

## Heroic Mothers and Noble Sons

*Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in a discourse in May 1996 said that the Mother principle embodies seven potencies —fame, wealth, speech, wisdom, intelligence, fortitude, and determination—thus she is highly sacred.*

**E**mbodiments of divine love! For the benefit of others alone trees give fruits, rivers carry water, and cows yield milk. Likewise, the human body is given for rendering help to others. But not recognizing this truth, man uses his body for selfish purposes. Man today behaves in a more degraded manner than trees, rivers, and cows.

Man is forgetting the purpose for which he has been endowed with a body. From dawn to dusk, he is immersed wholly in selfish pursuits. He has no comprehension of what selflessness means. Man considers the phenomenal world as the only reality.

*People mistake the unreal for the real and the real for the unreal.  
But the real is the only One and there is nothing else in the universe.*

This visible universe is made up of three *gunas* [qualities] (*satwa*, *rajas*, and *tamas*). This is the reason for describing the cosmos as *stree*. The term *stree* has three components: "Sa", "Ta" and "Ra". "Sa" signifies the *satwic* quality. This comprises qualities like forbearance, compassion, and love. "Ta" signifies 'the *tamoguna* that



includes qualities like modesty, bashfulness, fear, and patience. "Ra" signifies the *rajoguna* represented by such qualities as courage, sacrifice, and the adventurous spirit. Every being born in the world has only feminine qualities. Merely based on the physical form, a distinction is made between men and women. The three qualities in the term *stree* are to be found both in men and women.

### **Role of the mother**

The term *stree* should not be treated lightly. The *Bhagavad-Gita* [song of the Lord] lists seven attributes to the feminine principle—fame, wealth, speech, wisdom, intelligence, fortitude, and determination. The Mother principle, which embodies these seven potencies, is highly sacred. Wherever you turn, you will see manifestations of the feminine principle in nature. When any person goes abroad, the first question that is asked is: "What is your mother-tongue?" No one asks, "What is your father-tongue?" This shows how much importance is attached to the role of the mother. The mother fosters the child in the womb and goes through all travails to protect the child. There is no greater love in the world than maternal love. Hence the ancients accorded the highest honor to the mother and declared: "*Matru devo bhava*" (esteem the mother as Divine) and "*Pitru devo bhava*" (esteem the father as Divine). For every person the first preceptor is the mother. It is from the mother that a child learns its first words of speech, the first steps in movement, and many other primary lessons in behavior. Hence, the mother stands out as the reflected image of *prakriti* (nature).

### **Heroic women in Indian history**

Despite the evidence of recognition of the greatness of the feminine principle, women have been described as *abala* (the weaker vessel). This appellation is applied to women because of the secondary status accorded to women in the performance of *yagnas* (sacrifice) and other rituals, though participation together with men was permitted. Women could not perform sacrifices and rituals by themselves. Even charitable and religious acts could be performed by women only in association with their spouses.

Though the term *abala* is applied to women in this specific context alone, women are not weak at all in terms of strength or ability. We have innumerable examples of the strength displayed by women in the world. As against three potencies attributed to men, women are said to have seven potencies (according to the *Gita*).

Can you call as weak Savitri, who made the Lord of death restore to life her dead husband? Can Anasuya, who transformed the Divine Trinity -- Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva into three babies and played with them, be called an *abala* (weak woman)? Sumathee was a great lady who stopped the sun from rising because her husband was predestined to die the next morning. Could she be termed as *abala*? No. Was Draupadi, who bore with fortitude for 14 years all the ordeals her husbands went through, a weak woman? Can Sita, who shared with Rama all hardships of life in the forest and achieved ultimate victory, be called weak? Can Gargi, who could carry on the debate with the raja yogi Janaka—is a dauntless spirit—be called a weak woman?

There are any number of such heroic women in recorded history. Though physically women may appear weak, in reality they are full of strength. As the embodiment of the three *gunas*, women are endowed with exceptional strength. Even in the spiritual field women display their boundless capacity.

### **Gratitude to the mother**

It is in her role as mother that there is the highest expression of a woman's strength. Every child that is born owes its existence to the mother. Hence everyone should be extremely grateful to one's mother.

The mother is the symbol of the universal mother and father, the Divine Lord. There is a popular prayer in *Sanskrit* describing the Lord as everything:

*Oh Lord of Lords!  
You are my mother and father,  
My kinsman and friend,  
My wealth and knowledge,  
My everything.*

The mother is the first teacher of speech. The first words taught to the child are *Amma*, *Appa* (mother, father). Then the teaching of the alphabet starts. The first lessons are: "*Om Namah Shivaya*" or "*Om Namo Narayanaya*." The teaching of language begins with the teaching of names of the Divine—Shiva and Narayana. In ancient times, the mother occupied the place of the first preceptor for the child. Unfortunately, in the world today what are the parents teaching the child? They are teaching them: "A, B, C, D." Nor is that all. They go on to teach the child some meaningless stuff like: "Baa Baa black sheep!" (laughter) The mothers imagine that they are teaching something wonderful to the children. This is wrong. Teaching of the alphabet should begin with learning the names of the Lord.

### **Ancient mothers taught truth and righteousness**

This was the way the mothers in ancient Bharat taught their children. The ancient teachings exhorted the people to: "*Sathyam vada, Dharmam chara*"—Speak the truth, adhere to righteousness. No mother taught the child to speak untruth. No mother would think of asking the child to follow unrighteousness. Their sole desire was to see that their children secured happiness by leading worthy and meritorious lives. Hence, in the attitude toward parents the children should give the primary place to the mother.

Today, we need to promote such ideal mothers. This is all the more necessary because the modern trends are disturbing. The tendency (among the affluent families) is to entrust the child from birth to a nurse or an *ayah*. The child does not get the love of the mother. The child has no knowledge of what a mother means.

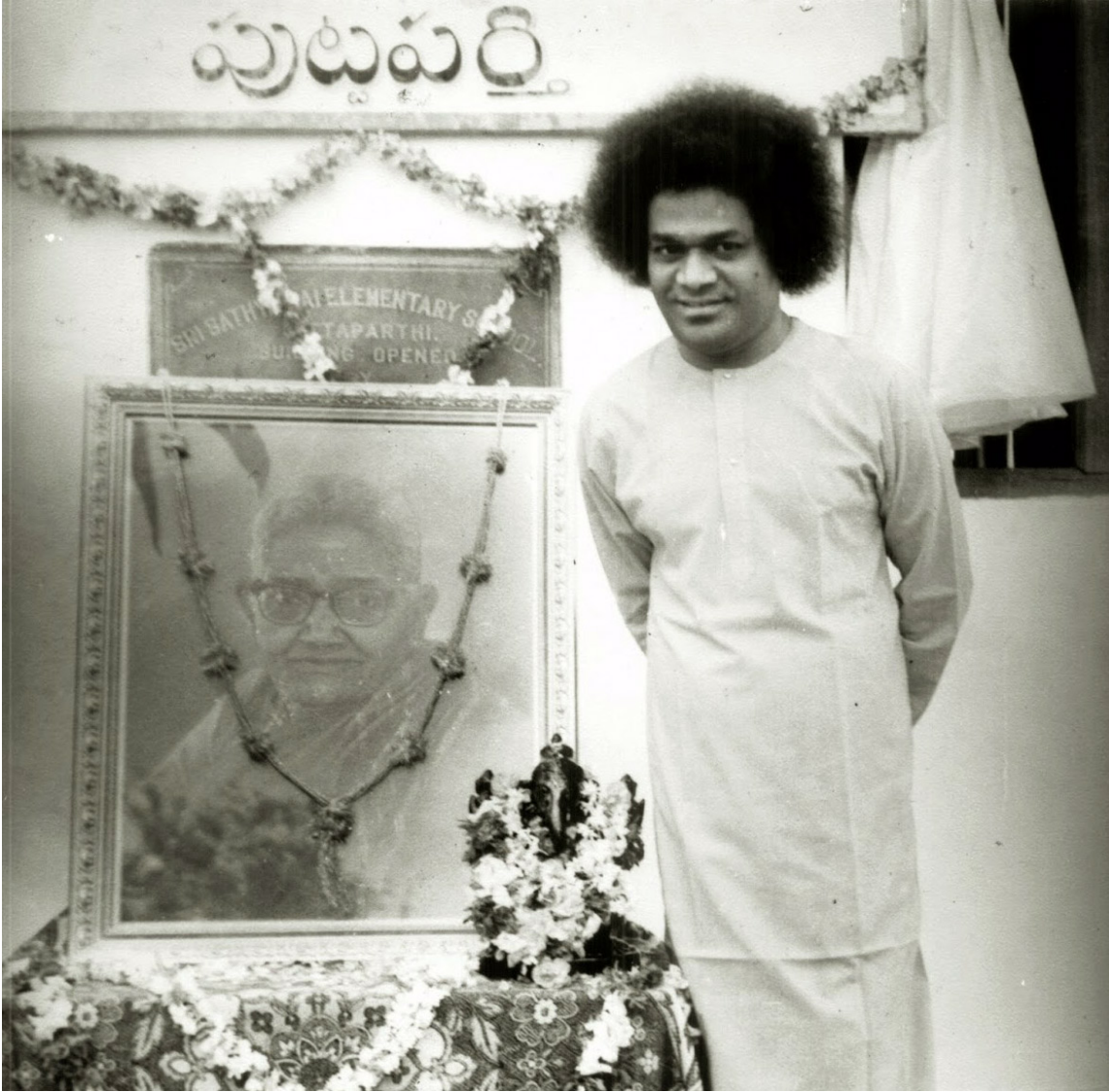
In ancient times, Queen Madhalasa was teaching the children from their infancy the greatness of *vairagya* (detachment). She used to sing a lullaby while putting the children to sleep:

*Placing you in the cradle of Omkara  
On the bed of the great saying "Tatt twam asi"*

*Swinging to the music of Awareness, dear child,  
May the Gods lull you to sleep!*

*The four Vedas are the four chains of the cradle.  
May your heart be filled with the nine forms of devotion.*

Because the mothers in ancient times filled the child with devotion and detachment, Bharat [India] stood out as a land of sacrifice, of wisdom, of yoga, and contentment. Because today mothers do not bring up the child in this spirit, this sacred land is ceasing to be one of sacrifice and is becoming a pleasure-loving nation. The pleasures are turning into breeders of disease. Sacrifice in ancient times made this country the *yogabhumi* (land of *yoga*). Our goal should be to become *yogis* [one who practices *yoga*], not *rogis* (victims of disease).





### **There may be bad sons, but bad mothers are rare**

Embodiments of divine love! You must be prepared to make even the supreme sacrifice for showing your gratitude to the mothers. Even the *avatars* [incarnations] Rama, Krishna, and others, owed their advent to their mothers. Everyone should pray for sacred mothers who will bring forth good children. There may be bad sons in the world, but bad mothers are rare. Most mothers today lament over the bad behavior of their children. No son who has caused distress to his mother can come to anything good. The *Telugu* saying is: "There can be no prosperity in a home where the mother sheds tears." Today we need sons who will please their mothers.

The mothers, for their part, should teach the children always to speak the truth. When a mother asks the son, "Where have you been?" he should not prevaricate. He must tell the truth and confess his mistakes if he has done anything wrong. Very few children tell the truth to their parents today. Of what use is education for such children?

Today's boys and girls are the future redeemers of the nation. Hence, the parents should bring them up on right lines so that they may be ideal citizens.

Women in various places observe what is called Ladies' Day. The day should not be observed only by making speeches or holding *bhajans* [holy songs], they should endeavor to help the poor and the destitute. Helpless women who have no means of livelihood should be taught some occupation like tailoring to enable them to earn an income. Slum dwellers should be helped to keep their huts clean. The environment also should be cleaned to help the children grow in a pure atmosphere. Proper housekeeping should also be taught to those people. Disease is caused mainly by unhygienic surroundings. Moreover, the air, the water, the mind, everything is polluted. This pollution is causing several new types of diseases.

### **Example of Vidyasagar**

In the past, mothers used to play a big part in molding their children. For instance, there is the example of Easwara Chandra Vidyasagar. He was a native of Calcutta. He justified his name by being a great scholar (*vidyasagar* means ocean of knowledge). He belonged to a very poor family. His mother brought up her son at the expense of her own food. Pursuing his studies under the most adverse circumstances, he completed his education and found a job on a salary of Rs. 50 per mensem. In due course, he rose to an eminent position by dint of hard work.

One day he approached his mother and said, "Mother, I have reached an eminent position thanks to your blessings and guidance. I am now able to fulfill any of your wishes." The mother said: "Not yet, my son. I have three desires, but I shall tell them in due course." Reaching a still higher position after some time, Easwara Chandra renewed his appeal to his mother. The mother said, "Our village is poor and the village has no school. Please set up a school here so that the children will not have to go outside for their education. That school will be an ornament for me." The son carried out her wish.

Later, the mother revealed her second wish. She wanted Easwara Chandra to set up a small hospital in the village to serve the villagers. She said this would be her second ornament she wanted from him. He set up a hospital as desired by his mother. In the following years, Vidyasagar rose to greater eminence, but remained as humble and free from conceit as ever. He asked his mother what her third desire was. She said that he should build a small rest house (*choultry*) for travelers passing through the village to stay. Vidyasagar built a small community hall in the village.

Today's educated persons get puffed up over their petty educational attainment. It was his mother's teachings that made Vidyasagar practice humility.

*Not penance, not rituals, not pilgrimages  
Are of any avail in crossing  
The ocean of human existence.  
Only service to the good  
Can take one across. (Sanskrit shloka)*

Service is most important; it helps to promote humility and to further the oneness of mankind. No room should be given for ostentation. True devotion is free from exhibitionism.

Children should recognize the supremacy of maternal love, which is equal to Divine love. Revere and love the mother. That is the meaning of Mother's Day. The parents are living symbols of God. Children must make them happy.

**Source:** *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. 29

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*The most direct method of achieving spiritual success is nishkama karma,  
action without any attention or attachment to the fruit therefrom,  
action as duty, action as dedication, and action as worship. ~Baba*

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## **The Birth of our Beloved**

Before *Kali Yuga* [Iron Age] started, sweet Lord Krishna oft proclaimed  
"To this Earth again will I be born, when it is steeped in shame".

And thus it was so written, 'pon the *Gita's* golden page  
"For the protection of the Righteous, I am born from age to age."

And then the world retreated deep—into *Maya's* cold embrace  
A handful cried to God Himself to assuage them with His Grace.

Thus in humble Puttaparthi, as the Lord destined it be  
A little one was coming to the Raju Family!

Unknowing Easwaramma, beautiful with child  
Had begged the gods for a son—the Lord Himself just smiled!

Midnight marked the holy advent of November twenty-third  
The pious family lay at rest; there was but naught a word!

SUDDENLY! *Tamboura's* [musical Instrument] drone ethereal with  
ecstatic joy of drum  
"Proclaimed out of their own accord: "The Lord Himself will come!"

Thus in the earliest morning, Easwaramma felt the pangs  
And the Greatest God began descent unto this lowly plane.

The mother partook of worship, water sanctified, and flowers  
And the village was chanting "Shiva! Shiva!" in these dawning hours!

The Sunrise was the Advent! The dawn of Humankind's dream  
The Divine and Glorious Babe was born, aglow with Light Supreme.

The blessed year-1926—thus our Precious Lord appeared  
Announcing once again to all! —"I am your Charioteer!"

A cobra, strange, 'neath Baby's Bed—mysteriously made it shake  
For mighty Vishnu rest again—as Seshasayi 'pon the snake!

God lay in His New Body, tiny head in halo'd cloud  
And measured lofty Powers with which He'd been endowed!

His smile captured all the Hearts of those who were so bless'd  
And wondrous realms of Divine Abode could this little face suggest!

'Sathyanarayana' was given as His Name  
Supreme Embodiment of Truth, Full-Grace Full *Sri*, Full Fame!

A celestial little laugh amidst a head of silken curls  
Dazzled Mother Earth and delighted all the worlds!

O, if we could have peered then—into those sparkling Lotus Eyes  
We would have wept with joy and cried—"He's come for us! Our Sai!"

Soon the air was softly filled with the breath of jasmine bloom  
Little Sathya radiated Bliss! And a God's Perfume!

Our Merciful little Gopal, now Sathya in this life  
Came to comfort the weary world for her human tears and strife.

The Lord's figure grew into a charming abode of Grace  
Today lakhs come to get the *Darshan* of His Blissful Face!

O, our Great Sai Baba—You've toiled here forty-four sweet years  
What merit have we won that You call all of us "My dears?"

Let us kiss Your Lotus Feet, O God, on this auspicious day  
Grant that there we'll e'er remain, to never go astray!

So on Your Glorious Birthday, Lord, may every heart rejoice  
JAI! We are all reborn! We've hearkened to Thy Voice!

~Mrs. Michael Shultz

**Source:** *Sanathana Sarathi*, Jan. 1971

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### Sri Jodi Adipalli Somappa

“Then, suddenly from among the crowd, an old man emerged. He shouted in a loud commanding voice, ‘Give the child to me’. There were two women and one man with him, who also pleaded, ‘Give the child to him, lady! He is famous as a curer of children’s diseases. He has saved many children from death.’ And, so, losing all fear, my wife handed over the child to him.”

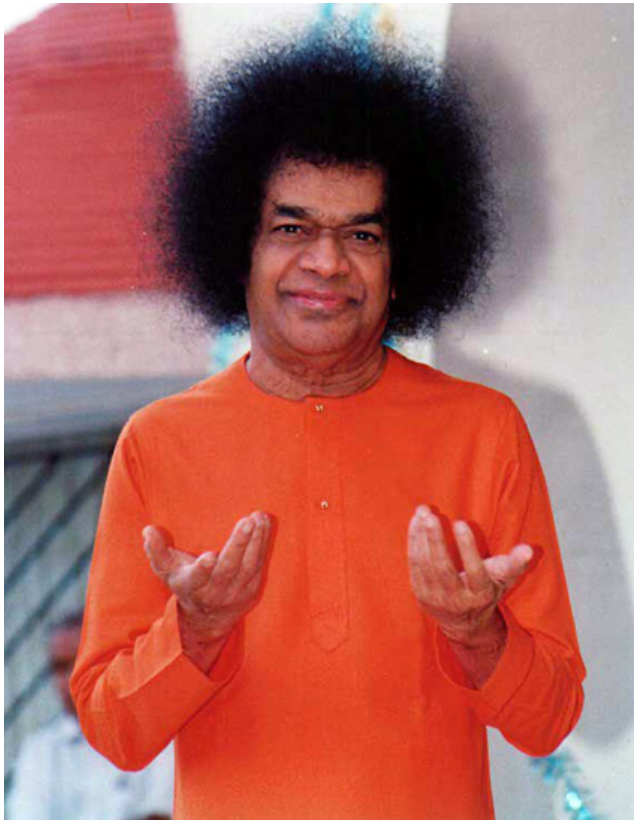
This is from a letter written by S. R. V on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1958. The incident happened on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1958. The ‘old man’ was no other than Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself. The two women and the man who accompanied Him were also creations of His grace and power, while He appeared in disguise in His mission of mercy! ...Let us now look a little closer at this strange story, this *leela* [play] of Bhagavan.

A devotee, S. R. V. from Bangalore, had come to Puttaparthi with his wife and child for the Birthday Festivities of Bhagavan, on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1958. He left Prasanthi Nilayam on the 25<sup>th</sup> at 12.45 p.m. taking leave of Baba and receiving from His hands the *Vibhuti* [sacred ash] that He gets by a mere wave of the Hand as well as a few oranges.

At 5:30 p.m. that evening, when some devotees gathered round Him at Prasanthi Nilayam, Baba told them a dramatic tale of ‘death’ and ‘rebirth!’ He said that S. R. V.’s



child, Geetha Sudha, called Sudha for short, had died on the way to Bangalore at 2:45 p.m., but He had left His body at Puttaparthi, hurried to the place, manifested Himself as an old man, and saved the child. His narration was full of details and very clear, and devotees who keep diaries of their experiences have recorded every word of it.



He said that the child was sleeping on the back seat; that a scratching sound was heard by the mother; that when she turned she was shocked to find the baby stiff and blue and practically lifeless; that the moving car was stopped; that the time was 2:45 p.m.; that the place was between Palasamudram and Bagepalli; that a huge crowd of villagers gathered on account of the wailing; that everyone was advising all kinds of remedies and cures; that a bus proceeding to Hindupur came on the scene, was stopped and added to the confusion; that as soon as the bus moved off, He appeared as an old man and demanded that the child be given over to Him, saying that He heard about the tragedy and had come running to the place; that He asked the party for a little *Vibhuti* because He was sure they had it; that

keeping the child on His lap, He showed it His real form, upon which the baby, as usual on all occasions when He took the child up in His hands, cried; that He pretended to go through some curative rituals and handed the baby to the overjoyed parents; that S. R. V. thanked Him profusely for His service; that he offered to pay Him a *rupee* [Indian currency], which He refused to accept; that he pressed upon Him an orange out of the five or six that He Himself had given him at noon while leaving Him at Puttaparthi, and that after invoking upon that fruit the calamity that had pursued the baby, He threw it away before reaching the Nilayam!

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of November, a long letter written by S. R. V detailing the entire incident was received at Puttaparthi and it was given over by Baba to be read by those who had heard Him describing the miracle three days earlier within a few hours of the 'death' and 're-birth.' What a surprise it was to read in the letter that the child was sleeping on the back seat (!) there was heard a scratching sound (!) that the body was stiff, that the child was breathless, that the villagers ran in from all directions, that there were suggestions galore, that the Hindupur bus was stopped at the scene (!) and then, the para quoted above! "Then, suddenly from among the crowd, an old man emerged ....."

The letter continued, “The old man placed the child on His lap and she began to cry (!) He also heated a copper wire and applied it to the brow. We thanked him much for saving the child and I asked him to accept at least a rupee as a reward (!). But despite our best efforts he refused to accept it. I then gave him an orange from among the ones which Baba had given us while leaving. He asked us to leave for Bangalore without worry and do *Arati* to our *Ishtadevata*—*Venkataramanaswami* as soon as we reached home. I asked him his name and he gave it as Jodi Adipalli Somappa.”

S. R. V. concluded his letter thus, “I am now certain that the Old Man was no other than Baba Himself. I also suspect that the three villagers who asked us very forcibly to give Sudha into His Hands were also ad hoc creations of His *leela*. My inference is that Baba must have gone on a ‘trance’ about 2:30 or 2:45 p.m. on the 25<sup>th</sup>.”

We who had heard Baba relate the whole thrilling story on the 25<sup>th</sup> evening itself have no doubt in our minds that Jodi Adipalli Somappa is no other than Baba Himself, Baba manifesting Himself 48 miles away to save the child!

Om Jodi Adipalli Somappaya Namah. . . Mysterious are the ways of the Lord. Words are of no avail if one desires to describe Him. The mind is too feeble an instrument to measure His glory... *aprapya manasa saha* [our mind is unable to conceive]!

~N. Kasturi

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, May 1959

# Q&A

WITH BHAGAVAN

## Ramayana Epic Characters Explained-II

*Bhakta*: Swami, the inner meaning of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* that You explained is really very interesting. If only one probes deeply, what else is there in them? That kind of *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* is taking place in every heart, through the action and interaction of *manas*, *chittam*, and *buddhi*. You said that the *Bhagavatam* is also occurring in the same manner. If you will kindly explain how that is happening, we can, after knowing its inner meaning also, start following the ‘subtle’ *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavatam*, all three. So please tell me about the *Bhagavatam*.

Swami: Well, the *Bhagavatam* is not like the other two; it has no qualities and no Form! It deals with the *atma* [soul] that is beyond and behind the qualities or *gunas*, senses or *indriyas*, the *manas* and the *chittam*; it deals with the powers and prowess

of the *atma* and its apparent activities or *leelas*. The *Bhagavatam* contains the stories of the Incarnations of that which is the Witness of everything.

*Bhakta*: What are the forms which that Witness assumed? Why did He assume those forms?

Swami: Really speaking, He is all forms—*Sarvaswarupee*. There is no limit to the number or nature of His forms. Still, if something must be said in conformity with what has happened, *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Maheshwara*, *Matsya*, *Kurma*, *Varaha*, *Vamana*, *Narasimha*, *Rama*, and *Krishna*, these are Its incarnations. In order to transect the creation, the preservation and the destruction of the world, and to punish the wicked and protect the good, He assumes Himself the form He deems as best at the time and for the purpose He has set before Himself. When that purpose is realized, He is as before, the Witness, the *atmarupa*.

*Bhakta*: Rama and Krishna also punished the wicked and protected the good, isn't it, Swami? Then how do you say that in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* there is the *Gunaswarupa*, while in the *Bhagavatam* there is no *Gunaswarupa*?

Swami: You see, *gunas* have a beginning and an end; the *atma* has neither. Rama and Krishna, too, have no qualities, essentially. They have demonstrated how being above *gunas* it is possible to keep all *gunas* under control. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* stories have an end, isn't it? In that sense, the *Bhagavatam* has no end. It speaks of the Lord who has no beginning or end. It tells of the forms that the Lord wore in the context of the age, the time, and the object. The other two on the hand, teach the correct policies to be followed in this false, evanescent world and urge men to follow *sathya*, *dharma*, *santhi*, and *prema*. Do you understand?

*Bhakta*: Then the *Bhagavatam* is of no practical use to us, so to say!

Swami: What! It is the *Bhagavatam* that is of most use to the *sadhakas*. It alone explains the real secret of the Lord, His real glory, and His real path! The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* endeavor to some extent to uplift the common man, the ordinary man, by moral teaching and example. They show how man can deserve the Lord's grace. But those who seek to know the nature of the *atma* and of *Paramatma* should study, more than anything else, the *Bhagavatam*.

*Bhakta*: Swami, what is the relation between *Bhagavanta*, *Bhagavata*, and the *bhakta*?

Swami: The relationship between the *Maharaja*, the *Yuvaraja*, and the *Kumararaja*! *Bhagavanta* or the Lord is the *Maharaja*, of course; the *Bhagavata* is second in rank because it has come from the Lord as a derivative, with the status of *Yuvaraja*; the *Kumararaja* is dependent on both these and so is the *bhakta*. The status of *Kumararaja* is not an ordinary one, he merits the position of the *Maharaja*. The rest are inferior to these three. Those who do not rise up to the status of *bhakta* or *Kumararaja* have no access to the Court of *Maharaja*.

*Bhakta*: Then, Swami, the *yogis*, the *jnanis*, the ascetics, do these not deserve that position?

Swami: Whoever he may be, without *bhakti* [devotion] and the love of the higher truth, how can anyone become a *Yogi*, or a *jnani* or an ascetic? They, too, have *bhakti* in an equal measure. Take Laddu, Jilebi, Mysore Pak and a number of other sweets. In each of them, as the common cause of sweetness there must be the one article - sugar, isn't it? How else can they be made? So also, in these three paths, the sweetness of the Lord's name or *bhakti* is an [essential] ingredient. Without it, the very names of these objects become absurd!

*Bhakta*: Another point, Swami! Can one approach the presence of the Lord only if he has faith in the Lord and only if with that faith he performs *japa* [taking the name of the Lord], *dhyana* [meditation], *bhajan* [singing devotional songs], and *puja* [prayer]? That is to say, is it not possible to attain that position through the path of truth, the path of *dharma* [righteousness], the path of *prema* [love], and the path of service to others?

Swami: Well, how can the qualities you mention originate without the fear of sin and the fear of God? Are these paths and the qualifications needed for them ordinary and common? No. They are the doors to the 'inner apartment' of the Lord. Those that follow those paths can easily reach the precincts of the Lord. Yet, there is a difference between relatives and friends! Those who develop only these qualities are friends; but those who practice them along with devotion to the name and form become relatives, that is the difference. The meditation on the name and the *rupa* (form) helps to strengthen the *gunas* [qualities] also. Without that foundation, the *gunas* cannot be strong and firm and pure. The Lord's name and the Lord's *rupa* remove the dross from the qualities of man.

*Bhakta*: But the *bhakta* and the man with good qualities both attain the same place, isn't it, Swami?

Swami: Certainly. The merely good man becomes a candidate who deserves the place; the good man who has *bhakti* [devotion] has a title to the place, he cannot be passed over.

*Bhakta*: Swami, there are many people who are active, doing various things under the slogan, "The Service of man is the Service of God"; do their deeds entitle them to the place?

Swami: Why do you ask so? Certainly, for those that do service with that attitude. But it is very hard to get that real feeling. Considering others as men, simply saying that 'serving them is to serve God', is not sincerity. The mind will then run in two channels. Grasp the glory of *Madhava* fully; understand that *Madhava* is in every *manava*; believe that service to *manava* or man is serving *Madhava* only; then your actions will

certainly entitle you to the place. What greater qualification is needed than that? Instead, if 'service' is done for name and honor and fame, and if there is a craving in the mind for the fruits of one's actions, then the statement, "Service to man is service to God" has no meaning, nor will one get the result expected.

*Bhakta*: It is very interesting, Swami! Speaking about the *Bhagavatam* evoked many holy ideas and morals today. So if one delves into it, what invaluable truths will emanate! I am, indeed, blessed this day.

Swami: Have you understood it all? *Bhagavatam* is the story of the beginning-less, the ending-less *atma*. It is in both forms, subtle and gross. It is subtler than the subtlest; grosser than the grossest. It has no limit or measure. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are *Ithihasas*—historical epics. The *Bhagavatam* is different; it is the description of the *atma*; it instructs in the path of *bhakti*. It can never end, nor has it ever a "Finis". This is the significance of the *Bhagavatam*.

**Source:** *Sandeha Nivarini*

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## Thought of the MONTH

### Suffering

There are five types of roots of sorrow (*kleshas*) that cause suffering to humans. These are: Ignorance (*avidya*), ego sense (*asmita*), desire (*raga*), hatred (*dwesha*), and fear of death (*abhinivesha*).

What is meant by *avidya*? 'Vid' means knowledge. Therefore, *avidya* signifies lack of knowledge. What is that lack of knowledge? It is not the lack of worldly knowledge. It is the lack of knowledge of one's divine nature. One considers oneself to be an ignorant mortal due to *avidya*. It is impossible for such a person to achieve peace. One who is in the grip of *avidya* leads a worldly life, identifying with the body and mind and lacking the wisdom to know that one is divine. Body attachment and attachment to the world cause immense suffering. All this is the result of *avidya*, which causes untold suffering to humans.

The second root of sorrow is ego sense (*asmita*). One is unable to recognize the root cause of this worldly life and all the suffering associated with it. One forgets that the mind is the root cause of all the suffering. As a result of this, one becomes a victim of ignorance and delusion. One is subjected to various types of sufferings because one is unable to control the mind, which causes all sufferings, sorrows, and difficulties. *Asmita* signifies the inability of man to understand the true nature of mind, which is the root cause of all suffering.



Desire (*raga*) is another root of sorrow that causes suffering. What is meant by *raga*? Here *raga* does not mean the tune of a song. To desire this, that, and everything signifies *raga*. When these desires become unlimited, *raga* becomes *roga* (disease). People undergo suffering because they are unable to control their desires. Therefore, one should try to control desires. That is why it is said, “Less luggage more comfort.” It is because of limitless desires that one loses stability of mind, gets deluded, forgets the true and eternal principle of divinity, and consequently undergoes enormous suffering. Therefore, first of all put a check on your desires. As long as you have limitless desires, you cannot have peace. You may have desires, but they should be under a certain limit.

Then comes the root of suffering called hatred (*dwesha klesha*). In times of difficulties, sufferings, and losses, one expects help from someone close. But if that person declines to help, one’s expectation turns into hatred.

Everyone knows that they have to die one day or the other. Yet, everyone wants to cling to life and nobody wants to die. This is due to sorrow of fear of death (*abhinivesha klesha*), which afflicts people. In this world, both good and bad cause suffering to people. All that is good does not necessarily give us happiness. Similarly, all that is bad does not always cause misery.

How does something good give us sorrow? Tulsidas gives an example of this. He said, “I offer my salutations to both good people and wicked ones.” You may say, there is some meaning in offering salutations to a good person, but what is the purpose in offering salutations to a wicked one? A wicked person causes suffering to you when you meet them. Similarly, a good person makes you sad when the good person leaves you. Therefore, Tulsidas offered his salutations to wicked people so that they would not come near him. Likewise, he offered his salutations to noble ones so that they would not go away from him.

Who can judge what is good and what is bad? Therefore, as the *Gita* teaches, “One should remain equal-minded in happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat (*Sukhadukhe samekruthwa labhalabhau jayajayau*).” Treat both happiness and sorrow with equanimity.

In order to attain peace, you should exercise equal mindedness. Do not consider someone as good and another as bad. See God in both. The same *atma* is present in both. That is the feeling of oneness and divinity (*ekatma bhava* and *Divyatma bhava*). Bodies are different, tendencies of mind are different, but divinity is one and the same in all.

**Source:** *Sri Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol 29 (1996)

## An Offering to the Divine Mother 2022

May 6th of each year is observed as Mother's Day. For this occasion, Sridevika Nair, age 7, submitted artwork in honor of the Divine Mother.



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