

Stoop to Serve

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba gave a discourse for Ganesh Chaturthi in 1971 and said: service, the utilization of time, and skill to uplift society—that is the highest form of adoration that God will reward with His grace.

Vinayaka Chaturthi is the name of the festival celebrated today all over the country, from the Himalayas to the Cape, and wherever people of this country owing allegiance to its culture live. *Vinayaka* or *Ganesha* or *Ganapati* or *Vighneshwara*—all indicate the Elephant-God. He is popular among young and old and is worshipped as the very first deity before beginning any ceremony or *samskara* (purificatory ritual), any *yaga* or *yajna*, any vow or fast or pilgrimage. He is the Lord of the *Ganas* or divine forces inside and outside the human body; He is the Lord who masters and overwhelms *vighna* (obstacles), however imminent or eminent. This is the natural effect of the fact that *Ganapati* is the God of intelligence, *vidya* or *buddhi* (learning or intellect).

Ganapati is a God revered in *tantric* (ritualistic) lore, and by various *Vedic mantras*. The elephant is proverbially the most intelligent among the mammals and it is vegetarian, indicating its *satwic* (balanced or pure) nature. *Ganapati* has the head of the elephant, for it indicates the intelligence through which obstacles in the path of achievement, secular as well as spiritual, can be overcome.

There is a popular verse used on most occasions when *Ganapati* is invoked. It mentions various attributes of this God: *Suklambaradharam* (wearing white vesture) is the first, this is the symbol of purity, for *ambara* also means the sky, the *akasa* of the heart. *Ganapati* is pure and has universal love and compassion. *Vishnu* is the second attribute ascribed to Him. *Vishnu* means that He is always present everywhere. *Shashivarnam* is the third adjective, used.

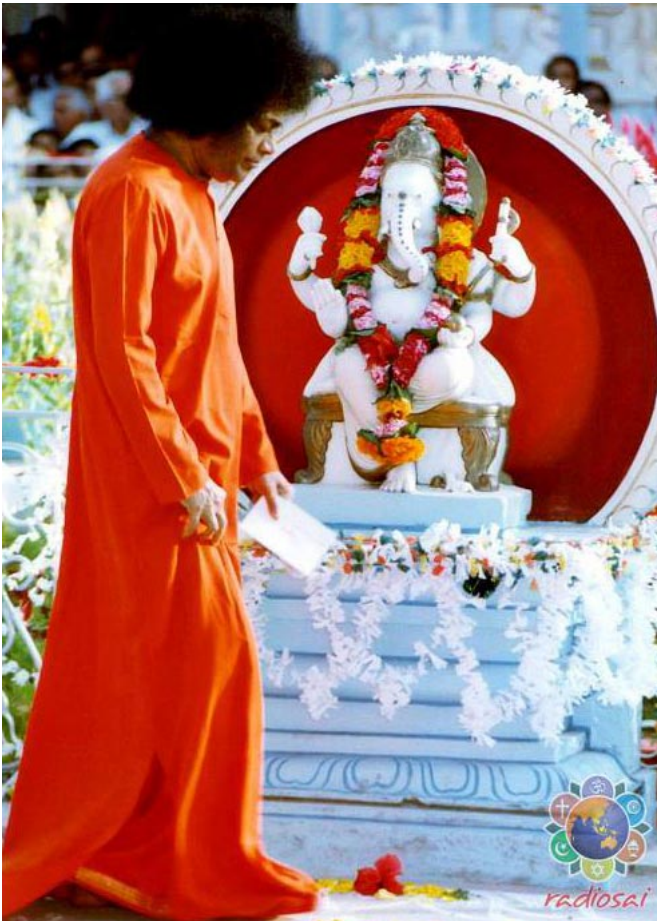
Of the complexion of ash or *vibhuti*, that is to say, glowing with spiritual splendor, with the majesty of spiritual attainments, achievements, and potentialities. These are also called *vibhutis*, for in the *Gita* we find Krishna saying, wherever you see power, glory, majesty (*vibhuti*), know that it is Mine!

Ganesha is OM personified

Ganesha is bathed in His Divine glory; that is the significance of the attribute *shashivarnam*. *Chatur-bhuja* (four-handed) is the next denotation. This means that

apart from two visible hands, He has two invisible hands that are available for the two divine uses of (1) Blessing the devotee and (2) Guarding him from danger. The last of the descriptive words is: *prasannavadanam* (of graceful countenance). The countenance depicts the inner calm, happiness, balance, inner grace and mercy, the consciousness of strength and sovereignty.

Without intelligent discrimination, no skill or strength can be profitably used. One must know how fire, for example, or the electric current has to be used and how far one can deal with it as an instrument for our needs. The senses of man are also like fire; they have to be kept under constant vigil and control.



No worship can succeed unless the heart is pure and the senses are mastered. Ganesha is the God who helps overcome obstacles; but He will create obstacles when good endeavor is obstructed by bad influences. He will clear the path for the sincere *sadhaka* (spiritual aspirant). He is *prasannavadanam* (of beneficial looks) when you pray to Him for good ends, but He will not be that when you seek His help for nefarious stratagems! He is *pranava-swarupa*, the *OM* personified, so He is auspiciousness itself.

When God is adored and man is injured, there can be no auspiciousness in such deeds. Man is God encased in human form; he is the Divine in that form and with that name. If the *anu* (part) is neglected, how can the *ghana* (whole) be gained? If the *paisa*

[coin] is discarded, how can the rupee [note] be gained? It all begins with a single *paisa*; another added to it makes two, and 98 again make the lump a *rupee*! Man is the one; start revering him then you can gain the grace of the invisible God. Neglect the visible *paisa*, you lose the invisible *rupee*!

The basic defect of man is greed, uncontrolled desire

Man loses his status of humanness through acts that shame even the beasts. He does not strive toward revealing and manifesting his latent divinity! There is not as big a

failing as this sliding back into the animal from which he rose! If he keeps on with his human attributes and capacities, that will deserve congratulation enough. A formidable list can be made of the inadequacies and defects of man, but the basic defect is 'greed', 'uncontrolled desire'—always clamoring for more because of the ceaseless prompting of the senses! Ravana destroyed himself afflicted by greed. The very Gods were his chamberlains; such was the dread his austerity invoked, such was the reward for his *sadhana*! But he was not content. The flames of lust rose as fast as they were fed. Dhritarashtra, the father of the Kauravas, was enamored of the greedy plans of his sons, and so he lost all of them, without a survivor, in the field of battle though their number was a hundred!

Let your heart pant for God

While moving through the dense jungle called 'life on earth', in the thick darkness of *ajnana* (ignorance) of the place you have come from and the place to which you should go, and even of your own real identity, six dacoits—Lust, anger, greed, attachment, egoism, hate—pounce on you, and you can overwhelm them and save yourself only by means of the light shed by *jnana* (spiritual wisdom) and wielding the weapon of *bhakti* or dedicated living.

The 'light of wisdom' can shine bright and far only when love, pure love, love that does not demand any requital, is firm in the heart. He who loves for the sake of some requital, or for being loved in return, is a coolie with his eye glued to the wages.

You are really loving only yourself, for, there is only You in everyone. *Soham*—He is I. Whoever you injure, it is you that suffers; whoever you cheat, it is you who are cheated. If you do not do your duty to the best of your ability and intelligence, and to the full satisfaction of your own conscience, you are cheating yourself. I have known that lecturers in the colleges have to take lecture only for eight classes of one hour each per week! And they do not put the rest of the hours to any beneficial use either!

Service, the utilization of time and skill for the uplift of society—that is the highest form of adoration that God will reward with grace. You get the actual experience of *sat-chit-ananda* through service. For, through service you conquer egoism and convince yourselves of the unity that underlies creation. Everyone, be he an office-bearer or not, must gird up his loins and stoop for work. The body must be sanctified through *karma* (good action) and the mind through *dhyana* (meditation). In all parts of the country, these units must uphold the ideals and practice them so that they become inspiring examples for the people.

Bhajan must be a felt experience. Do not sing with one eye on the song that makes the effect on the listeners, and the other on the effect it makes on God. Let your heart pant for God; then the *raga* (musical tune) and *tala* (musical beat) will automatically be pleasant and correct. Sincerity will blot out all errors in *raga* and *tala*! Do not allow even one vice like the vice of conceit to enter and ensconce itself in your heart.

All the water in a well becomes undrinkable even if one frog is dead and its corpse floats on it. A hundred live frogs will not render it unpotable; but a single dead one will!

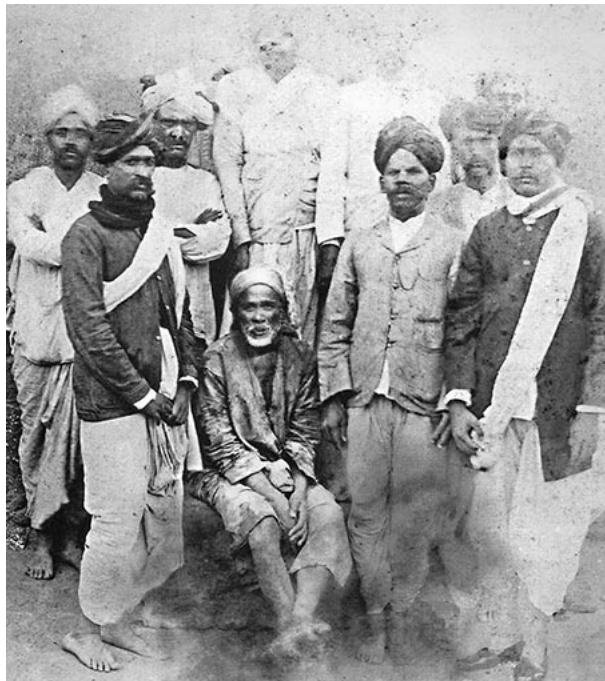
Life must be lived through the channel marked out by embankments that slow the raging flood and direct it into useful fields. *Na shreyo niyamam vina*—"No progress without rules and restrictions." Blessed are they who obey the commandments, for they will be rewarded.

Source: *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Vol. 11

Our Offering

The *Bhagavad-Gita* (IX, 26) says, 'Offer Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, a drop of water; that is enough.' But Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba does not ask even these things. He says that there is no use in offering God leaves that fade, flowers that crumple, fruits that rot, and water that becomes foul. Give Me your heart, pure and full of devotion, He says. He calls to Him those whom He has chosen and teaches them this great lesson—offer unto God the pure heart filled with devotion. If you think that you have come here, to Prasanthi Nilayam, to have His *darshan* [seeing Him] you are mistaken; He has chosen you and brought you here. God wants you to come here and so you have come.

If we must find out what exactly we have to offer to Bhagavan, we can know it well by examining the career of Mhalasapathi, who served Baba in His previous body at Shirdi. He was an ignorant villager with no pretensions to wealth or learning. He was the first to welcome Sai Baba when He reached Shirdi with the marriage party of Chand Patil. The carts of the party were loosened in the open space before Khandoba's Temple, and one by one the members of the party got down from the carts. When Baba got down, Mhalasapathi saw Him; he said *Ya Sai* (Welcome, O Sai). Thenceforth He was known as Sai Baba; Baba adopted that name.



He was sleeping with Baba at Dwarakamayi until the *Mahasamadhi*. He was such a great devotee of Baba that Baba called him by that very rare appellation, *bhakta* [devotee]—*bhagat!* This *dasya bhava* [attitude of servitude] is the attitude we should have toward *Bhagavan*; that is the best. He loves us beyond description by words; one glance from His eye is enough to make us happy forever. We who are less than the dust of His feet, He deigns to call near Him and use for His purpose and Mission. Mhalasapathi was very poor; Baba often used to ask him, "There are many rich people coming here; I shall tell them to give you money so that you can be rid of this trouble." But every time Mhalasapathi refused to take anything. He wanted only Baba's grace and the chance to serve Baba. Leave everything to Bhagavan, He knows best, He will give us what we deserve and what His grace can win for us.

Four years after Baba left, Mhalasapathi passed away on one *Ekadasi* Day, with the words Sai Sai on his lips, supremely peaceful and happy. That is the life we should emulate; that is the *bhava* [attitude] we must cultivate. May *Bhagavan* endow us with the discrimination to elect this path and stick to it through to the very Goal.

~From Speech by K. P. Mukunda Prabhu, Prasanthi Nilayam 28/8/67

Source: *Sathya Sai Speaks*, Sept. 1967

Be humble, so that you can escape the fury of the passions and the emotions. A tree that holds its head high is torn down by the raging floods; but a reed bends low when the flood swirls around it and so it survives the fury of the waters. Man must learn to be egoless and humble.

~Baba

Three-in-One Now

On Krishna Ashtami in 1967, Bhagavan Baba in His discourse said that man must allow the Krishna within him to Lord over his mind and let Him trample on the hissing hoods and tame the vicious viper; let it vomit the venom and become satwic (pious) and sweet.

This day is a sacred day, when devotees dwell upon the majesty and splendor of the Lord, and taste the sweetness of His name, which is so dear to them because it holds within itself the entire *Bhagavatha* [Song of Krishna]. The *Avatar* (manifestation of God) of Krishna was a full incarnation with all the 16 facets of glory. In the *Avatar* of Rama, out of the 16 the three brothers had one each and *Parashurama*, the contemporary, had one until Rama met Him and overpowered Him and drew within

himself the fraction of the divine power that He had. Other incarnations were for ad-hoc purposes, the suppression of evil represented by one evil person or group of persons. The Rama and Krishna *avatars* were, however, for more general purposes, the mission of restoring *dharma* (right action) and fostering virtuous living, besides punishing the wicked and teaching the world that vice will not succeed. Man is an amalgam of humanity, base animal urges, and divinity. It is a tragedy if he cannot get rid of the lower animal behaviors; it is a greater tragedy if he cannot cultivate his divinity. Contemplation of the Rama and Krishna *Avatars* and their *leelas* (divine plays) and *mahimas* (miracle powers) is the surest method of cultivating the divine in man.



Before every incarnation, two collaborators for the task for which the incarnation comes, also appear—the *Mayashakti* (deluding power) and *Yogashakti* (power of communion with the Divine). *Maya* [illusion] comes as the elder sister to warn the wicked; *Yoga* [union] comes as the elder brother to enthuse and keep constant company. *Maya* thrust Kamsa deeper and deeper into perdition so that his downfall will be more terrible and educative. But in this *Kali* [Iron] age, the wicked have to be reformed

and reconstructed through love and compassion. That is why this *Avatar* has come unarmed. It has come with the message of love. The only weapon that can transform the vile and the vicious is the name of the Lord uttered with love.

The great lesson of the Kalinga episode for man

The name is saturated with divine glory; so when it is turned over in the mind it transmutes it into an instrument for liberation from delusion. Take the name *navaneetachora* (butter-thief) that is used for Krishna. It does not mean a person who runs away with the butter that people have stored. It is not the stuff called butter that is got by churning curdled milk that He stole. It is the butter of faith, created by the churning process called 'yearning,' from the curdled milk called 'worldly experiences.' He covets only this 'butter.' When *Yashoda* [Krishna's mother] chided the child Krishna for this 'theft,' He replied, "But Mother, they like Me for stealing it; they are sorry if I do not; they churn it and they churn it in the hope that I will steal it; when I steal it, their hearts are illumined, and they awaken."

Of all the wondrous adventures that astounded people during His childhood, the one that revealed to them the Divinity that had come among them was the *Kalinga* episode; it is most meaningful. The serpent *Kalinga* was poisoning the waters of the Yamuna [River] and the atmosphere over it with its breath. All who approached that area, men or cattle, fell dead. But Krishna, the divine boy, jumped into the depths, forced the foul snake to rise above the level of the river, and leaping on its rapid range of hoods He danced upon them with His tender lotus feet. The pressure of those soft silken soles was enough to force the deadly poison out from the fangs of the monstrous cobra and render it harmless forever.

Allow the Divine in you to Lord over the mind

This is a great lesson for man. This *leela* [divine play] is quite unlike earlier incidents that evidenced the child's super-human strength and wisdom. He was lifted away by the storm-demon, he was hit by the calf-demon, he was felled by the cart-demon, he was pecked at by the stork-demon, he was poisoned by the nurse-demon; but sceptics can easily ascribe these miracles to accident or coincidence or exaggeration. But the *Kalinga* episode is a valuable lesson in spiritual *sadhana* [devotional effort].

In the *Manasa-sarovar* (the deep placid mind-lake) of every man, there lurks a poisonous cobra with six hoods—lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride, and hate—infesting the air and destroying all who are near it. The name of the Lord, when it dives into the depths, forces it to come up to the surface so that it may be destroyed. So allow the divine in you, the Krishna, to lord over the mind. Let Him trample on the hissing hoods and tame the vicious viper. Let it vomit the venom, become *satwic* (pious) and sweet. This is the *sadhana*—the episode teaches, the duty it enjoins.

Like all *avatars*, Krishna announced His advent to the world bit by bit, step by step, testing every time how far the reality would be accepted by the masses. The signs and miracles were intended then as now to proclaim the *avatar*. Even while in the cradle, Yashoda had a surprise from the child. She was singing lullabies and relating stories to send the child to sleep. One day she told the Ramayana story—how Dasharatha had four sons, how the eldest son, Rama, grew; how Rama was about to be enthroned as crown prince; how His step-mother persuaded His father to send Him to exile in the forest for 14 years; how a golden deer appeared before His dearly beloved wife; how He pursued wicked Ravana who had played this trick to get Rama out of the way, came to the hermitage at that time and carried her away to his island kingdom! As she said this, the child seemed to be terribly angry. It held forth Its hand and cried, "Lakshmana! Give Me My bow and arrow." The mother remembered that Lakshmana was the brother who accompanied Rama to the forest and she was convinced that He who was Rama had come as Krishna to the world again.

Krishna's revelation of His Incarnation

Chaithanya, as a child, also gave indications of His being an incarnation [of Krishna] to His mother. Chaithanya was then a baby crawling on all fours. His mother had a guest in the house, an old orthodox Brahmin, who was cooking his own lunch from

the provisions given by her. He desired his food to be ceremonially pure, uncontaminated by the touch of other hands. He offered to God the food he proposed to eat; that was his vow. It was rather late when the offering was ready. Just when he sat before the idol of Krishna for worship, the child toddled forward and dipped his fingers in the vessel of food thus making it 'impure' as an offering to God. So, provisions were given again, food was cooked again, and very late in the day the worship was resumed. This time, too, the child crawled in from somewhere and contaminated the sacred food! It repeated the mischief a third time. The mother dragged the child away and threatened to thrash the prank out of its head. But the child asked the mother quite innocently, "He is calling on me to eat it, but when I go near him he gets angry." Thus, did He reveal that He was Krishna come again.

All *avatars* teach as the first step in the long road of *sadhana* the giving up of attachment. In the *Tretayuga*, the *yoga-vasishtha* (Hindu text) taught the same rule. In the *Dwaparayuga*, Krishna taught Arjuna to give up *vishaya-vasana* (attachment to the objective world).

Once there was an ascetic who had given up all attachment. He was going along a path in the Himalayas when the wind blew the hair on to his face and blocked his vision. So he turned and walked in the opposite direction. He was not attached to any direction or place!

People utter with apparent faith, "Krishna-Krishna-Krishna," but they never give up *trishna* (thirst) for worldly goods or fame. In each *yuga* [era of time], you have the *avatar* of the Lord come to redeem, revive, and re-build. At the present time, *Mahashakti* (superpower), *Mayashakti* (power of illusion) and *Yogashakti* (power of the vision of God) all have come together in one human form. Your endeavor should be to draw near and earn His grace.

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, Vol. 7

Visit *Sai Sarathi* on the web at SaiSarathi.com

Sai Sarathi welcomes submissions of articles, transcriptions of talks, and student stories about Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, His teachings, and personal experiences at His lotus feet. We also welcome SSE student projects and announcements for regional events.

To submit text or photos, please email them to "editor@SaiSarathi.com."

Soar Like a Lark

We totter and grope in the dark
In the mire of ignorance; we flounder,
Instead of soaring like a lark!

Come, arise, awake, falter not,
For, He is here; why fear? He is so near!

Tune up the heart; cleanse the mind;
Brush the cobwebs away.
The grace, ever-present, doth flow—
O, take it in, my thirsty friend.
We can hear the flute of the Lord;

Why care for lesser joys?
Let the Lotus bloom;
Dance, O Dance to the music of His Name.
The Name so fragrant, sweet, and pure;
From millions of tongues, It echoes soft,
From millions of hearts its pulse-beats rise.

O the Glory and the Ecstasy
His Name can bring!!

—Dr. Keki M. Mistry, B. D. S. M. S.F.C.D
Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, Oct. 1967

Thrice Blessed by Sri Sathya Sai

*R. Subramanian, a student of Sri Sathya Sai College from Whitefield (1977-1980),
is currently a Lecturer in the Department of Mathematics at the
Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher learning, Prasanthi Nilayam Campus.*

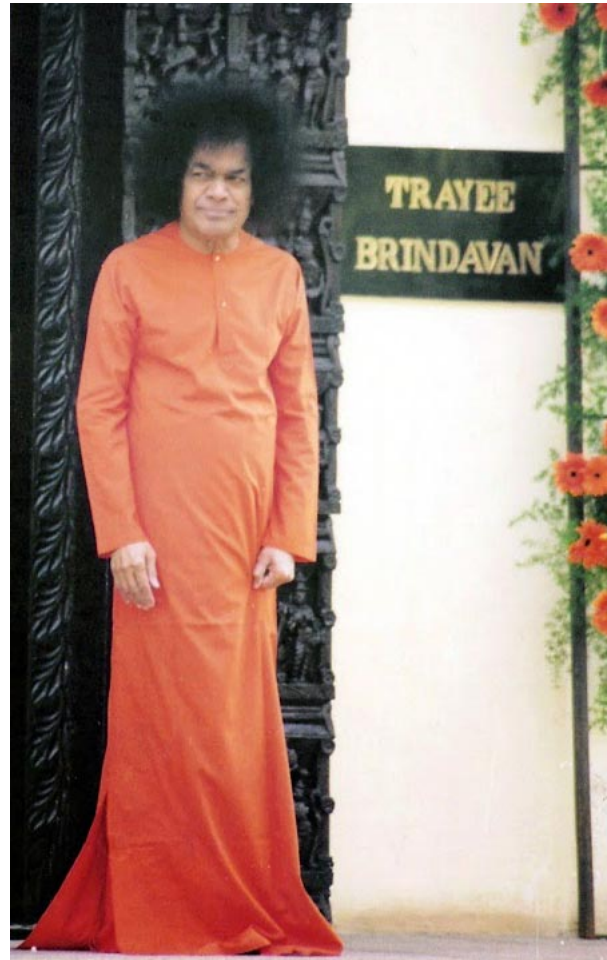
It is near to 17 years since I woke up to the presence of the Lord on this earth and more than 13 years since I entered the sacred precincts of Brindavan [Baba's *ashram* in Bangalore]. As I pause during my life and glance at the past, I compare my life that has been these many years with what it would have been. As I look at myself, I notice the changes effected in me—my personality, thinking, habits, ambitions.... And taking stock, I consider myself thrice blessed to have been a

student in *Bhagavan's* college, to be a resident of Brindavan, and to have become a follower of *Bhagavan*.

Living in the Hostel in Brindavan is a unique experience. Here one must lead a disciplined and holy life punctuated with religious and moral learning. The Hostel is isolated from the disturbances and pressures of the world. Here one meets a wide variety of people, young and elderly from various sections of life, possessing a high degree of maturity and understanding of the world, and filled with love for God. The serene, holy, and austere atmosphere breeds a healthy mind possessed with calmness and clarity of thought that brings about a gradual but permanent change in one's personality and a new attitude toward life.

Crowning all these is the opportunity of being in the proximity of *Bhagavan* when He is in Brindavan. The morning and evening sessions in the *Mandir* [temple] are the most cherished periods of time during one's stay in the hostel. It is during these periods that *Bhagavan* bends down to our human level and through humor, playfulness, concern, and even through silence fills us with joy, peace, and spiritual elevation.

Any evening session in Brindavan finds one and all eager to be nearest to the Divine Chair, jostling for space. When *Bhagavan* has seated Himself, everyone sits in rapt attention drinking in His benign smile, the loveliness of His form, and nectarine sweetness of His child-like sport. And this way the face is relieved of tension and fear and the heart is cleared of worry and sorrow and is filled with happiness and delight through light talk, conversations, and discourses. He impresses upon the students the need to become disciplined and morally upright. He not merely preaches but also practices. He does not impress or overawe the students by a display of His formidable powers or by philosophic complexities.



He leads a life of openness and continuous activity. Depending very little on others, He performs His personal tasks with cheerfulness and efficiency. His life is one of continuous sacrifice and great austerity. A master in time management and

planning. He achieves varied momentous tasks within the framework of a tight and unvaried routine. He is a perfectionist in tasks—spiritual or most mundane.

Come the *Veda Purusha Yajna* during *Dassara*, He expects a strict adherence to prescribed *Vedic* injunctions and a perfect recital of the *mantras* [holy verses]. Come the Annual Convocation of the Institute, He issues instructions to the minutest details for taking care of the guests, for stage arrangements, etc. It is in the light of these qualities—perfection in action, purity, dedication to a task, disciplined living, self-sacrificing, modesty, total goodness, to name but a few—observed in *Bhagavan* that a student sees in Him a perfect human being, a Master, an Inspirer. Through no prompting, a student resolves to acquire at least a fraction of these qualities for himself.

There is none to equal *Bhagavan* in the handling of adolescent students. It is a most wondrous sight to see students filled with restless energy and great dynamism being held spellbound and captive by His mere Presence, alert at His slightest gesture, and eager to fulfil His smallest wish. The power that *Bhagavan* wields over the students is that of love and understanding. He exhibits infinite tolerance for their shortcomings and exercises great patience in the face of their waywardness and vacillation. Though He deals firmly with any deliberate mischief, His actions are permeated with love. Love that is the magic wand *Bhagavan* uses to control the students and bind them to Himself. It is this bond of love that prepares a student to accept *Bhagavan's* teachings and His mode of education.

Through His teachings, which are simple but effectively worded, often couched in attractive terms and beautiful phrases, He sows the seed of transformation in every student. He allows enough time for the seed to sprout, flower, and [come to] fruition. No student who has passed through the portals of His college can remain unmoved, unshaken.

The most important change that has been wrought in me by *Bhagavan*, as I see it, is the development of a strong faith in God; more, a love for God and spiritual matters. Faith in God is acquired in many ways. I, among the many fortunate ones, could develop this love for God by living near Him, observing His actions with my physical eyes, experiencing Him, and witnessing manifestations of His power and glory.

Bhagavan's words and teachings touch one's heart. They stir up in one's heart a longing for something not found in this world. When one sees Him and comes close to Him, one realizes that there is no need to search anywhere to fulfill this longing. When I see Him, I remember the words of Lord Jesus: I am the way, the truth, and the life.

He has taught that I must feel His presence in myself. A life lived for the service of the Lord becomes devotion in itself. Work, when performed the right way with the right spirit, has a liberating effect. He has taught that God is for those who are not

for themselves and demonstrated how one can perform all the allotted duties cheerfully and remain detached from the results. When God is the focus of one's life, the vision is clear and penetrating. Through His words, He has given a proper understanding of religion and spirituality and the need for God in one's life.

~R. Subramanian

Source: *Sai Nandana 1990* (65th Birthday Offering)

Q&A

WITH BHAGAVAN

Duty is God

In the car enroute to Anantapur, an American who was teaching at the Sathya Sai College at Brindavan said: Swami, I feel guilty about leaving my classes.

Sai: Duty in the world carries no force or weight when God calls. God is the goal of life. When in His company, there is no duty. When He is absent on tour, etc., then duty comes into full play, because duty is God.

Hislop: When I am absent from Swami's physical person and far away in America, I know of His actual presence by the Jasmine perfume. Someone said it was smelled by the smell sense of the subtle body, is this correct?

Sai: No. Senses are in the physical body. The subtle body does not have senses. The perfume is known by the physical senses.

Hislop: Does man have three bodies?

Sai: Yes. There is body, mind, and soul—physical body, subtle body, and causal body. On death, the physical and subtle bodies disintegrate, but the causal body remains.

Hislop: How about the five *kosas*, the five sheaths?

Sai: The food sheath, life sheath, and mind sheath are impermanent. The intelligence sheath and bliss sheath remain. The body is mud. Out of the mud everything grows. Only the body dies. Life and all the senses merge into mind. Mind merges into wisdom. Wisdom merges into bliss, into God. Thus are the five sheaths.

Hislop: What are the 14 *lokas*, the 14 worlds?

Sai: They are really thoughts. There are seven levels of thought ascending upward and seven downward.

Hislop: Swami, some people claim to travel on the astral plane by projecting their minds.

Sai: It is like dreams or visions; it is not real. However, if a vision appears in meditation, it is of something real.

Hislop: Time is set by the clock, and on the clock each minute is the same as the next. But in one's life, time goes slowly in one experience and extremely fast in the next.

Sai: Hislop goes to sleep in Bombay. He dreams that he is born in California, and he lives through 65 years of life. Yet this entire 65 years takes only two minutes of clock time. Hislop has gone to sleep in Bombay, but the Bombay body is left behind. This is proof that Hislop is not that body. To the *jnani* [wise], who has wakened to wisdom, 65 years of 'waking life' is just a moment—like the dream to Hislop.

Hislop: What is this present moment?

Sai: God is omnipresent. That is, He is ever present. This moment is God. There is only God. Truth is the same in the past, in the present, and it will remain the same in the future. Therefore, the time sequence of past, present, future is just imagination. But 'I' am timeless, beyond time. 'I' look at past, present, future; they are not me. Of course, past, present, and future must be taken into account in daily affairs. These two aspects of time must be mixed and in operation at the same time. The perception that the time sequence is only imagination, that 'I' am timeless and beyond time, both should be there at the very moment that one is using the time sequence in his daily affairs.

Hislop: In terms of the unreality of time, how are we to experience past, present, and future?

Sai: They are unreal. But at the same time the *atma* is real. Hold to that central reality. There need be no confusion. The inward intelligence may harmonize the experience of the relative time and the permanent Self. Even now you are hearing and seeing, yet the inward intelligence co-ordinates the two.

Hislop: At this moment we seem to be as we are at this moment. When Swami looks at us with His eyes, what is it that He sees?

Sai: Man has two eyes; he sees only past and present. God has three eyes. God's eyes are spiritual. He sees in front, behind, above, below. Like the garland pulled over the finger—finger is the present and it is in touch with past and future. God is the

present. He is omnipresent. As Baba looks at people, he sees the past, the present moment, the future, and everywhere in every direction.

Source: *Conversations with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

Thought of the MONTH

Two Paths: *pravritti marga* (the path of involvement) or the *nivritti marga* (the path of non-involvement)

An able monarch will have his ministers under control; he will direct them along proper lines and maintain the peace and security of the kingdom. On the other hand, a monarch who allows himself to be controlled by the ministers does not deserve the throne; he is spurned and disgraced. His kingdom has no peace and security. The mind is the monarch in man; the senses are the ministers. It is the slave of its servants, and so the realm has no peace. Every *sadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) who aspires to achieve the expression and expansion of the divine in him has therefore to earn mastery over the senses. That is the first step. The next one is the conquest of the mind, its elimination. The third is uprooting the *vasanas* (innate tendencies), and the fourth, attainment of *jnana* (spiritual wisdom). The branches are the senses; the trunk is the mind; the roots are the innate tendencies. All three must be overcome and destroyed, so that the awareness of the *atmic* (divine) reality can be gained.

The mind hops from object to object with incredible speed. It rises to the heights and drops to the depths with every wink of the eye. It hides, deludes, and distorts. One can subdue it through concentration only. The process can be practiced in either of two directions: the *a-rupa* or the *sa-rupa*. *A-rupa* means 'unbound' by form. One feels that he is not the doer or enjoyer; he is only an agent of God, a tool, an instrument. One is not affected, well or ill, when the act results in good or bad. One has no identity with the *rupa* (form or body). *Sa-rupa* meditation gets lost in dualities of pleasure and pain, profit and loss, for it considers the name and form, the body and its activities as valid.

Similarly, Man has the choice of two paths—the *pravritti marga* (the path of involvement) or the *nivritti marga* (the path of non-involvement). When involved, man is confronted with the six internal foes—lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride, and hatred. When non-involved, man is helped by six internal friends—sense control, mind control, fortitude, contentment, faith, and equanimity. The human

body is deified as a temple, yes, but the foes have to be evacuated and the friends admitted before the Divine can establish itself there.

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 16 (1983)

Once, Uddhava went to *Gokulam* with a message from Krishna to the *gopikas* [milk-maidens]. Uddhava told them: "I have brought for you a remedy for the pain you are suffering as a result of separation from Krishna. You must take this medicine. Through this *yoga* you will be relieved of the *roga* (the ailment) from which you are suffering." The *gopikas* replied: "Oh, Great One! We do not suffer from any malady. Hence, we don't need any *yoga*. It is enough if we know the *yoga* by which we can return to Krishna." Uddhava asked: "What is this *yoga*?" A *gopika* replied: "The ordeal we enjoy on account of *tyaga* (renunciation) is itself a kind of *yoga*." Uddhava observed: "How can there be anything common between renunciation and enjoyment? The renunciant does not seek enjoyment. The one who enjoys is not concerned about renunciation. As the two are irreconcilable, how can you regard the enjoyment of separation as form of *yoga*?" The *gopika* said: "You simpleton! Is this all you have learnt from your nearness to Krishna? When a person gives up egoism in his doings and attachment to the enjoyment of their fruits, then *tyaga* (sacrifice), *yoga* (spiritual austerity), and *bhoga* (enjoyment) become one. First get rid of the conceit that I am the doer. Then free yourself from the desire to enjoy the fruits of your actions. When you have no attachment to the fruits of your actions and have no sense of ego in what you do, then there is no difference between *yoga* and *bhoga*."

Love of the Divine is the first requirement in the march toward the realization of one's humanness. You must have one-pointedness and strength of mind. The mind must be unwavering, and the heart must be pure and unpolluted. You must fill your life with unselfish deeds.

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 22 (1989)

