

## The Immortal *Bhaktas*

*In His discourse in 1986, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba spoke about the nine forms of devotion that we can practice. He elaborated on them and said that bhakti (devotion to the Lord) is the essence of love.*

**A**mong all forms of *sadhana* (spiritual practices), *bhakti* is the easiest and holiest. "*Bhakti*" is derived from the root "*bhaj*", with the suffix "the". It means "*seva*" (service). It denotes a feeling of friendship coupled with awe.

For one who is a creature of the *gunas* (attributes), to understand what transcends the *gunas* (*satwa, rajas, tamas*) an attitude of humility and reverence is required. "*Bhaja Sevayam*" ("Worship the Divine through *seva*"). *Bhakti* calls for utilizing the mind, speech, and body to worship the Lord. It represents total love. Devotion and love are inseparable and interdependent. *Bhakti* is the means to salvation. Love is the expression of *bhakti*.

Narada declared that worshipping the Lord with boundless love is *shakti* (universal energy). Vyasa held that performing worship with love and adoration is *bhakti*. Garga Rishi declared that serving the Lord with purity of mind, speech, and body is *bhakti*. Yagnavalkya held that true *bhakti* consists in controlling the mind, turning it inward, and enjoying the bliss of communion with the Divine. Another view of *bhakti* is concentration of the mind on God and experiencing oneness with the Divine.

### Win love through love

Although many sages have expressed different views about the nature of *bhakti*, the basic characteristic of devotion is love. Love is present in every human being in however small a measure. The individual (*jiva*) is an aspect of the Divine, who is the supreme embodiment of love. Man also is an embodiment of Love, but because his love is directed toward worldly objects, it gets tainted and he is unable to get a vision of God in all His beauty.

Ordinarily people regard offering worship to God, reciting His name and meditating on Him as constituting *bhakti*. True devotion really means installing the Divine in the heart and enjoying the bliss of that experience. It is the mystic union of the individual soul and the Universal. When the devotee prays ardently from the depths

of the heart and his love gushes forth, *bhakti* is manifested. Winning love through love is the vital aspect of devotion.

Prayer does not mean merely appealing to God for favors. It is a means of conveying to God one's troubles, desires, and aspirations and offering all one's merits and the fruits of one's actions to God. The basic quality of devotion is the yearning for realizing oneness with the Divine.

### **Two kinds of devotion**

Devotion is of two kinds. One is acquiring knowledge about God and transforming oneself thereby. This is a natural process by which one starts with the physical, proceeds to the mental, and ultimately attains the spiritual goal of merger in the Divine. But in taking to this path of knowledge, only the individual concerned can benefit. In the second type of devotion, the devotee not only benefits himself, but shares his experience with others and benefits them also. Such a devotee not only saves himself but helps others to save themselves.

Love is flowing in an endless stream through humanity all the time. By turning this love toward worldly objects and fleeting pleasures man is missing the opportunity to make life purposeful and to secure enduring bliss. Man should direct this love toward God to attain the true goal of life. Love of the Divine is not developed by secular education or scriptural studies. It springs from the heart. One who is filled with love of the Divine will not be attracted by anything else in the world. Nor will he submit to anything demeaning or unworthy.

Love is selflessness. The devotee filled with love of the Lord welcomes what may appear as punishment as something for his good. Even when the Lord appears to be angry, His compassion is evident. Even in punishment, God's kindness will be seen. Hence, no one should cherish a grievance that he is being singled out for punishment. Even punishment is a means of leading one to God. The display of anger is for safeguarding the devotee. The true devotee is one who recognizes this truth



and welcomes whatever happens to him as intended for his good. Eschewing interest in worldly concerns, he should concentrate on means to realize the Divine.

### **Nine ways of devotion**

Nine ways of expressing devotion to God and attaining Him have been described by the sages. They are: *Shravanam* (listening to God's glories), *kirtanam* (singing the glories of God), *Vishnusmaranam* (ever remembering the Lord), *padasevanam* (worshipping the Lord's feet), *archanam* (offering daily worship), *vandanam* (prostration), *dasyam* (dedicated service), *sneham* (friendliness), and *atmanivedanam* (total surrender). Many devotees who have pursued one or other of these methods have been high-souled persons, some of whom have been great emperors.

***Shravanam*** (listening to God's glories): King Parikshit, the moment he learnt that he had been cursed by Shringi (the sage) to meet with death in seven days, summoned all the sages to ascertain how best he could utilize every moment of the remaining life span given to him. He felt that waste of time is waste of life. He appealed to the sages to advise him how best he could use the seven days left for him. When the Sage Suka entered the assemblage, the King requested him to redeem his life by converting what was a curse into a blessing. Suka taught the King continuously night and day all about the Supreme Lord and His incarnations and glories. Listening to Suka's words, Parikshit was immersed in an ocean of bliss. All the sages present there felt equally ecstatic and were lost in contemplation and love of the Lord by enjoying the stories about the Lord. Parikshit was filled with devotion and experienced the Lord within him. He exemplifies how devotion can find the highest expression in merely listening to the glories of the Lord.

***Kirtanam*** (singing the glories of God): Sage Suka taught how by listening to the exploits of the Lord, singing His glories and constantly reciting His name, the supreme goal of God-realization can be achieved. Suka experienced the bliss of union with the *Brahman* by reveling in singing His glories.

***Vishnusmaranam*** (ever remembering the Lord): Prahlada is the supreme example of the devotee who always centered his thoughts on Vishnu regardless of whether he was subject to pain or pleasure. "*Namo Narayanaya*" was his response to every ordeal. He was ceaselessly repeating the names of the Lord without any concern for the tortures to which he was subjected by the demons deputed by Hiranyakasipu (his demonic father). He was neither afraid nor distressed. Prahlada was fully conscious that the body composed of the five elements was perishable while the Indweller was eternal. Hence, he did not care what happened to the body. All his thoughts were ever concentrated on God.

***Padasevanam*** (worshipping the Lord's feet): Not all devotees get the opportunity to worship the feet of the Lord. Even when the opportunity is available most people

use it for material purposes. Goddess Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu, is the supreme example of one who dedicated herself totally to the worship of the Lord's feet, regarding these feet as the source of the entire creation, holding them supremely sacred owing to their being washed by Brahma himself, worshipping them as feet that had measured the whole cosmos, and venerating them as all-pervading.

**Archanam** (offering daily worship): Emperor Prithu stands out as the exemplar of this type of devotion. In all circumstances, Prithu adhered to the worship of Hari as his primary occupation. He saw the Lord in everything in the Universe. Hence, he dedicated every thought, word, and deed to the Divine.

**Vandanam** (prostration): Akrura is an illustrious example of a devotee who sanctified his life by constantly prostrating before the Lord and offering obeisance to Him with humility and purity. "Vandanam" does not mean merely folding the palms together and offering salutations. It means offering to the Lord all that the *jnanendriyas* and *karmendriyas* (the sense organs and the organs of action) do in a spirit of total surrender. Akrura worshipped the Lord in this spirit of total submission to the Divine will. Hence he could get a vision of Vishnu everywhere.

**Dasyam** (dedicated service): Hanuman is the great exemplar of this type of devotion. Concentrating on the name of Rama and rendering service to Rama were Hanuman's sole preoccupation all the time. He was no ordinary being. He was a master of the 64 sciences and arts. Rama described him as a hero of peace, who possessed immense strength and wisdom. In everything he handled, Hanuman would examine whether it had Rama's name on it. If it was not there, he would discard even a precious gem as a useless piece of stone. While building the bridge to Lanka, Hanuman hurled rocks into the sea uttering the name of Rama and they rose to the surface. The letters "Ra" and "Ma" were written on separate stones and when they were thrown into the sea they joined together on the surface and thus the bridge was formed. Each hair of Hanuman was echoing the name of Rama. He was a devotee who remembered Rama at all times, whether in joy or sorrow. He had no sense of ego. He had given up all feeling of "mine" and "thine". When the *rakshasas* [demons] asked him in Lanka who he was, he firmly declared: "I am a *dasa* (servant) of the Lord of Kosala (Rama)." In all situations he described himself as a servant of Rama.

Those who call themselves devotees these days put on the sacred ash on their foreheads while going to a temple and rub it off on their return. When they are near Swami they behave like devotees. But when they go to a place where religion is in disfavor, they explain away their visits to Puttaparthi in a casual manner and declare that they are not devotees of Swami. What value is to be attached to the devotion of such pusillanimous persons? Real devotion consists in courageously standing up for your faith anywhere at any time. Hanuman was such a courageous and steadfast devotee. By his devoted service to the Lord he redeemed his life and became immortal.

**Sneham** (friendship): The great exemplar of this kind of devotion is Arjuna. Arjuna and Krishna lived together closely. Arjuna accompanied Krishna like a shadow. He experienced innumerable troubles and was subjected to calumny and abuse. But through all these experiences, he did not allow his faith in Krishna to waver. He always prayed: "Krishna! You are my sole hope and refuge. There is none other to protect me." In this way, looking upon Krishna as friend, kinsman, and alter ego, Arjuna relied on Krishna for everything. Krishna, for His part, was even ready to act as Arjuna's charioteer in battle. Arjuna made Krishna the charioteer of his life. Krishna thereby acquired the appellation Parthasarathy—the charioteer of Partha (Arjuna).

**Atmanivedanam** (or *Atmarpanam*) (total surrender of the self): Emperor Bali, the grandson of Prahlada, was an example of a devotee who completely surrendered to the Lord, offered everything he possessed to the Lord, and thereby sanctified his life. He was totally dedicated in his devotion to the Lord. He was prepared to offer his head to the Lord and go down to the nether-world. No sacrifice was too great for him to win the Lord's grace. When his guru, Shukracharya, advised him to go back on the gift he had promised to Vamana, Bali rejected the advice, declaring that his life, his body, and all that he had belonged to the Lord.

Many high-souled men and great rulers practiced these different ways of devotion in the past and held themselves forth as examples to the world.

### **Devotion and society**

Devotion, the sages felt, should not be solely for achieving individual salvation. It should find expression in some kind of collective action. Offering worship or prayer in seclusion and for one's own sake savors of some kind of selfishness. The ancients felt that the Divine cannot be attained by one who is self-centered. Even among Christians and Muslims, there is the practice of someone reading passages from the scriptures that are repeated by the congregation that is present. The Indian sages valued community prayers for the welfare of the world as good for the individual and the world.

In the year 1459 A.D., Guru Nanak, the first Sikh guru, started the practice of community singing or *bhajans*. This practice gathered momentum over the years and in 1798, the great South Indian saint-composer Thyagaraja invested *bhajans* with *raga* and *tala* (musical form and rhythm). Since then, *bhajans* have acquired national vogue in all parts of the country.

### **Bhajans** (devotional singing)

*Bhajans* should not be treated as one way of spending time. They are intended to harmonize the feelings, the singing, and the rhythmic beats of the participants so that they experience in unison the oneness of the Divine. Such *bhajans* are considered spiritually efficacious. *Bhakti* (devotion) should be given pride of place in *bhajans*. They should be surcharged with love. When *bhajans* were first

introduced in villages, Thyagaraja began with the song: "Come, all ye blessed ones, come, and let us join in singing the glory of Sri Rama." He also said that when they have Kodandapani (Rama with the Kodanda bow) on their side, they need not fear Dandapani (*Yama*, the Lord of Death). It was in this spirit of intense love for the Lord and pure devotion that *bhajans* were started in the past. But in *bhajans* today this spirit of holiness is absent. More importance is given to *raga* and *tala* (the tune and the rhythm) than to *bhava* (the feeling) and *raga*. The attempt is more to please the hearers by sweet singing than to promote in them finer feelings of devotion. The feelings expressed in the *bhajans* should melt the hearts of the participants and move them to their depths.

The essence of *bhakti* is Love and not formal exercises in *japa* (repetition of the Lord's name) or worship of various kinds. Worship should be offered to the Divine who resides in all beings. Love is God: live in love. Love is the means of realizing the bliss of the Self, which is centered in ourselves. It need not be sought elsewhere. It can be found within oneself when all thoughts are controlled, and the mind is turned inward. Dedicate all actions to the Lord. This is the highest knowledge. It is the summum bonum of existence. Love should become a way of life. That alone is true devotion."

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the singing of "*Hari Bhajan bina sukha santhi nahi*" (Without singing to the Lord there is no happiness or peace) in which the entire audience fervently joined in full-throated rapture.

**Source:** *Sanathana Sarathi*, Nov. 1986

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## The Fettered Fire

Indra Devi, who is well known to our readers, has had the experience of a great big act of Grace from Baba, something which we love to call a Miracle.

"In person and through writings in most of the 11 languages Indra Devi speaks, she has tried to help lead the world 'from darkness to light', in such seeming diversity of places as the Kremlin and the White House", says a Los Angeles magazine. The writer of that article speaks of 'sitting in the shadows on the deep carpeting' of the Sathya Sai Hall, which is so vast 'that it becomes its own psychic experience'.



"This center, the Yogic Nilayam, is on Rancho El Cachuma, which adjoins La Puerta." Recently, Indra Devi has added a 100-acre piece of land adjacent to this Yoga Institute and named it Sai Nilayam.



On September 26, the Bocks (Janet and Richard) wrote to us from Los Angeles: "Bhagavan's Grace has blessed us with protection in the midst of disaster. We have just learned that a major fire has burned over 6000 acres of land in Tecate, which is, as you know, the location of Indra Devi's Yoga Foundation, and of the property called Sai Nilayam—a retreat for those who wish to practice *sadhana* (spiritual

exercises) in an atmosphere devoted to Him. Indra Devi's property was untouched by the fire! Although most of the property, Sai Nilayam, was burned, the miraculous will of the Lord protected the house (!) and the ancient trees (!), as the fire burnt everything else including tents and a truck! The people at the house in the Sai Nilayam were forced to seek shelter on top of Mount Cachuma, the only escape possible for them. When they came down later, they found the whole house blackened with soot, except for the Shrine Room, which was untouched!

Richard Bock writes, "We cannot explain the reason for His Grace; we only hope that with His help we will someday be worthy of it".

Writing about the incident, Indra Devi says in a letter, "While I was away in Chicago, big fires broke out in South California. The newspapers carried reports that they were turning 200 yards from our Center". (The Tecate Fire, worst in the country in more than a year, was started by campers who abandoned a smoldering campfire along the border, four miles west of the village of Tecate. It was reported at 10.05 A. M., and it spread rapidly up the eastern slopes of the 3885-foot Tecate Mountain and in a south-westerly direction to Mexico. A total of 2000 acres were afire in the United States, and Mexican officials estimated their burned acreage at 4500. Indra Devi continues, "But that didn't disturb me one bit since I was confident that Bhagavan will protect the place dedicated to Him. And if they were to be lost, there must be a *good reason for it*. And so it was.

On the Mexican side, only the hillside behind our vegetable garden was burned down. On the American side, Sai Nilayam had suffered the destruction of some trees and bushes, a truck and tents. *But the house was untouched.*

When the devotees who fled to the mountain top from the devastating flames returned, they found that all rooms were thickly covered by black soot with the exception of Bhagavan's *Meditation Room*.

*Nobody could explain it otherwise than by the fact: "Baba must have been here."*

There is a consciousness  
beyond this body  
where love feels no bounds

There is a space  
beyond this mind  
free from narrow confines

There is a Truth  
beyond this delusion  
where myself is known

Divine Mother  
I pray I may  
Come home

~*Michele Malvin*

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, Nov. 1970

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## **The Truth of the Truth**

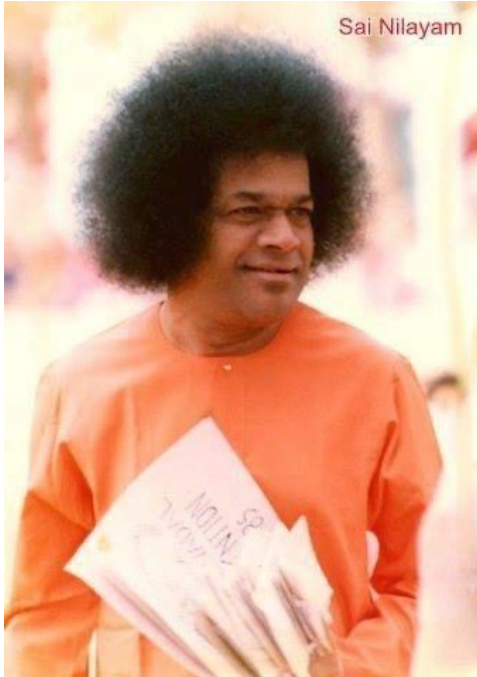
I am in you and for you: you are for Me and in Me. Yet, I have an urge to tell you a little about Me and guide you. I am not won by adulation or lost by disregard. I am won by Truth, Genuineness, Sincerity. For, I have come with this human physical apparel for upholding Truth; I am the Truth of the Truth; the Truth in all truths. This Form bears the Name: Truth (Sathya)! The vitality within this Form is Truth. That is the Power which overpowers all powers.

Why has Truth come down on earth in this Form? To place man on the road to Truth, to plant in their [men's] hearts the yearning for Truth, to help them reach the goal of Truth through instruction and illumination.

Therefore, I move with you in order to correct and console. I eat and talk, I laugh and teach, I speak and travel in the manner you do so that I can lead you on to the



Truth from which you have strayed away. I make you laugh and weep, I appear before you here and there, to harden you and to ease your burden, so that you can reach Truth.



I do not stray, despite the fact that I am aware of all that is and was and will be, despite My knowledge of all that is enveloped in Time and Space. I desire you to note this well. For, whosoever finds himself in positions high or takes up the reins of leadership has to walk straight and steady, so that all who follow may do likewise and win the goal.

I have come to re-establish the rhythm of righteousness in the world; hence, all the hours of day and night, every second I fill with activity suffused with Love, activity designed to further your progress in the pilgrimage to the Truth, that is Myself. For, Truth alone can

confer on you lasting Bliss; and the Bliss you gain is the Food on which I sustain Myself.

***Baba: From Discourse on 10-10-70***  
**Source: Sanathana Sarathi, Nov 1970**

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### **In the Garden**

In the garden of my soul  
His Light walks, among  
the dark and troubled valleys,  
He soothes the stormy  
winds of anger, of anxiety,  
with the very whisper of His Being.

Oh! that one day I might come,  
to ever have His name  
upon my lips; His Calm  
to fill my every second.

Baba, Baba, Help me perfect  
myself so that I may  
help the ones I love;  
Baba, Baba, through my love  
for you, may I teach  
others of Your constant

*Gifts of Joy and Peace*

so that they, too, may see  
Your Light, feel Your Being.

~Elaine Scott, Phoenix, Arizona, U S A

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, Oct. 1972

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## Peace Through Seva

*Y. B. Dato' Lew Sip, Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, Malaysia, in his speech at the Sadhana Camp in Port Dickson, Malaysia, spoke about the Sai Baba followers serving the community selflessly and how it is beneficial in the present world.*

Let me tell you how I came to know of Sai Baba. I was informed that a certain group of public-spirited people were operating a weekly free medical clinic in a squatter area in my constituency. This is a transit long-house area built to resettle illegal squatters. There was no publicity when this medical service was launched. I came to know about it quite by chance.

This episode brought several facts to my attention: (1) Devotees of Sai Baba included Malaysians of diverse racial groups and they belonged to different religions. The organizer is a Hindu, the Doctor is a staunch Catholic, the people they serve are Malays, Indians, and Muslims. (2) This selfless service was being done without any desire for publicity. (3) The devotees of Sai Baba are those who have firm belief in God; they continue to pursue the religion of their choice or origin, they dedicate themselves to the service of mankind, regardless of race, religion, or creed.

In a multi-racial country like Malaysia, where we have Malaysians of Malay, Chinese, and Indian origins, and where we have virtually all the major religions of the world, this attitude of service to mankind regardless of race or religion is most laudable. If all the devotees of Sai Baba in Malaysia dedicate themselves to such services in villages, hospitals, old folk homes, orphanages, etc., they will, I am sure, create a tremendous impact on the nation. I cannot see a better way to instill *Muhibbah* or Goodwill that has been the call of this government than by the type of service that I believe all of you are prepared to dedicate yourselves to.

I am amazed to find that increasing numbers of Malaysian Chinese are becoming devotees of Sai Baba. I understand that hundreds of Malaysian Chinese who, in the past would have no thought of visiting India have, in fact, gone to India to visit Sai Baba. Malaysian Chinese are also here in this Camp. They have come from Kuantan, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, and other parts of Malaysia. I am informed that in the temple of Kuantu in Kuantan, classes are held for about 150 children by the devotees of Sai Baba, where they are taught religion and morality and spiritual and devotional songs. As you are aware, in Malaysia the government has declared Belief in God as one of the tenets of the *Rukun Negara* or as one of the pillars of national life. If the youngsters of this country are able to turn



to God and become aware of religion, spirituality, and morality, there can be no better bulwark against Communism and Communalism and against the growing tide of Drug Culture and other aspects of Western influence.

If the Sai Baba movement in this country can bring people close to the religion of their own choice, if the movement can make people more conscious of God and their obligations, duties and responsibilities to their parents, their family, their schools, their state and their nation, then this movement will have done a great service to this country. I have been told that Sai Baba is a phenomenal force in the world today and that there are devotees of Sai Baba in virtually every country in the free world. I have also heard about various miracles happening in His personal presence and in the homes of devotees thousands of miles away from where He is located.

Religion has always been a source of inspiration to man to bring him along the path of righteousness and goodness. However, in modern society religion is losing its hold, especially on the youngsters. Fast living is becoming a new religion. This has brought untold suffering to families. Parents who have dedicated their lives to the

children find that they become liabilities, rather than assets. Religion is most important today not only for youngsters, but also for elders caught up in the rat-race for living.

Modern man can accumulate knowledge, power, and prestige, but the one thing he cannot buy or acquire from others is internal peace. Internal peace is becoming a rare commodity today. The fact that wealth itself is not the answer to this problem is evident from the increasing number of suicides taking place all over the world. The fact that power and prestige are transient phenomena is evident from events taking place all around us. For man to acquire internal peace, the path of spirituality, morality, and God is vital.

Many of us make the mistake of not bothering to give time to prayers, for religion, for God and for selfless service. However, if this is the message of Sai Baba and if all Sai Baba devotees dedicate themselves to tread the path of spirituality, along the religion of their choice, and if they perform selfless service to their fellowmen, I am sure they will find the internal peace that they desire, while giving comfort and joy to others at the same time.

*Source: Sanathana Sarathi, Oct/Nov 1980*

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# Q&A

WITH BHAGAVAN

**A Second Visitor:** Swami, I have been away from business and I want to talk with Swami, but if I stay another month then there will be only one final talk with Swami. I want to talk with Swami now, and then stay a month.

**Sai:** Tomorrow is Thursday. Swami will see each of you individually, then you can make your plans when you want to leave or whether you want to stay. With you, it is like this: You have a few doubts; now you want to clear those doubts immediately so as to leave room for new doubts (much merriment from the interview group). That is your plan.

**Sai (to a Visitor):** You have some plan for poor people. What are the details?

**Visitor:** The old *Mandir*. We should make a number of new homes for the poor people. Then those who are now staying in the old *Mandir* can move to the new houses and the old temple can be made like new. It is Swami's first *Mandir* and it should be saved for history. If people continue to live there, it will tumble down in no time at all. To use it just for living looks like a lack of respect from the people who are in Puttaparthi.

**Sai:** That can be discussed further at a later time. Now, Swami is troubled that all of you have come from so far and have spent so much, and your love is so touching. There is no price for that love even if measured in crores [millions] and crores. Swami wants your happiness. Swami will teach as quickly as possible.

**Visitor:** But now is the time because there is the world conference in May and Swami's devotees will come here. It does not matter whose plan it is to save the old *Mandir*; it should be as though it is everyone's idea and all should work together to accomplish it.

**Sai:** You draw up a plan and show it to Swami. How to do it.

**Visitor:** And one other thing I must ask Swami because people say Swami must be asked. I want a little plot of land. On the opposite hill if I have a little place and then put a big shed, I have the plan, so that there is a big place where they can come and gather and do *yoga* or whatever it is. But then when I am so close, that is closer than from here to the old *Mandir*, but not just outside the gate so that people will be saying this or that about me, then I am outside, and then—you know...

**A visitor interrupts:** ... so that no control...

**A Second Visitor:** No control...

**Sai:** A faithless garden. (Much merriment from the interview group.)

**Visitor:** Well, you know, nobody can come and say, 'No cooking,' and so on.

**Sai:** It might be all right to start, but then you will have many more problems than you wish for. All the dogs from the villages and other problems.

**Visitor:** The thing is what I have said at home, that I would like to have a little house outside the compound.

**Sai:** With all the dogs together, you are going to have a great problem. Ten puppies each.

**Visitor:** But, anyway, you...

**Sai:** We will discuss it. You may start enthusiastically, but then the problems that will be coming [in the future] will not be good.

(Swami now moves His hand, and a large mass of sugar-candy appears in His hand and is distributed. The group exclaims how sweet and delightful it tastes.)

**Sai:** Complete sugar.

**Visitor:** Not only sugar. It is flavored.

**Sai:** Every day should be sweet like this, that Swami would again make sugar.

**Visitor:** Someone told me that I should not let anybody touch these earrings that you gave me because they are sacred. But I don't like to tell people not to touch.

**Sai:** Nothing like that, about touching. Was everyone angry because Swami did not come this morning?

**Visitor:** No, no, Baba. We were singing *bhajans* and talking about the *gopis*.

**Sai:** *Gopi* means sense control, one who has controlled the senses. It is not a lady's name.

**Source:** Conversations with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai

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## Thought of the MONTH

### Grace—God's Rewards Devotion

How is man to realize the presence of Shiva and Shakthi in Him? It is by doing all actions as a dedication to the Divine. "*Mathkarmakrith, Mathparamah, Madh-bhakthah,*" declares the Geetha (Whatever actions you do, dedicate them to me.

Consider me as your Supreme Lord. Be devoted to Me). This is the message of the Lord in the Geetha. This is the right way to worship the *Sakara* (attributeful Lord). This kind of worship promotes devotion. Only a land that is properly ploughed, weeded, manured and sown with good seeds will yield a rich harvest. Likewise, after the field of the heart has been cleared of the weeds of bad thoughts and qualities, fertilized by good feelings and virtues, and the pure seed of *Prema* (Love) is sown, the sacred crop of *Jnana* (wisdom) can be enjoyed. Based on this, two paths have been laid down in the spiritual field: *Vidhvamsaka* and *Vidhayaka* (the destructive and the constructive paths). *Vidhvamsaka* path refers to the clearing of a field of bushes, thorns and the like before it is got ready for cultivation. *Vidhayaka* path refers to the planting of good seeds in the form of good qualities which will yield a harvest of joy. Hence everyone's heart has to be filled in the right way by *Shraddha* and *Vishvasa* (devotion and faith). It is not enough for a devotee to claim that he loves the Lord. He must find out whether the Lord loves him. You must see whether God showers His grace on you. Only then, your devotion becomes meaningful.

In all his actions, man should not be concerned only with self-interest. He must find out whether his actions are approved by his conscience. Just as the Divine is always blissful, the devotee should be a *Santhushtah* (ever-blissful). But in the present times, men have no contentment or sense of joy. They are racked by doubts and apprehensions. How can such persons ever experience divine bliss? It has been said that one who is vacillating is merely a living creature, but one who is firm and unwavering is divine.

*Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 26 (1993)*

God is the embodiment of compassion. He watches for a grain of goodness or humility so that He can reward it with tons of Grace. In a certain temple for Shiva, the priest had silver basin with a hole in its base for water to drip continuously. He filled it with water and hung it over the Lingam (the idol of Shiva) so that the God who swallowed the poison which would have destroyed the Universe could be cooled and comforted! Even at night when the doors of the shrine were locked by the priest as he went home, the silver basin of water, was in its position. So, a thief broke into the sacred apartment; his eyes were on the silver: he could not reach the rope that kept the basin in position; so, he climbed on the Lingam itself in order to take the costly booty down. Even as he was standing on the holy idol Shiva manifested Himself in all His glory before him, saying, "Son! I appreciate your surrender; you have cast on me your entire burden!" The thief prayed that Shiva may help him to secure the silver; -there was no ladder or bench or any other article on which he could climb. So, the Lingam was his only refuge.

Once a Guru sent a pupil for further guidance to a mendicant in a Shiva temple. When he reached the temple, he found the fellow reclining in the central shrine with both his legs resting on the sacred Lingam. The pupil was naturally enraged at the man's insolence; when he spoke angrily against the behavior, the man said, "Please lift my legs and place them where the Lingam is not." When he did so, there was a Lingam under the feet in the new position. Wherever he deposited the man's legs, a Lingam rose to give them rest! That was the lesson the beggar taught him— God is everywhere; only win the vision to see Him so. To attain God, feats of hard Sadhana are superfluous. Love is enough; avoid hating, envying or even disliking anyone. Put love into practice, through *seva* (selfless service). When the loveliness of the seed blooms, you have the flower. And God is the loveliness which blooms as *mani* (jewel). In the Geetha the Lord has announced, "I am the Seed of all Beings"— "*Beejam mam sarva bhoothanam.*" When the seed is immortality, the tree too is immortal, the flower and the fruit are immortal. When He is *rasa* (juice), sweetness and love, all His manifestations are sweet and loving. When He is light, nothing can be dark. When He is *Chaithanya, Chith* (Supreme, Awareness), nothing can be Jada (insentient), without awareness or intelligence or consciousness.

*Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 12 (1973-74)*

