

"Stone as God," not "God as Stone"

In the culture of India, all religions and faiths are integrated harmoniously for, it emphasizes Righteous life, Love, and Service, beyond which there is no higher *sadhana* [spiritual effort]. But people have grown deaf to the call of this message, and those whose duty it is to attract people's attention to the lapse have been rendered weak and vacillating by the attraction of alien attitudes.

Throughout history, India has drawn the loyalty of her children to the four goals of *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha*, or rather, to the worldly ideals of *artha* and *kama* to be worked out within the limits set by *dharma* on the one side and *moksha* on the other. *Artha* (wealth) has to be won through *dharma* (righteousness); the only *kama* (desire, yearning) worth encouragement is the desire for *moksha* (liberation). Love is the impetus and Truth is the gain; they are the two wheels of the chariot of life. *Ahmisa paramo dharmah*—"Non-violence is the most meritorious activity." These axioms have been the life-breath of this nation since millennia, and they have become the heritage of each man, woman, and child. Therefore, it must be said, the present plight when we find violence stalking the land, and brother stands with dagger drawn against brother, is a standing disgrace to all that the land has been proclaiming as precious.

God can be cognized by pure consciousness only

Hin means *himsa* (violence) and *du* means *dura* (distant), so that *Hindu* means a person who is devoid of violence, who loves and sympathizes, who helps and serves—not one who hides and hits, harms and draws blood. The same sky is over every one's head; the same earth supports every one's feet; the same air enters every one's lungs! The same God brought forth all, brings up all, and brings about the end of this earthly career. Why then this inhuman role of foe and fanatic, of fight and feud?

In the *Gita*, the Lord has declared, *Beejam maam sarva bhootaanaam*—"I am the seed for all beings." The tree is a broad spread of leaf and flower, fruit and green. It is a fanned-out system of trunk, branches, and twigs! All have grown out of one single small seed! And every fruit of that tree has seeds of the same nature inside it! So, too, contemplate for a while on the magnificent multitude of life, all its rich variety of strong and weak, prey and hunter, distressed and delighted, creeping, crawling, flying, floating, walking, hanging, burrowing, diving, swimming—all these uncountable variety of created beings have come out of the *beejam* (Lord) and each

of them has in its core, the *beejam*, again (the Lord)! Visualize this Immanent Divinity; you become humble, wise, and full of love.

The God who is the origin and the goal can be cognized only by the pure consciousness, after *chitta shuddhi* (cleansing of the mind) is attained. And, to cleanse the consciousness, one must start early. The race is won by those who start early and drive slowly; then, they reach safely, not otherwise. Put the little feet on the path of God; the joy of the first steps will lead them forward. We in India see God in trees, in plants, in birds and beasts; we worship Him everywhere, in all things. People laugh at you when you worship a picture; and some weak-minded persons feel ashamed themselves, when they do so. But we are treating the picture as God, and not treating God as a picture. Worship the stone as God, not treat God as stone!

***Sadhana* is necessary to get vision of God**

Seeing alone is believing, for these critics. Will they deny the Sun in the sky when the clouds hide it from view? It is the cloud of *maya*, the curtain of confusion, that hides God from the consciousness of man. The eye affected by cataract swears that there is no lamp in the room; but an operation to remove it is needed for him to become aware of the lamp. That operation is the symbol of the spiritual discipline that one must undergo, in order to get the vision of God. Man is flying to the Moon, and diving into the sea; but he does not know how to live on earth with his fellowmen, in love and peace. He moves toward the Moon for fear that others may reach before him; and dives through the sea to strike terror, himself terrified of others!

The way to live without fearing or causing fear is laid down in the *Gita*, the very first *shloka* of which is about *Dharmakshetra* (field of righteousness). The *shloka* is about a question which Dhritarashtra asks. Who is this, Dhritarashtra? The word means, he who holds fast to the kingdom, who will not give it up, who is attached to it fanatically. Now, what is the *rashtra* (kingdom) for a person? All that is not he are his possessions; that is to say, his body, his senses, his knowledge, his feeling, emotions, besides his house, car, lands, reputation, etc. Dhrita-rashtra means, any person who treats things not his, as he himself, a person who identifies himself as his body, for example. He asked, Sanjaya to tell him what was happening in *Kurukshetra* and *Dharmakshetra*—The fields of action and of virtue.

Develop nearness and kinship with God

Sanjaya means, one who has won the victory, the victory over the senses and other forces that limit and divert the higher faculties that lead man Godward. He was asked about the progress of the battle that was being fought in *Kurukshetra*, which was also *Dharmakshetra*; his answer is summed up in the very last, the 700th *shloka* of the *Gita*: "The side that merges in the *Yogeshwar*, the Lord of those who seek to merge their identities, to lose their separate names and forms, Lord Krishna, that side will gain the victory." The first *shloka* has the question and the last, the answer! The rest of the text is the elaboration of this theme.

People have specialized in the various methods of worshipping God; there is a host of rites, ceremonials, hymns, festivals, fasts, vows, and pilgrimages; but, the best form of worship, the one that will bring the grace of God in ample measure, is to obey the commands of God. Adulation is poor adoration! Placing God at a great distance from you and praising Him as Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent will not please Him. Develop nearness, proximity, and kinship with God. Win Him by obedience, loyalty, humility, and purity.

Make your lives simple; fill the daily tasks with love and mutual co-operation; be tolerant toward the errors and failings of others; look upon them with sympathy and understanding; be calm and without agitation, under all conditions. Then, you can be happy, and the country can be happy. Your sentiments will be unselfish and your emotions, tender. Envy, hatred, and vindictiveness can gain no entrance into the stronghold of your mind, where mercy, benevolence, and indulgence stand guard.

Disappointments test your fortitude

God is not involved in either rewards or punishments. He only reflects, re-sounds, and re-acts! He is the Eternal Unaffected Witness! You decide your own fate. Do good, be good, you get good in return; be bad, do bad deeds, you reap bad results. Do not thank or blame God. Thank yourself, blame yourself! He does not even will that creation, protection, and destruction shall take place. They follow the same law, the innate law of the *maya*-ridden universe.

This electric current, for example, can be used by us, to turn the fans and give us coolness in this sultry weather; it can be used to give light, to magnify human speech and take the sound nearer to you; it can be made to produce many copies of a printed sheet. In all these cases, it creates. But, if you are so overcome by all the good that it does and your admiration goes a little too far and you grasp the wire that carries it to you, you are killed! The current creates; it protects; it destroys; it depends on how we utilize it.

Let the petty wishes for which you now approach God be realized or not; let the plans for promotion and progress that you place before God, be fulfilled or not; they are not so important after all. The primary aim should be to become Masters of yourselves, to hold intimate and constant communion with the Divine that is in you as well as in the Universe of which you are a part. Welcome disappointments, for they toughen you and test your fortitude.

The gold that was melting in the fire, before the goldsmith with his blowpipe, told him: "Do not exult when you drop me into the fire, and I am molten and the alloy is taken out of me. Remember I am rendered purer and more valuable every moment, whereas all that you get for your pains is smoke in the face and soot in the hand!"

Believe that ills draw you nearer to God

This is the lesson the *Mahabharatha* teaches! Never give up God, holding Him responsible for your ills; believe rather that the ills draw you nearer God, making you call on Him always when you are in difficulty. You suffer stomach pain, and the doctor gives you the pain of operation, in order to reduce that pain and give you relief. Then, you say, you have joy! Joy is but the interval between two moments of pain and pain the interval between two moments of joy.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa had a boil on his throat, and he could not swallow any food or even drink liquids without much pain. At this, Vivekananda pleaded with his Master, and prayed to him to seek the Mother's grace so that he might take in at least liquid food. Ramakrishna replied that he did pray to Mother and the Mother answered, "Are you not now taking enough food through all these billions of throats, the throats of all living beings in the world? Unable to take in through one out of the billion, why are you so upset?" The one *atma* (consciousness) is pervading everywhere; that was the lesson taught by the Mother. Everyone is just a wave, a part of the Universal, the *Paramatma*. That is the Truth, the *Sathya*.

Sathyanaasti paro dharmah—"There is no higher *dharmah* than Truth." Be true; that is the acme of righteousness, the essence of all morality. The truth of the One-ness of all involves love, service, peace, and so, it is the basis of moral living. All distinctions are temporary walls erected by ambition or hate.

All differences are trivial transitory marks

Now, Hindu *dharmah* or Christian *dharmah*, or Muslim *dharmah* is identified with external conformities like dress, coiffure, facial hairstyles, rosaries and caste marks, and other attitudes like whom one can touch and yet remain ceremonially pure, when one can pray, where one has to eat and what, and such trivial, transitory marks. It is mostly superstition—don't touch this, don't touch that!

Dharma must be surging from the heart as the cool energizing water of *prema* and *shanti* (love and peace). You can learn what exactly *dharmah* is from the *Ramayana*. Rama is the very embodiment of *dharmah*; every word and every deed is resonant with its message. Lakshmana, Rama's brother, who followed his footsteps throughout his earthly career, is the symbol of the mind; walking on the footprints of *dharmah*, it never lost its way; it triumphed in the lap of victory. The *Ramayana* is a textbook for *dharmah* to be lived out in every home, by the father, the mother, the son, the brother, the members of a joint family—both men and women.

Gandhiji dreamed of *Ramarajya* in *Bharath* [India]; he wanted that people here must live like the subjects of Rama in Ayodhya. But look at the sad contrast! Then, the brothers Rama and Lakshmana reached the supreme state of identity because of the love between them. Now brothers reach the Supreme Court, in their attempt to resolve differences and disputes, over some paltry properties, which are not proper ties at all! People climb rostrums and shout 'Brothers! And Sisters!' but that platitude remains a platitude! As soon as they descend from that altitude, the

sentiment melts into thin air. The brotherhood one has to cultivate is the readiness to give love for love, heart for heart and life for life!

Purify yourselves and purify the atmosphere

Bharatiya [Indian] culture condemns violence as bestial and even worse. Though the epics and ancient tales of this land speak of demons, men, and gods as diverse, they are names only for traits, which all share to a more or less extent. Humanity has to get rid of the dross of demonism and invest itself with splendor of divinity.

Take the story of Krishna in the *Bhagavatham*. Kamsa has *asuric* (demonic) character; his sister, Devaki, is human, and she brought forth Krishna, the Divine, that incarnated to rescue the world from perdition! The person who married Devaki, the person who had the honor to be the father of the Incarnation was Vasudeva. His sister's son, Shishupala is an *asura* (demon)! And, strangely enough, Shishupala nearly married the future Queen of Krishna, Rukmini. Krishna carried her away from the wedding gathering and saved her from being wedded to the demonic personality, Shishupala! So, it is clear, that the inclinations and behaviors of persons decided the category into which they were thrown—demon, human, or divine.

Be therefore ever vigilant that your activities do not drag you down into the depths of demon-hood; let them elevate you into the heights of Divinity. It is really commendable that in this City so many of you are engaged in *bhajans*, *nagarsankirtans*, and *namasmarana*. Let the Name of the Lord proceed from the heart, not from the lips. Be Prahladas, in the land that is sick with too many Hiranyakashipus. The Name of the Lord is the *Narasimha* that will save and sustain! Purify yourselves and purify the atmosphere, in which and by which you must live. That is my advice and my blessing.

Source: *Sathya Sai Speaks* Vol., 10

As the shadow that you cast is reduced bit by bit with every step that you take towards the Sun, until the Sun shines right on the top of your head and the shadow crawls under your feet and disappears, so maya [illusion] too becomes less and less effective as you march toward jnana [knowledge]. Then it is well established in your understanding and maya falls at your feet and is powerless to deceive you further; it disappears, so far as you are concerned.


~Sathya Sai Baba

A Petal in the Lotus

I am a petal in the lotus of Baba's Grace;
I am a drop in the Ocean of Baba's Compassion;
I am a flower in the beautiful Baba's Garland;
I am a star in the firmament of Baba's heart;
I am a silken thread in glowing Baba's *pitambar*;
I am a flaming camphor on the altar of Baba's Temple;
I am a humble blade of grass in Baba's green garden;
I am a ray, issuing out of Baba's radiant effulgence,
I am a dust clinking to Baba's fragrant Feet,
I am a breath, embodied out of Baba's Glory.

—K. Vaidyanathan

Offerings to the Divine Mother



Manhattan SSE

- Water Conservation

Offering - *Developing Watersense*



Our Humble Salutations to our Dear Mother Sai



Offering to Mother Earth on Easwaramma Day

The Three Wishes

Swami says, " Today, people desire that only their family and children should be happy. But Easwaramma was not like that. Easwaramma had a broad mind. She wanted everyone to be happy. Even though she was not educated she taught noble qualities to everyone."

Once, Easwaramma was returning from Chitravathi river with a vessel full of water. An old woman was walking along with her with great difficulty, while carrying the vessel filled with water. Easwaramma enquired "Mother! Are you having difficulty in carrying the vessel full of water?" The old woman who was perspiring and unable to keep pace with her replied, "Yes, mother! I am unable to carry this vessel for such a long distance. But, I have no children to help me in this task. I myself have to carry this vessel full of water every day." These words of agony were imprinted on the mind of Easwaramma.

Easwaramma wanted the village to have drinking water. Swami promised that it would be done. The bore wells were dug to overcome water scarcity, but they became useless within a short period of time. So, Swami got a bigger well dug in the Old Mandir. "Yad Bhavam Tat Bhavati" (as is the feeling, so is the result). If the intention is good, the result also is bound to be good. As the intentions were good, a copious spring of pure water gushed forth, even from a depth of seven feet! At the back of the Mandir, an entrance was provided for people to collect water.

– Easwaramma, The Chosen Mother, www.sathyasai.org




Why do we need to conserve water?

We need to save water to keep our daily activities going, to grow the food that we eat and to preserve natural habitats. Saving water also reduces the burden on water treatment facilities, saves money and energy.

More importantly, saving water ensures that we make a sufficient supply of water available for future generations. It also makes it possible for areas with little access to water to get enough to cater to their needs.

– *Why do We Need to Save Water*, www.oasense.com

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- Water is part of our daily life.
 - Food can't grow without water.
 - Wastewater affects the environment.
 - There is a limited water supply.
 - Saving water prevents groundwater depletion.
 - Conserving water reduces demands on technology and infrastructure

Water Conservation Project: A Mother's Wish

In SSE the children have been practicing Ceiling on Desires (COD) program for several weeks and developing useful habits and tools to not waste resources. This was the inspiration for the Water conservation offering in honor of Mother Easwamma three wishes. The following slides consist of the SSE student journey of developing watersense.



Ganesh- Group 3

For this water conservation project I timed myself while I showered for a week. Then I put in the information into a table as shown below. I realized the impact of the amount of time of showering by doing this project because a 5 minute shower wastes around 12.5 gallons of water. I managed to save water by taking these shorter showers.

Day	Time
3/23	4:16
3/24	3:51
3/25	3:47
3/26	3:27
3/27	3:02
3/28	2:55
3/29	3:14

**Gratitude to our
Mother Earth**

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

Thank You to All Mothers!!



Poems by SSE Students

Foundation of all children
Stands a pure figure
Waiting with open arms
Never found a quitter

Sacrifices so appreciated
no one loves more
than a mother's tender soul

Your soothing voice
nurtures my heart
with your wise words of wisdom
that make you so smart

You support dreams
you withdraw tears
through joy and sorrow
throughout the years

Oh dear mother
your love so promoted
like our dear Sai ma
ever so devoted

~ Sahana Narayanan, Grp. 3

A mother's love holds strong and true
They are always there for you through and through
No matter how tough things can get
They're in your life for each and every step

She's there to listen and understand,
Holding our dreams in her loving hand.
Her words of wisdom, like a guiding light,
Helping us navigate life's darkest frights

In her arms, we find comfort and rest,
A love that's long lasting, the very best.
For she is our rock, our pride, and might,
A mother's love, forever making our lives bright

Even our dear mother Sai forgives any mistakes
Our dearest mother has been known to give
And never to take

Our dearest mother Sai always comes to our rescue
Always there to guide and bless you

~ Sai Achintya Kolanivada, Grp. 3

Submitted by SSE students from SSS Flushing Ct.

Thought of the MONTH

Fill Your Heart with Compassion

Some people say that money is the basis of the entire world (*dhana moolam idam jagat*). Others say that righteousness is the basis of the entire world (*dharma moolam idam jagat*). But the correct statement is that compassion is the basis of the world (*daya moolam idam jagat*). The five basic elements—the sun, the moon, and night and day all function based on compassion (*daya*). The heart filled with compassion is divine. Even if others talk to us harshly, we should always speak amiably. One can find fulfillment in life only with compassion and mercy.

One may be a *Brahmin*, a demon, or a king, one may do a lot of *yoga*, one may grow beard like a renunciant, one may smear one's forehead with ash, one may keep on chanting names of God, but one avails nothing without possessing a heart full of compassion. Although compassion is a natural quality, people are not able to realize this. The entire world is based on kindness. Philosophies, religions, nations, and languages may be different, but the heart is the same.

~Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 30 (1997)

Here, in the aspect of womanhood, one must observe and draw attention to a great quality that may be described as compassion. The next quality that we must note is their ability to sacrifice. The makeup of a woman is such that she will give protection despite many faults. She can also be compared to an educational institution where she will teach patiently like a good teacher, even if the recipient is not willing to learn. She may also be described as a happy home where she arranges everything without thinking of any discomfort for herself. We can also think of a woman as a person of sufficient spiritual strength by which she can make *Aja*, *Hara*, *Hari* or God himself play like a child before her.

~Summer Showers 1978

Every man has a heart. Every heart is filled with compassion. However, how many choose to share this compassion with others? Sharing one's compassion with ten others has been characterized as *bhakti* (devotion). One who does not share his compassion with others cannot be called a human being. Today the human heart that should be full of compassion has become stone hard. This is man's misfortune. What is the reason? It is because the heart is filled with the bitterness of differences of caste, creed, and nationality that it has become stony. All human beings belong to one caste, one community, one nation. All are embodiments of the Divine. Krishna declared in the *Gita*: "All beings in the world are a fragment of 'My Self.' It is tragic that man should forget his divine essence and behave like a demon."

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

What can the evil effects of *Kali Age* do to one
Whose heart is full of compassion,
Whose speech is suffused with truth, and
Whose body is dedicated to the service of others?
(Sanskrit Verse)

You may worship God with various types of flowers,
But He will not be pleased with such worship.
If you offer Him the lotus of your heart,
He will accept it with great love.
Never forget this great truth.

(Telugu Poem)

~Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 29 (1996)



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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.

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