

## Recognize Your Divine Identity

*The following discourse given by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in Sai Kulwant Hall was given on His birthday in 1997. He said, "Love is life itself. Without love one is as good as dead. Install love in your hearts."*

Neither merit nor sin, neither joy nor sorrow;  
Neither mantras nor pilgrimages;  
Neither charity nor *yajna*;  
Neither eating, nor food, nor consumer of food;  
I am none of these.  
I am the Eternal Bliss Divine,  
The One Absolute. I am Shiva.

### **E**mbodiments of Love!

You are neither endowed with merit nor with sin. You are not creatures of happiness or sorrow. You are not creatures of *mantras* (sacred chants). Nor the products of manual or mechanical skills. You are not renunciants or hedonists. Who, then, are you? Your real form is the Eternal Bliss Divine, ("*Sadananda Roopam*"), the Divine form of Auspiciousness (Shiva).

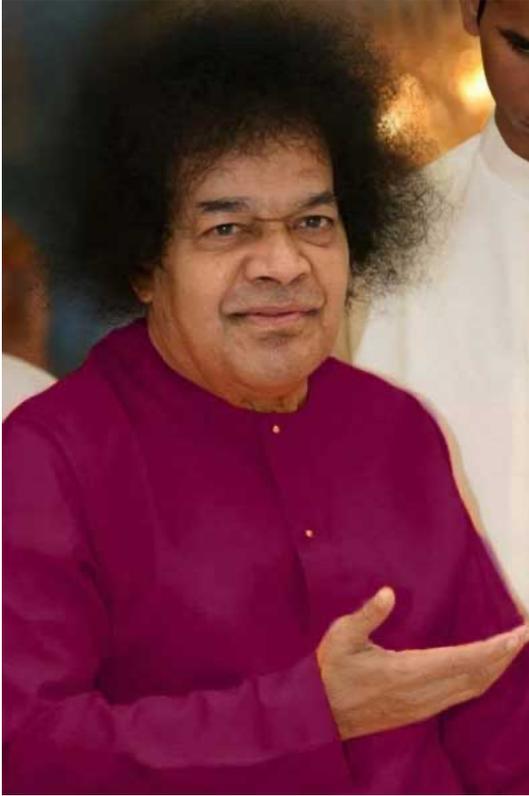
But because of the differences in external physical forms, you are victims of the ignorance of your true selves. From a pauper to a millionaire, from an ignoramus to a great scholar, irrespective of whether one is a male or a female, young or old, anyone, when describing oneself, uses the term "I" ("*Nenu*"). The principle of "I" is the *atmic* principle. The scriptures have described it as "*atma*" or "*hridaya*."

"*Hridaya*" means that which enshrines kindness. Hence all of you are embodiments of kindness. It is only when everyone recognizes this quality of kindness that world peace will be realized. People pronounce the prayer: "*Lokas Samastha-sukhino Bhavanthu!*" ("May all the beings in all the worlds be happy"). But few practice that kindness that will make the people happy.

### The "I" Principle

No individual can introduce himself (or herself) to the outside world without using the term "I" ("*Nenu*"). Even birds and beasts are not using the term "I" because they do not know human speech. Otherwise, each of them would declare: "I am a cow", "I am an eagle", "I am a dog" and so on. All beings in the world proclaim their existence by using the term "I".

The "I" is present in all beings. The all-pervading *Brahmic* Principle is also the "I". Without properly understanding the nature of the "I", man identifies himself with the body and is immersed in the delusion caused by this mistaken identification.



The whole cosmos is associated with plurality (duality or "*dvaitam*") based on the distinction between "I" and "this" (the other). "This" refers to what is perceived ("*drishyam*"). "I" refers to the seer ("*drashta*"). Without the seer, the seen cannot exist. (Swami held up His handkerchief and said) This is a cloth. The reference to the cloth cannot be made without using the term "this." (Pointing to a tumbler Swami said) This is a glass. Here again we cannot refer to the tumbler without using the term "this." The term "this" must be used to refer to a specific object. When I say, "this is a hall", the statement points to a specific object that is perceived.

All names and forms are associated with objects of perception. It is the seer (*drashta*) who testifies to the existence of what is perceived.

### **The Seer and the Seen**

You see the bulbs shedding light in the hall. What is shedding the light is not the bulb but the current in the bulb. The bulb is a vesture ("*upadhi*").

If you ask a young boy when he came to Prasanthi Nilayam, he will answer: "I came on the 20th, Swami." If he is asked! "Why did you come?" he will answer: "I came for the Convocation." Who is it that came? The body (of the boy). Identifying himself with the body, he replies that "he" came on the 20th. Yesterday, he slipped and sustained a fracture in the leg. Today, he comes to me and says: "Swami! My leg has sustained a fracture." Does not this mean that his leg is different from him?

At one moment you identify yourself with your body. At another moment you distinguish yourself as separate from your body. That means that all that you perceive belongs to the realm of the seen ("*drishyam*"). The perceiver who enters into the perception of all things is the Reality. He is unchanging and remains changeless through all the categories of time—past, present, and future. The *Shrutis* called that unchanging entity as "I" ("*Nenu*"). That "I" represents the *atma*. The *atma* becomes "*hridaya*", the seat of compassion ("*karuna*"). All terms like "I", "*karuna*",

"*atma*", "*hridaya*" or "God" are all synonymous. They are all different names given to the same entity in common parlance. The name Rama or Krishna by which one may be called is a name conferred on a person and is not born with him.

The first name given to anyone at birth is "I". Even for God the first original name is "I".

The *Upanishads* declare: "*Aham Brahmasmi.*" ("I am *Brahmam*"). In this declaration "*Aham*" ("I") comes first and "*Brahmam*" comes thereafter. Hence, the "I" is the primal basis for everything. Very few make any attempt to recognize the nature of this "I".

Many persons are engaged in different kinds of spiritual exercises. For whose sake are these exercises done? The usual answer is: "I am doing the *sadhanas* to seek God." Where is the need to search for God when He is omnipresent? It is a ludicrous exercise. When you are yourself Divine, where is the need for a quest? A man who goes enquiring about where he is will be deemed crazy.

### **Role of the Mind**

Man today has failed to recognize his divine identity. This situation must be changed. How is it to be done? A bent branch may be straightened, a rock may be softened, but can a perverted mind be reformed? (Telugu Poem) It is the incorrigible perverted mind that accounts for man going astray.

The mind is the root cause of man's happiness or sorrow, health or disease, his goodness or wickedness. What, then, is the meaning of man's search? It is the desire to experience a vision of the Self (*atma*).

The different forms of devotional exercises in which people engage themselves are not really for experiencing God but for some kind of mental satisfaction.

If you want to go on with these spiritual exercises, you must do so with only one aim in view, namely, to get rid of the "*anatma-bhava*" (forgetting the *atma* and identifying one's self with the body). You will then realize that the *atma* is the only reality. The "*anatma-bhava*" is like the darkness in a room. It has no existence of its own. The moment a light is brought, the darkness disappears.

You may ask: "How am I to declare I am the *Brahmam*? (*Aham Brahmasmi*)."  
Yes, you can do so. But first of all, you must understand the "*aham*", the "I". The "I" principle is the Divine. *Vedanta* declares: "*Ekam eva advithiyam Brahma.*" The Absolute is one only without a second. In the work-a-day world, men are used to worshipping the Absolute with different names and forms. But the Supreme Reality is only one. Different names are used in the context of different functions. It is like calling the same person by different epithets according to the function he is discharging at any moment. God has no form or name. All names and forms are

creations of the human mind. The *Shruti* has declared that the Lord is the attribute-less eternal Reality.

In this context, there is no point in people going after *gurus* and preceptors. You are your own preceptor. You must subdue your mind. Only then you can develop good qualities. Man is losing peace because of giving a free rein to the mind.

The Divine nature of the "I" (*aham*) must be properly understood. That I is the master of the body, the senses, and the intellect. It is the power that permeates the entire cosmos. To worship such an omnipresent power in a small shrine is hardly appropriate. To confine the infinite Divine to the limits of a small photograph for worship is hardly befitting. What is the need to have several photographs? It is demeaning the Divine to adore Him in a multiplicity of pictures. (Swami sang a song in *Telugu* that dilated on the futility of trying to erect temples, light lamps, or confer names on the infinite cosmic Lord who is boundless, infinitely effulgent, is the indweller in every being and contains within Himself the entire universe. How can such a God be offered food or adored in any way?)

All the forms in which God is worshipped are products of the human imagination. The proper way to experience God is to feel with all your inner being that you are the Divine itself. That experience will make you feel the presence of the Divine in all beings and in all things. With that experience there will be no room for hatred towards anyone. Such a one will not do evil deeds.

What is the reason for the ubiquitous existence all over the world of violence, discord, and disorder? It is the absence of the feeling of the spiritual oneness of all beings. The same Divine Indweller is present in all beings, like the current which illumines all bulbs. All are manifestations of the Divine, as declared in the Gita. (Swami sang a song to describe how the *Gopikas* found it impossible to realize the true nature of Krishna, whose divinity was manifested in the subtlest particle and in the infinite vastness of the cosmos.)

### **The Transformation Process**

When men begin to recognize the omnipresence of God they will be transformed. All their thoughts and actions will get divinized. It may be asked: "Who is responsible for the evil in the world?" The persons indulging in the evil deeds are responsible. God is only a witness. The rewards or punishments people receive in life are fruits of their own actions and not conferred by God.

When all actions are done in a spirit of dedication to the Divine and with a recognition of one's own divinity, all actions become sanctified. Identification of the "I" with the body is the cause of all troubles. It turns the "I" into the ego (*ahamkara*). The ego is at the root of all troubles. There is nothing wrong in looking after the body, but life should not be based on attachment to the body.

As I was coming to the Hall, many devotees greeted me with the words, "Happy Birthday!" They should wish for "happy birthdays" for those who are not happy (cheers). I do not need your birthday greetings. The Divine is perennially in bliss (*nityanandam*). "The Divine is ever blissful, confers supreme happiness on others, is the very embodiment of the highest wisdom, has transcended the opposites, is vast as space, cloud-like in complexion, with perfect features." (*Sanskrit shloka*) Like the lightning in the heart of a cloud, wisdom should illumine your hearts. That wisdom will reveal the Divine in you.

Embodiments of Love! You have all come here at great expense and trouble. Make the utmost effort to understand the spiritual basis of the "I" principle. When you regard the "I" as the Self (*atma*), you will be free from all suffering. In case troubles come, they will vanish like the snow on a mountain. Why should you bother about these passing clouds? When you have realized Self-awareness ("*atmajnana*") there will be no need for you to worry about anything.

All troubles arise because obsessed with the mind man forgets the *atma*. When your life is illumined by the effulgence of the *atma*, the mind will be put in the shade.

When you ignore the body and the mind, you will understand your true nature – the *atmic* principle in you. When you have realized this basic truth, you can carry on all your daily activities and do your duties in a spirit of dedication.

Today there is no peace anywhere in the world. What is the reason? People have forgotten the reality of the Spirit (*atma-tattwa*). They have lost faith in the Spirit and have developed attachment to worldly things. People look at the phenomenal world, but they do not see it as a manifestation of the Divine. Herein lies their foolishness. All that is perceived by the eyes is divine. The perceiver is also divine. Spirituality points out the divinity that is present in both the seer and the seen. When this basic spiritual oneness is realized, the division between man and nature disappears.

Have the conviction that God is with you always. A mother may forget her child, but God will never forget you. He is closer to you than any mother. Never forget God.

Are all those who are coming to Prasanthi Nilayam experiencing "Prasanthi"? No. They are engaged in too much talking, moving about from one place to another. What for have you come? For whose abode have you come? Why should you wander about restlessly? Make use of this golden opportunity to acquire peace of mind. Gather as much spiritual experience as you can while you are here and ruminate over it when you go back like a cow chewing the cud.

You have come here to strengthen your relationship with the Divine. Hold on to it firmly. Put into practice at least one of the things you learn here. Of what avail is a mountain of book knowledge without a modicum of practice.

It is not enough to chant the names of God. God must be installed in the heart. Make your conscience your guide and preceptor. That will promote true devotion. All external paraphernalia have no use.

There are four mottos that all devotees should follow: Avoid bad company. Welcome association with good persons. Remember always the distinction between the transient and the permanent. Ceaselessly engage yourself in meritorious acts. It is by these means that you become good. Remember the message of Vyasa epitomized in the dictum: "Help ever; hurt never." If these basic rules are followed, all countries will be happy and peaceful. Each country is a part of the mansion of planet earth. Bharat is a part of this mansion. When we have this broad vision, humanity will be one in spirit.

Swami does not rejoice in the celebration of birthdays. Since all of you have come for this celebration, I am obliged to give you satisfaction. I have no wants. Whatever I do is for your sake. Recognize this truth. I have no dislike for anyone, and no one dislikes me. All are mine and I belong to all. My benediction is: "May all be happy." Everyone should adhere to the path of righteousness. All should manifest their spiritual essence and experience spiritual bliss. Till you realize that spiritual oneness, you must perform devotional acts like *bhajans*, *japas*, and prayers.

### **Advice to Devotees**

(Bhagavan then sang His favorite *bhajan* "*Bhajan bina sukha santhi nahi*", and concluded His discourse with words of practical advice to the devotees.) He said:

You must install in your hearts the essence of today's message to all of you. I want you to exercise control over five vital things in life. The first is to realize that "**Misuse of money is evil.**" **Don't waste money.** If you wish to keep a photo (of Bhagavan), have only one. Why do you waste money on buying too many photos? Do not go on buying photos.

Second: "**Misuse of food.**" Realize that "**Food is God.**" Your body is the product of the food taken by your parents. **Do not waste food. Waste of food is waste of God.**

Third: **Do not waste Time. Time is God.** The scriptures have extolled in many ways God as the Master of Time. **Time wasted is life wasted.**

Fourth: **Do not waste Energy.** Energy enters every one of our actions. When you see, speak, hear, act or think, energy is expended. In every one of these activities, you should see that you do not waste your energies unnecessarily.

Fifth: **Every moment do not forget God, whatever you may be doing.** God is present wherever you may go. He is with you, beside you and around you always. Hence there is no need for you to go to some temple to pray to God. Your heart is your temple. Turn your vision inward. Thereby understand the *atmic* Principle.

In your journey to Prasanthi Nilayam, you must have undergone many inconveniences. In future avoid unnecessary journeys. You may do so when you need it for your contentment.

Hence, **do not waste time.** Do not give room for useless thoughts.

**Do not waste your love.** Love is life itself. Without love one is as good as dead. Install love in your hearts.

### **Avoid Bad Company**

Avoid unnecessary and excessive association with all and sundry. Many of you have come here away from your kith and kin. People have come from America or Japan, Germany or Russia, leaving their parents or other relatives. Why, then, should they cultivate new relationships with others here? Keep yourself to yourself as far as possible. Keep your mind pure. There is no need to indulge in talk with people in all sorts of places. Talk less, think more. Cultivate this habit. Unnecessary association with strangers may have unexpected consequences of a serious nature.

You might have noticed in the play staged by the students how one person got into trouble because of his association with some undesirable persons. Ultimately, he recognized his mistake and felt that his mind had been poisoned by association with bad persons. Others should not be blamed. The mistake was his in not keeping his association confined to good persons. He cried over his folly in joining bad company.

To join bad company and come to grief is a self-wrought calamity. Keep your association with anyone to the barest minimum. Genuine spiritual aspirants should be particularly careful in eschewing bad company. They should create an environment conducive to their spiritual progress and mental peace. That is the only thing Swami wants. Having come to Prasanthi Nilayam, all of you must become exemplary devotees. Outsiders must feel spontaneously how exemplary is the behavior of Sai students and Sai devotees. That reaction will do you more good than satisfying me (cheers).

### **The Devotee of Devotees**

I have no devotees. You may describe yourselves as Sathya Sai devotees. I am myself a devotee. Whose devotee? A devotee of those who claim to be my devotees. My duty is to fulfil their desires. I belong to you, and you belong to me. Understand and strengthen this relationship. This is my sole desire.

I do not relish the celebration of my birthday or pompous decorations for the purpose. Such ostentation is not good for anyone. Adopt a practical attitude toward the spiritual life.

With the holy thoughts in you on this auspicious day, you must go out into the world and spread your sacred feelings among others. Do not confine your feelings to yourselves or retain them only during your stay here. Spread them wherever you go.

Swami is above all distinctions of caste, religion, or language. The caste of humanity, the religion of love, and the language of the heart—these are what I stand for. Experience this truth and share your joy with others (cheers).

**Source:** *Sanathana Sarathi*, Dec 1997

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## **Love, Sacrifice, Unity**

Embodiments of Divine Love! There is a Creator for this marvelous and beautiful cosmos consisting of moving and unmoving objects. He is Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent. He has been worshipped as God by many names and in many forms by various people. Adored by Muslims as *Allah*, as Jehovah by Christians, as the Lotus-eyed Lord by *Vaishnavites*, as Sambhu by *Saivites*. The One who confers health and wealth, revere Him as the one Supreme Omni-Self

Unity, fellow-feeling, and devotion are essential for every human being. To promote these sacred qualities in mankind, some great souls sought to establish different religions. Religion is not a restrictive concept. Religion is intended to develop the human personality and indicate the basic guidelines for right living. Religion brings out the humanness in man and enables him to live in harmony with his fellowmen. It provides the link between the individual and the Divine. It demonstrates the unity that underlies the diversity in the world.

Love, Sacrifice, Service, and Righteousness are the four limbs of religion. Religion brings out the divine and sublime feelings in man and makes him serve society. It evokes all that is great, blissful and good in men and demonstrates the unity of mankind. It is supremely unfortunate that religion, which has such high and sacred objectives, is construed and practiced in a narrow way and propagated as a narrow creed.

Religion is like an undercurrent that sustains the whole of humanity. The founders of religions, with a view to spreading the subtle secrets of religious faith, laid down certain rules of conduct and conveyed their message to the people.

### **What do the Religions Teach**

*Buddhism* declared that Truth and Non-violence are the basic requisites for getting rid of delusions and achieving purity in life.

Christianity proclaimed that all are children of God and should have fraternal feelings toward each other. Jesus declared: "All are one, be alike to everyone."

According to Islam, all are members of one family in spiritual terms. It regarded prayer as the best means of ensuring peace and security in society.

Emperor Manu declared: "*Thyajeth deham Kulasyaarthe; Kulam janapadaschaarthe*" (One must be prepared to sacrifice his body for his community and his community for the sake of the nation). Manu's *Dharmasastra* laid down that the welfare of society is most important.



The *Upanishads* declared: "*Sahasraakshas-sahasrapaad*" (The Divine has a myriad eyes and a myriad feet). All eyes are God's; all feet are His; all hands are His. This was the message of the *Upanishads*. In this manner, the *Upanishads* emphasized the oneness of humanity.

For man, it is the collective concept that is fundamental and not individualism. No one can live in this world all by himself. He must cultivate the sense of community if he wishes to live in peace and happiness.

*"Sahanaa vavathu; sahanau bhunakthu; sahaviryam karavaavahai"* (Let us live together; let us struggle together; let us

grow together in joy and harmony). This was the teaching of the *Vedas*.

### **The Greatness of Unity and Purity**

It is evident that in this way all religions propagated unity for promoting the well-being of society. The welfare of the world is bound up with the well-being of society. Self-Realization and Self-knowledge can be got only through social involvement. Unfortunately, society today is riddled with strife, chaos, and conflict.

All religions preached the greatness of spiritual purity. All religions called upon people to adhere to the path of Truth. They also taught that good qualities are essential for man. Thus, when the essence of all religions is one and the same, when all the scriptures proclaim the same truth, when the goal of all human efforts is one, where is the basis for any differences? The paths are varied, but the destination is one and the same.

It is a sign of man's degradation that despite these truths, he indulges in conflicts and agitations on account of religious differences. When there is a downpour, the water that comes down is pure. The rain falls on mountains, plains, rivers, the sea,

and so on. According to the region through which the rainwater passes, its name and form undergo changes. Because of these variations, it should not be thought that the water itself is different.

Based on the teachings of the founders of different faiths, having regard to the requirements of the time and circumstance of particular countries, and keeping in view the specific needs of the people concerned, certain rules and regulations were laid down. On this account, one faith should not be considered superior and another inferior. Man's primary duty is to bear in mind these sacred truths and practice them in his life.

### **Truth, Beauty, and Goodness**

Truth is a fundamental principle. All religions have declared that no one should break his plighted word. That man should honor his pledges, that he should regard his words as his life breath, that keeping his promises is the greatest treasure—this was the primary teaching of the great lawgiver, Emperor Manu (author of the *Dharmasastra*).

Plato was the foremost among the disciples of Socrates. Aristotle was a disciple of Plato. Alexander was a pupil of Aristotle. Plato commended a system of polity based on morality, righteousness, mutual forbearance as conducive to the well-being of society. He attached the greatest importance to Truth, Beauty, and Goodness as the basic virtues. In the Vedas these three qualities have been described as *Sathyam*, *Sivam*, *Sundaram*. Thus, though different words are used, their essential purport is the same. Spiritual discipline consists in recognizing the unity underlying the apparent diversity and realizing divinity.

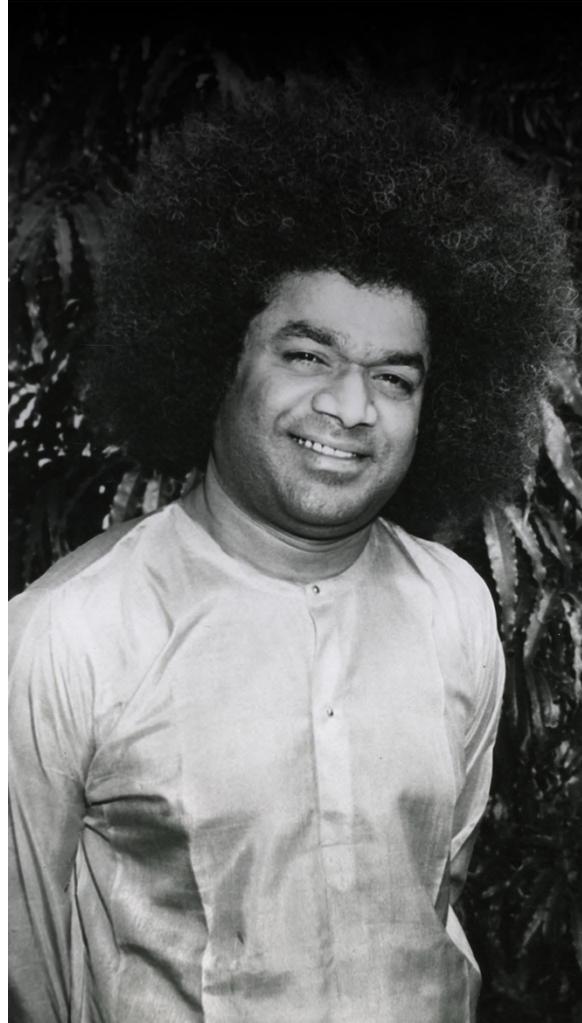
### **Love should not be Confined to Human Beings**

*Bharatiya* [Indian] culture has always upheld the supremacy of faith in God. *Bharatiya* culture was based on the view that there is nothing in the world that is not permeated by the Divine. From a stone to a diamond, from a blade of grass to a blooming lotus, from an ant to an elephant, everything was regarded as a manifestation of the Divine. *Bharatiya* culture upheld the view that love should not be confined to human beings but should be extended to all beings and objects in creation. Ignoramuses who have not understood this great truth speak disparagingly of *Bharatiyas* as people who worship stones, trees, serpents, and the like. In the eyes of *Bharatiyas*, every object is a creation of God. "*Sarvam khalu idam Brahma*" (All this is Brahma), "*Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat*" (The cosmos is permeated by *Vishnu*)—these *Vedantic* declarations proclaim the same truth. You cannot find in any other country a universal, all-embracing sacred declaration of this kind. This contains the broad concept of social justice. You cannot see in any other country such a sacred view.

Although all religions have preached this truth of oneness and *samathvam* (equality), selfish persons, for their own ends, have interpreted them in narrow terms and promoted strife and discord between different people. One who is merely well-versed in the scriptures cannot be called a *pandita* (a person with knowledge and wisdom). Even a master of the Vedas, *shastras*, and *puranas* cannot be esteemed a *pandita*. Scholarship alone does not make a man a *pandita*.

Mastery of language does not confer this title. "*Pandithaah samadarsinah*" (Pandits are those who see all with an equal eye), says the *Gita*. Only the person who has this vision of equality can be esteemed a *pandita*. Hence, we should look upon all religions with *samadrishiti* (equal respect). No religion should be criticized or reviled. One should imbibe the sweet essence in all religions.

The essence of all religions is the principle of Oneness, the principle of Love. When you cultivate this principle of love, there is no room for hatred.



### **Conflicts are Caused due to Selfishness**

Today religion is regarded as the cause for all the conflict, violence, and bitterness in the world. But *matham* (religion) is not the cause. *Mathulu* (selfish minds) are responsible for all the conflict. Are there not conflicts in countries with only one religion? People in Iran and Iraq profess the same Islamic faith. What is the reason for the conflict between them? What is the reason for conflicts between countries that profess Christianity?

In *Bharat*, all are *Bharatiyas*. But why is there discord amongst them? When we examine this question deeply, we find that religions are not the real reason for these conflicts. Only selfish minds are the cause. Wearing the garb of religion, these selfish persons are inciting conflicts among the people.

Embodiments of Divine Love! If you desire to secure genuine peace in the world, you should not have any antipathy toward religion. You must hold *neeti* (morality) as superior to your *jaati* (community). You must cherish good feelings as more

important than religious beliefs. *Mamata* (mutual regard), *samata* (equal-mindedness) and *kshamata* (forbearance) are basic qualities necessary for every human being. Only the person with these three qualities can be regarded as a true man. It is essential that everyone should cultivate these three sacred qualities.

### **Try to Live Harmoniously**

How did differences arise within each religion? After the passing of the founders of these religions, the followers violated the teachings of the founders and quarreled among themselves on account of their selfish interests. With the passage of time, schisms developed in each religion and separate sects were formed. This is the result of individual selfish motives and not the fault of the original founders.

People must first get rid of self-interest and self-centeredness. They must develop love, forbearance, and compassion. They must try to live harmoniously. Only then can we claim to be lovers of peace in the nation and of the well-being of the world. Service should be the guiding principle. There should be no room for any kind of differences in rendering service. When you wish to serve society, you must be prepared to sacrifice your individual and communal interests. Such sacrifice alone will sublimate one's life. The Veda has emphatically declared that immortality can be attained only through *tyaga* (sacrifice) and not by any other means.

### **Christmas in Prasanthi Nilayam**

To propagate this message of equal-mindedness, the army of Sai devotees must prepare themselves. Today in Prasanthi Nilayam members belonging to a variety of faiths have come together. They speak different languages. They belong to diverse traditions. But all of them have a single belief, a single ideal—that is Love.

The Christmas festival is celebrated in many countries with a lot of fanfare, merriment, and riotous festivities. You should note one thing. Nowhere in the world is Christmas celebrated in the way it is done in Prasanthi Nilayam. People belonging to different countries, different faiths, and different cultures coming together to adore God and celebrating this festival in such a holy atmosphere cannot be found anywhere else. This should spread to all countries.

Christmas is celebrated in America, Germany, Italy, and other countries. But in what manner? By sumptuous eating, drinking, dancing, and wasting time. Here also you indulge in drink. But what is it you are drinking? You are drinking Pure Divine Love. It is this Love that you must offer to the world.

Don't entertain religious difference of any kind. Put into practice the message you receive here and share the bliss of your experience with others. Preaching to others is not enough.

Everyone should develop devotion and dedication. Life without devotion is worthless. If one does not show his gratitude to the Creator, of what avail is his life? Should you not show some gratitude to the Lord who has provided such infinite

benefits through Nature and the elements? Gratitude should be the life-breath of a man.

The founders of religions experienced these truths and propagated them as ideals for mankind. You must wholeheartedly live up to these teachings. Mere reading of the *Bible* or reciting the *Quran*, repeating the *Bhagavad Gita*, or chanting the *Granth Saheb* is not meritorious. The basic teachings in each of these texts must be put into practice in daily life.

### **Discharging your Debt is a Pious Obligation**

Socrates used to gather young men around him and expound to them how to enquire into what is transient and what is permanent. He told them that only those who have devotion and dedication are entitled to wield power. A ruler should adhere to truth and show his gratitude to God. Puffed up with ego, he should not forget the Almighty. Those who did not relish Socrates's teachings brought charges against him. When he was sentenced to death, he chose to die by drinking the cup of hemlock from the hands of his disciples. Before his death, he told his disciples that no one should die leaving an undischarged debt behind him. He told a disciple that he owed a cock to a friend and asked him to discharge that obligation.

Prophet Mohammed, likewise, told his disciples before his passing that the money he owed to a camel driver should be paid before his end came. The discharging of one's debts is regarded as a pious obligation for every *Bharatiya*. Harischandra sacrificed everything for the sake of honoring his plighted word.

It will be seen that all religions have emphasized the greatness of truth, sacrifice, and unity. Learn to live in love and harmony with all the members of your society. This is the basic teaching of Christianity and Islam. Guru Nanak favored community prayers in preference to individual prayer in isolation. When all people join in unison to pray to God, their prayers will melt the heart of God. In a large gathering there must be at least one who prays with a pure heart. That prayer will reach God. Hence, devotees should take part in community *bhajans*. They should participate in community service and involve themselves in the life of the community. This is the noblest path.

Cultivate love. Love is the form of the Divine and God can be realized only through love. Of all the myriad names given to God, the one which is most to be cherished is *sat-chit-ananda* (being-awareness-bliss). *Sat* represents truth. *Chit* represents *jnana* (wisdom). Where *sat* and *chit* are present, *ananda* (bliss) is bound to be present. As God is Truth, He must be realized through truth. As God is *Jnana*, He must be realized through *Jnana Marga* (the path of Knowledge). As He is *Ananda* (Bliss), He must be realized through bliss. Follow the path of love and achieve the goal of Unity. Banish all differences. This is the supreme message for you today.

## Do not give Room for Religious Differences

Embodiments of Divine Love! Wherever you may be, in whatever country, do not give room for religious differences. Do not give up religion. Get rid of differences based on religion. Adhere to your faith and your traditions. When differences between religions are given up, love will develop in you. When love grows, you can have a direct vision of God. Without love, verbal prayers are of no avail. Realize that the love that is present in everyone is common to all. It is love that has brought you all together. It is the cord of love that has bound all of you. It is the unifier, the motivator, and the bringer of joy to all. Therefore, develop love.

**Source:** *Sathyam Shivam Sundaram* Vol. 13

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*The Sun is teaching us that when one is oneself, there will be no exhaustion or elation, no disgust or pride. The task of Surya [sun] is not something imposed from outside and taken up under compulsion. That is why it is performed systematically and smoothly. He is also exhorting mankind to use the time that He creates and allots fully and fruitfully, not merely for living comfortably and safely, but for living a moral and elevating life worthy of the destiny that is man's. Now you can realize why the Gita was first taught by the Lord to the Sun. He is the great Karma yogi, the great Nishkaama Karma Yogi.*

~Baba

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## OH, SWEET MOTHER

Oh, Sweet mother.  
Every day I see you smiling at me, the apple of your eyes  
From baby, till now.

Every day she combs my hair  
Till it is soft and silky.

Every day she cooks my favorite foods.  
Fresh homemade breakfast, lunch, and dinner

Every day no matter how busy she is with her job or even when she is sick.  
She always keeps the house shining and comfortable for me.

Every day she anxiously waits for me to come home from school by the door.

Her eyes are shining in the sun, and even when it is rainy I can feel that  
warmth from her lustrous eyes.

When her shimmering shiny gaze falls upon me  
I feel so happy and loved inside and out.



Oh! What can I ever do in return for you? Oh! Sweet mother,  
You give everything to me so selflessly! Your love knows no boundaries.

Oh! Sweet mother, I love you with all my heart and soul.  
Oh, Sweet mother.

### **I CHOOSE TO BE HAPPY!**

I do not want to live in the dark  
I want to live in the light of stars.  
I choose to be happy!

Once, I went to a Thanksgiving party.  
There I touched a turkey balloon bigger than my body.  
In a minute it popped, and I sobbed.  
The lady looked at me with a smile and  
Said it happens occasionally.  
She said she chooses to be happy.

Then one day I was making sand art,  
Everyone said I was smart.  
A boy came from nowhere and ran over my art everywhere.  
I felt disheartened but my mind sparkled.  
I remembered the kind and wise words of the lady.  
I choose to be happy.

And be steady.  
I understood that things will not always be perfect.  
However, I could always choose to be happy.

~Hridik Sehgal  
Online SSE Group 2

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## ***Dhyana*darshana – part 2**

*The following is a continuation of Theory and Practice of Meditation as compiled and translated from Bhagavan's Divine Discourses by B. Srinivas Murthy*

### **Meditation is Conquest of Mind**

The *sadhana* of *dhyana* starts at the lowest level of sense data. The way of knowing called sensationism is the most primitive faculty of living organisms. The organization of sensations into perceptions is known as empiricism. The generalization of perceptions into conceptions is known as rationalism. Intuitionism and mysticism are suprarational ways of knowing. That is why *indriyas* (sensory and motor organs) must be harnessed by controlling *manas* (mind) that is their master. If the master is controlled, his servants can be easily snubbed. Mind is vicariously responsible for the erratic behavior of sensory and motor organs. The sense data supplied by eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin impinge on mind that selects some sensations and then organizes them into perceptions and conceptions. If the mind is mastered, all *jnanendriyas* and *karmendriyas* can be conquered.

Millions of soldiers are deployed in war. Each combatant needs not be captured and killed in order to win the war. If the commander-in-chief is captured the army will surrender unconditionally. A country can be conquered by capturing its king.

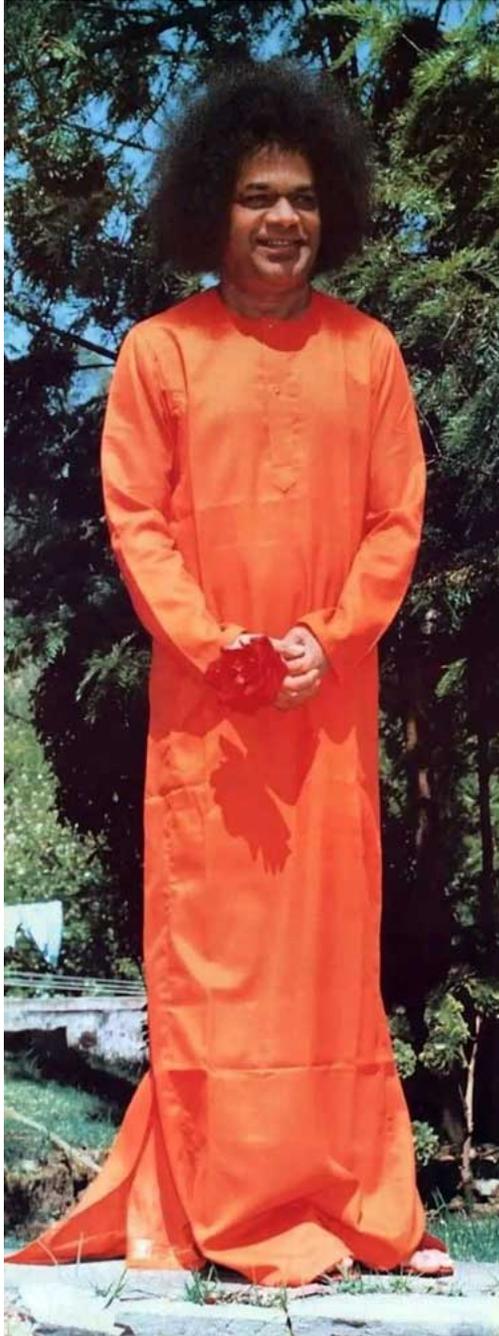
### **Psychosomatic Relationship**

*Manas* or mind is the master of *jnanendriyas* or sensory organs and *karmendriyas* or motor organs. Hence, it should be first conquered in order to transcend our sensations and suspend our metabolic processes. Intelligent diplomacy is needed for the conquest of the mercurial human mind. It should be conditioned and disciplined with the aid of spiritual practices. It should be clearly recognized that mind and body are normally inseparable. They interpenetrate each other.

Mind is an embodied form of the personal self. It is a unified structure of the energy of consciousness. It may be regarded as superphysical energy or parapsychical matter. It cannot express itself without the material medium of a gross physical body. It communicates with the external world through its five doors of perception. A disincarnate mind cannot have meaningful intercourse with the material universe. The well-known psychosomatic phenomenon pertaining to the intimate connection between psyche and *soma* or mind and body is of supreme importance for spiritual aspirants. A subtle personal self manifests itself as mind in a gross human body, expresses itself in various ways, and communicates with other human minds or embodied selves. In other words, a material body is essential for the self-manifestation and self-expression of a personal self and its communication with other embodied selves.

### **Meditation is not Self-mortification**

Because of this phenomenal psychosomatic relationship, a *sadhaka* should always keep himself physically fit and mentally alert. An optimum psychosomatic euphoria is essential for maintaining steady and sustained spiritual advancement. The physical body should be neither pampered nor mortified. Mortification of the material body does not lead to intellectual illumination or spiritual enlightenment. Self-mortification results in physical senility and mental deterioration. Mental equanimity cannot be achieved without physical euphoria. Hence, a *sadhaka* should avoid self-torment and self-punishment. It is necessary to reiterate that the human



body should be preserved like a temple of the living God.

### **Life is Yoga**

The paramount importance of correct posture cannot be overstressed. You should always sit straight or stand erect wherever you happen to be. The mental equilibrium and physical discipline acquired through meditation should be transferred to everyday life because all life is *yoga*. A *sadhaka* should keep his body straight and his limbs supple. He should always try and sit straight. Wrong postures and awkward gestures debilitate the body and enfeeble the mind. Hence, a *sadhaka* should not bend his backbone and subject his body to all sorts of ugly contortions. A sound mind cannot be developed without a sound body. An emaciated, enervated and emasculated individual cannot do any serious *sadhana*. A *sadhaka* must be straight and supple like a reed. A correct and beautiful posture can be acquired by regular practice. A perfect posture facilitates meditation.

### **Significance of Jyoti**

A *jyoti* [flame] is the most suitable object to be meditated upon. It should be a steady lambent light or a gently glowing flame like a candlelight or the flame of an oil lamp. A flame has profound physical and spiritual significance. The bio-psychophysical human body is in a state of dynamic equilibrium. Every person is surrounded by his own individual bio-plasmic aura. A flame is not a solid, liquid, or gas. It exists in the fourth

plasma state of matter. There is a significant resemblance between the dynamic equilibrium of a human organism and a glowing flame, and between a bio-plasmic human aura and the plasmic state of a shining flame. Meditation on a flame is tantamount to meditation on the bio-plasmic aura of the personal self-identified with the immanent and omnipresent Cosmic Self or God. A *sadhaka* should sit in front of a  *jyoti*, relax his body, and fix his attention on its lambent light.

### **Preparation for Meditation**

Gaze steadily at the gleaming  *jyoti* before you. Stare at it steadily. Stare as long as you can. Then close your eyelids slowly. Visualize mentally the  *jyoti* before you. During this process of imaginative re-collection and re-creation of the previously perceived  *jyoti* you should neither shut your eyes nor keep them open. If you keep your eyes open your attention will be distracted by extraneous sights. The span of your attention will be extended and your  *ekagrata* or one-pointedness will become  *anekagrata* or many-pointedness. Your latent  *rajoguna* will flare up. But if you shut your eyes tightly you will fall asleep. Squatting in front of the  *jyoti*, fix your attention on its golden flame. Then begin to gaze at the tip of your nose with ball-closed downcast eyes.

### **From Attention to Concentration**

Your mind has a tremendous capacity and a gargantuan appetite for work of all kinds. It requires proper food for thought. There are various types of food. The most wholesome food for thought is provided by the divine pabulum of spirituality. Contract the span of your attention by making it one-pointed. Then extend the duration of your one-pointed attention until it becomes steady concentration.

A slothful mind tends to become sinister. You might have seen a monkey tamer in your village. He exhibits his monkey at county fairs. He fixes a long pole on the ground and commands his monkey to climb the pole. As long as the monkey clammers continually up and down the pole it has no time for mischief. Man's mind is a monkey. If it is idle, it becomes a devil's workshop and resorts to all kinds of monkey tricks.

### **`Soham'**

You must make your mind do work that is stimulating, illuminating, and enlightening. The most congenial, appropriate and inspiring work for your mind is provided by the repeated practice of `*Soham*'. The two syllables `*so*' and `*ham*' represent the act of controlled breathing. `*Soham*' is an esoteric  *mantra* or occult incantation for harnessing and disciplining the monkey mind of man.

### **The Practice of `*Soham*'**

*Soham*' is practiced in the following way: Inhale air through one nostril. This is `*so*'. Then, exhale air slowly through the other nostril. This is `*ham*'. Practice the slow inhalation and exhalation of air steadily for a couple of minutes before the

commencement of concentration. Repetition of slow inhalation through one nostril followed by slow exhalation through the other nostril to the accompaniment of '*Soham*' disciplines your body and tranquillizes your mind.

Cover the right nostril with the tip of the right-hand thumb. Cover the left nostril with the tip of the right-hand middle finger. Put the tip of the index finger at the center of the forehead between the eyebrows. Uncover the right nostril. Inhale air through the right nostril keeping the left nostril closed with the tip of the right-hand middle finger. This act of slow and steady inhalation through the right nostril is accompanied by the utterance of the primary sacred syllable '*so*'. After inhalation retain the breath for some time before exhalation. Uncover the left nostril. Then, exhale air through the left nostril, keeping the right nostril closed with the right-hand thumb. This act of slow and steady exhalation is accompanied by the utterance of the secondary sacred syllable '*ham*'. Repeat these slow and steady acts of inhalation followed by exhalation for a couple of minutes.

During these rhythms of inhalation and exhalation the tip of the right hand index finger should touch the center of the forehead between the eyebrows. This exercise of regulated breathing is known as '*Pranayama*'. Regular and systematic practice of *Pranayama* purifies your body and tranquillizes your mind. It rejuvenates the psyche and regenerates the *soma*. It gives the wealth of health and the benediction of bliss. Personal guidance of a master is absolutely essential for *Pranayama*.

### **Mira's Devotion**

Mira was an ardent devotee of Lord Sri Krishna. She used to meditate continuously on the physical form of Lord Sri Krishna. Her ignorant husband and shrewish mother-in-law misunderstood her devotion to God. They teased, tortured, and tormented her in all possible ways. She expressed her love for the Lord by composing and singing devotional songs of great fervor and piety. But her husband and mother-in-law were too brutal to appreciate the divine love described in her sweet songs. They had filthy and vulgar minds. They mistook her divine love for physical infatuation, carnal lust, and voluptuous passion. Her husband turned her out of his house. She did not know what to do or where to go. It was in that hour of extreme distress that she composed the classic lines: '*Chalore man, chalore man Ganga Yamuna teer chalo.*'

She exhorts her mind or inner self to concentrate its attention at the center of the forehead between the eyebrows. It is the place where the third invisible eye of wisdom is situated. Prayag or Allahabad is situated on the banks of Triveni, the confluence of *Ganga*, *Yamuna*, and the subterranean stream of *Saraswati*. Allahabad is really '*Ahlbad*' that literally means the city of bliss.

Another line from Mira's song has great significance: '*Ganga Yamuna nirmala pani!*' The clear waters of *Ganga* and *Yamuna* stand for the regulated process of controlled inhalation and exhalation. It is a symbolic representation of the concept of '*Soham*'.

There are some more magnificent lines in Mira's song: "*Moramakuta pitambaradhari Kundala rajatashareeri chalo.*" In these lovely lines there is an implicit allusion to `kundalini shakti', the primal energy latent in man. '*Raja tashareeri*' is an individual glowing with effulgence, the luster of silver. He is a holy man who finds his ultimate spiritual fulfillment in the gradual awakening of *Kundalini Shakti*.

### ***Pranayama***

During Pranayama or regulated respiration, inhalation, and exhalation are accompanied by the subconscious and sub-vocal incantation of '*Soham, Soham...*' A *sadhaka's* mind should endeavor to listen to the repeated utterance of '*Soham*'. All his thought waves must converge on '*Soham*'. His mind should become obsessed with '*Soham*'. He should limit his span of attention to '*Soham*'. Concentration is attained by reducing the span of attention. The *sadhaka's* mind should act as a vigilant sentry of '*Soham*'. It should become a master of the situation. It should intensify its concentration on the gleaming  *jyoti* for at least a couple of minutes.

Extension of the duration of concentration leads to the altered state of consciousness known as contemplation. The *sadhaka* should continue in this state of profound contemplation for some more time. In deep contemplation the *sadhaka* destroys the dichotomy between the  *jyoti* and all other objects in the world. The *sadhaka* and the  *jyoti* alone exist. The next step is absorption in the  *jyoti*. The *sadhaka* enters a state of empathy. He identifies himself with the  *jyoti*. He interiorizes the external  *jyoti* in his own inner self, which is transfigured and transformed by the radiance of the  *jyoti*. In a state of deep absorption, the dichotomy between the *sadhaka* and the  *jyoti* does not exist. The  *jyoti* is visualized as an integral part of the *sadhaka's* body. After the successive states of self-induced motivation, one-pointed attention, intense concentration, prolonged contemplation, and deep absorption are gone through, real meditation begins. The altered state of consciousness leading to non-dualistic meditation is picturesquely described as 'the blossoming of the lotus of the heart'.

### ***Interiorization of the Jyoti***

The interiorized  *jyoti* is consecrated in the tabernacle of the *sadhaka's* heart by a sustained effort of imaginative empathy. The vision of the  *jyoti* is retained in the lotus of the heart that has blossomed spiritually. As soon as the holy  *jyoti* is installed in the lotus of the heart, the blissful state of '*tamasoma jyotirgamaya*' is attained. The darkness of spiritual ignorance is dispelled by the eternal  *jyoti* representing the lambent light of wisdom. The golden glory of the  *jyoti* reaches the *sadhaka's* throat. From the throat it reaches his hands. From the hands it reaches his stomach. From the stomach it goes down to his legs and feet. From the feet it rises up to his cranium. From the cranium it reaches his *Sahasrara chakra*, the crown plexus known as the thousand-petalled lotus. Finally, it emerges at the center of his forehead between the eyebrows. The  *jyoti* emerges as an aureole or halo around the *sadhaka's* head. It radiates from the *sadhaka's* body as a divine aura. The

interiorized effulgence and golden glory of the divine  *jyoti*  will illuminate every limb of the  *sadhaka*  who has reached the acme of spiritual ecstasy.

### **The *Jyoti* Spiritualizes Body and Mind**

When the spiritual effulgence of the divine  *jyoti*  is reflected in the  *sadhaka's*  eyes, they are purified and sanctified. His looks beam with benevolence and become a potent antidote to the malevolence of the notorious evil eye of vicious people. His eyes sparkle with love and compassion. When the interiorized  *jyoti*  penetrates the  *sadhaka's*  tongue, his speech is sweetened and made as mellifluous as the  *manna*  of Gods. He is no longer influenced by evil talk and malicious gossip. When the interiorized  *jyoti*  enters his ears, he will begin to shun slanderous speech. When the divine radiance of the  *jyoti*  illuminates his hands, he will refrain from evil actions. When it reaches his feet, he will seek the company of virtuous people. He will no longer haunt places of vice. When the celestial ' *jyoti* ' illuminates the  *sadhaka's*  brain, all vicious thoughts and evil desires vanish. The  *sadhaka's*  stomach filled with the spiritual glory of the  *jyoti*  will discard evil food. Thus, the interiorized divine  *jyoti*  transforms the physical body of the  *sadhaka*  into a temple consecrated to the Cosmic Self.

### **Exteriorization of the *Jyoti***

Then this spiritual splendor should be transmitted to friends, relations, foes, and wild animals. The  *sadhaka*  discovers his kinship with the entire creation. His passion for all becomes universal compassion. He experiences the divinity of humanity and the humanity of divinity. The interiorized  *jyoti*  is ultimately absorbed as the celestial light of cosmic consciousness. Its astral projection within and without the  *sadhaka's*  body may be continued for nearly half an hour. During this interval the doors of his perception will be cleansed by a spontaneous sublimation of his animal instincts.

Imagine a huge tree among whose sprawling branches thousands of birds have built their nests. As long as the birds perch on its branches, the ground under it will be made dirty by their droppings. You may sweep the ground every morning but it becomes dirty again as soon as the birds arrive in the evening. When you are sweeping the ground, the droppings will fall on your body also. That is why you will have to drive away the birds permanently to keep the ground clean. The place becomes clean as soon as the birds fly away.

### **Bio-psycho-physical Catharsis**

Thus, if the  *sadhaka's*  mind galvanized by self-motivation follows the arduous path of undivided one-pointed attention, intense concentration, continuous contemplation, and deep absorption culminating in the interiorization of the effulgent  *jyoti*  whose lambent light illuminates every  *indriya*  (senses) of his body, then the next step will be spiritual realization through profound meditation. Purification of mind and body, purgation of malevolent emotions, and the cleansing of the gates of perception are desiderata for all types of meditation. It is only after

this bio-psycho-physical catharsis that it will be possible for a *sadhaka* to consecrate himself to the life divine.

### **Sense Subservience to Sense Transcendence**

The infra-sensory or subconscious mind 'below the senses' is essentially instinctive and habitual. The suprasensory or superconscious mind 'beyond the senses' is mainly transcendental and supramental. Subservience to senses is an essential characteristic of motivation, attention, concentration, contemplation, and even absorption. Transcendence over the senses leads to the altered state of consciousness known as supramental meditation. A *sadhaka's* mind should liberate itself from its bondage to senses, rise above them, and attain the ineffable state of *dhyana*. This *sadhana* will not be possible unless it is backed by powerful self-motivation for achieving spiritual experience.

### **Sense-independence**

While progressing from a state of sense-subservience to a state of sense-transcendence, a *sadhaka's* consciousness passes through a state of quiescence, comparable to a common overlapping zone of neutrality. This is a sort of buffer state between the two states of sense-subservience and sense-transcendence. At the frontiers of this no-man's land the passport of sense-independence should be shown. This intervening state of consciousness is the overlapping zone of contemplation and absorption.

### **Salokya, Sameepya and Sayujya**

The primary state of sense-subservience encompassing the mental activities of motivation, attention, and concentration is known as *salokya* that corresponds to the universe of pluralism or the world of names and forms. The secondary state of sense-independence encompassing the mental activities of contemplation and absorption is known as *sameepya* or proximity that corresponds to the universe of dualism. The tertiary state of sense-transcendence is meditation. It is *sayujya* corresponding to the ineffable experience of oneness with the Cosmic Self. It is a non-dualistic state of consciousness in which the personal self is immersed in cosmic consciousness.

### **Love is a Rose**

Consider the example of a rose plant. It has branches, twigs, leaves, and flowers. You may be lured by a beautiful rose. It has a thorn like every other rose. You are motivated by a desire to have a rose. You must fix your attention on the branches, twigs, leaves, and thorns also because you must distinguish the rose from other parts of the plant. Then you must concentrate on the rose and pluck it cautiously from the plant without getting pricked by the thorn under the rose. If you are a devotee, you will most probably offer the flower to God.

## Human Love and Divine Love

Man's life is like a rose plant. His relations and friends are branches and twigs. His thoughts are leaves. His animal lust is the thorn under the rose. His selfless divine love is the rose flower. It is said that every rose has a thorn. There is no rose without a thorn. Likewise, there is no 'human' love without animal lust. What should man do in order to extract 'divine' love from human love? He must pluck the 'rose of immaculate love' without getting pricked by the thorn of voluptuous lust.

## Love is Your Offering to God

Man's heart is a flower of love blossoming in the bog of sensual desires and mundane aspirations. This immaculate flower of divine love should be separated from the plant of profane life. The flower is a *naivedya* or an offering to *Paramatman* or the Cosmic Self. The pure, holy, untarnished, and unselfish love in the human heart is an immaculate blossom. It should be offered at the altar of God conceived in any form you like.

## Meditation on a Personal God

If you feel that a  *jyoti*  is too impersonal to rivet your attention, you may visualize any other divine form in the  *jyoti*  but not apart from it. You can mentally exteriorize on the center of the  *jyoti*  any deity or personified abstraction of divinity that you might choose. Some people are naturally anthropomorphic. They cannot think about  *Nirguna-brahman*  or God without name, form, and attributes. An abstract or non-anthropomorphic God cannot be visualized by many people. They cannot help visualizing God in human form. They regard God as an embodiment of all human excellences. They are free to do so because anthropomorphism is always preferable to atheism and agnosticism.

Humanized religion is more popular than abstract religion. There is no harm in meditating on a personal God if you cannot visualize  *Nirguna-brahman* . You may be a devotee of Sri Rama. Then you may visualize Rama's form in the  *jyoti*  before you. If you love Sai, you may imagine His presence in the  *jyoti* . If Vighneswara is your favorite deity, you may imagine the likeness of Vighneswara in the  *jyoti* . You may choose any deity you like from the vast pantheon of the world's religions and meditate on that deity's form in the lambent light of the  *jyoti* .

But one thing you must not forget. It is the fact that the entire creation is bathed in the divine-light of  *Paranjyoti* , the Archetypal  *jyoti* . You can visualize all ephemeral forms of the kaleidoscopic panorama of the universe in the eternal effulgence of the comprehensive and cosmic  *Paranjyoti* .

## Meditation on Sai

If you can afford to devote more time to meditation, here are some more hints for you. You may imagine the physical form of Swami. Shut your eyes for a minute. Imagine the thick kinky mop of hair framing Swami's head like a divine halo. Imagine His long saffron robe. This will not take you more than a moment. Keep this

form before your mind's eye as an impressionistic outline to be filled in with more minute details. This bare outline may make only a momentary impression on your mind. Your mind may be able to retain this form for a split second.

But you should not stop with this. You must fill in all the details from head to foot by exercising your imagination. Begin with the head. Imagine the visage and profile of Swami filling in as many details as you can recall. Visualize the eyes, the nose, the mouth, the ears, the lips, and every feature of Swami. Thus, imagine the form step by step from the face downward. Visualize every aspect of the form of Swami. Then mentally retrace your path of visualization slowly from the feet upward to Swami's head of thick curly hair. This will take you another ten minutes. You will have already spent 20 minutes in meditating on Swami's physical form.

### ***Sakshatkara***

In this practice of meditation based on imaginative visualization there are three stages. First, you start with an imaginatively visualized representation of Swami's form. Second, this abstract form becomes a concretized thought form. Third, this thought form is revealed as a vision. This is known as the spiritual experience of *Sakshatkara*, the final consummation of meditation.



Many people think that meditation is an occult faculty. It is not. It is a natural faculty of the human mind when in a state of perfect inner tranquility. The tranquillization of the mind has to be practiced slowly, steadily, and spontaneously. The advanced *sadhaka* will experience the self in its disincarnate state, the noumenal subsistence of the soul apart from the phenomenal existence of the physical body. It is an over-

whelming experience in which the personal self transcends the barriers of the spatiotemporal continuum.

No man becomes a saint in his sleep. A *sadhaka* cannot overnight attain the highest altered state of consciousness. The *sadhana* of *dhyana* is a slow, steady, and spontaneous spiritual exercise. Nevertheless, a *sadhaka* should start early, drive slowly, and reach safely.

But *dhyana* without *daya* [compassion] or meditation without compassion is a negation of religion. Spirituality without love is an exercise in futility. Your thoughts, words, and deeds should be inspired by pure selfless love— 'Start the day with love, spend the day with love, fill the day with love.'

**Source:** *Sanathana Sarathi*, March 1980

# Thought of the MONTH

## The I Principle

The physical body that performs *japam* (Name recitation) or *dhyanam* (meditation) or the various other spiritual practices is but a water-bubble. The mind that is based upon this physical body is but a mad monkey. With the help of this mad-monkey mind and this water-bubble body, how can you hope to achieve the permanent *atma*? *Japa, dhyana, bhajans* (devotional singing), austerities, sacrifices—these are all methods for temporarily controlling the mind. But there is one practice that will have a permanent effect, and that is self-enquiry. You should go on enquiring "Who am I? Who am I?" until you reach the stage where you find out who you really are. The enquiry should go on thus, "Here is my body, here is my mind, my heart, my feelings, my intellect, my memory power. I am not any of these. Someone has praised me. Someone has censured me. But to whom does this pertain? Only to this physical body." In this way you have to develop a sense of detachment and sacrificing nature. How can a physical body abuse another physical body? That is inert and this is also inert. How can inert things criticize or admonish? They cannot. How can they even worship anything? They cannot. But then can *atma* criticize another *atma*? That is absurd. One person who has seen God says, 'God exists.' Another person who has not seen God, says, 'God does not exist'. If a person has not seen God, then how can he assert that God does not exist?

*Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 20 (1987)*

Those who have faith in the *Gita* should note that it has clearly declared that this world is ephemeral and "a vale of tears", and enduring peace and bliss are not to be found by attachment to it. The source of lasting peace and happiness is within us. That is the *atma* (the Divine Self). It is by realizing it that peace and bliss have to be secured. One must constantly develop the consciousness that the *atma* is everything—the doer, the deed, and the outcome thereof. When the consciousness is broadened this way, in due course it leads to Self-realization. If your vision is broad, your destination will also be of the same magnitude. A narrow outlook can lead only to a narrow alley. If you are immersed all the time in the petty trifles of mundane existence, when will you ever understand the reality that is beyond the physical and the mental? Set your sight on the Supreme. The illumination will come in a flash. Everyone should develop the consciousness that "I am *atma*. I am Brahman". When one says, "I am Brahman", it is evident that there is "I" in Brahman. Who is that "I"? "Brahman" means pervasiveness. In declaring "I am Brahman", the consciousness of all-pervasiveness should be developed. Brahman is all-pervasive. It is equally present everywhere. You should regard yourselves as all-pervasive, omni-self. Whatever you do, whatever you see, whatever you speak, saturate it with Divinity so that you may be aware of your reality.

*Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 20 (1987)*

The whole world appears to contain innumerable names and forms. One should not be enmeshed with these names and forms. It is only when the names and forms are set aside and the underlying source is identified that it is possible to recognize the truth. And that truth is *tattwamasi* (That Thou Art). That is *Prajnanam Brahma* (constant integrated awareness is Brahman). That awareness is *Ayam Atma Brahma* (This Self is Brahman). When you analyze the *mahavakya* (Divine axiom) *tattwamasi*, it will lead you to the awareness "I am That" and "That I am". When you are able to realize this truth, you will find that the principle "I" underlies everything in the universe as the principle of unity. We have to recognize that "I" principle, which is universal. It is a futile exercise to get into arguments and counterarguments over this matter and waste one's time. The only aspect you have to realize is "I am Brahman." When somebody questions you who you are, the proper answer would be "I am I". "I am the word, I am the form, and I am the name"—this "I" represents and explains everything. When somebody questions who you are, do not reply by quoting your name. The name represents the name given to the body. You are not the body. Hence reply, "I am I." Everyone should strive to attain that state of unity.

*Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 37 (2004)*

