

## Guru—God

*The following discourse was given by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on June 18, 1970, on the auspicious day of Gurupoornima.*

**G**urupoornima is sacred for many reasons: this day, the seeker who suffers from identification with the false objective world is initiated into the reality of the 'unseen motivator' within him. On this day, those who have no urge to tread the spiritual path are inspired to seek the bliss that the path will confer. It's the day on which the aspirants are helped to achieve the consciousness of the One, which is known by many names and through many forms, in various languages and lands.

With the rise of the sun, the world is bathed in light and heat. So, too, with the oncoming of *Gurupoornima* the human heart is bathed in peace and security. *Gurupoornima* is not just one day in the year marked out in the calendar. It is all days when the mind of man (whose presiding deity is the Moon) becomes full of pleasant coolness, fully illumined with the light from the Sun, (intelligence, discrimination).

The contemplation of death is the very foundation of spiritual discipline. Without it, man is certain to fall into falsehood, pursuing the objects of sense-pleasure, and trying to accumulate material and worldly riches. Death is no ominous calamity; it is a step into the auspicious brightness beyond. It is inescapable; it cannot be bribed away, adjourned by certificates of good conduct, or testimonials from the great. Once born, death is the inevitable end. But it is possible to escape birth and, thereby, escape death. For, birth is the consequence of *karma*. Do *karma* that breeds no consequence, no aftereffects that must be lived through—and you need not be born again. Engage in an activity as duty; or engage in activity as 'an offering of worship to God'—then such activity will breed no after-effects.

This problem of escaping death, achieving immortality, *amritattwam*, is the very core of inquiry. When Yagnavalkya [a *Vedic* sage] proposed to go into the forest for asceticism and divide his riches between his two wives. Maitreyi [one of his wives] wanted to know from him, before accepting her share, whether riches will help her to realize the truth and get release from death. Nachiketa [a sage's son] asked the same boon from the God of death. Prahlada [Lord Vishnu's devotee] taught the same

point of view to his playmates. Buddha was prompted by the sight of a corpse to solve the mystery of death. The true *guru* is the one who makes one aware of the seriousness and urgency of this problem.



When acts are done as offerings to God, one will not be elated at success or disheartened by failure, for He prompts, He helps, He grants joy or grief as He wills and as He cares. The doer will have no attachment to the fruit of the deed; so he will not be bound to its consequence. It will leave no trace on his personality that will shape him beyond

death. But there are people who assert that there is no God at all. Now, the very currency of the word God is proof enough for those who can think, that there must be God. A word originates to represent an object that exists, or an idea that arises. Tree, cow, bird, forest—these exist and so those words are current. Every word indicates the existence of something. A non-existent thing will not have a word to denote. It may be said that words like sky-flower, hare-horn, barren-mother denote nonexistent things; but they are not just words; they are compounds—we have the sky and we have the flower. It is the compound, the double word, the combination of sky and flower that does not exist. So, too, the rest.

A word expresses experience; experience is the result of craving; craving comes out of desire; desire arises because of the impact of nature on the senses. Nature is the illusion that covers the One and displays it as the many. Illusion or *maya* is God's artfulness, His *leela* [play], '*mama maya*' ('my *maya*', He says, in the *Gita*). This truth is expounded by the true *guru* to the disciple who is earnest and efficient. This is a gem of wisdom that must be treasured in the heart, and carefully guarded against the viles of the six inner thieves—lust, anger, greed, passion, pride, and hate.

There are two types of jungle where the beast and man can roam; he has to make the choice. There is the *Vedic* jungle, where calm and quiet prevail, where leonine majesty in the form of realized souls resides, where in the silence that filters into the heart, the mysteries of birth, death, and liberation become clarified. There is the other non-*Vedic* jungle, where wildness is rampant and each lives on the other. There you have teachers who are even more engrossed in worldly tangles and

whose eye is more on your purse than your mind or heart, your fortune more than your fate.

“*Gu* means darkness and *ru* means light. *Guru* scatters darkness through light; he imparts wisdom that roots out ignorance. Render unto him as much homage as he deserves, but not more. You repeat the *shloka*[verse]:

*Guru Brahma Gurur Vishnu,  
Guru Devo Maheshwarah  
Gurusaakshaat Parabrahma  
Tasmai Sri Gurave Namah*

It is usually interpreted as indicating that the *guru* is Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwarah, and that he is the visible Parabrahma. But it is capable of a nobler interpretation: Brahma is the *Guru*, Vishnu is the *Guru*, Maheshwarah is the *Guru*; really Parabrahma is the *Guru*. Do not seek human *gurus*, however great their reputation. They are not *gu* (*gunateeta*—beyond the *gunas*, they are bound by the qualities they have developed) and *ru* (beyond form, they are still in need of form so that they may conceive of Reality). Themselves limited, how can they communicate to you the Unlimited? Pray to the God within you, the Maheshwarah, the Vishnu, the Brahma, or Parabrahma Principle to reveal Itself. Accept that as the *Guru* and you will be illumined.

It is sheer waste of money to burden the pictures and idols in your shrines and altars with plenty of garlands and to use costly utensils and offerings in order to show off devotion. This is mere deception, and it demeans Divinity, which requires only a pure heart for showering Grace. Do not posit distance between you and Me by these attitudes of Guru—disciple or God—devotee. Fundamentally, I am neither Guru nor God. I am you; you are I. That is the Truth. There is no difference or distinction; that which appears so is delusion. You are waves; I am the Ocean. The name and the form are separate, but the taste is the same; the *jivatma* [soul in man] sans the *upadhi* [limitation/imposition] is *Paramatma* Itself. If you achieve inner content, I am content; for I am you.

When the *guru* is himself struggling in the dark, how can he lead others on? When he is himself a beggar, in search of moneyed men, how can he be free and strict as a teacher? When *moha* [attachment] predominates, *moksha* [liberation] is a will o' the wisp. You may eat a tiny grain of sugar like an ant and be contented with the gain; but you must grow into an elephant that will eat with relish a whole bundle of sugar-cane! The *Gayatri mantra* is a prayer for the progressive upsurge of intelligence so that Truth may be grasped by the seeker. Subordinate the mind to the pure Intelligence, which is but a reflection of the God within. Then, you have the *Guru* of *Gurus*, as Guide.

**Source:** *Sanathana Sarathi*, Aug. 1970

## The Banana and the Peel

*At the Onam festival in 1974 Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba said that—You must take this as the Onam message—strive to manifest, cultivate, and express love, and suppress pride and egoism, so that you can win the grace of God.*

Tulsidas [the great poet] has said in his *Ramacharitamanas* [spiritual epic] that he composed the great epic on the story of Raghunath for '*swantasukhaya*,' that is to say, for his own *sukha* or happiness and joy. He engaged himself in that self-imposed task, not to [please] any patron or even Rama, but to please himself. He derived great *ananda* (divine bliss) while writing it and when it was finished. That was the urge that moved him. In fact, all that a man does, is, ultimately, traceable to this urge—the urge to earn self-satisfaction.

A man builds a house, writes a book, enters a job, executes a plan—all because he gets joy therefrom. The cuckoo coos sweetly and derives joy therefrom, far more than those who happen to listen. The rose blooms on the plan, because of an inner urge, not an outer prompting. The father fondles his baby and receives thereby more joy than he ever gives. The various disciplines undergone by *sadhakas* (spiritual aspirants), monks, ascetics, and those on the march along the path of self-knowledge are all adopted and adhered to because they give joy to oneself and fulfill an inner need.

### **Sacrifice is at the very basis of bliss**

This day is celebrated by you as the day when Emperor Bali was both humiliated and blessed by God in the form of Vamana. Emperor of the three worlds -- Bali called himself so, for he had *bala* (power) more than anyone else. He was saturated with egotism. God came to him, while he was busy with a *Yaga* (an offering), in the form and guise of a Brahmin boy and asked for a gift of just three foot-measures of land. Bali told him that he could ask for infinitely more riches and lands. But the “boy” insisted on that tiny gift only. Bali’s preceptor warned him about the identity and bona fides of the strange mendicant; he mentioned that he may be God Himself. This made Bali happier, for if it was true, he was so mighty that even God came to his door as a mendicant. Such was the measure of his conceit.

But when Vamana drew Himself up to cosmic proportions and measured the entire earth with one foot and the vast expanse of space with another foot, Bali was humbled. He offered his own head as the third foot-measure and let himself be trod-down into the nether world. This day marks the day when the incarnation of Vamana happened in order to teach this lesson that pride meets with doom. Once the ego was thus suppressed, Bali became cleansed and God blessed him with various boons. He assured him that He would ever be his guardian. He permitted him every year on Onam day to come up into the world and see for himself his empire and receive therefrom the homage of his people. So this is the Festival of Vamana's Advent as well as Bali's Transformation.

This day also extols the merit of gifts, renunciation, and charity, however little, to anyone for all are images of God. *Tyaga* (renunciation or sacrifice) is at the very basis of bliss, of grace, of immortality. *Na medaya na prajayaa danena, thyagenaike amrithathwam anasuh*—say the *Vedas*. ("Not by intellect, not by progeny, not by riches, but by renunciation alone can the bliss of immortality be attained"). Onam is the festival that instills this message into those who observe it with an eye on its inner significance.



**Every obstacle is a step that leads to *ananda***

Kerala [state in Southern India] has contributed a great deal to the preservation of *Vedic* culture, and *Sanskrit* learning. Keralites have a name for faith and dedication. Witness the age-old privilege the *Nambudiris* [brahmins] of Kerala enjoy, priesthood of the great *Vaishnavite* shrine thousands of miles away

from their land, namely *Badrinath* among the Himalayas.

Of course, wherever faith and dedication to God are evident, forces that tend to ridicule it, diminish its strength, also are found. Where *astika* (believer in God) is, there *nastika* (atheist), too, will raise its head. But disbelief in God or in some Supreme Will can be only a pose, assumed for the sake of personal aggrandizement or advertisement. It cannot stand the light of reason or of experience. Even so-called atheists have love in their hearts, honor truth while dealing with society, and live on the basis of some eternal basic principles of justice. So they are believers in *sat-chit-ananda* (being, awareness, bliss supreme).

You have the duty to stand witness in your lives to the courage, joy, strength, generosity, humility that true spirituality and faith can impart to man, while faced with disappointment, distress, defeat, defamation, and other calamities against which the atheist has no such shield. Gold gains in value when it is melted in the crucible. A piece of diamond when it is cut into a many-faceted gem is thereby rendered more brilliant and more costly. The dull stone is not sought after by all. Prahlada, the grandfather of emperor Bali, was subjected to torture by his irate father; but that only added to his luster. Bali himself shone all the brighter for the punishment he received from the compassionate Lord. This is the lesson you have to

garner today. Every obstacle is a step that leads you to the *ananda* that can never be destroyed or taken away.

### **It is natural for man to raise himself up**

There is another duty that you owe to yourselves, which you must recognize today. The world is the playground of *nara* (human) and *Narayana* (God) -- *Nara* transforming himself into *Narayana* and *Narayana* transforming Himself into *nara* and playing their roles in unison. You know full well that *Narayana* has come in human form for reestablishing *dharma* (morality) in the world, for feeding the roots of faith in God, and for interpreting God to man. You must be assured that it is natural for man, too, to raise himself up through spiritual discipline, moral elevation, expansion of love, and other means to become *Narayana*. But man is unaware of this high destiny. He misinterprets his skills and strength and is so absent-minded that he slides down the scale into a monster or a monkey. Of course, there are many who struggle with these downward dragging tendencies and endeavor to elevate themselves; these most often grope in the dark and are badly led.

### **Devotion must flourish unaffected by time**

There are two truths that must be accepted by every pilgrim or devotee: (1) Devotion must be full, free, and comprehensive; (2) Divinity must be conceived as full, free, and comprehensive. On the other hand, devotion today is almost always only 'part-time.' That is to say, whenever disease, defeat, or disappointment happen to assail you, you turn to God and pray for His grace; but when you are happy, prosperous, healthy, and in good shape, you ignore God and claim that they are all due to your own abilities and achievements. God is ignored in sunshine; He is wanted only when there is night. Devotion must persist and flourish unaffected by time, place, or circumstance.

God, too, has to be experienced in His fullness, and the *ananda* of that experience made one's permanent possession. Kasturi recited that poem, which was sweet to the ear and full of *Sanskrit* words. But words seldom come out of actual experience. It is impossible to experience God and also talk about him. Words like *sarvajnana*, *sarvavyapi*, meaning that "He knows all," "He is everywhere", are used by people since elders and saints have used them from ancient times. It is impossible for anyone to have the fullest and most comprehensive experience of these qualities of the Divine and also speak about that experience.

The *Gita* [Song of God] speaks of God as *achalam chalam evacha*, "immoveable as well as moveable," which strikes one as impossible. God appears to move, to act, to bless, to save, to test; but He is unconcerned basically with these. Look at a tree. The branches, leaves, etc. might be moving with the wind; but the trunk is steady and unmoved. God *is* but appears as *not is*. The body moves, the intellect moves, the mind moves, but the *atma* is unaffected; it is steady, firm, and unchangeable. The lake is unmoved; the surface is tickled into wavelets by every passing breeze. The colorless unmoved curtain or screen is unaffected by the pictures of fire, faction, floods, and glaciers that appear upon it in a realistic manner. When the pictures are

seen, the screen is unseen; when the screen is seen, the pictures are unseen. But without the screen (*Brahman*), the pictures have no meaning, carry no message, and tell no story. They impart no *ananda*.

### **God is the stealer of hearts**

You may carry a matchbox in your pocket with no danger of fire emanating though the components are there in that box. So, too, there are the components of Divinity in you; only, it is not patent, it is not expressed. Take a stick and strike its head against the chemical coating given on one side of the box, and suddenly in a flash you get the flame of fire. So, too, take the *jiva* (the individual) and strike it on the *Brahman*-principle that is immanent in the Universe, make it aware of it, so to say, and the individual, too, manifests the Divinity latent in it. The tree is the individual; the forest is the *Brahman*. The one apart from the many is the individual. The many and the manifold is the *Brahman*; Kasturi standing alone, apart, is *vyashti* [individual]; when he goes and sits among you, the thousands who have come here for *Onam*, he merges in the *samashti*. *Samashti* is *Brahman*; *vyashti* is the *jivatman*.

Prahlada's grandson, Bali, whom you honor today extolled the Lord standing before Him as master of the entire Cosmos, as "Arch thief among thieves," (*Dongalalo gajadonga*). For, God steals the most precious possession of man even when its owner is awake. He steals the *chitta* [mind]; He is the *chitta apahari*, the stealer of hearts. I disappointed you; I even requested you not to come so far away from your homes for this festival; but yet your hearts have been stolen by Me and so you could not stay away.

*Onam* is the day when you Keralites feast on the banana. When you eat a banana, you have first to remove the skin, so, too, when we desire to eat a mango or a lime fruit. The sweet substance has to be reached after removal of the bitter skin. For Bali to be received and accepted by God, the bitter cover of egoism and power-mania had to be removed. Ignorance, *maya* (delusion), illusion, pride, all are the components of the skin.

*Onams* come and *Onams* go, but people are no nearer the goal. This is because though *Onam* is given a hearty send-off, generosity, renunciation, love, and the spirit of service are not given an equally hearty welcome. You must take this as the *Onam* message—strive to manifest, cultivate, and express love, and suppress pride and egoism, so that you can win the grace of God.

**Source:** *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. 12

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*I ask only that you turn to Me when your mind drags you into grief or pride or envy.  
Bring Me the depths of your mind, no matter how grotesque, how cruelly ravaged  
by doubts, or disappointments. I know how to treat them. I will not reject you;  
I am your mother.*

**~Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

# POETRY



## Guru

*Dedicated to Sai Baba*

That Light because of which  
Men see the sun  
Whose all-Pervading Presence  
None have felt.  
Whose prime essential  
Essence is but One  
Pure Consciousness wherein  
All else has dwelt.

Thou are that truth  
That never can be told,  
That sweetness taste can  
Never hope to know,  
That fragrance which no  
Flower can unfold  
I look to Thee,  
Myself to see—and lo!

—Henry Conyers, Santa Barbara

## Incarnate in Every Age

Dispelling the mass of Darkness pervading the world  
A Divine Effulgence illumines the land of Bharat;  
The resonant OM reverberates over Earth and Sky!  
The Avatar—Truth Goodness Beauty all in One, has come!  
In every heart, awakening sublime deep-hued in dream divine!  
By the holy Chitravati, ever-famed, Prasanthi Nilayam shines.  
Dattatreya shines resplendent Hand assuring, 'Why fear!'  
He is indeed the Trinity in One, Divine Mother in Beauty sublime.  
For afflicted man, thirsting for Peace He doles out Grace  
Of Love Divine; His nectarine voice rings Sathyam Shivam Sundaram.  
Omniscient, He knows the hearts' craving the wordless prayer of man.

Bestows fulfillment no knowledge unravels, Bestows His Gifts  
From portraits we prize: nectar, sacred ash! He does create, confer.  
To take men back to Godward way! Sing the Glory of the Lord  
With hearts well-dipped in Love.  
Pray to the Lord of your Heart,  
For all names are Mine!



Yearn for Me and with you, He says, I shall be in a trice.  
To heal your killing maladies, anoint body mind and soul with holiness.  
Far or near, you are Mine, He says, And I am yours!  
My Love shall repair, heal and save, for I've come for you  
As I have come in every age, says—The emblem of Infinite Love!  
Showering Grace, Grace and more Grace on all who want and all who can't  
Come, then, kinsmen of the world! Let us Bask in the Sathya Sai Sun!  
Let us dip in the Sathya Sai Ganga!  
Unafraid, let us take refuge At His Lotus Feet!

—Padmasri Sri Nalinabala Devi  
Translated from Assamese,  
by Muktinath Bardoloi, Shillong

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*I, pure and simple, is different from I identified with the Body or Subtle Body or Body imagined in Dream Life. This pure and simple I, unidentified with anything, is God. This pure and simple I is 'incessant awareness'.*

—Baba

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

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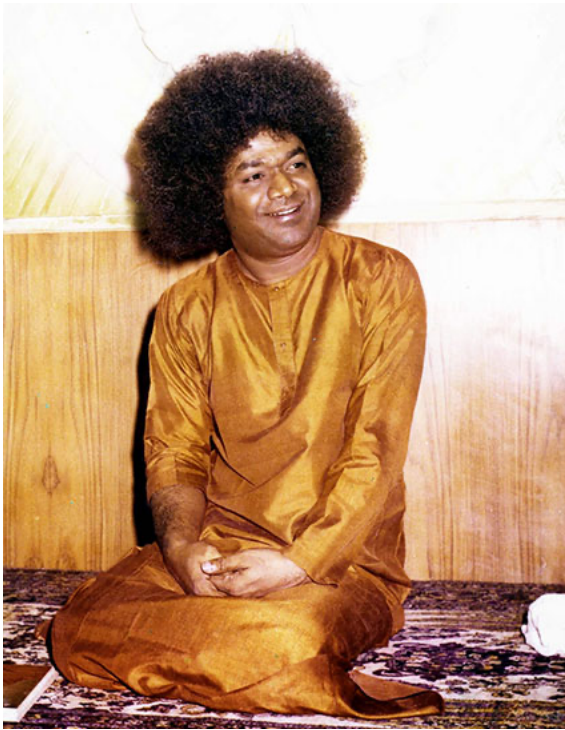
## Suffering in Life

Look around you and you will see everywhere the specter of suffering. Try to understand it, and, more often than not it will baffle you. How, you will argue, can God the infinitely merciful tolerate suffering in the world?

And yet, there is no life without it. It is as inescapable as the rose with the thorns or the body with its corruption. It winds itself into life projecting its image in the most unlikely places. Science seeks to root it out, but its success is only partial.

For suffering is not God's doing; it is the effect of our sin. And the sooner we realize this fact, the better it will be for all of us. For just as a car will not work if there is something wrong with the engine, so suffering will not disappear until sin, its cause, is removed from our experience.

You may ask: Could not God have prevented man from sinning? The answer would be yes, but at what price? The price is reducing us to be sub-humans with no option but to do the creator's bidding. Surely such a conception would do God no justice! It is because God loves us and loves us intensely that there is sin in this world. For God would not think of man as anything less than Himself. And if God is free, then man, too, must be free. And because man has freedom and can choose to do what he desires, man can sin in the same way as he can rise to heights of heroism and merit.



God is as little to blame in this as the teacher who does not give beforehand to the children in her class the questions that will be asked at the examination. He is as little to blame as the mother who coaxes her child to walk even if he risks falling down, or the father who sends his son out into the world even though he foresees him falling into evil company. It is because God loves us that He has run the risk that we will sin.

Even then, despite God, man continues to sin. It is not surprising that suffering is always present everywhere. For man essentially is one family, and for better or worse influences others as others influence him. And so, a man might be sinless and yet suffer because of this solidarity with others. He is born into a

family, grows in society, and depends for his entire development on others. And when he sins, it is often well-nigh impossible to say how far the implications of his sins will travel, as it is often impossible to pinpoint the origin of the disorder caused by famines, wars, or earthquakes.

There is a mysterious communion between ruin and man and between man and matter—and for every sin that appears in the world, there is somewhere a new suffering making itself felt.

Do not for a moment entertain the thought that God needs suffering or desires it in any form. He wants it wiped out, but He knows that this will only happen when sin is wiped out too. And therefore, while we should lay the axe at the root of suffering and destroy sin in our own lives, we must also endeavor to sublimate suffering wherever we find it. There is often little that a man can do. But rather than steel the person for the worst, as the stoics would, could we not make suffering acceptable so that he who suffers, suffers with the thought that his pain can be enriched and made a meritorious action pleasing to God? To anaesthetize oneself to suffering is selfish. Become insensitive to your sufferings today and you will become insensitive to the sufferings tomorrow.

For if every sin brings with it a new suffering, every suffering patiently and lovingly borne will in turn bring about a new love, a new charity that will counteract the spread of sin. Here it has a redeeming action! It becomes creative and therefore an object of love to God.

Everything that takes place on this earth is purposive and has a meaning. Suffering by itself would be meaningless except for the love of God that gives the pain its inner purpose.

So the next time you have a headache, do not yell out; the next time you are passed over in your office for promotion, do not take it out on your family; the next time you fail your tests, do not despair. Use the suffering that each of these actions entails to remind you that you can utilize this suffering to help yourself and others.

And where you can, you must help toward the eradication of suffering. Today perhaps more than ever in history, the inequality between man and man has spawned hunger, sickness, and misery. Once again it is sin, the egoism of man, his pride and negligence that have been the ruin of others. To this you must bend your will. You may be able and trained to alleviate physical suffering. Your talents may place you in a position to bring justice and peace to nations or communities. Your work and research may help benefit mankind. Suffering may lessen by your joining a union or resorting to strikes. If in all sincerity you can say you are helping to remove misery where you find it, then go ahead—you are doing the right thing.

If you prune a tree merely to cut its branches off, if you sow a seed only to see it die, if you punish a child merely for the pleasure of it, you are mentally unbalanced. Pruning, planting, and punishing all look to new growth and development as their ultimate aim. Asceticism is meaningless without a positive purpose. It must involve a richer harvest.

Suffering should be a continual reminder to man that he is a sinner. Suffering generously borne for others should be a continual reminder that he is a brother among brothers, a son under God.

Therefore, the next time you suffer, neither make a self-discipline of it, a display of heroic endurance to win the applause of others, nor let it remain an intolerable burden that saddens your journey through life. Let it instead open you up to a new love, make you sensitive to the lives of others, and more conscious of your responsibilities toward God.

~M. Mascarenha, Poona

**Source:** *Sanathana Sarathi*, Feb. 1968

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*Desire is storm, greed is whirlpool, pride is precipice, attachment is avalanche, ego is volcano. Discard desire and you are liberated.*

**~Sathya Sai Baba**

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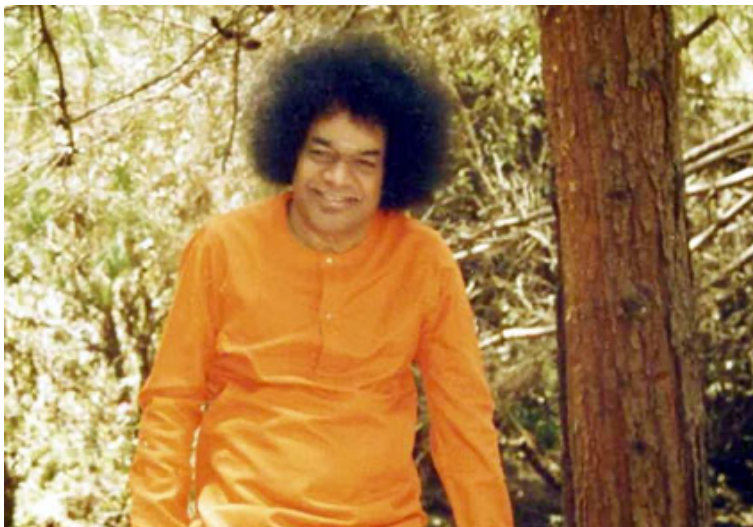
## The Ego Barrier

In the *Bhagavad Gita* Lord Krishna says that one of the qualifications for a devotee to earn His love is "*nirmamo nirahankarah* " (XI 1-13), without *mine-ness* and without *egoism*, free from the feeling of "I" and "mine". The scriptures of all religions consider egoism as the only major hurdle between man and God. "Man, minus ego is God," so goes the saying. Swami in His discourses frequently denounces this ego and stresses that it is the only obstacle that stands between Him and ourselves.

What is this ego and how did it come about? Man exhibits two natural traits in all his activities, namely, protecting and expanding his individuality. This conceited individuality instills in him the idea of an autonomous entity, a subjectivity responsible for his actions and for the enjoyment of the fruits therefrom. How did man conceive of himself as an individual?

The Omnipresent Pure Awareness got reflected on matter to produce the individual consciousness. This consciousness is the basis of all cognition. Cognition is possible only when the cognizer and the cognized are separate entities. The perceiver and the perceived cannot be one. Thus, the cognizer consciousness assumes the role of the subject and objectifies everything else. In this continuous process of objectivization or conceptualization an individual pseudo entity has arisen, using the body-mind complex as its abode. This assumed individuality that had come up soon after birth gets an identifying name and considers itself as separate from everything else. The functioning of this duality, the "me" and the "other", is the original sin of man referred to in the Bible.

This whole process has thrown up a phenomenon called man, which has three aspects in itself: the first—the real "I" or the true self, the second—a reflection of the first giving rise to the consciousness "I am", and the third—an individuality, "I am so-and-so". Thus, each person, as Swami says, is really "three in one", "the one you really are, the one you think you are, and the one others think you are."



### Ego and evolution

Why did this ego develop? If we analyze carefully it appears to be a necessary part of the evolution of life. How else could a conscious individual have cropped up? Having evolved, its dissolution is, interestingly, the only means to reach the Divine. To quote Sri Aurobindo, "as for the lower life, the

development of ego; so far as the higher life this reverse movement of elimination of the ego is indispensable." The 'why' of it all is beyond our comprehension and can only be termed as the play of the Divine.

However, this ego with its deluding power is the source of all man's problems. The real illusion man suffers from is his mistaken identity with the body that is only a part of the phenomenon. *Viveka Choodamani* [text by Sri Shankaracharya] says, "The body is known to be the source of the delusion of "I" and "mine".... It is strange that a person ignorantly remains contented that he is the body."

### **The body and the soul**

What is a body? The common definition will be that it is the physical frame of a man or an animal. But our scriptures provide an extended definition that considers the body as any substance that consciousness is capable of supporting and controlling for its own purpose and that is subordinate to consciousness. In other words, the soul possesses the body and not that the body has a soul.

What is the purpose of having a body? It is an instrument for righteous living. "*Sariramaadyam khalu dharmasadhanam*" (The body is the primary requisite for realizing righteousness). This task of the body has two components, to carry out physical actions that are external, and second, to achieve Realization that is inner action. But blinded by egoism the individual forgets that he is only an instrument Krishna says in the *Gita* (111-27), "*ahamkaara vimoodhaatma kartaaham iti manyate*"—one who is deluded by egoism thinks "I am the doer." Shankara says, "*ahamkaarah sa vijneyah karthaa bhoktaa abhimanyayam*"—it is the ego that identifies itself with the body and becomes the doer or experiencer and "*sukham dukham cha taddharma*"—happiness and misery are its characteristics. (*Viveka Choodamani*)

### **Liberation from ego**

Giving up this ego or annihilation of the pseudo-entity is the greatest achievement expected of man. "*Nirmamo nirahamkaarah sa saanthim adhigacchati*" says Krishna (Gita II-71)—devoid of possessiveness and egoism, that is giving up the feeling of "I" and "mine", a man attains peace. Such a non-egoistic person is called *saatvika* [pure]: "*anaham-vaadi saatvika uchyate* [free from attachment & ego]" (Gita XVIII-26). This mistaken identity with a particular transient phenomenon, the body, is the real bondage. As *Viveka Choodamani* (V. 299) declares, "So long as one has anything to do with this wretched ego, there can never be any talk about liberation," because liberation is from the ego, from the dualistic concept of "me" and the "other". Liberation is *from* the "person" and not *for* the person. Swami declares that purity leads to unity and unity leads to Divinity. Identification with the body is the basic impurity and all other impurities follow it. It is basically this impurity that an *Avatar* [incarnation] wants to remove from us. It is this "person" in us that He wants to destroy because it stands in the way of our becoming one with Him. Lord Krishna categorically states (Gita XVIII-53) "*ahamkaaram Balam darpam kaamam krodham*

*parigraham, vimuchya nirmamah saanto Brahmabhooyaya kalpate*—"Giving up egoism, violence, arrogance, desire, anger, possessions, without the feeling of mine, and becoming peaceful, one is fit to become *Brahman*."

A major step in abandoning the ego is to give up body consciousness and abide in the Self. This does not mean developing a contempt toward the body. This body is a part of the intended manifestation of the Divine. It is wrong to subject it to mortification and self-torture. Lord Krishna denounces this in *Gita* (XVII-6). "*Karshayantah sarirastham bhootagraamam achetasah maam cha eva antah*"—"They are fools who torture their bodies and Me who dwells within the body." The body itself is not an obstacle to spiritual progress. It is the identification with the body that is the stumbling block on the path.

### **Wiles of the ego**

Complete annihilation of the ego is a slow process, and the most important step is surrender to the higher power within. For that faith is the prime requisite. But here one has to proceed with caution because the ego tends to take refuge behind this term "surrender" and consider itself as the greatest devotee of the Lord and does not hesitate to go about saying so! Even if one claims to be performing *nishkama karma* (action without desire for the fruits thereof), the ego far from being annihilated may continue to consider itself to be the doer of the work that is being dedicated to the Lord.

Thus, every attempt made to destroy the ego is accompanied by the ego putting up several disguises and finding for itself many hideouts. Two of its deceitful disguises are a vain show of regard for others and putting up a garb of indifference to worldly matters. The former presents the individual as a great *sevak* and philanthropist while the latter makes him put up a false appearance of a poor or simple man or even of a saintly person. The most important hideout for the ego is to take shelter behind the true self and behave as if it were the Self. Then a spiritual superiority is assumed by it and thereafter all that remains to be done is to guide others in the path!

Practically every *sadhaka* [devotee] faces these problems. As Sri Aurobindo says, "the form of ego has to be dissolved, it has not to be replaced by a bigger ego or another kind of ego." The best example to illustrate this is Arjuna's behavior on the battlefield. First, he came to fight with the egoism of strength as demanded of a Kshatriya. Soon the ego manifested as a selfish fear and inaction for selfish ends. Identifying himself with his body and bodily relationships with his cousins and Acharyas he was reluctant to fight. This was egoism of weakness. But the same was posing as a virtue. He said: (B.G. I-31), "*na kaanksha vijayam Krishna na cha raajyam sukhaani cha*", "O Krishna, I desire not victory, kingdom, and pleasures." Even refusing to do one's duty under the misconceived pretext of compassion and perverted argument about *dharma*, is egoism. Here Arjuna assumed doership in his duty of slaying the wicked.

Hence Krishna had to remind him (B.G. XVIII-17), "*yasya na ahamkrto bhaavo hatvaa apt sa imaan lokaan na hanti*"—"He who has not got the notion of egoism, though he kills these people, he does not kill." Again (B.G. XVIII-59), "*yad ahamkaaram aasritya na yotsya iti manyase, mithyaa esha vyavaasayah*"—"If you take refuge in egoism and think that you will not fight, it is an empty resolve." Moreover, "*ri'te api tvaam na bhavishyanti sarve yevasthitah pratyaneekeshu yodhaah*"— (B.G. XI-32) —"Even without you these hostile warriors lined up here shall not live." Because "*mayaa eva ete nihataah poorvam*"—"They have been already slain by Me", and "*ova nimitta maatram bhava*" (B.G. XI-33)—"You are merely an instrument."

Thus, the greatest lesson that emerges out of this episode in the *Mahabharata* is elimination of the sense of doership and complete annihilation of the feeling of "I" and "mine", which is based on the identification with the body. That is the only means to attain the state of *satvic* [pure], "*anathematic* [not egoistic]," "*nirahamkarah* [devoid of possessiveness and egoism]", and to qualify for the status of the beloved devotee of the Lord. Then, as Swami says, you become like the hollow flute fit to be taken by the Lord to play upon and produce Divine music.

~Dr. M. Balasubrahmanyan

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, June 1988

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# Q&A

WITH BHAGAVAN

## Glimpses of Baba

(From "The Movement," California)

**Movement Newspaper:** You've mentioned prior to this interview the "Hour of God." You said that this hour will be brought to us sometime during the 1980s. Will this come about by the development of man, or will this be an act of the God force itself?

**Dr. Gokak:** The development of man's technological forces has been going on for years. There is a possibility that there is going to be a world crisis around the 1980s, after that there will be a definite turn toward what we call the Golden Age. At this time, it will be clear to man that any more entering world power games will end in disaster for the whole world; and this will not be done. Simultaneous with this realization, there will be a descent of grace. This descent of grace is what will really bring forward the "Hour of God." This "Hour of God" is different from the prediction regarding the collapse of California.

The "Hour of God" is the hour of the unexpected; there will be different patterns in things. We will find that all elections that take place will place good men into positions of power. It is the good men that will begin to lead the industries. It will be the good men that will serve the people. Then there will be a great change in the very atmosphere. This will be one of the signs of the coming of the Golden Age.

This spiritual awareness will assert itself in small Gnostic groups, a group here, a group there. These groups will have lived this kind of Gnostic lifetime. And meanwhile, there will be signs of the coming Golden Age.

Sai Baba hinted that the person who was to come in a robe with a stock of hair on his head' is already here. If you like, this is the coming of Christ. You may or may not accept this, but this is what Sai Baba said.

**M. N.:** What is the importance of being with one's Teacher, physically.

**D. G.:** It has very great importance. One cannot consummate a relationship if his work takes him away. One cannot draw all the love and all the delight that he can receive by being nearby. Suppose I have Rama or Krishna for my Master. He is no longer in the flesh. It is quite possible that I could get in touch with my Master in my own meditative musings. But there is a particular delight in the physical presence of one's Master right with us as a human being. One relates to him as a human being and still he is the Divine in the human. This brings in a certain sense of fulfillment and a certain experience that has been spoken of in all the ancient Indian texts. They say that even the gods hunger for this relationship.

In this evolution, when God comes down and is represented in human flesh, he brings something of the divine himself in human flesh and is part of the evolutionary term "existence." There is a peculiar joy in this relationship of the human-Divine, which you don't get even in the Divine by Himself.

**M. N.:** If God wanted man to hear His voice, why does man have difficulty in hearing Him?

**D. G.:** As long as man loves to hear his own voice, how can he hear the voice of God? It's only when one shuts his own ears to his own voice that he can hear the voice of God. It's very difficult. The voice of God must penetrate through the many layers with which we have surrounded ourselves. The purer we are, the nearer we are to His voice.

**M. N.:** How has your spiritual development changed since working with Baba? Have you noticed the change?

**D. G.:** Yes, there has been a great deal of change. The first change was that He made me conscious of what divine love stands for. I was an intellectual. I compared my emotions to water that jets out from a rock. It is very difficult for this water to



come out. It's like penetrating the heart of a rock. This was my emotional life for a long, long time until I met Him. I don't know what He did, but He cut down some of this rock. He made it clear for this spring to gush forth. This is only one of the great things that He has done for me.

Another thing that He did for me was to correct me in so many small, even trifling, matters to which I never gave any thought. In India, an intellectual is a lazy person. There is so much labor available that one never has to do anything. This creates an imbalance in one's personality. Baba does everything. He never allows anyone to do His things. He must do His own packing. If there is a public meeting, He must put up the buntings. He does that. All of this enabled me to get back this balance that was lost.

**M. N.:** Would you encourage any spiritual students to attend the Sai Universities in India?

**D. G.:** Not unless an American student joins the College for Indian History or Sanskrit or learning a modern Indian language. If he joins anything like Chemistry or Engineering, he will find that he is doing something that is useless for his purpose. The Chemistry or Physics required in a developing country like India is different from the kind of Physics or Chemistry that is required here in America. One can join these universities for study in Indian disciplines, Indian Philosophy, and so on. And even better, he can join our summer courses; we admit others along with our own students. However, it may be difficult for them. Their diet must change, their habits have to change. They have to get up at four o' clock in the morning, chant *OM*, meditate, and go about singing songs of God throughout various villages in the early hours of the morning.

**M. N.:** I've heard that you were visiting with Dr. Benito Reyes of the University of *Avasthology* in Ojai. What was your impression of what was happening there?

**D. G.:** I have great faith in and a deep appreciation for what Dr. Reyes represents. I believe that he is a very genuine person who doesn't mince matters, who calls a spade a spade; he never compromises. When it comes to giving up advantages he might have, he will never compromise his Truth. This is a spiritual college interested in spiritual things. The entire management is interested in building a spiritual institution. Thus, there may be a great deal of strength in its success because this has been assured by Baba. Dr. Reyes told me that his own Master, who has synchronized with Baba, has told him that between the year 1976 and 1980 a great world Teacher will visit the institution. Dr. Reyes is sure that Sai Baba will come there during the period. For all of you readers who want to know when Baba will come to America, here is a prophecy. Between 1976 and 1980 he is going to come here.

**M. N.:** Would you encourage people to come to India to see Baba?

**D G.:** Oh, yes. Particularly because he has set a limit about it. He says he is not going into retirement until all those people that were destined to see him in this lifetime have seen him. Apparently, there are a certain number of people who still have to see him. Until then, he is open and accessible to everyone. I don't know when this will be completed, when the statistics will be over. Therefore, the sooner one goes to him the better.

**M. N.:** What does Baba require of people, if anything, so that He would wish to come to America? What should the people do here so that he would be satisfied?

**D. G.:** He would be very happy to come here and to see seekers of truth steadily pursuing their goal. Nothing pleases Him better than the sight of a man who is sincere to himself and loyal to truth. Those who have been Sai devotees in this country, if they have pursued the Sai way of life—which really means right doing, right thinking, right feeling, and the pouring forth of love to those who are around them—if this is done and the Sai way of life is adopted by them and practiced by them, nothing would be dearer to His heart. It's not that He wants big receptions. He really would be very happy to go to the homes of people who have lived this kind of life and spend His time with them. He has ideas of coming over here and speaking directly, without an intermediary. But when, I am unable to say. Probably in two or three years. Next year he won't be able to come here because that is the year of His 50th birthday and the year of festivities for us in India.

**M. N.:** What does Baba say of the different religions?

**D. G.:** The first thing He says is that there is only one religion, the religion of Love. There is only one language, and this is the language of the Heart. There is only one caste, and this is the caste of Humanity. There is only one God and He is omnipresent. I am quoting Baba's own words. He stands for this universality of outlook; His *ashram* flag contains the symbols of all great religions of the world. Those people who want to believe in their own religion should never be disturbed. They should practice their religion spontaneously, but with proper understanding; they should not practice it in blind manner. One should be guided through His studies.

There are people who don't want many rituals to bind them on their way. They want to feel free. They want to live a life of psychological awareness. They don't want to be bound down by any rituals. Their hearts prompt them to turn their whole life into a pilgrimage. If one wants to turn his life into a ritual and be a free person not professing any religion but speaking only of the Divine, then this also is welcome. Just as Baba doesn't want rituals to be discarded, he doesn't want rituals to be adopted either. It depends on a person's needs in his life. If one needs a religion then he takes it with understanding. If one needs the other lifestyle, then he takes that with understanding.

**M. N.:** Is there a reason why Baba is always seen in crowds?

**D. G.:** This is His role. The 24 hours of every day are directed toward liberating the common man, setting him free from his bondage, wherever he may be from. All the methods, techniques, and exposition of His philosophy are directed toward this particular purpose.

His methods are those for redeeming the common man. His *bhajans* [devotional songs], which are sung with concentration on their rhythm, music, meaning, and imagery, can liberate the heart and release these springs of life. He has transformed the lives of millions of Indian people and thousands from all parts of the world.

**M. N.:** Does Baba ever manifest large objects like a house or an airplane? I've seen some of the small objects that he has manifested—rings, necklaces, and statues.

**D. G.:** I have not seen anything like this done, but from what I know of him, a thing like this is possible. If a man can bring back the life of the dead, which has happened in two or three cases, or be in two places at the same time, this also can happen. It has not happened because it was not necessary. These materializations do not take place for fun. They take place when the need is there; when the circumstances require them then they are done.

**M. N.:** Has Baba explained His ability to do the miracles that we hear about, and His manifestations?

**D. G.:** Yes. He has said, "I don't perform miracles, these miracles flow from Me; how can I help it? It's my love that expresses itself in this form. I see a person who is dear to me, such a beautiful Soul, and a ring comes out and I give it to him! Here is somebody else; he needs to be healed. He is such a fine person, and some medicine comes out or some healing *Vibhuti* [sacred ash] and I give it to him!" This is love, nothing else but love. Somebody asked Him, "How is it that you cure so many incurable diseases?" Baba answered, "It's not always done. It's my experience that I am in the heart of every living being. I am seated there whether he acknowledges Me or not. I am in the heart of every living creature. I therefore love everyone, for in a sense I love myself. If I do this and if the other person also responds to Me and loves Me, then the negative and the positive meet and My love and his love flow into each other; there is a conjunction. And then there is a cure. Where there is no response in love, there is no cure."

"If I am to satisfy the legitimate worldly desires of My devotees, later I want them to want spiritual gifts. I want them to ask for God Himself. To train them toward this desire for God, I satisfy their worldly desires now. I do this so that they might come to Me for something greater."

These are techniques required of a redeemer who deals with the common man.

*Oh Sai!  
I long to know Thee better, day by day,  
I want to draw much closer when I pray,  
To listen more intently for Thy voice,  
To let the things Thou chooseth be my choice.*

**Source:** *Sanathana Sarathi*, Jan. 1975

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## Thought of the MONTH

### Purity

The heart of a human being should be full of the noble qualities of tolerance, perseverance, sympathy, and contentment. Only then can the human easily understand the principle of the Self and propagate the same. The principle of the Self cannot be attained merely by education, scholarship, and intelligence. Purity of heart is of utmost importance for this.

What education did noble souls like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Kabir, and Surdas have? Ramakrishna was not highly educated, yet he earned worldwide name and fame as *Paramahansa* (realized person). His purity of heart was responsible for this.

To attain purity of heart, there is no need to perform chanting, penance, and meditation, nor is there any need to study the *Vedas*, scriptures, *Puranas* and *Itihasas* (epics and mythological texts). Love for God is the only requirement to attain purity of heart. There is nothing greater than this. The heart that is full of love for God is truly the heart of a human being.

~*Sri Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol 29 (1996)

Let no one be proud about his beauty, strength, and youth. The ravages of old age are ahead and will overwhelm him. Even while you feel puffed up by your strength and energy as a youth, age creeps on you irrevocably. With the body bent, wrinkles on the face, and bleared eyes, the old man becomes a butt of jokes for juveniles, who call him an old monkey. What is lasting in all this? Everything is subject to change and decay in this world. Whether it be physical objects or individuals, all are transient and impermanent. Nothing is lasting. Only your purity is permanent. Purity is the essential nature of man. But if man leads a polluted life, he is degrading himself.

~*Sri Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol 21 (1988)

How can a man who is not aware of his humanness recognize the Divinity within him? Hence the first requisite is the recognition by everyone of his human essence. Basing on this truth, Buddha declared that everyone should cultivate at the outset *samyak-drishti* (a pure vision). It is only when man has a pure vision that he can get rid of impurities in the body, speech, and mind. It is this purity that can protect man from invasion of impurities through the eyes and the ears. Hence the first requirement for every man is *samyak-drishti*. The second quality that is needed is *samyak-sankalpa* (pure thoughts). Everyone should have pure thoughts. Only the person who has developed purity in vision can have purity in thoughts. The third requirement for every man, along with purity in vision and thought, is *samyak-karma* (pure deeds). Everyone should do pure deeds. Through pure deeds man can recognize his human essence.

Man is not merely an embodied being. By his capacity for developing good vision, entertaining good thoughts, and performing good deeds, he has the power to transform humanness into Divinity. A fourth requirement for man is *samyak-shruti* (listening to sacred words). When one listens to unsacred words, he can have only unsacred thoughts. The fifth quality prescribed by Buddha is *samyak-jjeevanam* (living a pure life). What is meant by "living"? It is not leading a worldly life attached to worldly pursuits. True living means making one's life meaningful by ideal actions. Man's life must be governed by idealism in action.

~Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 30 (1997)

Only by the light of the Divine lamp inside can you blossom as a worthwhile person. Inner purity is the greatest wealth that one can acquire. The inner purity is the wick in the container of the heart. Devotion is the oil and Divine grace is the fire with which the lamp of wisdom can be lit. The prime requisite for achieving Divine Grace is to have harmony in thought, word, and deed.

~Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 28 (1995)

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