

The Voice of the Ocean

In 1969 Bhagavan spoke Guru Poornima Day. He said that each body that you see before you is a mirror in which, if only you open your eyes, you can see the image of God. The God in you is in each one of them, too.

The seeker has to be very vigilant about his point of view, the things he seeks to visualize, the things he longs to cast his eyes on. For, it is *drishti* (the view) that decides attachment, sorrow, passion, etc. You are the noblest being yet created, and so, you must develop a sight that sees no high or low, that sees all as suffused with divinity, and therefore, not different one from another. Shankara [Indian philosopher] declared, "Make your *drishti* charged with *jnana*; then, the seen will appear in its true light as *Brahman*."

Such sight is called divine, supernatural, super-sensual, and auspicious. Each body that you see before you is a mirror in which if only you open your eyes you can see the image of God. The God in you is in each one of them, too. Do not imagine the others to be distinct; they are only you, in so many mirrors. The world is filled with your kith and kin; all are sparks from the same flame. The *Gita* [The



Song of the Lord] says, "*Pundits* (the learned) see *Brahman* in the scholar, the sage, the venerable and the venerator, the cow, the elephant, the dog, and the eater of canine flesh." Such *Pundits* are very rare on the face of the earth; men claim to be *Pundits* on the basis of the scholarship they parade, not the vision they have won.

Some *Pundits* explain the *Gita* verse, which declares that God incarnates when *dharma* (virtue) declines, in this way: "*Dharma* stood on four legs in the *Kritha* (golden or fulfilled) Age; it had only three in the next age, the *Tretha*, (three legged) later, in the *Dwapara* (twin based) Age, it stood precariously on two and now in the *Kali* (iron or harsh) Age, it has only one leg to stand on!" They say also in the same breath, that God incarnated as Rama in the *Tretha* Age, and as Krishna in the

Dwapara Age, with the avowed purpose of restoring *dharma*! According to them, when Krishna incarnated *dharma* had two legs, but, when His human career was closed, *dharma* lost one more leg and had to survive in agony, having only one solitary leg. Can such absurdity be ever believed? No. The incarnations of God have always fulfilled their tasks. *Dharma* has always been restored, in full.

Truth is the lamp that dispels darkness

What they re-established on firm foundations is *sathya* (truth). For, as the *Vedas* (sacred scriptures) announce, there is no *dharma* higher than truth. Truth gets hidden, appears distorted, is declared as failing, so, the *Avatar* (Divine incarnation) asserts its validity and value, once again. God wears truth; the good seek truth; the bad are rescued by truth. Truth liberates; Truth is power; Truth is freedom. It is the lamp that illumines the heart and dispels doubt and darkness. The effulgence of God is truth. Welcome God in your heart. Install Him there as a result of yearning. Be always concerned with *Brahman*; then, you are entitled to be known as a *Brahmin*; if you are concerned with the skin and all that it contains, that entitles you only to be known as a *Chandala*, who works on leather and skin!

There was Kanaka, born in a low caste. He was an ardent devotee, yearning in unbearable anguish to see Krishna. So, he went to Udipi, where there is a famous Krishna Temple, established by the great sage, Madhvacharya himself being of low birth, he could not enter the temple and see the charming idol of Krishna. He stood before the outer door, but the idol was hidden by the flag-post in front of the shrine. He went round the outer wall and sought some crevice amidst the stones through which he could earn a faint glimpse. He saw a stone was loose: with his fingers, he scooped out the mortar and he made a narrow chink, and when he looked eagerly through it, he saw only the back of the idol. But he was overcome with delight! He danced in ecstasy, singing the glory of Krishna. Just at the moment, the idol turned toward him and Krishna granted him the full vision of His charm and majesty. Yearning was rewarded with grace. Yearning leads to surrender, and surrender gives the highest joy. Leave everything to His will; accept whatever happens, whether pleasant or painful.

Have firm faith in God and His compassion

There was once a rich merchant in Baghdad, who was leading a virtuous God-fearing life. He had a daughter whom he adored greatly, for she was the very embodiment of virtue. The father decided that he would marry her only to a young man who was intimately devoted to God, regardless of any other excellence or handicap. He searched for such a groom in caravanserais, mosques, and places where holy persons were likely to gather. One Friday, he noticed in the mosque a fair young man, on his knees, even after all else had left, crying out to God most endearingly and with great sincerity. He approached him and asked whether he would marry his daughter. He said, "I am the Poorest of the poor; I have a leaky roof over my head, and a gravel floor whereon I sit. Who will wed such a beggar? I shall marry someone who would not object to my spiritual *sadhana*, consents to share my poverty."

The merchant felt that he was the most eligible groom, and the wedding was celebrated soon. His daughter came to the *fakir's* (mendicant's) residence and started cleaning the floor. She was happy that her husband was of her own heart; she too was pilgrim on the road to God, a practitioner of spiritual exercises. While sweeping the floor, she found in a corner a plate with a piece of bread on it. She asked her husband why it was kept there, and he replied, "I kept it by, lest tomorrow when I go on my rounds, we may not get enough to eat." At this, the wife replied, "I am ashamed of you. You have so little faith in Allah. He who gives us hunger, will He not give us bread too? I shall not live with a person of this nature. You have no faith in God and His compassion." After saying this she left the *fakir* to himself.

Live without being inimical to any being

The *Gita* says that if you give up all *dharma* and take refuge in Him alone, then He will save you from sin and wipe your tears. Giving up *dharma* does not mean that you can bid farewell to virtue and righteous action; it means, you have to give up the egoism that you are the 'doer,' be confirmed in the faith that He is the 'doer' of every deed. That is the genuine giving up. There are in the world *Bhojanalayas* (hotels), *Vaidyalayas* (Hospitals), *Vilasalayas* (Homes of Entertainment, Theatres), *Viharalayas* (Places of sport, gymkhanas), *Vichitralayas* (Museums, Palaces of Art, etc.), etc. But however, they are named, they are all *Dukhalayas* (Homes of Sorrow). The only *Anandanilaya* (Home of joy) is the *Devalaya* (Temple of God), that is to say, one's own body where God is the inner guide and guardian.

On this *Guru Poornima* Day, the counsel that I can give you is: Do not hate anyone, follow the *Gita* prescription to spiritual health, *Adwestaa Sarva bhoothaanaam* (without being inimical to any being.) The reason for this injunction is that God is the inner *atma* [soul] in everything that exists. So, injury inflicted on any being is sacrilege, self-injury. Love is transformed into poison if hate contaminates it. Love some, but do not hate the rest, for that hate will foul the love and make it mortal. Love comes automatically to the realized soul; but the spiritual aspirant has to cultivate it by means of service and inquiry into the unity of the *atman*. Love must flow not from the tongue, or from the head only, but chiefly from the heart.

Poor progress in *sadhana* is as bad as failure

You get the marks that your answers at the examination deserve, not more, not less. Sometimes, if you secure only 5 or 6 out of a total of 100, even the 5 or 6 may be cancelled and you will be assigned just a zero. For, there is not much to choose between zero and the 5 or 6 you were able to collect. But, if you get a number very near the minimum needed for a pass, the 2 or 3 that you fall short of will be added on as grace marks and you are very likely to be promoted. This is true of *sadhana* [spiritual practice] also. Poor progress in it is as bad as failure, whereas good progress will be appreciated, and grace will pull you through.

On the *Guru Poornima* Day, people generally take initiation into spiritual life from some preceptor or get directions for some vow or fast or vigil. These preceptors cannot claim the status of the *guru* as delineated in the *shloka*, *Guru Brahma*, *Guru*

Vishnu, Guru Devo Maheswarah; Guru sakshaat Parabrahma, etc. The *guru* extolled therein is the sage who has transcended name and form and is beyond the effect of the three *gunas* or attributes; he is neither good nor bad; neither passionate nor dull; neither enthusiastic nor uninterested. He is unaffected, calm, and content. He is the *atma*, having realized that the *atma* is the one and only. He makes you cast off the fear of death and birth, he renders you fit for the vision of the eternal absolute truth.

Only dedication will take the prayers to God

If you do not come across such preceptors, do not get downhearted, pray for guidance and from your own heart you will receive the *Gita* that you need from the 'Charioteer' who is there. You can easily get many preceptors, the moment you seek; it has now become a profession, full of competing practitioners, each one trying to collect as many disciples, as much money, and as wide a reputation as he can. There are some who have developed swollen heads, while others suffer from short sight or bitterness or itching palm. How can persons challenging each other for dry disputations be revered as *gurus*? When they do not possess, along with the elation of scholarship, the ecstasy of Divine experience, they are not entitled to that holy mission.

However superfine the paper, however artistic the envelope, however poetic the composition of the letter, it will not reach the addressee by post when it lacks the 20 paise stamp! So too, the trappings, vestures, shawls, robes, and rosaries are ineffective; they cannot reach the addressee, God. What will take their prayers to the addressee is the 20 paise stamp—dedication or *bhakti*.

He who seeks a *guru* can find him in every word spoken within his hearing, in every incident that happens around him. The Deity, Dakshinamurthy (primal divine teacher of eternal spiritual wisdom) was walking along wide seashore alone, immersed in deep meditation. He turned toward the waves and watched the unending succession of breakers. He saw a dry little twig on the crest of a wave in the distance; it was being passed on from one wave to another, from trough to crest, from crest to trough until it was cast on the sands on the shore, near where He stood! Dakshinamurthy was astounded at the egoism of the Ocean that would not give asylum to even a tiny twig. Sensing His reaction, the Ocean declared, in words that He could understand, "Mine is neither egoism nor anger; it is only the duty of self-preservation. I should not allow the slightest blot to deface my grandeur. If I allow this twig to mar my splendor, it will be the first step in my downfall." Then, Dakshinamurthy smiled within Himself, admiring the vigilance of the mighty Ocean. He pictured the incident as a great lesson in spiritual endeavor. The slightest twig of desire, if it falls on the mind, has to be immediately lifted out of the pure waters and thrown off. That was the lesson to be learnt.

Three stages in the journey to reach God

The *Ramayana* teaches that Sita had to suffer separation from Rama as a result of a tiny little desire: to own the golden-hued deer! If only she had cast it off her mind, as

the Ocean did! Be free from the bondage of desire—this is the refrain in the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Bhagavata*, the *Bible*, the *Quran*, and all the scriptures of mankind.

Each religion exhorts those who are attracted by it to meditate on God in certain form known by a certain name; but one who is aware that He is all names and all forms will adopt a sound that is profoundly significant, which summarizes all names, namely, the *Pranava* (OM sound) the *Akshara* (Unchanging, indestructible). Through the changing to the unchanging, that is the journey. From the *kshara* to the *Akshara*. There are three steps or stages in this journey. "I am yours"; "you are Mine!" and, finally, "I am you!" Every *sadhaka* [spiritual practitioner] has to walk from one to the other, and reach the journey's end. Move on, don't halt.

It is good to be born in a church, but it is not good to die in it. Grow and rescue yourselves from the limits and regulations, the doctrines that fence your freedom of thought, the ceremonials and rites that restrict and re-direct. Reach the point where churches do not matter, where all roads end, from where all roads run.

There is no shortcut to attain Self-realization

Dutt from Calcutta said that it is a pretty hard assignment to listen closely, reflect deeply, and practice faithfully, the three stages prescribed in the *Shastras* [scriptures]. Of course, it is. Attaining Self-realization is not done by a trick, or a ruse; it has no short cut. Listen to what happened to sage Ramadas of Bhadrachalam, the singer who was imprisoned by the Nawab of Golconda, for misappropriation of public funds (to renovate the Rama Temple at Bhadrachalam), whose liberation from jail was affected by Rama and Lakshmana themselves paying the Nawab the sum appropriated!

Ramadas had piled up a large mass of Palmyra leaves, on each one them he had written with his style a song on Rama. When his eyes fell on the heap a thought struck him: Did I compose these songs for my pleasure? Or, for pleasing Rama? He wanted to know the songs that had pleased Rama and fling away those that did not. He decided to throw the whole bundle into the Godavari River and let Rama save those that He approved. Almost the whole lot sank in the depths; only 108 floated and were recovered. They alone had arisen from the heart; the rest smacked of cleverness, artificiality, punditry, pedantry. Prayers must emanate from the heart, where God resides, and not from the head, where doctrines and doubts clash.

Faith in God being within the heart, faith in His constant presence and constant guidance—these will confer courage, virtue, and illumination. The *Shastras* say, have faith in the doctor, so that you may get cured of illness; have faith in the *mantra* (holy formula) with which the preceptor initiates you, for then alone can your *sadhana* be fruitful; have faith in the sacredness of the temple, for then alone is your pilgrimage profitable; have faith in the astrologer's predictions, for, without it, why bother yourselves with him and his abracadabra? Have faith in the *guru*, for then

alone will your steps be steady and firm, on the path to Self-realization. Faith in the *guru* should bring faith in the *atma* (free self), or else, the *guru* is a handicap.

Source: *Sathya Sai Speaks* Vol. 9

When worship is rendered with a view to fulfill desires and realize wishes, the precious prize will be lost. Worship must cleanse the heart, so that the indwelling God may shine in all His glory, but desires tarnish, instead of cleansing.

~Sathya Sai Baba

Love Is the Force Behind Compassion

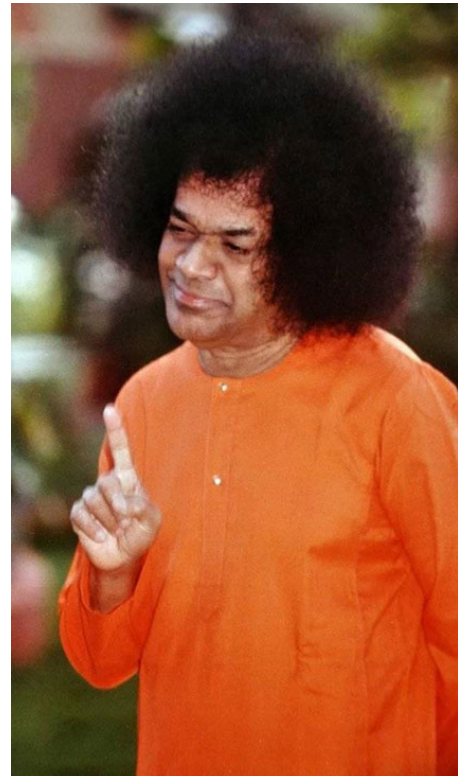
Our Lord Sai is the most compassionate one. To illustrate this, I would like to narrate an instance.

On the 7th of September 2005, a man had a severe heart problem and was admitted to the hospital. He asked his nephew who was a student at the Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, to pray to Swami. September being a festival time in Puttaparthi the nephew forgot about his uncle. Soon after *darshan* [sight of a holy person] the boy received a call stating that his uncle had been admitted to the ICU [Intensive Care Unit]. The boy felt really bad for not having prayed to Swami.

The next day was a special day indeed as the boy saw Swami Himself distributing clothes and other items. Taken away by the love and compassion the boy hardly prayed to Swami to take care of his uncle.

When Bhagavan was about to go back, he suddenly recollected what his mother had told him. He immediately joined his hands and prayed in his mind, "Swami please help." Bhagavan with a smiling face looked at him and the boy felt assured. On the 10th of September the boy was assured that his uncle was out of danger.

We often feel that our prayers are being answered but so intricate is His web that we often tend to lose track and get disconnected from Him. The ever-compassionate Sai's life is His message and it's our duty having received the bounty of His proximity, to follow His message.



One day as I was going to the *mandir* [temple], I saw a very poor and helpless woman with her child. The mother went on asking for alms from a man besides her and to give her something to eat from what he was eating. The man gave her a frustrated look. This touched me. It is quite easy to blame God, for not having given us the riches but I said to myself think of the one's who did not have a morsel of food to eat.

The day was quite bad as I had scored very badly in physics. This fact soon overpowered me, and I forgot about the mother and her child. In the *mandir* my whole attention was riveted to a drama that portrayed the need to serve the poor and needy. After the program was over, I received the coconut sweet that I used to cherish a lot and given an opportunity was could eat even three pieces at a time. That day I thought that I should give the *prasadam* [blessed food] to the crying mother. So, I controlled all my senses and began walking out of the *mandir* fighting the rising desire to eat that sweet. I saw that poor lady went to her and called out, "Amma." She immediately spread out her hand and I placed the packet of the *prasadam* in her hand. The child smiled seeing this, the mother too gave a beautiful smile and suddenly, I felt light at heart.

Well, being from a scientific background that demands rational thinking I am clueless and conclude my reverie with regard to this incident with the following statement, "Giving away is not only good for the spirit but it is also a beneficial heart stimulant. Health is to a great extent conditioned and controlled by the circulation of blood. That important little circulatory heart I believe is influenced to a greater degree than we realize by the other heart, the seat of affections, the seat of beloved Mother Sai."

Swami often says that we must love everyone, and be compassionate toward everyone, not so that we are acknowledged but importantly he, on whom we pour our compassion, feels that he has been acknowledged.

Swami loves people who perform selfless acts. In the old *mandir* an eye camp was conducted. Soon after the camp was concluded an old man came to the doctors and pleaded to examine his eyes. Two of the doctors said that the examination was not possible as they had packed their instruments. The old man went to the third doctor and pleaded to him to check his eyes. The doctor took pity on the patient, examined his eyes, and gave him medicines. He also asked the patient to chant, "Sairam."

The next day all the doctors and assistants were seated together. Swami came directly to the three doctors. He asked them what they had told the old man who had come for the treatment. Two of them said that they had sent the old man away without examination as their instruments had already been packed. The third doctor said that he had examined the old man and had given him the necessary medicines. Swami added, "You also told him to repeat 'Sairam', is it not?" Swami asked the doctor to take *padanamaskar* [touching the feet]. He materialized *Vibhuti*

[holy ash] and applied it on the doctor's forehead. He also materialized a ring and put it on the doctor's finger. Swami then asked the doctors, "Who do you think that old man was? It was me!"

Swami appreciates those who really love people and give away everything. In one of His discourses while speaking about sacrifice Swami said that sacrifice is giving away something that both the giver and the acceptor need.

Einstein once stated that, a human being is part of the whole world we call the universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts, and feelings as something separated from the rest—a kind of optical illusion of his consciousness. This illusion is a prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and showing affection to the people who are nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison, widening our circle of compassion, embracing all living beings and all of nature.

Compassion is the attitude of the heart, and this must be learnt from within. Loving our fellowmen takes us closer to God and makes us dearer to him.

*~B. Shashank Kumar, Alumnus,
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Source: Sai Chandana 2010 (85th Birthday Offering)*

The Love of the Gopis

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba said in His discourse on Krishna Janmashtami Day [Krishna's birthday] in 1963 that there should be no artificiality in your attachment to the Lord, no affectation, no pride, no egoism, to soil the freshness of the flower you offer.

Kompella Subbaraya Sastry spoke about the coming on earth of the incarnation of Krishna and read extracts from the *Bhagavata* describing the antecedents of the birth. All of you enjoyed listening to him, though many of you are listening to the story for the hundredth time; the story of the Lord does not lose its sweetness when repeated. *Jnana, yoga, and karma* (knowledge of Supreme Self, meditation, and selfless action) are, each one of them, hard to go through, but like *chutney*, which is salt, chilly, and tamarind in the right proportion ground to a paste, *bhakti* [devotion] that is *jnana, yoga, and karma* in the correct proportion, is bound to be appetizing to all tongues.

Lord's grace is a subject dear to everyone. It is a subject that is within the grasp of all. The Lord also can be addressed by any name that tastes sweet to your tongue or pictured in any form that appeals to your sense of wonder and awe. You can sing of Him as Muruga, Ganapathi, Sharada, Jesus, Maithreyi, Shakti, or you can call on Allah

or the Formless, or the Master of all Forms. It makes no difference at all. He is *Sarvanama* and *Sarvaswarupa* (all names and all forms). He is the beginning, the middle, and the end, the basis, the substance, and the source. So, any story that brings into your consciousness, His glory, His grace, and His beauty must perform appeal to you.

Every thought sets up a function, agitating all around

Believe Me, all *vrittis* (mental modes or functions) are *anitya* (impermanent). A *vritti* is a circle, like the circle that emanates from the place where a stone falls into the still water of a lake. The water gets agitated, and the circle affects the water up to the farthest end. Every thought acts like the stone on the stillness of the mind; it sets up a *vritti*. It agitates all around. The *pravritti marga* (path of attachment) multiplies these circular waves and seeks to create further and wider agitations. But the *nivritti marga* (path of detachment) aims at stilling the waters. No agitation at all. Preserve the calmness, even the level. Keep the agitating thoughts away.

Concentration on the name and form of Krishna tends to calm the waves of *vritti*. When E. M. Forster came to India, he was for some time with the Thakore of Rajkot and when he found the Thakore, engaged in *dhyanam* (meditation) before the image of *Radha-Shyam*, he wondered at first what it was all for! The Thakore had no wants to fulfil. What could he pray for? One day, he asked the Thakore, "Why?" He replied that Krishna was for him the embodiment of *prema*, *Soundarya*, and *anandam* (love, beauty, and bliss), and so, when he meditated on that form he was filled with love, beauty, and joy. The senses, intellect, and emotions, all get purified and clarified by dwelling on the pure and the splendid.



Forster was induced to try the first steps and though he found it rather difficult at first, the thrill engendered by the strange calm egged him on to persist. He found *dhyanam*, good and useful. Krishna's pranks reveal His divine essence Krishna was only a few weeks old, when a certain ascetic came into the house of Nanda [Krishna's foster father]; Yashoda [Krishna's foster mother] had the baby in her lap. Of course, this is an incident not found in any book: I have to tell you this Myself. The

maids ran in, for, they were afraid the child might start weeping at the sight of the uncouth individual. He walked in nevertheless, and Yashoda found that when he was sent away, the baby raised a cry; not when he was approaching! The *Muni* also announced himself as having come to see *Krishna-paramatma* (Krishna, the Supreme Self), a name that was new to the entire family. No wonder, the baby cried when that distinguished visitor was asked to go! Devaki had been given the vision of Krishna being the Lord Himself, but this *Muni* had discovered the arrival of the *Avatar*, by the Almighty's grace. It was Baba who had invited the *Muni* for His *darshan*.

The replies that Krishna gave when the *gopis* complained to His mother about His mischievous pranks and thefts of milk, butter, etc., also reveal, by the inner meaning they convey, the divine essence that He was:

"Why did you drink the milk from the pot she was carrying?"

"She was taking it to be offered to God; perhaps, God might have drunk it up."

"Where had you run away?"

"I was always with you, is it not?"

"Why do you hold that butter pot in your clasp?"

"So that others may not eat it!"

"Why do you put your hand into that butter pot?"

"I am looking for a lost calf."

These were the types of answers He taught them with. He was the Ancient One, in the new garb. His words came from the beginning of Time.

Radha's *prema* was pure without egoism

The *Radha-tatwam* (principle) is also a deep and inscrutable one. She was ever in the contemplation of the Lord and His glory. She too saw the child Krishna as the Divine manifestation, separate from the human form. Yashoda one day was searching for Krishna who had strayed away; she sought almost everywhere and at last, she went to Radha's house. Radha just closed her eyes and meditated on Krishna for a while and when she called "Krishna," Krishna was there. Then, Yashoda shed tears of joy. She said, "I love Krishna as a mother; I have a sense of egoism in me that He is my son and that I must save Him from harm and seek to give Him guidance and protection. Your *prema* is pure; it has no egoism prompting it."

The *gopis* had that one-pointed *prema* (love), unwavering, clear, and pure. The relationship between the *gopis* and Krishna as depicted in the *Bhagavata* [scriptures] has been unfortunately judged by persons who have not regulated and controlled their *vrittis*. This subject is beyond the comprehension of such people. Only *brahmacharis* (celibates) of the most ardent and ascetic type like Suka Maharishi who described it to King Parikshit and in recent years, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, can appreciate that relationship and pronounce upon its uniqueness. All the rest are apt to see in it only the reflection of their own failings and their own feelings. The language of *samsara* (worldly life) is the only language they know; the regions of *Turiya*—beyond the regions of wakefulness, dream, and deep sleep—to

which those experiences relate, are not within their reach. So, they drag the subject down to their own level and claim that they have mastered their mystery.

Every Godward step makes you shed all attachment

As a matter of fact, the Inner Eye, the Inner Senses are needed to grasp the meaning of this relationship. Oruganty has shown that it has eluded the grasp of most interpreters, for it is closely allied to the *advaitik* [non-dualistic] experience of *nirvikalpa samadhi* (the super-conscious state where there is no mind) itself. The mind has to be the master, not the slave, of the senses, if the interpretation has to be just. Thoughts, wishes, deeds, and feelings—all have to be purified of the desire for gain. *Ahamkara* (egoism) itself must lose all its hold on the interpreter, as it did on the *gopis*. *Prema* toward the Lord such as the *gopis* had, should make a man strong, not weak. In fact, the *gopis* were not weakened by their love; they were rendered tough. Ramakrishna too exhorted his disciples, like Narendranath, to grow strong, with the cultivation of *prema* toward the Lord.

Every step taken toward the Lord makes you shed bit by bit all attachment to the world. How then could the *gopis* retain their physical awareness? Dhruva went into the forest to get from the Lord the boon of sitting on the lap of his father, a very ordinary wish of a plainly earthly type. But as he advanced in *tapas* [penance], that wish disappeared from his mind and his mind was elevated to great spiritual heights. How can one who has tasted *amrita* (nectar) be eager to taste water? Or crave for tamarind fruits after tasting *khajur* (dates) and having it in his possession? Every craving will be sublimated into the higher realms of pure consciousness, the moment one enters the spiritual field.

The gods came to the world

And then who are these *gopis*, according to the Bhagavata itself? They are the demi-gods who wanted to share in the glory of the *Avatar* and who came down to the world as witnesses and sharers in the Divine *leela* (cosmic sport). They came for a purpose; they are not ordinary village folk, who could be dismissed as a crowd of voluptuous women. They saw in every gesture and gait, every word and phrase of Krishna the Divine, not the human at all. They had no occasion or chance to be agitated by a secular *vritti* (thought wave); all *vrittis* were awakened by Divine promptings and urges. Like the magnifying glass that catches the rays of the Sun and directs them all to one spot, thus concentrating the heat on one point and helping it to ignite, the hearts of the *gopis* collected all the *vrittis* and concentrated them and caused the illumination and the flame. The flame burnt all dross; the illumination revealed the truth. All other interpretations are to be laid at the door of either ignorance or scholasticism, the pompous pride of mere book learning, which scorns the exercise of discipline.

Meaning of Krishna's theft of butter

Krishna is condemned as a thief who stole butter from the cowherd maidens; but the butter represents the *bhakti* [devotion] of the heart that is got after the process

of churning. It is a question of a symbol being taken as literally true. He is *Chittachor* (the stealer of hearts). The thief steals at night, in the darkness, without awakening the master; but, when this thief steals, the master awakens; He wakes him and tells him that He has come. The victim is left supremely happy and satisfied.

Every *gopi* had the highest type of *bhakti* in her heart. They saw only Krishna wherever they turned; they wore on their foreheads blue *kumkum*, to remind themselves of Krishna. There were many husbands who protested against the color of the *kumkum*, but they dared not wipe it off, lest harm should befall them and the sacrilege recoil on them alone. (Here Baba who had filled his hand with petals of *Mallika* (jasmine) flowers pulled apart by Him from garlands given to Him, showered the petals from one palm to another and they fell in a cascade of blue gems.) Even the gems they preferred were of this type, blue, like Krishna. (He showed the astounded gathering the gems He was referring to. Each gem had Krishna's form in it, beautifully clear.)

There was Neeraja [a *gopi*], for example. She was warned against the stratagems of Krishna when she came to Brindavan from a distant village as the bride of a *gopa*. Despite all warnings, however, she saw Krishna during the Govardhanagiri Festival and when she saw Him, she surrendered her heart to the Lord. She passed through great ordeals on account of this spiritual attachment, but she bore it all with courage. She had seen Krishna first at the foot of the Govardhana Hill, playing sweetly on the flute. So, she used to go often to that bower where she first saw Him, to inhale the holy air. Years passed; thus, she was the foremost among those *gopis* who tried to curb the horses that drew Akrura's chariot with Krishna in it, away from Brindavan to Mathura.

She suffered silently the separation for years and years, until one day when she was exhausted with the agony and well-nigh spent, Krishna appeared before her in the self-same bower, where she was. He fondled the *gopi* and consoled her. She had one request to make, however: she longed to hear the Divine flute, before she died on Krishna's lap. The Lord said, "I have not brought it," but, just to grant her the boon, he broke a length of reed from the bower, made it in a trice into a flute and played on it a tune that melted Neeraja's heart into tears, which washed her soul away. She passed into the Krishna-*tatwa*, the moment the song ended. And, Krishna, too gave up the flute that he had resumed for her sake. The bower came to be called Vamsikunj, in memory of the flute that gave birth to, and which it heard so much.

Do not have pride in your attachment to God

There was a *gopi* named Suguna. One day, when Krishna was with Sathyabhama, He pretended to have severe stomachache and in spite of all the remedies that she tried she could not afford relief. Of course, it was all acting, superb acting such as the paralytic stroke I had for a week previous to *Guru Poornami* recently! Even Rukmini was not admitted into the house by her to inquire about Krishna's health. But Rukmini found Suguna pining outside the door in great agony at the illness of the Lord. She gave her the articles and asked her to go in. Krishna welcomed Suguna and made her sit at His feet and ate the fruits she had picked up from Sathyabhama's

own garden. And suddenly, the ache had gone. It was her agony at the Lord's condition, her simple sincere devotion that was so effective.

There should be no artificiality in your attachment to the Lord, no affectation, no pride, no egoism left, to soil the freshness of the flower you offer. Sathyabhama protested when Krishna accepted the fruits, for, Krishna had brushed them aside as tasteless when she had herself offered them as the precious product of her assiduous gardening effort. They were tasteless since her pride had entered into them now. When the simple rustic *gopi* picked them from the ground and saturated them with her devotion, they became tasty and attractive for the Lord, who cares for the *bhava* (inner feeling), not the *bahya* (outer show)!

The only *prema* that will not allow pride and envy to interfere with its purity is *prema* toward God. I know that many of you, who know that I have been taking only a cup of buttermilk daily for the last two months, are genuinely grief-stricken, though I have been talking to you that no work of Mine has been stopped or delayed because of what they call My "reduced intake of food." That is a sign of their *prema* but really, I live on your *anandam* [happiness], not on this material food at all. I wish that you realized this and stopped worrying or weeping.

Source: *Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 3*

Remember always that it is easy to do what is pleasant; but it is difficult to be engaged in what is beneficial. Not all that is pleasant is profitable.

Success comes to those who give up the path strewn with roses and brace the hammer-blows and sword thrusts of the path fraught with danger.

~Sathya Sai Baba

1.

The Hills of Puttaparthi

Grey, rugged, stately, they stand, timeless, and serene:
The morning sun turns them into a slate-blue wall,
And in the soft rays of the setting sun, they glow
With fast-changing tints of a ravishing rainbow.
They tell of old feuds, of man's love and hate,
Of the unbroken drama of his passion and grief.
Perhaps in some dark caves amidst their rocky slopes,

Above the gurgling waters of the meandering streams,
Lived the Seers who had seen God face to face,
And taught to weary mankind the Peace of the spirit.
They still stand, the grey, rugged, stately hills
Serene, above the valley of green fields and tiny hamlets.
And in the Valley, itself, a new Miracle is on.
The Divine Formless in a human Form has arisen,
Teaching the ancient wisdom to seekers far and near.
Unwearied, compassionate, His clarion-call He sounds:
Awake and listen! For a new Voice in accents clear,
Reverberates through these grey, rugged, and stately hills.

2.

He Speaks

He speaks and His words caress the spirit
Like the soft petals of a new-blossomed flower.
He smiles and the ripples of that smile spread
Unto the far reaches of the afflicted heart.
The veiled mystery of birth and death,
The soul's perplexity and the spirit's caverned gloom
Are driven away with magic wave of His hand
Raised to cheer to bless and to sustain
Lonely pilgrim life's rugged and thorny way.

~H. Sunder Rao

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, July 1964

Q&A

WITH BHAGAVAN

Swami Explains the Mind—2

Hislop: Swami, what does the mind know? There is much knowledge in the mind, but what does it really know?

Sai: The mind does not know anything. So-called education is just book knowledge. Hand in hand with knowledge must go philosophy. Philosophy is not religion; it is love for God. It is cultured by reciting the Name, singing *bhajans* [spiritual songs], thinking spiritual thoughts, desiring union with God. Union with God, as the bubble upon breaking,

finds itself the whole ocean. From the cultivation of philosophy comes will power. Without will power, knowledge is useless.

Hislop: Swami, in the West, will power is thought of as a quality one is born with.

Sai: Will power is brought about by philosophy. Will power is the direct manifestation of the *atma shakti* [power of the self].

Hislop: In the West, great value is given to the mind. It is felt that unless one develops a skillful mind, he cannot gain success in life. For instance, I needed to develop skill of mind to get an education and earn money to travel and see Baba.

Sai: You came to see Baba because of the heart, not the mind, isn't it? The viewpoint that there is a mind is useful up to a certain stage—university, science, and so forth. But after a certain stage, science falls away and philosophy comes to the front. Heart is then used instead of mind. The other day, someone mentioned the illustration of the mirror. As one moves away, the image grows smaller and smaller, although, the image has not changed at all. The same happens with the world. As one turns to God with stronger and stronger love, the world recedes, appearing smaller and smaller until it can hardly be noticed at all. Really, there is only the heart.

Hislop: The belief that we are self-willed, separate beings moving about in the world—what is the cause of this illusion?

Sai: The whole mirage, the whole thing, arises from the 'I' thought. From identification with the body, all complications arise. Since it is the mind that has woven this web of identification with the body, it is the mind that must now turn and seek one's true nature through enquiry, discrimination, and renunciation.

Hislop: Swami has said that the mind need not be dangerous. But with all the trouble it has brought about, it seems to be very dangerous.

Sai: The mind creates no harm and gives no trouble as long as it is not merged with the body senses. For instance, the mind has a thought of the theatre. No harm. But if the mind picks up the body and carries it to the theatre, then it becomes involved with the picture, the people, the emotions, the concepts, and peace is lost. The mind should not engage itself in body senses. Body sense should serve the needs of body only. Mind should be engaged in the five mind senses, which are: truth, concentration, peace, love, and bliss. As long as the mind is so engaged, all is well, and the person is happy and peaceful. Physical objects have a temperature potential. If the breathing is fast movement, body temperature rises. If objects subject to temperature are added to a fire, the fire burns more fiercely. That which is subject to temperature may join with that which is subject to temperature. Mind, however, has no temperature. God is without temperature. So, mind and God may merge.

Hislop: In this, Swami, what is the definition of 'mind'?

Sai: The whole complex, ego through intelligence may justly be called 'mind.'

Hislop: Whenever the mind falls away from necessary work, I call it to attention and keep it engaged in repeating, 'Sai Ram, Sai Ram.' Is that all right?

Sai: Quite all right.

Hislop: When the mind is not engaged in any particular work, where should the attention be kept?

Sai: Between the eyebrows. That is the Eye of Wisdom, of Shiva.

Hislop: The flow of thought interferes with concentration. How can one diminish thinking?

Sai: The habit of thinking is long standing. Even if the habit is broken, there is a slow cessation. For example, a fan continues to revolve for a time after the switch is turned off. But the train of thought can be changed. One train of thought can stop another. The best way is to divert the train of thought to a spiritual topic. The attraction to God is spontaneous. It is the turning back to the source; all other attractions are self-imposed. The fish is placed in a gold and jewel vase of greatest value, but it has no interest in the gold and jewels, it wants only to get back to the sea. Man comes into his limitation from his home. He is really of the nature of God, of this Ocean of Delight, of Rama, of He who attracts. The soul attracts us. Rama was God, that Ocean of Delight in human form. Everybody wanted to be close to Him, to look at Him.

Hislop: Well, Swami, perhaps if one were to follow thought inward to its source and observe the source of thought, one might then have a quiet mind? In affairs of the world thought is both necessary and practical. But when there is no need to be thinking, the mind still keeps on going with all sorts of idle thoughts; whereas one would be much better off if the mind would just be quiet.

Sai: That is really the wrong way to approach the matter. The nature of the mind is restless, just like a rat whose nature is always to nibble at something, and just like a snake whose nature is to be biting at something. The nature of the mind is to be occupied. Even when still, like the feathers on a peacock, there is a shimmering, an apparent movement in the mind. Like the aspen tree, even on a still morning its leaves seem to tremble and move. It is the nature of the mind to dwell upon things. So, the proper method to deal with the mind is to direct the mind's activity toward good deeds, good thoughts, repetition of the name of the Lord, and not allow it to be

aimed at harmful objects, harmful thoughts, and deeds. In that way, the mind's natural tendency to be occupied will be fulfilled and yet it will keep out of mischief.

Another essential for keeping the mind away from harmful activities is work. Man is made to work hard, and if one is working hard service to the Lord in one way or the other, the mind will not have the time to be occupied with useless random thoughts. And if there is no outside work, then the work of spiritual endeavor should go on, in the way of meditation, recitation of the name, reading good books, talking with good people, and so on. One might find it difficult to surrender to God, but every man surrenders to time; time conquers one's life and that time is God. Therefore, first there is work, then wisdom, then love, and the time will come in a person's life when work itself is love, work itself is God.

Hislop: But Swami said the other day that if the mind was quiet and receptive, then perhaps Swami would come into the mind and speak.

Sai: If the desire to communicate with Swami is sufficiently intense and strong, then the mind will be sufficiently quiet for Swami to speak; but the problem is that we do not have that intensity in our lives.

Hislop: The Buddha's way of slowing down the mind is given much attention to in Burma. Swami must have a better way.

Sai: The Buddha's way of watching the breath as it enters and leaves the nostril is just for a few minutes before the meditation begins. There is no 'better' way to quiet the mind. There is only one way. Sitting in meditation, the question often comes up, 'How long to sit?' There is no answer. There is no particular time. Meditation is really an all-day-long process. The sun shines, and the sunlight falls here and there. What is the difference between the sun and the sunlight?

Hislop: There is no difference, Swami.

Sai: In the same way, all is God. Thoughts, desires, all are God. All thoughts should be regarded as God.

Hislop: But Swami, there is still the puzzle of how to slow down the activity of the mind.

Sai: Really, there is no mind; it is a question of what is desired. With God as the only desire, all will be well.

Hislop: But in meditation there is a fast rush of thoughts and ideas through the mind. Does this not need to be slowed down so there may be quiet in meditation?

Sai: Yes. The mind must slow down. At a certain stage it will come to a stop. If desire in meditation is turned toward union with God, the mind will naturally slow down. No method should be used; no force used. Desire should not be too fast, too strong. Even desire for God can be too hurried, too feverish. Start early, drive slowly, reach safely. It is possible to be too lazy. Fast, then slow is also bad. The process should be steady.

Hislop: These thoughts that stream through the mind, are they material?

Sai: Yes. They are matter. All matter is impermanent.

Hislop: Where do thoughts come from?

Sai: They come from food and environment. If you have *satwic* [pure] food and have only desire for good, only good thoughts will come.

Hislop: Where do thoughts go?

Sai: They go no place because thoughts do not flow through the mind. The mind goes out and grasps and gets engaged in thoughts. If desire is for God, the mind does not go out. But the best way is to not have the problem of getting rid of thoughts. The best way is to see all thoughts as God. Then only God thoughts will come.

Hislop: Swami says that it is the *atma* [soul] that is unlimited power, yet in one's daily life, the mind gives the experience of being a sort of relentless power.

Sai: The mind is passive, yet it seems to be active. It is active only because the *atma* reflects into it. It sometimes seems to be stronger than *atma*. Iron, in its nature, is not hot; it is cool and passive. The iron is heated in fire. Is it the iron that burns, thus creating the heat? No, it is the heat that is put into the iron by the burning coals. The heat is added to the iron. Yet, when hot, the iron seems to be hotter than the burning coals.

Hislop: The mind has the tendency to plan ahead. No doubt this is a wrong activity?

Sai: In ordinary life, one makes plans and carries them out. This has to continue, with purity, and without harm to others. At length, a spontaneous divine thought will arise without planning. Such divine impulses will continue.

A Visitor: How can I tell what is a right thought?

Sai: Here, in the *Ashram*, you can ask Swami. In America, pray for the answer, then make enquiry in an impersonal way, and in half an hour you will have the answer. If you know what is right, don't ask. Do it. That is confidence, God power. Put aside all relationships. Is the work right, regardless of who is involved?

Hislop: Swami says to keep a distance from the mind. What does that mean?

Sai: That means, do not be led by the mind.

Hislop: What are the acceptable mental functions?

Sai: First, find out what is right and what is wrong. If right, do that which satisfies you. If unsure, do nothing until sure.

Source: *Conversations with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

Thought of the MONTH

3 P's—Purity, Patience, and Perseverance

If every person observes three things, he will be one with Swami. You will experience the Divine in you. As the following three are in Me, I can declare firmly about them. They are three P's—Purity, Patience, and Perseverance. These three are in Me and around Me.

Anyone with these three qualities will be unafraid wherever he may be.

It is not enough if the body is clean. Inner purity (*shuchih*) is essential. The latter, in fact, is more essential than the former. For the proper enjoyment of all things, purity of mind is essential. Whatever sacred acts you may do in the external world, if you have no purity of mind and heart, all of them are valueless. The food cooked in an untinned vessel will be spoilt even if all the ingredients are good. Likewise, in the vessel of the heart, the inside must be purified by *prema* (love). Then, all that one consumes will be wholesome. Hence, purity is vital for all aspirants; without it, all man's actions get tainted. Actions done with an impure heart can only produce undesirable results. Whatever good results you want to secure in the external world, inner purity is the basis.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 26 (1993)

Every individual must cultivate this noble quality. Patience (*kshama*) is not achieved by reading books or learnt from an instructor. Nor can it be received as a gift from someone else. This prime virtue *kshama* can be acquired solely by self-effort, by facing squarely diverse problems, difficulties of various sorts, anxieties, and suffering as well as sorrow. In the absence of *kshama*, man becomes susceptible to all kinds of evil tendencies. Hatred and jealousy easily take root in a person lacking this virtue.

Divinity is nothing but the combined manifestation of *prema* (love) and *kshama*. At one stroke, *kshama* subsumes *sathya* (truth), *dharma* (righteousness), and the entire *Vedas*. It

is the greatest among *tapas* (penance). It is the grandest and the noblest among virtues. It is all encompassing.

Whereas *kshama* can give complete protection, its absence can plunge one into distress and disaster. Impatience breeds selfishness and promotes jealousy, which together spur infighting and divisive tendencies of various kinds. The troubles the country is currently passing through are largely due to the absence of this noble quality of *kshama*. Impatience has ruined even very great spiritual aspirants. Likewise, kings have been reduced to beggars. Absence of *kshama* can make *yogulu* (*yogis*) into *rogulu* (sick persons). Without *kshama*, mankind becomes degraded and starts declining, but if it has this quality then it can progress by leaps and bounds. *Kshama* is thus the very breath of life.

Summer Showers 2000

The third quality is perseverance (*shraddha*), which is indeed a prime need for any one in any field but more so in the spiritual path. Once you have taken up a vow to do a good thing, you should not go back on it under any circumstance. You should fulfill it even at the cost of your life. This is the hallmark of a true devotee. In ancient times, people had this determination and became good souls. The Pandavas [from the Mahabharatha] had to spend their lives in forests feeding on leaves and fruits. Still, they never gave up their adherence to the plighted word. In the *Kali Yuga* [Iron Age] devotees have to face a lot of trials and challenges, but they should not waver even a wee bit in their devotion to God.

Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 26 (1993)

... Adore God with firm determination. The right time for starting on this quest is when you are young as students. Remain unflinching in your faith. You did *bhajans* all thorough the night. But that is not enough. Contemplation of God should be kept up always at all places. Whatever work you do, dedicate it to God. Divinized every word and action.

Sathya Sai Speaks Vol 28 (1995)

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