the absence of gratitude, which is rampant today. Ingratitude is the hall-mark of wild beasts, not of man. Man today is all humility, all obedience until his wish is fulfilled. Once it is satisfied, he tries even to ruin the person who helped him realize it. This does not befit man. He must be conscious of benefits derived and eager to repay the debt, or at least eager to avoid causing harm to the person who saved him while in distress. *Manava* means "an individual without a trace of ignorance." But man by his pomp and pride, his egoism and conceit reveals that he is ignorant of his reality and therefore undeserving of that name.

### **Ingratitude does not befit man**

As far as lies in your power, do good to others. Do not sow fear in others' hearts; do not inflict pain on others; do not promote anxiety or grief. If you take pleasure in the

pain of others, you only scotch the divinity in you and bring to light the demonic nature. "*Ishwara sarva bhoothaanaam*—the Lord resides in all." He is in you as much as in the 'other' whom you try to harm. Know this and give up all efforts to ruin others. You cannot help another; you can only help yourself by that act; you do not harm another; you harm yourself by that wicked act. The attachments are different; but the inner reality is the same in you and the "other." You will understand this when you distinguish values, the value of *vishaya indriya anandam* and *Vishweshwara Anandam*, that is to say, the joy derivable from senses and objects and the joy derivable from the contemplation of the glory and the grace of God.

Rama strove to uphold *sathya* [truth] as the main plank of *dharma*. Whatever the trial, however hard the travail, He did not give up truth. *Sathyam* is *dharmam*. *Dharmam* is *sathyam*—the two are irrevocably intertwined. *Sathyam vada* (speak the Truth), *Dharmam chara* (practice Righteousness), say the *Upanishads* [the scriptures]. Rama will be remembered so long as mountains raise their heads and the oceans exist because of this strict adherence to *sathyam* and *dharmam*. If he had argued, "Why should I be bound by the word of my father?" he would not have earned this immortality. The immortal had come in the form of Rama to show the way to immortality.

Sita, too, kept up the *dharma* of women. She declined to return to Rama on the shoulders of Hanuman for, she said, she would not of her own will contact another male; nor would she deny Rama the chance of proving His prowess by destroying the wicked person who stealthily carried away His consort. That is the *dharma* of a *pativrata* (chaste woman). These ideals have weakened now. Women as well as men are tempted to yield to the convenience of the moment; they do not attach importance to the deeper springs of righteousness. Tree shade or tent, what we want is sleep, they seem to say. The end justifies the means, that is the philosophy. Fair ends through foul means, how can this be right? He who must install Rama in his heart is sheltering a beast therein. What a tragedy!

### **Traits that man should learn from Rama**

Kausalya counselled Rama at the start of His exile in the forest, "The *dharma* that you are so scrupulously observing will guard you." That was the farewell she gave, not a banquet of tasty dishes. The ten-headed Ravana who held the Gods in chains could not stand up to Rama, who had *dharma* as His sword and shield. Rama was happy when others were happy. He grieved when others were in grief. That is the trait that He wanted man to learn. So, while avoiding pain from others, be vigilant not to cause pain to others, too. Then you attract the grace of the Lord, not when you contrive by tricks to harm others, or revel in the misery of others, or concentrate on your own happiness and progress, irrespective of the injury you cause to others.

The grief you cause to others will suffocate you after getting hardened into hatred. It will recoil on your own head with tenfold force. If you are established in *atmatatvam* (reality of Self), you need not fear. Of course, you must be afraid of wrong, of injustice, of cruelty, and of sin. But why fear when you have the security

granted by *sathyam*, *dharmam*, *nyaayam*, and *premam*—truth, righteousness, justice, and love?

I had no intention to speak today, but I was pressed to speak for five minutes at least. I have spoken for 50! I shall now give you a chance to sing a few *namavalis* (divine names).

**Source:** *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. 5

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*Darkness and light cannot exist at the same time and in the same place; they cannot continue together. Dhanam (riches) and Daivam (God) cannot be joint ideals. When riches are sought, God cannot be achieved. If both are sought by man what he will achieve will be neither dhanam nor Daivam but the devil.*

~Sri Sathya Sai

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## **When the Doorbell Rang**

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba entered our lives in the strangest way. Ever since His grace flowed for the first time in 1966, the bond of love has maintained its pace all these 19 years and is growing strong. This article provides a glance into the first vision and its permanence not only in memory but also in its impact.

Between 1963 and 1967, our family, consisting of my wife and myself, my father and my mother, and my grandmother and an uncle, lived in Jamshedpur, Bihar State, India. The life in the family was that of a typical Indian extended family with one main earner and three generations living together, sharing the love, worship, joy, and sorrow. In late 1965, it was known that the fourth generation was about to be launched. My wife was pregnant and the lady doctor taking care of her informed us that the expected delivery date would be around the 20th of July, 1966.

In early 1966, my father, who was 61 and had retired from regular service, took up a part-time job. In July, his employer requested him to go on an official trip to Durgapur. My father liked to go on the trip except that he was quite keen and firm about being present at the time of my wife's delivery. When he found out he would travel by car from Jamshedpur to Durgapur, a distance of some 300 miles, and that he could leave on the 10th of July and return in a few days, he was quite sure that he would be back in time for the arrival of his grandchild.

Father left on the 10th of July for Durgapur. He specially took my wife's permission to go and assured her that he would return to Jamshedpur by the 15th, well before the expected delivery date of July 20. On the 14th, we were blessed with a daughter. The arrival surprised the hospital staff who did not expect the delivery almost a week earlier. In any case, all concerned were relieved and happy that the delivery was easy, and the baby and mother were healthy. We were all eager to share with my father the news of the baby's arrival. He was expected on the 15th.

My father did not return to Jamshedpur on the 15th. Starting that day there were unusual rains in the whole of Bihar State. Railway, telegraph, and telephone lines were all disrupted. Road bridges were either damaged or not visible in the floodwaters in many places. The situation was very bad by the 16th. We were getting worried about father's safety. Our concern was that he might attempt to come by car and meet with an accident or other mishap. By the evening of July 17th, there was no news about father and there was no sign of his possible return to Jamshedpur. My mother and grandmother especially were getting very worried about father's safety. All of us could not really enjoy the presence of a darling three days' old baby since on top of the joy was the anxiety about father.

### ***"Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram"***

On the 18th of July (1966), I went to the office with a heavy and melancholic heart. A pious person by name Gopalam visited me in the office that afternoon. Gopalam and his family were greatly devoted to Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He brought for me a copy of "*Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram*" in Telugu and advised me to read it so as to understand the life of Baba. I was not really in the mood for it but received the book and kept it in my briefcase. In the evening when I returned home from the office, my first question to



mother was whether there was any news from father. Her response was the same. The atmosphere at home was depressing and my mind was going in all directions: what could have happened to father? Could it be that the car was involved in some accident? What about his life and safety? I did not express my deepest fears to mother, nor did she say anything to me. Grandmother

was also getting agitated about her son. My wife, while taking care of the baby, was also concerned.

That evening, after a shower and snack, I started to read "*Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram*" just to pass time and know a little bit about the Bhagavan. The first couple of chapters in the book were interesting. I probably did not think much of the early *leelas* [Divine play] of Baba. I read about a quarter of the book by dinner time and then continued after dinner.

By about 10 p.m., when I had completed a little over half of the book, I was truly amazed at the miracles performed casually by Baba. As I continued to read, tears were rolling down my cheeks. Baba once rescued an elderly gentleman from a deep ground well; He saved someone about to commit suicide; He cured some incurable diseases; and so on. The important thing to note is, He had saved the devotees by His presence at far off places while physically being present at Prasanthi Nilayam, the abode of peace and the residential township of Baba. As I continued reading, it soon became a routine of tears, wiping, reading, and tears. There were far too many miracles page after page to free myself from the force of devotion instantly formed toward a Baba whom I had not met before.

### **An appeal and a challenge**

"You did countless miracles. You saved so many people from misery and difficulty. Is it all true? Are you really divine? Are you God? Baba! If you are divine, please bring my father. Can you materialize him for me?" Such were the thoughts crossing my mind every other second. After a while I resolved as follows: "Baba! The book is what is pressuring me to believe you. Here is my resolve and challenge: before I complete the book, bring my father. If you do, I will be devoted to you from now on and will bring a picture of yours into my prayer room. In case you cannot bring father, I will throw the book down the balcony, pay the appropriate amount to the lender of the book, forget about all I have read, and will never have anything more to do with you!"

After throwing the challenge at him, I continued to read the book, was a bit nervous about the consequences of my resolve and still shedding tears as I read. By about 12 midnight, when I came to the penultimate page, I prayed to him with all my heart. *The doorbell rang*. I asked my mother to wake up and open the door and assured her that father had come. Indeed, he was there! He gave his story: he had to use various modes of transport, travel for a long duration and somehow managed to return safely. He was very sad for not being present at the time my daughter was born.



Slowly and calmly, I told everybody how Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba came into our lives that very minute and how he brought father to us at that moment. I quickly went into my room and with all my heart, shed tears of devotion, the translucent pearls that Divinity accepts when the devotee offers them. "Bhagavan, you decided to be my own God," so I thought and completed the last page of the book.

~V.V. Bhanoji Rao, World Bank, Washington DC  
**Source:** *Sanathana Sarathi*, August 1985

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## The Real *Panchangam*

*In 1961, on the Tamil New Year day, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba said that we should not take the predictions of astrologers seriously, instead we should take things as and when they come. He asked that we should educate and hold in check our five senses—the Panchangam.*

Kasturi has just now read from the *Panchangam* (almanac) for the New Year, *Plava*, the predictions of the astrologers about rainfall, the condition of the crops, the prices of articles in the markets, the rise and fall in the rates of gold and silver, the prospects of internal and external peace, the occurrence of natural calamities like floods, droughts, earthquakes, etc. But reading all this only increases your worries, your restlessness. Take things as and when they come. Do not try to peep too far into the future with the help of astrologers. They are mostly wrong, and the data you supply them are mostly unreliable.



Take care of the *Panchangams* (the five-limbed almanacs) within you; that is more vital. The *Panchangams* within you are the five senses. Educate the mind to hold them in check—then you can have peace of mind whatever the rise in the market rates or the quantity of rain. Do not get panicky over what the almanac says about the combination of many planets, the *Ashtagraha koota* (conjunction of eight planets). They exaggerate the consequences; nothing much will happen; the *pralaya* (destruction of the Universe) is more in the frightened mind than in external nature. If you earn the *anugraha* (divine grace) of the Lord, no *graha* (planet) or combination of *grahas* can harm you. If you learn how to secure that *anugraha*, you need not worry about the *Panchangam*.

Today you are celebrating the arrival of a new year with a new name, a name that you will use for the 12 coming months. But remember, it is not the year alone that is new once in 365 days. Every day is new, every hour and minute, every second is new. Do not celebrate only the New Year Day in joy; celebrate every second in joy.

### **Every step toward Godhead is to be cherished**

Start from today, not that today is a new year—there are so many new years celebrated as such by one or the other community that every day is a new year to some one set of people—but because it is today and the matter brooks no delay, start from today a new chapter in your life, the chapter of *japam* (recitation of holy name) and *dhyanam* (meditation), *japa-sahitha dhyanam* (recitation-oriented meditation) or *dhyana-sahitha japam* (meditation-oriented recitation). In the *Tretha Yuga*, the name was *Sitarama*; in the *Dwaparayuga*, it was *Radheshyama*; in this *Kaliyuga*, it is *Sarvanama*, that is to say, all names of the Lord; you can select any one that appeals to you.

Life is like a flight of steps toward the Godhead. You have your foot on the first step when you are born; each day is a step that must be climbed; so be steady, watchful, and earnest. Do not count the steps ahead or exult over the steps behind. One step at a time and that well climbed, that is enough success to be satisfied with and to give you encouragement for the next one. Do not slide from the step you have got up on. Every step is a victory to be cherished; every day wasted is a defeat to be ashamed of.

Slow and steady—let that be your maxim! Adhere to a regular routine, a time-table. Just as the doctor prescribes a certain fixed measure or weight of the drug and warns you that anything less is ineffective and anything more is harmful, so too, have some limit for your spiritual exercises. Do not overdo them or do them casually and without care. The doctors tell you also about the hour of the day and the number of times the drug must be repeated, for, the action of the quantity taken must be reinforced before it becomes weak. So also, you have to repeat the *japam* and *dhyanam* at regular intervals.

### **Do not move very fast with the world**

Millionaires who always go about in cars and airplanes and people of sedentary habits are advised by doctors to take a long walk every morning. The walk is called 'constitutional' because it helps to build up the constitution. Similarly, to get over the mental ills consequent on too-long brooding over worldly affairs, the *guru* will advise you to have a long spell of *dhyanam* and *japam*. Do not move so fast with the world; the cure for moving fast is to sit quiet. Do not get entangled in the vain hubbub of the world; the treatment for those who suffer from the after-effects of that is silence and meditation.

You will have observed that when your train is stationary, another train moving along another line gives you the feeling that it is your train that moves. If you watch your coach, fix your attention on your train, you know the truth. Similarly, if your

attention is turned on "the other," "the outer," your knowledge is based on illusion. Once you divert the attention to yourself, you can discover the truth, viz., though the world moves, you are still.

In the *Panchangam*, as Kasturi quoted now, it is also predicted that in the year that is born today, the number of people who deride God and who laugh at Him and hate Him will increase. Let Me ask, how can that happen for that number has reached the maximum already! The cynical spirit of derision and ridicule is the bane of this Age; but there is no reason for the godly to be down-hearted. At least the coming *Ashtagraha koota* will put some fear into people's minds and they will call on God to save them, and they will do various acts to propitiate the Divine beneficence to overcome the malfeasance of the planets. Therefore, the prediction might prove incorrect after all. Be assured that the Lord has come to save the world from calamity. Your duty is to keep calm, to pray for the happiness and prosperity of all. Do not pray for your own exclusive happiness and say, "Let the rest of the world go to pieces". You cannot be happy when the rest of mankind is unhappy. You are an organic part of the human community. Share your prosperity with others; strive to alleviate the sufferings of others. That is your duty.

The New Year is called, *Plava* or Boat. Make it a boat to cross the sea of *samsara* (worldly life). That is My blessing to you this day.

**Source:** *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. 2

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*The ocean drops rose as vapor, joined the congregation called cloud, fell on the earth, flowed along the ravines, and at last reached the ocean. Reach like-wise the ocean you have lost. Start on that journey and travel quick and light.*

~Sathya Sai Baba~

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### **"To My Fellow Pilgrims"**

Have you heard our Baba speak?

Have you heard our Baba speak  
At public meetings anywhere?  
He never calls it speech;  
Nor will you name it so!  
He does not raise His voice, harangue,  
Or rouse the mob or rail or flail;  
He does not hesitate, He will not calculate,  
Hum and haw and pause and ponder,  
Making you wonder why you came!  
He does not wait and wander,

Collecting thoughts, contriving notes;  
He does not waste a moment, decorating speech  
In showy lace and frills, clothing borrowed texts  
In shimmering gauze. He is no orator, pompous, proud,  
Clamoring for claps, publicity-mad!

He will not circumambulate, declaim...or, even...‘speak’!  
He is the Rain-cloud, bringing Life  
To the parched ones here below!

He 'talks' ... He 'talks' to you, and you,  
and every single you that has gathered there;  
To every single Arjuna, with heavy heart and empty hand,  
Afraid to fight the battle of Life on to Victory.  
You feel He has come for you, to you.

You see Him, silently looking around!  
The searchlight eye full circle swings!  
How lucky you are there!  
He smiles; He wins you by that smile!  
You scarce can take your eyes from off that Face,  
So alluring, so Divine!  
You scarce can pull your heart from off His grip;  
The clasp is cool comfort!  
The silence deepens...  
Though thousands have been squatting, waiting,  
For hours and hours...  
Himalayan stillness; twilight calm!

*Premaswarupulara!*  
The Golden Hour has come!  
Heaven's Gate ajar!  
The voice is sweet as honey  
Hived by Heavenly bees from *Parijata* trees!  
His call is clarion clear!  
O! 'Tis thrilling, 'tis filling rapture in the soul,  
Flowing like the Ganga, freeing the bound,  
Yielding rich reaping, for just ploughing and sowing  
Welling and swelling like Gersoppa Falls,  
Yielding vast power, for just wheeling and wiring!

His talk is a cascade, so limpid and pure,  
Teaching, never preaching, unravelling all knots,  
Stilling the questionings ere they emerge in mind;  
Defining, refining, consoling the pining,  
Commanding, yea, demanding the bending of pride,

Sparing no one, be he ruling or serving.

Chiding, reprimanding the fool, and fanatic;  
Joking and coaxing, poking fun at all hoaxing;  
Quoting from what He said in the past ages,  
Detailing facts of His incarnating—

Resplendent poetry, spontaneous, sublime,  
Painting pictures of transcendent Truth,  
Parable, proverb, scintillating bright,  
Tinkling, twinkling, tintinnabulating lilt,  
Every hour a minute, every minute a second;  
Every word a *mantra*, every phrase, *Sutra*,  
A *Gayatri* a sentence, *Upanishad* a speech!  
For He is no well or tank or river!  
His is the ocean of Wisdom Divine!

Oh! His words shower mercy, like morning dew  
On every heart-bud awakening from dreaming.

He is feeding your roots and speeding the sap,  
Sprouting the buds, painting the petals,  
Perfuming them well, inviting the bees,  
Ripening the pods, with each word of His!  
There! The meaning of His word, a tiny seed  
Drops on your rock-like heart! And wonder of wonders!  
It germinates there! ... sprouts and puts forth leaves!  
The silken half-blind baby-roots do run about  
Tickling the stone, jabbing, pleading for suckling!  
Succeeding at last, it grows; and, growing into a tree,  
Your rock is broken into clay!

His talk, you will find, is cooling, not freezing  
Warming, not burning; raining, not flooding;  
Healing the ailing and hearts bewailing;  
Soothing, not searing; no toxin, but tonic;  
Balming and calming; all fact and no fiction!

Every sentence spreads joy and scorches gloom,  
Impelling attention, compelling assent,  
Dispelling dejection, repelling sloth,  
Attracting you nearer, detaching from bonds,  
Infusing courage, and fusing creeds,  
Imposing no doctrine, composing all feuds,  
Informing (so charming!), never harming, disarming!  
Sifting the responding, lifting the desponding.

Stressing on 'Doing, Behaving and Living',  
Appealing for 'Feeling, Believing and Acting'.

Calling all listening, to spurn imitating,  
Vainly disputing, blind leading the blind,  
Knocking at Paradise through power and pelf,  
Or boasting of branches of family tree,  
And seeking for peace, in earning and spending  
And wanting and panting and hoarding and guarding.  
As you hear Him talking, you quietly resolve  
To take a step forward on the pilgrim road;

Unfold your wings and soar into the sky!  
You feel you are a Lion, cheated into bleating!  
A diamond, set in dirty lead!  
Engaging in no fray, enraging no foe,  
He is welcoming all, who are thirsty or starving,  
Or limping, or blinking, or climbing and sliding,  
Raising the stooping, embracing the drooping  
Assuaging pain, assuring His Grace.

He reminds us all of the road we have missed.  
He describes the joy of the journey's end.  
He opens our eyes; He strengthens our limbs;  
He heartens the struggling, groping his way,  
Awakening the sleeping, making the sitting stand,  
The standing to walk; the walking to reach!

Proclaiming, revealing, announcing to all  
Asserting His coming for our burden assuming,  
Redeeming the wayward, the downcast, diseased;  
Underlining the Truth, undermining the false.

Ah! What is this? What luck! What Grace!  
Even as He talks; 'it' blossoms into song,  
Oh! Captivating Song! He teaches us to pray  
Tranquilizing all the furious waves,  
Steeling the nerves and strengthening the will,  
Attuning our soul to *Dharma! Sathya! Prema!*

And when it stops  
And you open your eyes,  
You find them full of tears!  
Your neighbor weeps like child for mother,  
But Why? Look up and see; He has left the dais!

Be proud you had the chance. From this moment, I know  
You are bound to be an ascending, attempting, adventurous soul.

Arjuna, resuming arms for the fray  
With Krishna leading the horses aright—  
How lucky you heard Him talk!

~N. Kasturi

(Poem read in the Holy presence on 16-10-58)

Source: *Sathya Sai Speaks* Vol. 1

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# Q&A

WITH BHAGAVAN

## Ramayana Epic Characters Explained

*Bhakta*: Swami, last time you spoke of the *Mahabharata* war; in the same manner, does the *Ramayana* also happen in everyone's heart?

Swami: Undoubtedly! It does take place systematically and in the same sequence.

*Bhakta*: Then in what form does Rama come in this?

Swami: The *atma* is Rama. He has come in the character of *jivi* [individual], wearing the dress called body.

*Bhakta*: Then being a *sankalpa-siddha*, whose will prevails, and being Omnipotent, who is all powerful, why does He suffer so much?

Swami: It is all play: His *leela*, sport. What can be joy for Him? And what can be suffering for Him? He is *anandaswarupa* [embodiment of joy], who knows neither. By His will He can produce everything. He has enacted the *Ramayana* on the stage of the theatre of the world, with Himself taking a role and showing each quality or *guna* as a separate form. Such a *Ramayana* is taking place in every heart. The Rama in the heart, the *atmarama*, is observing everything as a witness.

*Bhakta*: But the inert material—*jada*, the *jivi*, how does it enter into this *Ramayana*?

Swami: This *jada* accepts the active *chaitanya*, viz, the knowledge of Bhrahmam. *Chaitanya* is born with the name of Sita. The *jada-chaitanya* become One. This is referred to as Seetharama. So long as the *jada* and the *chaitanya* are One, there is

no trouble and no suffering. It is the separation of one of these two that gives rise to all the bother.

*Bhakta*: How is that, Swami?

Swami: Sita, who is *Brahmajnana*, goes away from the *atma* that is in the form of the *jiva*; hence falling into the darkness of the jungle is inevitable. Rama has acted in this way to show us this: if Sita or *Brahmajnana* is allowed to be lost, one cannot escape wandering about in the jungle of darkness.

*Bhakta*: If that is so, what is the reason, Swami, for this Lakshmana to be always with Him? In our life what does he stand for?

Swami: One should not be alone in the dark jungle of life; one should have the *manas* [mind] ever by one's side. It is for this that Lakshmana is kept near, always.

*Bhakta*: In the *Ramayana*, Vali and Sugriva are described. Who are they?

Swami: When wandering in the dark jungle one gets despair when one should get discrimination. They have vengeful hatred of each other. Vali, who is despair, has to be destroyed; then only can success come. Despair is Vali; discrimination is Sugriva.

*Bhakta*: Hanuman, who appears between these two, who is he?

Swami: He who is of great help in the conquest of despair, viz. courage! That is Hanuman, He is courage. Associated with courage, it is possible to cross the ocean of illusion; that is why Rama built the *Sethu* or Bridge with the help of Hanuman.

*Bhakta*: After crossing the ocean of illusion, what is to be planned?

Swami: Don't you know what Rama did after crossing over the Bridge? Conquering *moha* or illusion, He slew *rajoguna* [passion] and *tamoguna* [dullness] in the form of Ravana and Kumbhakarna. The remaining brother, the last, the *satwaguna* [purity], viz, Vibhishana, was crowned king. The three *gunas* [qualities] have been illustrated in the characters and careers of the three brothers, Ravana, Kumbhakarna, and Vibhishana.

*Bhakta*: After this what has to be achieved?

Swami: Has to be achieved, do you say? Next, is the attainment of *anubhavajnana* [experience] or Sita; the *jnana* [knowledge] reached after experience, *jnana* reached in actual life. When both *jada* and *chaithanya* unite again, that is the *Pattabhisheka*, the Coronation; that is to say *jivanmukti*, salvation for the *jiva*. Therefore, the fundamental teaching of the *Ramayana* is this: "The *jiva*, *manas*, *jnana*, despair, discrimination, courage, delusion, *rajas*, *tamas*, and *satwa* - these demonstrate themselves each in a different form. It is to be learnt how and in what ways each of



these can be either acquired or subdued.” All this is done by the *atma* who has come in the form and with the name of Rama, by His acting, behaving, directing, and guiding. So the Ramayana has not ended long ago. So long as in each one’s life there is a struggle for achievement through these paths, and persons attain the *anubhavajnana* in the end and *satwaguna* is crowned at last, until then the Ramayana will continue to take place in the heart of man. On one side the *Mahabharatha* war, on the other side the *Ramayana*, and on another the *Bhagavatha*, thus is life led perpetually. These are the *sukshma* [subtle] forms of the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, and the *Bhagavatha*, do you understand?

*Bhakta*: That means, in the *Ramayana* of actual life, *atma* is Rama, *manas* is Lakshman, *Brahmajnana* is Sita; and when that Sita is lost, Rama falls into the forest of existence. There, in that forest, there is despair and discrimination. If we associate ourselves with Hanuman or courage, we can go across the sea of delusion with the army of zest, strength, and steadfastness represented by Jambavan, Angada, and other *vanaras* (monkeys). As soon as we cross it, we can destroy the *rajasic* quality and the *tamasic* quality symbolized by Ravana and Kumbhakarana; the *satwic* quality or Vibhishana can then be crowned; *anubhavajnana* or Sita is then attained. This union of *jada* and *chaitanya*, that is of Sita and Rama, is the *ananda*, *jivanmukti*, salvation for the soul. Ah! What a splendid *Ramayana*! The *Ramayana* accomplished as the son of Dasaratha is being enacted now as the subtle *Ramayana*, through *gunas* and *indriyas*, qualities and senses in each individual, so to say.

Swami: There is no ‘so to say’ in this. It is happening as the subtle *Ramayana*!

*Bhakta*: You said, Swami, that each *guna* and each *indriya* adopts in *Ramayana* a separate form. It causes some surprise to imagine that the senses also put on some form! In these, the gross and the subtle *Ramayanas*, in what form do the senses appear? Please tell me this.

Swami: Whatever may be the *guna* or quality, how can it express itself without the help of the senses? *Gunas* are bred in the senses. The senses of action are five; the senses of knowledge are five. These ten with the help of the *manas* create attachment, isn’t it? Otherwise, there can be no merging at all. “Born in *maya* [illusion], bred in *maya*, man’s mission is to master “*maya*”, it is said. So, too, born in the senses, bred in the senses, the *jada chaitanya* has to master the senses. That is their basic duty, don’t you know? Do you know where Rama, the *jivi*, was born? Whose son is he? Dasaratha has that name because he symbolizes the *dasendriyas* or the ten senses. Whichever *guna* or *rupa* [form] we consider, it cannot be unrelated to the ten senses, the senses of action and of knowledge, the *karmendriyas* and the *jnanendriyas*. In the form of Dasaratha, we have the ten.

*Bhakta*: Four sons were born of Dasaratha. Of what were they the forms, Swami?

Swami: From the ten senses, not only four, but any number of *gunas* and *rupas* can originate. But only the chief four, symbolizing the four faces of the Lord, originated

by His will. They are born as Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha, and Shatrughna. They are *sathya*, *dharma*, *shanti*, and *prema* in the subtle form. These are the four faces of the Lord.

*Bhakta*: Who among these, Swami, is *sathya*? Who represent *dharma*, *shanti*, and *prema*?

Swami: Can't you discover? Rama is *sathya*. "The status and the honor should go to him who has the right, not to me," said Bharatha when he was offered the crown, and so he is *dharma*. Placing complete faith on the *atma*, that is Rama, believing that there is no *ananda* sweeter than its uninterrupted company, Lakshmana followed Rama, and so he is *prema*. Having no individual separate ambition of his own, treading the paths followed by these three, Shatrughna was calm and unperturbed, and so he is *shanti*. Is that clear?

*Bhakta*: Yes, Swami, but these four were born of three mothers; who are those mothers?

Swami: As I said just now, 'born in *maya*, bred in *maya*, one has to transcend this *maya*'; so also, one is born from *gunas*, one is brought up with *gunas*; finally one has to transcend the *gunas*. The three mothers represent three *gunas*! Among them, Kausalya is *satwaguna*, Kaikeyi is *rajoguna*, and Sumitra, *tamoguna*; they play those roles in the epic. Dasaratha in the form of *dasendriyas* is associated with these *gunas*, and so he is *Indriya-guna-swarupa* [embodiment of senses]. It is because man cannot easily grasp the truth through the senses and the *gunas* only that the Lord taught him through the *Ramayana*. The Lord is teaching us even to this day. The Lord performed that day the gross *Ramayana*; and today He is performing the *sukshma-Ramayana* on the stage of the heart of man.

[To be continued]

Source: *Sandeha Nivarini*

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## Thought of the MONTH

### Remove Defects in Character

Egoistic individuals love to exercise authority over others. They see everything through glasses colored by the smoke of selfishness and self-love. "My words are true"; "My opinion is correct"; "My deeds are right"—Such attitude is very harmful for spiritual aspirants. Aspirants must look forward eagerly to any objective criticism, suggestion, or advice from any quarter. Also, they must minimize

all discussions and argumentations as these breed a spirit of rivalry and lead one to angry reprisals and vengeful fighting. Do not struggle to earn the esteem of the world. Do not feel humiliated or angry when the world does not recognize you or your merits. Learn this first and foremost if you are after spiritual success. Do not become elated when praised, for therein lies a deadly trap, which might even lead you astray and endanger your progress.

-*Dhyana Vahini*, Ch 14

You must reform your mental traits and habits. Cultivate the habit of never causing pain to others. Try to understand others, sympathize with, and help them. Train yourself to take insult and criticism as decorations awarded to you. Be friendly with everyone, whatever be their nature or conduct. A joyous disposition is necessary for spiritual progress, but many things and situations deprive you of the atmosphere of joy. So, you must pray sincerely in order to be free from such obstacles. The recital or repetition of prayers (*mantras*) will be of great help.

-*Dhyana Vahini*, Ch 14

The udder of the cow contains milk in it. The milk has *ghee* (clarified butter) in it. But the *ghee* is not available to us as such. The milk has to be drawn, curdled, and churned to obtain the butter that, in turn, has to be clarified to produce the *ghee*. This when consumed gives strength. So, too, though God is omnipresent, He has to be discovered and cognized in order to experience the bliss. Like oil in mustard, butter in yogurt, water under the earth's surface, and fire in timber, God though present in everything is not patent. God is in the body and the mind, but to become aware of Him spiritual effort is necessary. When that is undertaken, oneness with the Supreme within can be realized.

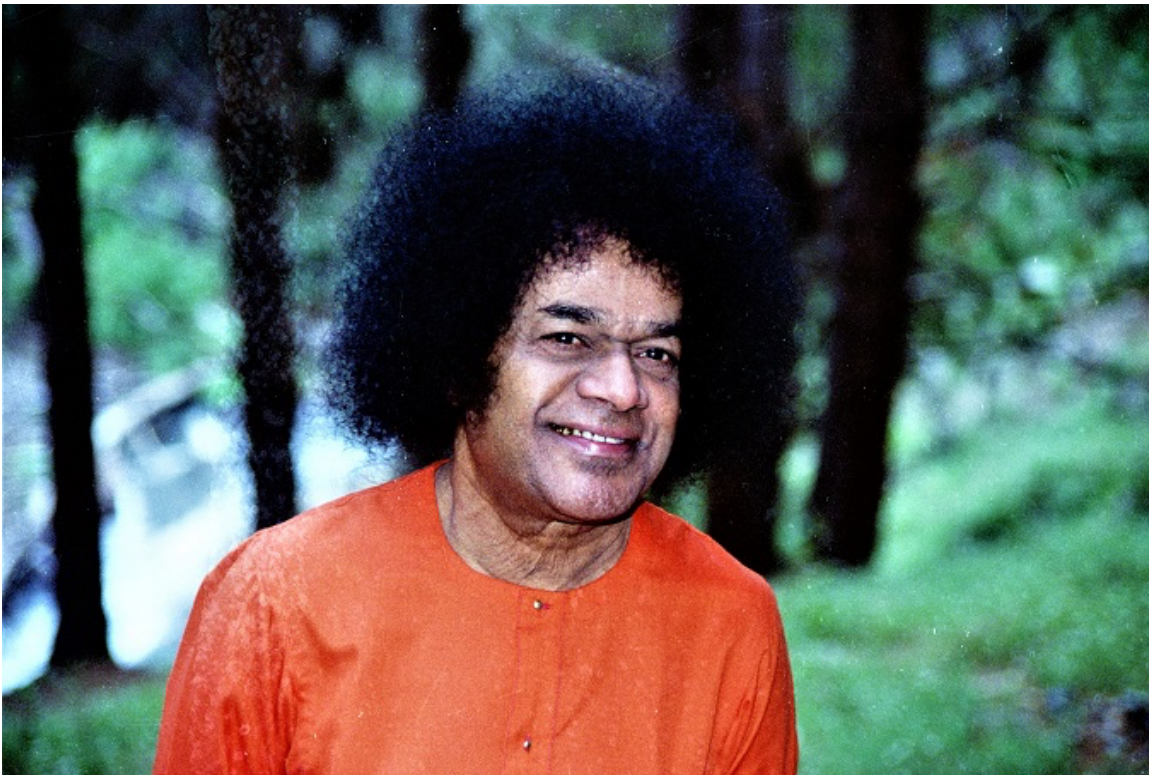
You will make quick progress on the spiritual path if you overcome the difficult obstacles of anger, pride, conceit, the tendency to look for faults in others, etc. These operate subconsciously, like the currents in the depths of the ocean. You must be vigilant not to lose your temper, be it even in small things, for that will hinder your progress. Anger is the parent of all wrong behavior, and it can turn any person into bad ways any moment and in any form. So first and foremost sublimate it by systematic effort. Welcome gladly anyone who points out your defects; be grateful to them. Never entertain hatred against them, for that is as bad as hating the good. You must love the “good” and discard the “bad”. Remember, the “bad” should not be hated but given up or avoided. Cultivate humility and love toward all; undesirable habits will then fall away from you.

-*Dhyana Vahini*, Ch 14

Conceit, jealousy, anger, pride, trickery, and fault-finding—all these are obstacles in the spiritual path. Even if these are not patently exhibited, the inner impulses urging

one along these wrong directions are latent in the mind. When a room kept closed for a long time is opened and found dust-ridden and foul-smelling, it is cleaned and made habitable by elaborate sweeping and dusting. Similarly, the mind, too, must be cleansed by means of meditation. Spiritual aspirants must, by inward observation, examine the mind and its contents and condition. By proper disciplinary habits, the accumulated dirt should be removed little by little and systematically. Conceit, for example, is deep-rooted and unyielding. It may appear to be dry and dead for some time but will sprout again easily. In a passionate mind it puts forth many branches and spreads in all directions as soon as a chance arises. So a spiritual aspirant must be ever vigilant.

-Dhyana Vahini, Ch 14



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