

## How Can We Satisfy God with Our Actions?

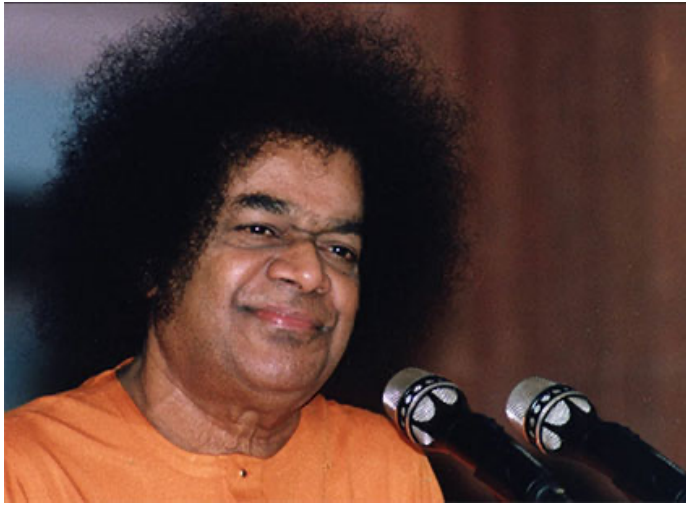
**W**hen Rama visited Shabari [an ascetic lady from the *Ramayana*], He told her, "I am hungry." She gave Him some berries that she found in the forest. The Lord went to everybody. He went to Emperor Bali and asked him for three footsteps of land. But He occupied all the three worlds. God keeps going to everybody and keeps asking. We have to give something when God asks us. Always try to attain the grace of God. Just give Him what He asks you for. That is your fortune. You should surrender yourself completely to God. That is what Emperor Bali did. Other people offered something to God, but Bali gave himself to God. That is why God sent him to the nether world. He attained great fame, name, and reputation. He merged himself with the Lord.

We have to offer ourselves completely to God. You do not have to get any materials. No gold, no diamonds. Give yourself to God that is enough. Then He manifests Himself there. Everybody speaks, but they cannot do it. That is why they are not enjoying bliss. They try to satisfy God with words, but not with action. When you satisfy God with your actions, there God manifests Himself. It is the mistake of people to think that God will manifest sometime later. Any moment, any minute, anytime, and anywhere He can manifest Himself. All the time you should contemplate on the name of God.

Many people ask questions, "If all the time we keep praying to God, then how can we do our jobs? How can we run our family?" Do not keep your mind on the job. Do your job. Think that this job also belongs to God. It is so easy. Think that all the actions that you do, you are doing them for God. Offer everything at His feet. Whatever I am doing I am doing it out of love for God. You need not give up anything. Go to examinations. Do not give up examinations. Even the examination is God's work. If you do that, easily you can attain God. But we say that I am eating food, this food is mine, and this is God's. You are dividing by saying that this is God's and this is mine. Because you divide, everything remains divided. Do not divide.

When you feel and say that everything is God, you can get great joy and peace. Today's men say everything, but they are not experiencing the unity of everything. When you experience the unity, you can understand Divinity. Since you are young boys, you must do work. You have to try to attain higher status. You have to serve the world. You must do jobs and other tasks as well. Think that all that you do is God's work. Then you will get the right reward. Do not think, "This is my work and

that is God's work." If you think so, then God will not give you the reward. Realize that everything is God's work.



*Gopikas* did the same thing. They would churn the milk. Early in the morning *Omkaram* time they would get up. They would put curd [yogurt] in the pot. They had lot of bangles on their hands. They were churning the curd, and all the time they were uttering Krishna's name. Uttering Krishna's name was like the *shruti*. The bangles became the rhythm, the churning was the pitch, and what they uttered

was the song. While churning the curd they were getting butter. Where did this butter come from? It came from the curds. But the butter that comes out of the curd does not merge back with the curd. Similarly, you have come out of God. You must go and merge with God. You remain separate like the butter. But you have come from God, just like the butter from the milk. If you understand this unity, you can experience it everywhere. Physically, mentally, and spiritually there is no difference.

Man has the three principles—*bhur*, *bhuvaha*, *suvaha*. What are these *bhur*, *bhuvaha*, and *suvaha*? '*Bhur*' means materialization. This body is nothing but materialization. The human body consists of 7 buckets of water, 1 bucket of lime, 1,200 iron pieces, 900 matchsticks. With all these materials man's body emerges. Then the second is that which moves, vibrates. That is life principle. That is vibration. '*bhuvaha*' is vibration. '*Suvaha*' is radiation; that is *prajnana* (consciousness). All the three exist in us. The body is with us, the vibration is with us, the radiation is also with us. We are the cause for all of this.

### **Master the mind and be a mastermind**

We think that we are weak. Thinking in this manner is a big mistake. We are not weak. There is nobody as powerful as a human being. But he is afraid. Man is afraid even of a small ailment. Why this fear? Why is man afraid? This is because man has committed many mistakes. Without a mistake there is no fear. You think that you are this body that is why you commit mistakes. We are not this body. Body, mind, senses, and intelligence are instruments. They are the instruments; we are the masters. Master the mind and become the mastermind. Be a mastermind. You are the master, become the master, then you can merge in everything. Students! It is not enough if you study books. Enquire into the activities of daily life and understand the truth. It is possible that children can become the teachers of the father. Wife can teach the husband. Without any sense of difference, Shuka, Vyasa's son became his father's teacher. He advised the father.

### **God first; world next**

Once the King Maharana came and told Meera to get away from the temple. She was wondering how she would be able to protect herself. Meera's contemporary was Tulsidas. He was on the Chitrakuta Mountain. She wrote a letter to Tulsidas through a messenger. What did she write? Husband is God for wife. We say that you should not hurt mother, father, teacher, and God. What can I do now? Husband asked me to go away from here. Shall I go away from here or stay here? Then Tulsidas replied, "It is wrong if you run away for the sake of world. There is no mistake if you run away for the sake of God."

Kaikeyi sent Rama, who was the very life of Bharata, to the forest. She wanted Bharata to be crowned the king. But Bharata said, "Rama is God for me. He is like my father. Kaikeyi has hurt Rama, who is Divine. Therefore, she is not my mother." Even if you refuse mother for the sake of God there is no mistake. You can disobey father for the sake of God. Not for other's sake. For the sake of God you can do anything.

Prahlada's father Hiranyakashyap told him not to utter the name of Narayana. But he said, "I can only utter the name of Narayana. Narayana is everything for me." He refused to obey his father. So his father tried to poison him. But nothing happened. He felt that everything is God. Bharata refused to obey his mother. Prahlada disobeyed the father.

Lord Vamana went to the emperor Bali. Bali's *guru* told him, "Do not think that this person is an ordinary person. God Himself has come here. Do not give promise to Him." Who was the *guru*? It was Shukracharya. Shukracharya told Bali, the Emperor not to give a word. Then Bali said, "There is no greater sin than breaking a promise. I have given the word. I will not break my word. I may disobey you, but I will not break my promise." He refused to obey his *guru*. Hence Tulsidas wrote to Meera, "If you refuse to obey your husband, there is nothing wrong. For the sake of God you can refuse him. It is not for the sake of property or house."

There is nothing wrong in disobeying others for the sake of God. In the world many things happen. You can do anything for God. There is nothing wrong. You recognize this principle. As long as you are in this world, as long as you don't realize that Divinity within you, respect your parents, respect the teacher. Look after the wife and children. It is our duty. They are the worldly duties. Once you have the Divine relationship, you need not care for anything else. Other things are small things. When you have the mountain of gold why do you look for gold and silver elsewhere? When you have the wish-fulfilling cow why do you want to purchase another cow? When you have the wish-fulfilling tree why do you go anywhere else? When you have God who gives you everything, why do you bother about other things? So put lot of effort to attain God.

**Source:** *Pathways to the Lord, Discourse 2, My Dear Students Volume 3;*  
Divine Discourse on March 19, 1998 at Trayee Brindavan

## **From Transformation to Happiness**

*This is an edited version of a talk given by at the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Metropolitan New York in March 2022. A lawyer from Costa Rica, he is the producer of the radio program, "Sathya Sai Baba: Love in Action", which broadcast 360 programs from 2007 to 2014. He has written over 1000 articles for various media on the Avatar and His message. Jose Cabezas has held various positions in the Sathya Sai Organization of Central America and the Caribbean.*

We have to understand that with the teachings of Sai Baba, the material plane takes on a higher spiritual value because Swami has an impressive characteristic: He is not the *Avatar* [Incarnation] who only teaches us to connect to the heavens and the kind of life that will come to us according to the result of our actions, or with our own inner being. He also teaches us to enrich life wherever we are. *In short, His teachings connect us with the heavens, with the earth, and with ourselves.*

Sai has all the answers that we may seek. When we listen to His speeches or His teachings in auditoriums where there are young and old, rich and poor, intellectuals and illiterate, men and women, not one person leaves without the conviction that that the message was for him or her.

For about 15 years, my office was in front of one of the largest churches in the center of the capital of my country, Costa Rica. I used to go there frequently to take a break. Day by day I saw people getting into the church with the sole reason of asking the Lord for a favor. This seemed normal to me until I met Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Little by little I became consumed with His teachings and learned that spirituality must be a constant way of life and not only a way to ask for help, which is not bad at all, but it is not the way to find that happiness that everyone needs and seeks and believes as the reason for living.

### **Truth and Service**

Baba tells us one of the most unquestionable truths, "If you look at me, I look at you." Looking at Him is nothing other than living as He teaches us, complying with His principles, seeing life as He teaches us to see, based on practicing service to others because serving others is serving God. *Hands that serve are holier than lips that pray*, He told us. That truth is something very new that no one had said so emphatically before.

*Truth is God.* One day I tried to find the seed of it and found that what Sai Baba wanted to tell us is not what we understand as truth. Baba says that what we can appreciate about objects is clouded by our materialism and by the meaning we give

to things. He says that if we walk through a dark place and see a hose on the floor, it could appear to us as a snake. The senses deceive us. Instead, God is what He is.

*Truth is God because the truth is what never changes.* When we say, "I am," we are also the essence and reality. If God is reality and essence and we are also reality and essence, understanding His most popular teaching, "You and I are one" tells us that we are part of Him. There is one difference, though: we haven't realized it, He did and hence affirmed it.



Let us focus on the concept of truth and the activity of *seva* or self-less service. The first places in us the clear and precise concept of God and who we are. The second complements us with other living and non-living beings in an absolute sense of unity—we are all one. We are one with creation. The more we focus, contemplate, and meditate on this truth, the more will be our interest to live in tune with that truth and more will be our passion to serve.

It is only then that we are flooded with a sensation or an experience that the Divine force is in us and at the same time we are in it. We can experience this by letting ourselves be led by the hand of our Lord Sai Baba. It is the beginning of a new life. But we will not achieve it if we only approach Him to ask and ask and ask. If we look at Baba, He looks at us. But looking at Him is beyond seeing. It is connecting with Him, which happens only by fulfilling His teachings, the prime one being 'Love All, Serve All.' Let us remember that He told us He does not need anything and that He is served by serving others. It is analogous to what Jesus said—that He was helped when we gave clothes and food to the helpless, and that every time we did so, we were doing it to Him.

### **Finding Baba when in need**

Many of us found Him during very difficult moments in our lives, financial, health, family, or social. Many of our problems are God's way of attracting us to Him and the longer we take to get closer, the more we delay their solution because Baba is always the solution. If we take one step toward Him, He takes ten toward us. He fulfilled that promise to all of us who tried. Moreover, He said, "Bring me your



recurring desires from your mind whenever they arise, your confusion, your fear, your longing, your anxiety, your inability to love the world, your hesitation to serve, your jealousy, all the shortcomings of your spiritual discipline.”

I came to Sai Baba because I was going through a very difficult material situation. I had built a commercial company in my country back in the early '90s, and in a few years it collapsed. In the midst of the anguish, I felt very scared. In addition [I was] ashamed to ask God for material help—somehow, I felt, due to my religious beliefs, that materialism led us to sin. When I saw the Cross of Christ, I felt



that it was almost my duty to crucify myself on it to follow our Lord Jesus Christ. *Sai Baba taught me that what I had to crucify is my ego.*

When I began to delve into Baba's teachings, I quickly realized that all that polytheism that I thought was the religion of India was not such and that the Western understanding was wrong. After all, what Hinduism presents us with as so many millions of gods, and what they call the "Hindu pantheon", is nothing more than the multifaceted representation of God.

Within the representations of God, I soon found Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and of abundance. I also realized that Lakshmi has her place amongst the many deities at Prasanthi Nilayam. I was thus enabled to think that God is also prosperity, and that if you access God you access that attribute.

Is our financial life an important factor for our happiness? According to David Myers, Professor of Psychology at Hope College, Michigan, in 1970 1 in 4 American college students said it was essential that they do well financially. In 2004, it was 3 out of 4. It could well be 4 out of 4 by now.

### **Spiritual wealth and happiness**

Happiness increases at the rate of income growth to a point where it is possible to attend to basic needs and experience a sense of control over one's life. However,

once a certain level of comfort is accessed, the income of a greater amount of money continues to obey the well-known law of diminishing returns. That is, you lose your appetite to earn *more* money.

In 1957, the US per capita income expressed in today's dollars was \$8,700 a year. It is currently a little over \$60,000. Here is the set of other indicators. The Americans now have twice the cars per person. They eat out two and a half times more. In the late 1950s, few Americans owned dishwashers, dryers, or air conditioners. Most Americans today do. On all accounts, the Americans have prospered a lot. But then, are they happier now?

They are not. The number of Americans who say they are "very happy" dropped from 35% in 1957 to 32% in 2010. The percentage must have gone down over the past decade. There are other key concerns as well. The divorce rate increased two or three times, teen suicide almost tripled, violent crime rate almost quadrupled, and depression is skyrocketing. These features of current life constitute a real negative of the materialism that characterizes our society.

Sai Baba shows us the path, which is the core point of my talk: the goal of life is not to reach material wealth first and later reach the spiritual, but the right thing to do is to reach spiritual wealth to achieve the material. To put the order in practice, Swami asks us for our *transformation*. Knowing Him via His life (His message), living His teachings, learning His lessons—these are the means to achieve *transformation* of our existence. It is the wake-up call that Baba gives us over and over again. Needless to say, one will face many uncertainties on the way; at such times, one should simply recall His statement—"Love my uncertainty."

Let's return to the theme of prosperity and wealth that we have been discussing. Let me now talk about Anthony de Mello, the Jesuit priest who reached a high degree of mysticism due to his residence in India and who, to the liking of some, combined Christian and Hindu beliefs with great success.

De Mello tells a fable that portrays well the concept of wealth that we want to have. A good man, living in a tent near Baghdad, suffered from many calamities arising from his poverty. One night he begged God with the greatest of strength to give him wealth and get him out of his anguish. God heard him and that same night spoke to him. He told the man to go to the city gates at dawn, and there, sitting on the floor and leaning against a wall he would find a monk. He would have to tell the monk that God Himself had sent him so that the monk would give him something that would help him make very rich and thus improve his life.

As soon as the sun appeared, our man in search of wealth took his horse and galloped toward the gates of Baghdad. There he found, like the voice had told him, a lonely and brooding monk sitting with his back against the wall. He approached him and said, "God sent me here. He told me that you would give me something that would make me rich." The monk raised his face and with a calm look, without asking anything at all, he took an object out of the pocket of his robe and gave it to the wealth seeker. When he saw it, he was stunned—it was a diamond of enormous size, whose value, without doubt, would make him a millionaire. He thanked the monk, took his horse, and returned to his tent.

He went to bed but could not fall asleep. An enormous restlessness stirred his spirit. When the sun rose again in the morning, he hurried back to take the horse and return to the place where the monk was. Arriving, he approached him in a hurry. He touched his shoulder to bring him out of his meditation and when he looked at him, our friend took out the huge diamond and handed it back to him. The monk immediately asked him, "Isn't this what you asked of me following God's instructions that would make you rich?" The man replied, "Well, no. I now understood what I need you to give me—it is the teaching to learn your detachment from your goods and fortunes."

Here is the gist of what one learns from this fable: The diamond does not cease to have value, but enjoyment and maintenance of the peace is worth more, whether we possess great wealth or not. As Swami told us often, "Less luggage, more comfort."

Here is what I say. Don't confuse success with happiness. The excess of goals achieved, the array of titles/positions received, the money accumulated, must not lead to loss of peace, lack of contact with families and neighbors, and so on. No success is worth it if it makes one less human.

Sai Baba says, "Without character, what is the use of wealth, strength, and friendship? They come and go like passing clouds."

The *Shandilya Upanishad* [Hindu text] reflects to us what perhaps we have never thought: that in what we do not see, or what is worse, in what we sometimes see and underestimate, there is neither more nor less than the creative force of the universe. In short, in ourselves lies the creative force for anything, even if we do not see it and do not realize that we possess it. So why doubt that we can continue this wonderful miracle of continuing to create?



## Practice these teachings

In conclusion, I shall try to project a summary from Sai Baba's teachings regarding finding happiness. He says, "The human being seeks joy in distant places and peace in silent places, but the source of joy is in his heart; the refuge of peace is within. Even if he walks on the moon, the human being must carry his fears, anxieties, prejudices, and aversions with him. Have faith in God and in the rightness of your moral life. Then you will have peace and happiness no matter what fortune throws at you."

*First:* Be one with God, seeing God in everyone.

*Second:* See pleasure and pain, joy and sadness, loss and gain as two sides of the same coin.

*Third:* Limit desires. Do not succumb to them; and do not allow greed to take over.

*Fourth:* Practice detachment

*Fifth:* Value peace over everything else.

*Sixth:* Always adhere to the truth. That gives strength.

*Seventh:* Develop harmony between what is said, what is done, and what is thought.

*Eighth:* Practice self-control.

*Ninth:* Practice human values.

*Tenth:* Be in the company of the good (Be in *satsang* at all times).

*Eleventh:* Let's not live in the past.

*Twelfth:* Communication must be with the transcendent.

Dear Sai Brothers and Sisters: I am blessed to be given this opportunity to speak with you today. *Sai Ram.*

~Jose Alberto Cabezas Davila

Translated from Spanish to English by Noelina Arciniegas

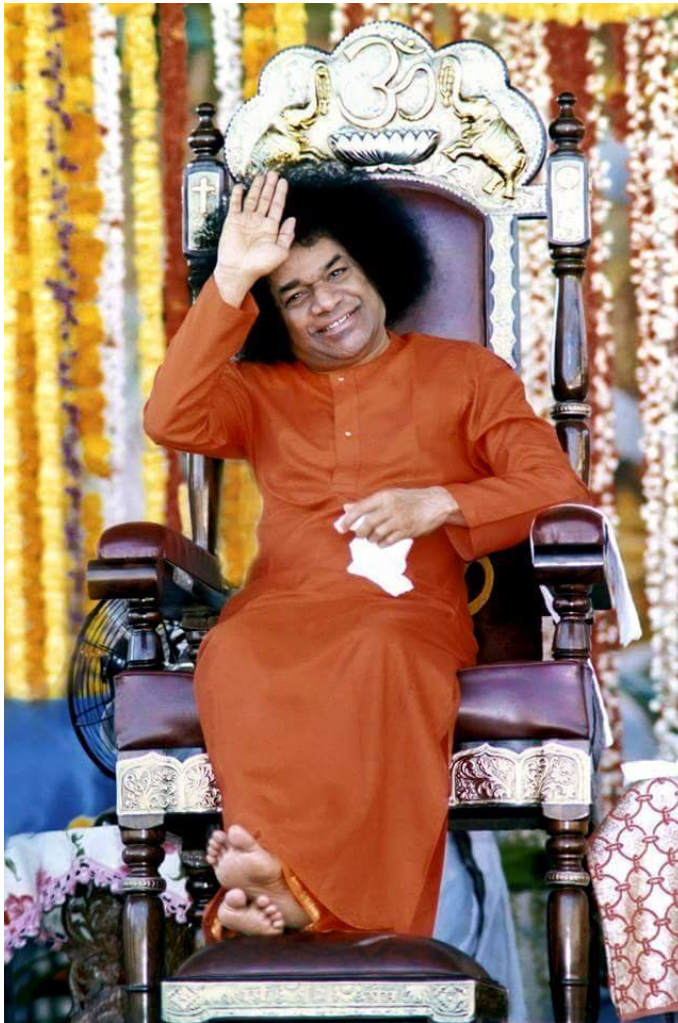
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"The best way to get rid of desire, anger, and hatred is to strike at the very taproot of the tree—the mistaken belief that you are the body, with this name and form, senses, intelligence, and mind. This is the luggage you are carrying. Don't you say, my nose, my book, my umbrella? Who is this 'I' that calls all these 'mine'? That is the real 'you'! It was present, when you were born, when you were sleeping forgetting everything else including your body and its afflictions. That 'I' cannot be harmed, it does not change, it knows no birth and death. Learn the discipline that makes you aware of this truth and you will be ever free and bold. This is true knowledge (*atmavidya*), which the preceptors and sages have gleaned for you. You too must, one day or the other learn this and save yourselves. All have to reach the goal, travelling along the path of wisdom."

- Divine Discourse, Feb 20, 1965.

## Sri Sathya Sai: Supreme Avatar

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I experienced the grace and exhilaration of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's *darshan* for the first time in early April 1972 at the house of my friend, the late Sohan Lal in New Delhi. It was a fleeting moment of recognition on my part of a unique personage of irresistible allure, all too apparently a living, moving human figure, mixing around with a small group of people present, talking and joking with them with the bonhomie of an old school pal, and yet someone not quite of this earth.

Despite the ease and informality of the occasion, there was an ethereal and unreachable quality to His presence. My feelings were a mix of curiosity, wonder, elation, and a sense of relief and comfort that comes from the end of a search or the realization of a long-cherished dream. These drew me some

three months later to the Sathya Sai Ashram at Puttaparthi on 1 July, 1972. [It was] a modest establishment comprising the bare hall of the *mandir* [temple], a few living quarters occupied by Baba's devotees, and three or four huts just outside the temple premises inhabited by old residents of the Parthi village. Baba was away at the time at Anantapur, but my journey was rewarded with a meeting with his most ardent devotee and biographer, Kasturi.

On Kasturi's advice, I motored down to Anantapur the following morning, to be blessed by Baba with my first gift of *Vibhuti* [sacred ash] materialized by a wave of the down-turned palm of His right hand and an hour-long uninterrupted private meeting in the course of which He spoke to me about the mystery that is death, the meaning and purpose of life, and of human love and human values. Incidentally, he also laid bare my past and in so doing charted a new direction for my future life. Those were moments of self-revelation and a deeply spiritual experience, a second birth for me in a very real sense. On that blessed day, 2 July 1972, the conviction dawned on me that Baba was not just an unusually wise, enlightened, and prescient human being, *guru* or saint, but an *Avatar* in the line of the Divine teachers of earlier epochs of the evolution of human civilization, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, and Christ.

Baba's grace is boundless, and on several occasions since that day I have had glimpses of His divine nature—the appearance of a bright halo around His head to remove the shadow of a lingering doubt, an epiphanic manifestation in a dream to provide solace or guidance in a difficult dilemma, a casually announced forecast of a coming event or sudden fulfillment of a long cherished but seemingly unrealizable wish or hope. His healing powers and cures of fatal maladies like cancer are well known. I have personally experienced His unseen but palpable protective intervention in dangerous accidents in which I was involved and in cases of critical illness, my own and of members of my immediate family.

I have experienced and known all this and much more since my first acquaintance with Baba 33 years ago, but I cannot honestly claim that I know Him or the magnitude of His being any better today than I did then. He is vast and mysterious as the universe, predictable only in His unfailing concern for the well-being of His devotees and His ceaseless work for human betterment, and the magnanimity of His love for one and all without distinction of high and low, of caste, creed, or religion.

Precisely because of the mystery He is, in the earlier years of my association with Him my mind was assailed by doubt, and now and then my devotion to Him faltered. But no longer does my mind entertain any doubt about the authenticity and plenitude of Sathya Sai's avatarhood. All this, I am sure, is a gift of His grace and love. In my personal conduct, I do still occasionally fall victim to anger, wrong-doing, and other human failings only to receive in abundance His corrective forgiveness and a gentle nudge toward greater self-knowledge. My faith and belief in Sathya Sai's Divinity has deepened and steadied over the years. It is Sai's most precious gift to an imperfect and erring devotee. He is truly a channel of grace, an unsurpassed guide to erring mortals.

All religions claim revelation of the truth through a messenger, messiah, or *Avatar*. These manifestations in human form of the great Divine remind us of our original connection with immortality. *Avataric* manifestations reveal to us glimpses of God's majesty and mystery, omniscience and omnipotence, and open before us visions of

the heights to which man can rise. God's descent as a man also serves to remind us of our original connection with Him and illumine our consciousness of that reality.

The Creator cannot be indifferent to the fate of man, the pride of His creation, or remain unconcerned with man's struggle with the flaws and failings of his nature, and his struggle against the forces of evil that destroy human values. God is immanent in His creation and, therefore, constantly involved with its advance toward perfection. The appearance of an *Avatar*, his life and work on earth, are timed to improve the prevailing world order by leading man on the path of perfection that culminates in knowledge of and eventual merger in the Absolute—the final goal of the cycle of births and deaths. This is at the core of Sathya Sai's teaching.

Lord Krishna says in the *Gita* [Song of the Lord] that whenever there is decline of righteousness (or virtuous living) and unrighteousness is on the rise, He incarnates Himself to protect the good and destroy the wicked and to re-establish righteousness. This implies that righteousness or virtuous life is man's divine inheritance at birth. What is virtue? And why does the purity we inherit become sullied, tarnished, or destroyed in the course of living? Plato, the Greek philosopher defines virtue as the composite of wisdom (which includes knowledge and discrimination), temperance, holiness, justice, moderation, and courage. He says that all these attributes are in the soul, but man falls prey to evil because he has been mastered by a desire for pleasure. He was echoing the perennial teaching of the *Gita*. In His discourses, Sathya Sai Baba also constantly reminds us of man's divine origin and his divine destiny, which he has to discover for himself through righteous living, through love for and service of fellow beings. Desires are a natural growth of the human heart, but for a life of virtue desires must be just and related to basic human needs. Sai advises devotees not to root out desire altogether but to put a ceiling of bare need, moderation, and discrimination on it.

God's entry into human history need not necessarily be for annihilation; His principal purpose is to redeem humanity and to give it life in fuller measure than before. Each *Avatar* defines his mission and the means to achieve the goal in the context of his time and the prevailing circumstances. The *Avatar's* role in Lord Buddha's words, is "to make a higher life known in all its purity and all its perfection", which he does by his personal example and through his revelatory teaching. In the epochs of Rama and Krishna destruction of demons and evil rulers was necessary. The *Avatar's* mission and method in today's world have to be different. As Sathya Sai explains, "Previous *Avatars* like Rama and Krishna had to destroy a few individuals who could be identified as enemies of the godly way of life and thus restore the *dharmic* [righteous] path. Today, however, wickedness has haunted so many that humanity itself stands under the threat of destruction. Therefore, in My present *Avatar*, I have come armed with the fullness of the power of formless God to correct mankind, raise human consciousness, and put people

back on the right path to divinity—the path of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, and Love.”

Sai’s love is without cause. It is His nature; nay, He is love. This is the power that attracts millions of men and women from all parts of the world to the *ashrams* at Prashanthi Nilayam and Brindavan for a mere glimpse of Him from afar, or for a glance, a word, or smile of recognition and sometimes the enriching experience of an unsought interview. Sai brings erring humanity in close intimacy to Him by His overpowering love so that men may learn from His perfect example as a human being and imbibe in their own daily conduct something of the sweetness of His manner and speech; His motherly sympathy and concern for our shortcomings and wants; His readiness to take on Himself the sufferings, disabilities, and ailments of those who love and adore Him; His compassion and calm resolve; His easy indifference to praise or blame; and His all-encompassing love. Sai is the messiah of the religion of love. He says that essentially there is only one religion, the religion of love, for “love flows as a stream through all the religions.” And by sowing the seeds of love in all hearts, He is uniting all mankind as one family. From love in the heart springs the desire for service of fellow beings—one reinforces the other.

Sathya Sai is Divine, but He is also human. Without this latter attribute we would not be able to communicate with Him nor understand His purpose, feel close to Him, and serve as intelligent instruments for the fulfillment of His vision. His humanity is the channel that enables us ordinary mortals to approach, appreciate, and have a glimpse of His reality. Sathya Sai has said that only those who have recognized His love and experienced that love can assert they have glimpsed His reality—for “The path of love is the royal road that leads mankind to Me!”

If love is Sai’s panacea for the world’s ills, service is the *mantra* [formula] for humanity’s redemption and rejuvenation. He says, “Love in action is service.” These two words—love and service—sum up Sathya Sai’s teaching of *yogic* action. Service inculcates the virtue of humility, curbs the ego, and is an antidote to selfishness. The *Gita* extols the virtue of service of the Lord. Krishna says, “He who serves me with unflinching devotion transcends the three modes (*gunas*) and attains fitness for becoming Brahman.” Sai extols service of humanity (*manav seva*) as higher than the devotional service of God (*Madhav seva*). He says, “Hands that serve are holier than lips that pray.”

His *Gram Seva* program, village water supply projects, free medicare in Super Specialty Hospitals, and model facilities of free school and university education have brought much needed sustenance, comfort, and care and the hope of a dignified life to millions of our forgotten people. These activities, vibrant living demonstration of Sai’s teaching about “Love in Action”, are noble examples that need to be followed by our governments in the states and at the Centre and by India’s burgeoning corporate sector for the uplift of our left-behind village folk.



Often, as I think of my Divine Master and His teachings and His works, three different images float into my vision and slowly merge into one single orange-robed figure: the images of the ascetic Shiva, of the radiant Prince Gautama, and the holy redeemer of humanity, Jesus Christ. Like Shiva, who drank the poisons of the oceans to secure nectar and immortality for the gods, Sathya Sai Baba is draining humanity of its poisons of self-conceit, intolerance, hatred, and strife, and in return, in true godlike fashion, giving it the ambrosial feed of love. He is the living embodiment of Buddha's compassion and calm resolve, and Christ's impassioned love for suffering humanity and of truth. Sathya Sai's teaching encompasses the teaching of these and other incarnations of the past. He is the Supreme Teacher of all time.

**Source:** *Sai Sparshan 2005* (80th Birthday Offering)

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## **The Difference Between Universal Love and Individual Love**

What is the way of practicing Swami's teachings? How can one get complete benefit of Swami's *darshan* (being in the presence of a holy being)? It is only through love. Love is God. Love is life. Life is awareness. Love is a challenge. Love is a dream. Love is a game. Love is everything. Love is life, so live in love. Love is said to be universal, but it is the mind that is the basis for this. *Mano moolam idam jagat*—Mind is the basis for this creation. The mind is the whole world. When there is no mind, you don't see anything in the universe.

Therefore, the mind pervades everything in this universe. The individual mind and the universal mind are one and the same. Because of the individual mind, we say 'You and I.' It is this same mind that is all expansive. There is nothing like the universal mind. There is no difference in the brilliance (*chaitanya*) of the individual and the universal mind. *Chaitanya* is *chaitanya* only. What is the shape of water? It has no definite shape. If you pour it into a glass, it will take the form of the glass. If you pour it into a jug, it will assume the form of the jug and so on. Similarly, when the mind is in the body, it will assume the form of the body. Depending on the nature of the mind, things change. So, it is all love.

Love is a Challenge - Meet it  
Love is a Game - Play it  
Love is a Dream - Realize it  
Love is Life - Live it  
Life is Love - Enjoy it

Without love, there is nothing. However, because we compare worldly love with Divine love, it assumes several forms. Worldly love is filled with attachment. You say, "She is my daughter and so I love her. He is my son and so I love him. She is my wife and so I love her. She is my mother and so I love her." But all this love is filled

with worldly attachment. However, love is one. You may prepare 'Athirasa' (a sweet) with some rice flour. You may prepare 'Rava Laddu' with wheat flour and 'Kesari' from some other powder (other sweets). The delicacies may be different, but the sugar in them is one. In the same way, love is one. There is no distinction between individual love and universal love. Individual love gets transformed into universal love. How does this happen? Individual love by itself has limits. You blow a balloon, for instance, and tie it up at one end. There is air inside the balloon and outside. The air outside is the universal air. If you continue blowing the balloon it will burst, and when this happens the air inside and the air outside become one. So, too, individual love merges with the universal love. As long as you bind it, it remains individual love. The moment the bondage bursts, it transforms into universal love. So, individual love and universal love are one and the same. Merger of the individual love with the universal love is called *moksha* (liberation).



What is *maya* [illusion]? There are three attributes—*rajas*, *tamas*, and *satva*. Once we get away from these attributes, we will be free from illusion. The whole world is born out of attachment (*moha*). When we are away from this *moha* or attachment, it naturally amounts to *moksha* or liberation. We are born with attachment. When this attachment is cut asunder, it leads to *moksha* or 'moha' plus 'kshaya'. Individual love is bondage whereas universal love is liberation. The feeling of 'I' and 'mine' is individual love. When you move from 'I' to 'we', it becomes universal love. The former is contraction of love, while the latter is expansion. Even in the case of truth, there are Absolute truth (*satyam*) and transcendental truth. Brahma is the Absolute truth (*Brahma*

*satyam*). The truth that changes is the transcendental truth. *Prajna* is conscience, not radiation. The radiation is one endowed with power.

Comprehensive wisdom (*paripurna jnana*) is the conscience. That is *chit*. It is the full knowledge.

### **What is *karma*?**

*Karma* in English is called action. *Karma* is not merely what is done with the hands and legs; whatever is done with the mind is also *karma*. Blood circulation is *karma*; pumping of blood by the heart is *karma*; the movement of the eyelids is also *karma*. So everything is *karma*. Digestion, breathing, and all the involuntary actions performed by the body are *karma*. English pronunciation is as such very funny. It has no rules and regulations. 'Put' and 'But' are pronounced differently even though they have the same spelling, but for the first letter.

*Karma* has two aspects to it—one is that which is done in the past lives, and the other is the one that we are doing currently in this birth at this point of time. But if we see it from the spiritual point of view, *karma* is *karma* and not action. The word '*karma*' has its genesis from the root word '*krut*' that also means '*kriya*' but cannot be translated as actions or deeds. Swami had once given this example that just as a patient (*rogi*) is given some painkiller to free him from the sense of pain due to the disease (*roga*), in the same way the grace of God is necessary for giving one the strength to bear the burden of one's own *karma*. Though westerners are new to these concepts of *karma*, they try to give their equivalent meaning by translating it as 'action'—that does not give the full meaning that the word '*karma*' gives.

**The role of students in society** If you take a loan and spend it lavishly without being able to pay it, then it is bad. We should place the welfare of the country before ourselves. Once a devotee got down from his car and he found three beggars each on either side of car. He gave them one rupee each. They said, "Sir, we won't get even one *Roti* [bread] for this money. We won't get any *Vaddi* (interest) also for this." Even beggars have some shame and self-respect. But today there are union leaders who take away money from the workers in the name of saving group money! Today there are no students, doctors, or lawyers who work for the welfare of the country. During General Elections, the students close down the college and go to the roads voicing their opinions for various political parties. The students take *lakhs* (of Rupees) as loan for their education, but waste that money without focusing on their studies. Are students supposed to be like this? No. Students should be like the protection pillars for the country.

### **Importance of chanting the food prayer**

Three things must be clean—*patra shuddhi*, *paaka shuddhi*, and *padartha shuddhi*. The material brought for cooking may be purchased through different means. It is possible that the food obtained may be stolen from somewhere or purchased through wrong means. The person who is cooking may be cooking with bad thoughts and feelings. It is not possible for us to purify all these. But when the cooked food is offered to God, it becomes *prasadam* [consecrated food]. And this *prasadam* will not have any defects whatsoever. After chanting *Brahmhaarpanam*, the God within (*Vaishwanara*) responds by digesting the four forms of food and supplying it to all the parts of the body. You may ask, "Where is God?" The answer comes from within, "Oh, mad man! I am present in your stomach as the *Vaishwanara*. I am the *Vaishwanara* in you. I am present in all bodies. I digest the four forms of food." What are the four forms of food? The four forms of food are the food that has to be chewed, the food that must be sipped, the food that must be swallowed, and that which must be tasted (like pickle). So I am the One who digests all these four forms of food.

**Source:** Discourse 16, My Dear Students Volume 4;  
Divine Discourse delivered on April 1993 at Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal

# Q&A

WITH BHAGAVAN

## Swami Explains the Mind-1

**Hislop:** This car in which we are driving has certain natural factors that are neither good nor bad. If moving, it has speed and momentum. In like fashion, what are the natural powers of the mind?

**Sai:** The mind does not have any powers. The only power is *atma shakti*, the power of the *atma*. Actually, the mind does not exist. There is no mind. The moon is lit by the sun. What we see is the reflected light of the sun. What we take to be the mind is the reflected light of the *atma* shining on the heart. Really, there is only the heart. The reflected light is taken to be the mind, but that is just a way of looking at it, a concept. There is just the sun and the moon. (The reflected light is not a third object.) In another way, the mind cannot be compared to a car. A car has form. The mind has no form, for the mind has no existence of its own. The mind can be said to be woven of desires. The *atma* shines on the heart, whether the heart be pure or impure. If the heart is purified and if the strongest desire is for God, that is best.

**Hislop:** My mind and intelligence are in operation at this very moment, regardless of the subtlety or coarseness of quality. Baba says that the only power is the *atma* power. So why do I not see as *atma* that which is in operation through the mind-intelligence complex at this very moment?

**Sai:** The *atma* in its purity will be seen when the hindrances to clear vision are removed by spiritual practice, by *sadhana*. Real *sadhana* is not just sitting in meditation. Meditation is constant inner enquiry as to who am 'I,' what is loving, and what is harsh. Meditation is thinking about spiritual principles, searching out the application to oneself of what Baba says, and so on.

**Hislop:** I have a conviction so strong that it is into the marrow of my bones that life is One, and that other beings and myself are One. The *atma* is that One, and it is fully here at this moment, and I am constantly engaged in *sadhana*. So the question remains, 'Why do I not actually experience that unity as no other than myself?'

**Sai:** Your conviction of unity is an idea, a thought. It is not experienced. For instance, your wife has a chest pain. Do you have the chest pain? If not, where is the unity? The unity of life must be experienced—not an idea or thought without experience.

**Hislop:** Now, Swami has to say something about experience! If *sadhana* and conviction do not bring that unity as real experience, then how is one to get it?

**Sai:** With steady *sadhana*; no special effort is needed to try and get the experience of One. Just as with ourselves in this car. We need only concern ourselves with the careful driving of the car, and in due course we will arrive at Anantapur. With

correct and steady *sadhana*, in due course the actual experience of One will naturally come about.

**Hislop:** Swami, it is not possible to tell death to wait for a convenient time. In respect to death, in what state should the mind be?

**Sai:** That we feel that only oneself will not die is the greatest wonder. Flowers bloom and give perfume before dropping. Whereas man, when his end is approaching, has only a long face. He should be like the flower and do something good and bright when dying. There are two things to remember: Death and God. And there are two things to forget: any harm done to us by others and any good we may have done to others. For to hold these two would be to reach for future results, and there will be future consequences if these are held in the mind. Whatever we think, or put in mind, we experience the reaction. Of course, death should be held in the mind always, for then much good action will result and much harmful action will be avoided.

**Hislop:** The mind is said to be dangerous. What does that mean?

**Sai:** It is the same mind that can liberate or enslave. The mind is like a snake with long poison fangs. When the poison is removed from those fangs, then the danger is removed. In like fashion, when desire disappears the danger of the mind disappears.

**Hislop:** But it is always said that all troubles arise from the mind?

**Sai:** From desires!

**Hislop:** Then one should control one's thoughts?

**Sai:** Thoughts and desires are not the same. There are many thoughts that are not desires. If thoughts go too deeply into objects, desires arise. If there is a desire, there was a thought. But not all thoughts are desires. Dark clouds bring rain, but there can be clouds without rain. God's grace is in drops like rain. They accumulate and then there is a torrent. If there is a very strong desire for God, even bad thoughts just pass through the mind and are not held. Desire directed to God brings discrimination. Intelligence, which is discrimination, is not the mind, nor is it thoughts. Intelligence is a direct *atma shakti*, a direct force of the *atma*.

**A Visitor:** How is one to handle bad thoughts arising from envy, hatred, laziness?

**Sai:** There is no use resisting or fighting thoughts. If suppressed, they are always ready to spring forth at weak moments—like snakes in a basket. If the cover gets loose or is removed, the snakes spring forth. The way to overcome bad thoughts and impulses is by having thoughts of serving the Lord, good conversation with wise people, good actions, and words. The weight of good acts and thoughts will bury the



seeds of bad actions and thoughts. Both good and bad thoughts and impulses are like seeds in the mind. If buried too deeply in the earth, seeds rot and waste away. Good thoughts and deeds bury bad seeds so deeply that they rot and pass away and are no longer ready to spring forth.

**Hislop:** Swami, when thoughts are troublesome, I say, 'Thy mind, Swami; it is not mine,' and that particular thought stream stops.

**Sai:** That is right. At that moment there is no ego. That is the easy path.

[To be continued]

**Source:** *Conversations with Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

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## Thought of the MONTH

### Self-inquiry—The task to be engaged in

Man does not delve deep into the significance of all that happens around him. Siddhartha, who became the Buddha, had that urge to know and inquire. Most people live superficial lives. They are like logs of wood tossed up and down by the waves of the sea, insensitive, dull, *tamasic*. Haste lands them in waste; waste increases worry. They have no time to sit and meditate on the reality of their own existence, their own knowledge, and their own joy. If that is done, they can contact the source of all existence, all knowledge, and all bliss. They don't take even the first step toward their self-inquiry. How then can they derive self-satisfaction at their vastness, indestructibility, infinite power, and wisdom?

*Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 13*

Only humanity has the capacity, the credentials for realizing the power of the Lord, for earning that power (*shakti*). It is indeed tragic that even after achieving human birth, people do not realize that eternal reality or even make an attempt to understand it. If this chance is missed, when can they attempt it?

Why, they do not concern themselves with the very purpose for which they have come! Did they come only for living like all other animals, birds, or insects, eating, wandering about, sleeping, and seeking pleasure? If the answer is "no," then for what else? Can we say that a person is just another animal, like the rest? People have three things that animals don't have: the power to reason, the power to renounce, and the power to decide on right and wrong. These are special powers; but of what

use are they unless they are applied in actual practice? If they are used, the name “human” is apt, otherwise, the name “animal” must be used.

The three powers mentioned above should be applied by people not only in worldly matters but even in the investigation of the ultimate truth. Really speaking, if inquiry, discrimination, and renunciation are carried out while passing through the joys and sorrows of life, the conviction is bound to dawn in a moment that all this is unreal, that all this has no basis in truth. When such knowledge dawns, one is certain to tread the path of religion and spiritual discipline and take up the inquiry that will lead to the truth. This is the task in which people must be engaged.

...Hence, people are truly fortunate. But alas, people have forgotten the task for which they have come, ignored the question whence they came, closed their eyes to where they are, diverted their intelligence toward amusement and creature comfort, and wasted all their powers. What a tragedy! If in this most propitious human birth itself the Godhead is not sought, when else is a person to succeed?

*Prashanti Vahini*

The expression is simple, of course, but its implications are infinite and fundamentally satisfying. Therefore, all great teachers exhort the seekers to “Know Thyself”, “Inquire into yourself, since that alone can give you release.” The scriptures also confirm this exhortation. “That which when known everything becomes known (*Yad vijnanena sarvam vijnatham bhavati*).” The scriptures extol the importance and value of this inquiry and make it clear that inquiry into the *atma* is essential. The assurance is given that the *atma* is you, yourself, as in the sacred axiom—“That thou art (*That twam asi*).”

*Sri Sathya Sai Vahini*

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