

Develop Self Reliance and Faith in God

From ancient times *Bharat* [India] has been conveying the message of peace and prosperity to the world by its adherence to spirituality. The people have always prayed for the welfare of all nations. The greatness of *Bharatiya* [Indian] culture can be appreciated only by those who have experienced its magnificence. It is a culture that has survived the vicissitudes of history and stood the test of time. The greatness of that culture is reflected in *Sanathana Dharma* (The perennial philosophy of life). Righteousness is the external manifestation of this philosophy. It is this righteousness that sustains human life.

It is only when this righteousness governs human life that ideals like equality, fraternity, and liberty will be realized in practice.

Duties and rights

Conflict and discord in the world will cease when men learn to practice sense-control. *Bharatiyas* today are ignoring the profound truths of Indian culture. This is because they are forgetting their inherent divinity in the pursuit of self-interest and the sway of selfishness.

The natural tendencies of man to be kind and considerate to others should be properly fostered. Today men are not doing this.

Man and nature

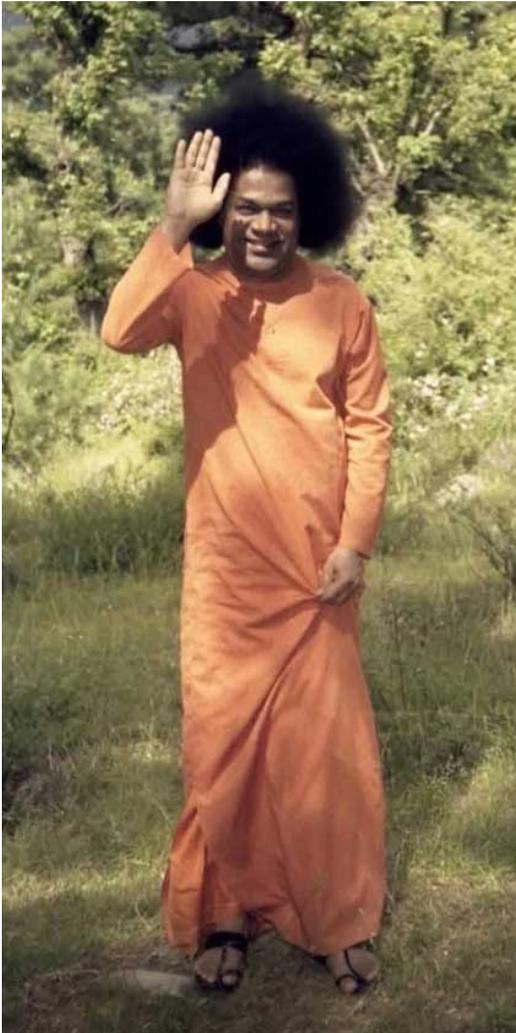
There is no basic conflict between man and nature. Man is entitled to enjoy the fruits of nature even as a child is entitled to the mother's milk or a bee to suck the honey in a flower. The creation is greater than mankind. It is humanity's privilege to understand the secrets of creation. Man should also seek to know the relationship between creation and the Creator.

The human body consists of different organs like the eyes, the nose, the hands, the legs etc. Human beings are limbs of society; Human societies are limbs of humanity. Humanity is a limb of nature (*prakriti*). Nature is a limb of the Cosmic Self (*Paramatma*). If you consider this chain of relationship, you can see that man is related to the Supreme Embodiment of Bliss.

But why is this Bliss eluding man? Because he has not recognized the Divinity within him. Man is considering nature as entirely a creation of Providence for his

enjoyment. This is a mistake. Nature exists for enjoyment by man according to certain limits.

Scientists today are exploring the powers of nature with a view to enjoying them without limit. They want to bring all those powers under human control for their unrestricted enjoyment. This is responsible for so many of the natural disasters which we witness today.



Misuse of nature

What is the cause of droughts and floods that occur in the world? Man seeks to enjoy the benefits of nature without any restraint or regulation. The result is imbalance in nature that has grave consequences. Here you have a globe. If you hit it one way, its balance is disturbed. We should always see to it that in the utilization of natural resources a proper balance is kept. Excessive use in any one direction will result in harm in another direction.

In the exploitation of natural resources, people are observing no limits in the name of their right (*hakku*) to act as they please. I do not understand wherefrom this "right" is derived. In reality, there is no such thing as a "right". In fact, what they have is "responsibility". If one's responsibilities are properly discharged, some rights may emerge from them. If responsibilities (duties) are ignored, what can be the outcome? Only disorder and lack of peace. When rain falls, there will be water in the channels. How can you hope for water when there is no rain? Hence, you must pray at the outset for rain. Only then you can enjoy the

flow of water in the rivers. Similarly, you have at the outset to discharge your duties, then you will secure your rights.

People's duty

Today everyone talks only about rights. This appears utterly meaningless. Consider for a moment how everyone is spending his day. From the moment he wakes up to the time of going to bed everyone is filled with worries of one kind or another. Time is sacred. Actions are even more sacred. Duties are most sacred. Accomplishment of something by an activity is not enough. Till the very end of one's life success must be achieved in every undertaking.

As the Chief Minister (Sri Chandrababu Naidu) observed in his speech, people must do all their actions in an ideal manner. Mere mechanical existence does no credit to one's humanness. Human birth is immensely precious. Three things must be observed as a mark of real humanness: Fear of sin, love of God, and morality in society. People should refrain from sinful acts. The Sanskrit saying declares: "Men desire the fruits of meritorious acts, but do not perform such acts. They do not desire the fruits of sinful deeds, but indulge in sinful acts." When people develop purity in thought, word, and deed, they will reap the fruits of good actions.

Self-reliance

Human life is filled with worries of all kinds from birth to death. The only way to get rid of all these worries is to turn your mind toward God and always think of Him.

Moreover, people should develop self-reliance. They should not look to others or to the government to do what they can do for themselves. You must do as much as possible to help yourself and enjoy the fruits of your labors.

Most people today have neither confidence in themselves nor the determination to accomplish what they desire. They want to get quick results, without the necessary effort on their part. How can this happen? It is not proper to cast the responsibility on God or government. God no doubt can help but He expects you to use the strength and talents given to you before seeking Divine help. To rely on God without using to the utmost your God-given abilities is misconceived,

People must try to purify the environment in which they are living. There is no peace or harmony anywhere. Devotees should try to purify and sanctify this atmosphere by developing love and practicing human values. They may meet with opposition or discouragement from some quarters. They should overcome these obstacles. These critics are like the pests that can destroy extremely valuable things.

Ignore the critics

Those engaged in welfare activities should not bother about these critics but carry on their good work according to the dictates of their conscience. This point has also been made by the Chief Minister. When you are convinced that you are doing what is good for the people, why bother about the criticism of small-minded men? Develop self-confidence.

Today in *Bharat* millions of people suffer from shortage of drinking water. This problem to some extent is due to the conduct of the people themselves. How far are the people acting in the right way? There are three types of behavior among human beings: the divine, the human and the animal. What we are witnessing is the growth of animality and decline of humanness. The reason for this trend is the limitless growth of desires and the steady disappearance of ideals ("*aasayaalu*"). Selfishness is growing, selflessness is declining. Trickery is spreading, integrity is vanishing,

attachment to the body is waxing, and love for the country is waning. The result is that the character of the people is getting degraded.

Lesson from the past

How different was the state of things in the good old times of our ancients. They rejoiced in the company of good devotees, they welcomed the arrival of the poor and needy to their homes, they loved to hear the hymns in praise of God. They considered only such days as sacred days. (Swami sang a sweet song in this connection). Life can be redeemed only by such virtuous living.

The ancient *Bharatiyas* placed the quality of sacrifice on a high pedestal, adored justice, esteemed righteousness as the supreme virtue, and welcomed truth as a valuable friend. Today the state of things is at variance with all these.

Renunciation is the real secret of happiness. Everyone should share with others to the extent of his capacity his income and possessions and contribute to the well-being of others. There are so many people who are destitute and suffering in various ways. It is the duty of those who are better off to go to the help of these unfortunates.

Live up to your words

Embodiments of Love! Today you have listened to the speeches of many leaders. They have spoken from their hearts and given expression to their concern for the welfare of the people. If these words are translated into purposeful action, the country is bound to make good progress. It is a welcome sign that such leaders have come forward to give assurances of this kind on occasions like this. They are bound to generate enthusiasm and confidence among the people. The Chief Minister, the Speaker (of the Karnataka Assembly), and the Union Minister have all spoken with conviction and enthusiasm. This should get implanted in the hearts of the people. The assurances should be translated into action (cheers).

Bharat as well as the rest of the world are racked by a myriad problems. What is the remedy? There must be a radical transformation in the minds of men. People should recognize the inherent divinity of man.

When this mental transformation and recognition of divinity come together, there will be the divinization of mankind.

An auspicious day

Embodiments of Love! Today the *Yajna* that began on the 5th has ended. It is *Vijayadasami* day. It is an auspicious sign that the drinking water project is being transferred on this day to the Andhra Government and the Chief Minister has accepted the responsibility for the proper maintenance of the project. There are many more similar welfare schemes that must be carried out for the good of the people. My entire being, from head to toe, is dedicated to the service of the people (cheers). I wish to do many things for the good of the people. I do not wish to talk

about them. Action must speak for itself (cheers). The Speaker mentioned that the drinking water problem was acute in his district also. Unlike some other districts, the Kolar district has no rivers. Everyone should resolve to see that he contributes his might to the solution of such problems. Everyone should realize his obligations to society because of what all he owes to society. Wherever necessary people should come together to solve their problems by their own co-operative action.

Mobilize the youth

There are many young people who are idling away their time at home. Their energies should be mobilized for constructive welfare work. The Chief Minister referred to the scheme and said that water is a primary need all over the country. Pure drinking water should be made available to the entire people. That is my resolve.

From my earliest years I have been concerned about providing three primary requisites for our people: Free education, free medical aid, and free basic amenities like drinking water. Education is for the head. Medical care is for the heart, and pure water for the body. These three cover the main requirements of life. To provide these three gives the greatest gratification (cheers).

Task before leaders

Try to provide free education wherever you can, provide free medicines and treatment for the poor. Co-operate among yourselves as far as possible to provide drinking water. In Rayalseema people suffer from the ill-effects of fluorosis. Please see that at least the future generation is saved from these ailments. I bless you all and assure you of my grace in all your beneficent activities. I desire that all the authorities concerned should act in concert to carry out welfare programs (cheers).

The Chief Minister, who had been yearning to come here for a long time, is fortunate in being present here on this auspicious and memorable occasion. I am confident that he will carry out his program well. I am happy that he has accepted the responsibility for the future maintenance of the scheme. He is no outsider. In fact, all are spiritually one though in names and forms they may be different. By his acceptance, we have been relieved of an onerous responsibility. I may have to take on new burdens in the future. I am well prepared for that. This is not the end of the story. I assure the people of Kolar that I shall see to the fulfillment of their needs soon (cheers).

By the 72nd Birthday, the drinking water needs of the Kolar people will be met and people in every village will be well served. Even in Anantapur district, some areas remain to be served. I assure them that all that remains to be done will be completed. If any area is not covered, I shall get the work done if I am informed about it. I am yours and you are mine. Our relationship is a spiritual one. You are entitled to approach me, and I am bound to respond to your wishes. Do not entertain any doubts on this score. I bless you all (Prolonged cheers).

(The function concluded with the singing of the National Anthem)

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, Nov. 1997

"All should be members of the group doing social service. Human life is meant for service to others. You should not be satisfied with just undertaking service. You should also request friends and relatives to join in."

~Baba

POETRY



Baba, Thy Will be done

Down here as in Heaven.
We are Thy tools of service;
We are units of sacrifice....

Baba, Thy Will be done;
We are parts of One great One
Each must work in his place,
Without trying to run a race.

Baba, Thy Will be done:
We are one family under the sun;
Each member must do his duty
Assigned to him, in tranquility.

~K. Vaidyanathan

O Baba, Bhagavan, Bestow Thy Grace
Unto all the Universe, till the end of time!
Make me humble, save me, teach me,
Never to forget Thy Name, let It course
In all my veins, while waking, sleeping
I take refuge in Thee, My Breath, My Life
My All, Almighty God, the All-in-all!

~G. Ramayya

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, June 1962

Dhyanadarshana

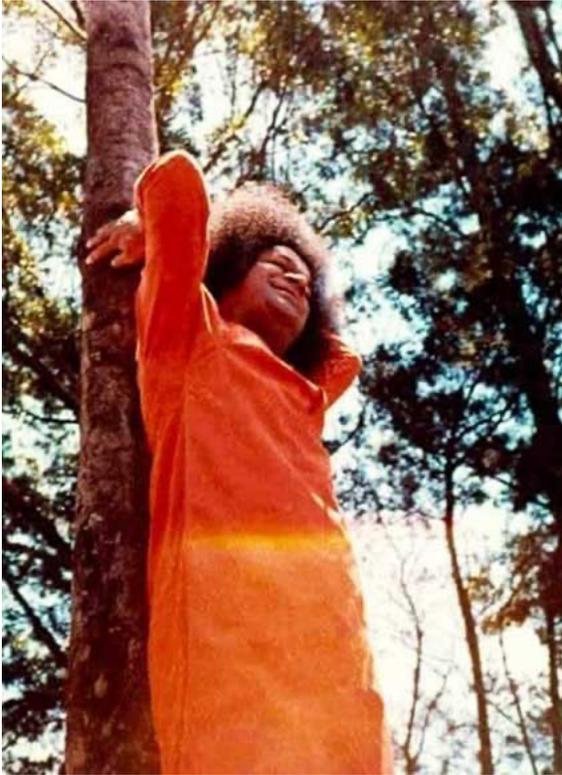
Following is a compilation from Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's discourses on the 'Theory and Practice of Meditation' by B. Srinivas Murthy

What is *dhyana*

Dhyana is a self-motivated, self-suggested, and self-induced state of super-consciousness. It is an aid to the attainment of higher altered state of consciousness.

The nature of mind

If you think about an object incessantly, imagine its form vividly, remember it constantly, chant its name repeatedly, and brood over it passionately, it will make an indelible and everlasting impression on your mind. A mind capable of becoming insanely preoccupied with mundane ambitions will be equally capable of becoming magnificently obsessed with spiritual aspirations. Just as a lovely form lures a voluptuary, a divine form enraptures a devotee. If any form of the Immanent Cosmic Self, Omnipresent Divinity, and Eternal Reality is constantly reflected upon, It manifests Itself as a thought form, reveals Itself as a vision, and ultimately materializes Itself as a Divine Existent.



Man's mind is an immaculate mirror. It provides an undistorted image of an object reflected by it. A mind polluted by profane thoughts mirrors the same profane thoughts. The human mind is a *tabula rasa* [clean slate]. It is naturally pure, amoral, and neutral. If it is exposed to evil influences, it becomes evil. An immaculate mind will be dehumanized by diabolical desires. A mind irradiated by the lambent light of divine love becomes divinized and sanctified. Such a sanctified mind becomes a radiant mirror of the Life Divine.

What meditation means

An ordinary human mind is perpetually preoccupied with mundane matters. It is eternally engaged in the contemplation of its environment. To attain a higher altered state of consciousness, this mundane mind must turn inward and concentrate its attention on the inner personal self. In other words, meditation is mental regression from extreme extroversion to profound introversion.

The vast universe around us is in an eternal state of dynamic equilibrium. Our external world is in a state of perpetual flux. All material objects, the ents and entities of this restless universe are mutable and transient. They have illusory forms and are evanescent existents confined to our spatiotemporal continuum. All worldly values are purely relative and have no absolute worth. Meditation is the search for that noumenal reality that lies behind the phenomenal appearances created by our conscious sensations, perceptions, and conceptions.

Five-dimensional personality of man

Man is a microcosmic replica of the macrocosmic creation. His body is composed of *panchabhutas* or the five primordial principles of earth, water, air, fire, and ether. He is animated by five *jnanendriyas* or the five doors of perception represented by his eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin corresponding to the five sensations of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Our knowledge of the external world is inferred from these visual, aural, olfactory, palatal, and tactile sense data. The human body is constituted by *panchakoshas* or the five subtle sheaths. It is energized by *panchapranas* or the five vital energies.

The ever-changing, evanescent, and irreversible human organism composed of *panchabhutas*, animated by *panchendriyas* (five *jnanendriyas* assisted by five *karmendriyas*), constituted by *panchakoshas*, and energized by *panchapranas* is subject to decay, disintegration, dissolution, and death.

Jyoti represents the immortal atman

But there is an asomatic, immutable, imperishable, indestructible and supra-spatiotemporal subsistent that survives the dissolution of the *panchabhutas*, *panchendriyas*, *panchakoshas*, and *panchapranas*. It is the immortal *atman* or the discarnate personal self. It is essentially a divine *jyoti*, a lambent light radiating the golden glory of God, the Cosmic Self. It shines with an everlasting and inextinguishable effulgence. Let us take the example of a tank full of water. Let each person remove a tumblerful of water from the tank. The level of water goes down and the tank becomes empty. Let us also imagine a heap of sand. If each person removes a handful of sand from the heap, the sand disappears.

Let us next consider the phenomenon of the eternal *jyoti* shedding its lambent light of love and divinity. It represents the immortal *atman*. An infinite number of *jyotis* can be lighted with the aid of the *jyoti*. But the brilliance of this primordial archetypal *jyoti* does not diminish. This original prototype continues to glow with the same pure primal effulgence. It goes on gleaming eternally. Hence, a steadily shining *jyoti* is the most appropriate form to be meditated upon.

Ekagrata

Ekagrata is one-pointedness of mind. It is undivided attention concentrated on a definite form. It is the reduction of the span of attention to a single point. It is the

convergence of all thought waves at the focus of attention. Many *upadhis* or practical aids are available for the attainment of *ekagrata*. Contraction of the normal span of attention leads to deep concentration. Likewise, expansion of the normal span of attention leads to diffusion of thought and the divergence of thought waves away from the focus of attention. In other words, *ekagrata* or one-pointedness becomes *anekagrata* or many-pointedness.

Consider the example of a vessel filled with water. If the vessel is steady, the water in it will also be steady. If the vessel is, shaken, the surface of the water will be disturbed by little ripples. Then, imagine a maelstrom in an ocean. The terrible waves thrown up by its deep whirlpools can wreck the largest steamers.

The lake of the human mind

The human mind is often likened to a lake. If the placid lake of man's mind is agitated by turbulent waves of passions and ambitions, he becomes unhappy and restless. In a similar manner, frequent and undesirable bodily movements like changing postures or making gesticulations cause irreparable psychic damage to human personality. They affect mind and body like the waves thrown up by a whirlpool. Young men endowed with robust bodies and energetic minds are likely to be excited by vicious thought waves generated by wrong postures and violent gestures. Body and mind interpenetrate each other. You cannot control your mind without disciplining your body.

Mind is disturbed by body movements

Man's body is interpenetrated with mind. Mind can be regarded as the embodied self. During meditation the body should be quiet, steady, and motionless. Then, the mind interpenetrating with the body can attain tranquility. If bodily postures change continually, the mind gets agitated. A disturbed and worried mind makes the clear stream of consciousness murky and muddy. The uncontrollable meanderings of mind disperse its thought waves from the main focus of attention.

Mind is a power pack of energy

Man's mind is endowed with stupendous potential energy. It possesses innumerable unutilized and unmanifested potentialities. It is subtler than the subtlest form of matter. It is a power pack of preternatural energy.

Personal self is cosmic self

Let us fill a little cup with salt water from the sea. The water in the cup and the water in the sea is the same though the cup contains only an infinitesimal fraction of the seawater. Likewise, the microcosmic personal self is the same as the macrocosmic Universal Self.

Padmasana

The practice of *padmasana* or the cross-legged lotus posture is of paramount importance in meditation. A *sadhaka* [spiritual aspirant] should keep his backbone

straight. No part of the backbone should be bent. Many youngsters walk like hunchbacks. Sitting straight is essential for all forms of meditation. Many men and women do not know how to sit straight. In course of time their backbones acquire the curvature of an easy chair. The head, shoulders, and back of a *sadhaka* should be erect. He should not recline backward, stoop forward, or bend sideward. The entire body should be quiet and relaxed. An imaginary straight line passing down through the center of the top of the skull of the *sadhaka* should be almost perpendicular to the seat on which he squats during meditation. The total mass of his body should be equally distributed and balanced around this imaginary axis. Those who cannot learn the *padmasana* may adopt the *sukhasana* or any convenient and practicable posture.

The importance of the cross-legged lotus posture technically known as *padmasana* cannot be overemphasized. Its regular practice is conducive to physical fitness and mental alertness. The practice of *padmasana* is an integral part of *dhyana*. Its esoteric significance is closely connected with the *chakras* or plexuses.

Chakras

Man's body consists of several *chakras* or plexuses. A *chakra* is the center of a subtle network of nerves. A complicated and crisscrossed web of veins and arteries radiate from each *chakra*. In the opinion of occultists and clairvoyants, a *chakra* is a small circular segment where the subtle astral body coincides with the gross physical body. *Muladharachakra* is the perineal plexus situated in the perineum between the genital organs and the rectum. It is also known as the basal coccygeal plexus.

Kundalini shakti

Muladharachakra or the perineal plexus is the storage cell of *kundalini shakti*, the primal parapsychical energy latent in man. It is a subtle esoteric form of energy congealed around the *muladharachakra*. It is symbolically depicted in treatises on *yoga* as a small sleeping serpent with three coils and a half. It inhales and exhales rhythmically. It transmits super physical impulses along the subtle axis connecting the six occult plexuses. One-pointed attention, complete concentration, steady contemplation, and deep absorption sustained by strong self-motivation lead to the ultimate altered state of consciousness.

In the most profound state of meditation the coiled serpent symbolizing the primordial energy of *kundalini* is slowly awakened from its spiritual slumber. The potential energy of *kundalini* gets converted into kinetic energy. It levitates slowly along the subtle axis connecting the six *chakras* or plexuses viz., the afore mentioned *muladharachakra* or the umbilical plexus, *anahatachakra* or the cardiac plexus, *vishudhachakra* or the pharyngeal plexus, *ajnachakra* or the brow plexus, and *sahasrara chakra* or the crown plexus. *Sahasrara* means a thousand-petalled lotus. It is regarded as the king of plexuses. It is situated at the top of the skull. When the awakened *kundalini shakti* reaches the *sahasrara chakra* an adept acquires preternatural powers. The communion of the personal self with the Cosmic Self is the ultimate goal of *dhyana-yoga*.

Voice of silence

The voice of silence is the voice of God, the immanent Cosmic Self. Hence, perfect solitude is a prerequisite for the practice of meditation. You may choose for meditation any convenient place you like but it should be as clean as possible. A solitary spot, a serene atmosphere and a spiritual environment promote pure thoughts, sublime sentiments, and unselfish emotions. A polluted place promotes polluted thoughts. Pollution is spiritually contagious. Pollution of the atmosphere pollutes mind and body. A *sadhaka's* attention is likely to be distracted by the diabolical thought forms created by a polluted environment. Serenity and solitude are essential for the purification and tranquillization of body and mind.

`Solitude in multitude' and `Multitude in solitude'

When many people must practice meditation at one place they should not sit in an overcrowded manner. They must not touch each other. There should be no physical contacts during meditation. Mental tranquility and physical euphoria are essential for acquiring higher altered states of consciousness. Even in an overcrowded room `solitude in multitude' can be experienced if all sensory stimuli and responses are scrupulously avoided. *Sadhakas* should cooperate with one another in maintaining absolute silence.

In general, collective meditation is self-contradictory, and self-defeating. Group meditation is a misnomer since no meditation can be practiced in an uncontrollable crowd. As meditation is a solitary spiritual exercise, the question of mutual collaboration does not normally arise except in telepathic communications. It is exceedingly difficult though not impossible to gain one-pointed attention in a large congregation.

During congregational meditation a *sadhaka* may shut his eyes, but his mind may wander from one thought to another. He is likely to become listless and restless. He may be tempted to see what others are doing. He is apt to indulge in comparisons. He is likely to forget that *sadhana* is a personal spiritual practice in which comparisons are invariably odious. Each *sadhaka* should formulate his own unique spiritual program. He should not worry about others. He should try and listen to the still small voice of his own inner silence. It is only then that he can experience the most sublime divine afflatus, the highest altered state of consciousness. If two or three bangles are worn on each wrist the slightest movement causes a series of tintinnabulations. But if each wrist is adorned with a single bangle no sound is produced. The striking contrast between the `one' and `two' is picturesquely expressed by the epigram: *`Ek niranjan do gadbad'* (one creates calm and two create a storm).

Meditation is reduced to an exercise in futility whenever two or more persons try to work together as a team. It is necessary to repeat that there can be no collaboration in meditation. However, it may not be always possible for a *sadhaka* to have a separate cell or cubicle for meditation. Nevertheless, it should be possible for every

sadhaka to isolate himself physically from others, insulate his body and mind from all external and internal disturbances, and become a lonely island in a turbulent sea of distractions. He should try and withdraw himself into a spiritual shell of his own. He should cut off all sensory contacts with his physical environment. He must endeavor to confine himself to his own personal aura though he may be compelled by circumstances beyond his control to stay in the company of other *sadhakas*. It should be clearly recognized that a soul which has discovered its own inner tranquility can enjoy 'solitude in multitude' just as a sick soul suffers from 'multitude in solitude'!

Purity of mind and body

A *sadhaka* should cultivate ceremonial purity by keeping his body and mind clean. The human body is a tabernacle consecrated to its personal self that is identical with the Cosmic Self. A *sadhaka* should regard his body as a temple of the living God. He should purge his mind of all morbid emotions and fill his heart with divine love.

Preparation for meditation

A *sadhaka* should not practice meditation squatting on bare ground. The subtle occult force or esoteric energy generated during deep meditation is akin to a current of electricity. It is common knowledge that an electric circuit is connected with the earth to avoid accidents like electrocution and short-circuiting. The earth conducts an electric current and dissipates its high potential. Thus, many electrical hazards are either eliminated or partially minimized. The subtle current of esoteric energy generated during deep meditation flows along the backbone of a *sadhaka*. This esoteric energy should be utilized for acquiring higher altered states of consciousness. Hence, a *sadhaka* should always squat on a mat or a carpet during meditation. He may use an ordinary mat. It also serves as an efficient shock-absorber. A simple mat woven with *durbha* grass or *tunga* reeds will be useful (*Tunga* is an aquatic weed growing in shallow streams). It is necessary to reiterate that a *sadhaka* should never squat on uncovered floor during meditation. This preliminary precaution will protect him from the psychic and physical hazards involved in spiritual *sadhana*.

Every serious student of the spiritual science of noetic should remember that such rituals are only external paraphernalia. They do not form an integral part of meditation. They are only aids to the attainment of higher altered states of consciousness. Any cunning charlatan can squat on a mat made of weeds, practice *padmasana* or the cross-legged lotus posture, join his thumb and index finger in the form of *chinmudra*, and keep his eyes half closed. It may be a mere pose for hoodwinking gullible people. Unwary persons are fooled by such theatrical gimmicks. But an adept can easily distinguish genuine spirituality from spurious ritualism.

Man's mind is a mad monkey

A novice must try and transcend all trivial worries, wavering moods, fickle thoughts, inexplicable phobias and unpredictable manias that torture and torment his monkey

mind. Many students switch off the lights and settle down for meditation. But they cannot switch off their thoughts. One thought leads to another, sparking off a sort of mental chain reaction. It is the nature of mind to go on recalling, recollecting, remembering, reflecting, reasoning, thinking, and worrying. Man's mind is a mad monkey. It cannot spontaneously acquire *ekagrata* or one-pointed attention. It is like a monkey, who can never keep quiet. You may give him all sorts of sweetmeats. But he will go on scratching himself and jumping from one branch to another branch.

An idle man's brain is said to be a devil's workshop. It is dangerous to keep the mind idle. It must always have some work to do. It should never be given a holiday. An unpreoccupied mind destroys the individual himself. The human mind works without respite. It cannot rest even for a single split second. Its spiritual appetite should be whetted to prepare it for meditation. A slothful mind remains slothful forever. It is only an energetic mind that can develop strong self-motivation for the cultivation of *ekagrata* or one-pointed attention, complete concentration, steady contemplation, deep absorption, and non-dualistic meditation.

Meditation is not concentration

Many lay persons believe that meditation and concentration are identical. They are not. Concentration is not a lower form of meditation. They are related but not similar. The first step in meditation is self-motivation. Self-motivation should enable a *sadhaka* to attain *ekagrata* or one-pointed attention. Contraction of the normal span of attention leads to concentration. A man might say that he has been meditating for many years and that he has not been able to achieve concentration of mind. But it is obvious that one need not practice meditation for cultivating concentration. Concentration is a natural mental faculty. It is a spontaneous intellectual activity. It is an integral part of all worldly activities.

It is inseparable from the *karma* of human life. It can never be dispensed with as long as *karma* is being worked out. It is an essential element of all voluntary action. In fact, you cannot do anything without concentration. If you have no concentration you cannot walk along a street, eat your food, write a letter, or read a book. When you read a book you concentrate on the juxtaposition of letters, words, sentences, paragraphs, and chapters. Thus, you try and grasp the meaning of words, sentences, paragraphs, chapters, and an entire book. Without concentration you cannot understand even a single word. In a similar manner, you cannot compose an ordinary letter decently without concentration of mind.

Consider the example of eating your meal. When you sit down for your meal you must distinguish *chutney* from *sambar* without mixing them up. If you have no concentration, you cannot eat your food in a socially acceptable fashion. When you are walking along a road to go to your college you concentrate on the traffic to avoid accidents. Concentration is such a common faculty that you need not make any

special effort to acquire it. It is so universal and phenomenal that you need not even think about it.

You need not practice meditation for acquiring mental concentration. If you try to do so you will be putting the cart before the horse. Thus, it becomes clear that concentration and meditation are two separate faculties though they are always interdependent and interconnected. Concentration is sensory, empirical, rational, logical, and intellectual whereas meditation is suprasensory, supra-empirical, suprarational, supra-logical, and supra-intellectual. Meditation is an intuitive and mystical experience. In short, concentration is a conscious activity and meditation is a super-conscious experience.

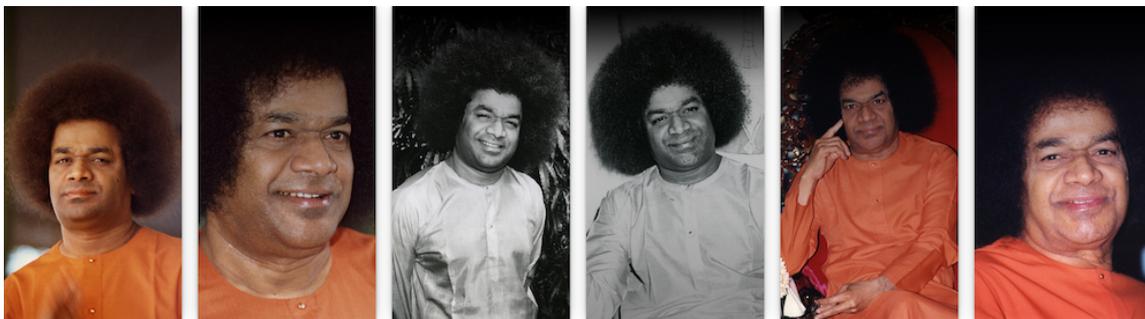
From consciousness to super consciousness

Eyes see. Ears hear. The nose smells. The tongue tastes. The skin feels cold and warmth. Hands and feet do work. *Manas* [mind] discriminates. *Buddhi* reasons. Eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin, hands, feet, *manas*, and *buddhi* are *indriyas*. Their functions depend on sensory impressions. Concentration is achieved when the activities of the various sensory and motor organs are organized, correlated, coordinated, synthesized, and synchronized. Concentration is an activity of the conscious mind. It is entirely dependent on the sense data supplied by sensory organs. It is always subservient to sensations. It can never be an independent mental faculty. But meditation is a supramental experience akin to intuitive insight and mystical revelation. It can be described as a state of suprasensory experience or extrasensory perception.

Since concentration is an indispensable natural activity, it must obviously form the foundation of meditation. The steady transition from concentration to meditation is the summum-bonum of spirituality. Concentration depends on *indriyas* and the *indriyas* are regulated by mind. Thus, it is only by transcending the mind that the transformation of concentration into meditation becomes possible. Consciousness should evolve into super-consciousness.

[To be continued]

Source: *Sanathana Sarathi*, March 1980





OM SRI SAI RAM

A letter to my dearest Swami

Dear Swami

*My humble Pranaams at your lotus feet.
 My sincere thanks to you for being my guide and
 Helping me in my life. Thank you for being my inspiration.
 I enjoy learning new bhajans and singing them for you.
 Thank you for giving me a loving family. I could not have asked
 For a kinder family.
 Thank you for helping me to feel the pain of others.
 Thank you for helping me to understand that Love is God and
 God is Love and that Love resides in our heart.
 Once again, I thank you Dear Swami for being there for all of us.
 JAI SAI RAM!*

*Love always
 Nivaan Rao
 Online SSE, Group 2*

My Beloved Mother Sai

Sai Shyam Sharma, an alumnus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, Prasanthi Nilayam Campus. He writes about his experiences with Swami and how Swami gave him the love of a thousand mothers.

*Love is something which no words can describe.
 It is something that only God can describe and design.*

The love story between my Mother Sai and myself began five years back when I lost my mother. Swami gave me the love of a thousand mothers. This Love can only be experienced and cannot be put in words. I would like to share some of the experiences with you all.

Like all mothers who cover up their children's mistakes, in the same way my Mother Sai covered up my mistake when I tried to run away from Primary School due to homesickness and the news reached Swami. They (Primary School teachers) told Swami, "Swami, this boy ran away from the school." Swami then told, "Who told you so? He came to see Me." He covered it up like a beautiful mother.

I used to suffer from an inexplicable fear of ghosts. When he got an opportunity, my father once told Swami about my fear. Swami then called us inside, created a sugar candy and told us, "You will never get scared again." Truly, I never got scared again.

Once, a teacher asked her first grade students to draw a picture of something that they were really grateful for. She expected them to draw the picture of an ostrich or a plate of food on the table. But she was surprised when she saw the picture that John drew—he drew a hand. The whole class was also surprised seeing the picture. The teacher asked John to explain about the hand. He said, "It's your hand in the picture." She said, "Why is it, John?" John was a shabby and a timid child. This teacher used to hold him by his hand and take him to recess. He said, "Your hand meant so much to me." This is not only a thanksgiving hand, not only for the opportunities given to us but also for the chances given to us by our beloved Mother Sai.

*Even before I saw the bright shining moon,
I saw her smile;
Even before I could feel the warmth the early morning sun gave, I felt her hug;
Even before I could see the twinkling stars, I saw her eyes;
Even before I could feel the breeze brush through my hair,
I felt her hand brushing through it;
Even before I felt the softness in touch of the lotus,
I felt her patting me on the cheeks;
Even before I saw GOD in this form, I saw MOTHER*

It is said that a mother is one who does the following:

*M - Monitors the child
O - Observes the child
T - Teaches the child
H - Helps the child
E - Encourages the child
R - Rewards the child*

I am sure that if I were to go round the whole world and search for a mother who befitted this definition, I would finally land up here at Puttaparthi and find one. There are various occasions in our lives here that we feel Her motherly love.

I would like to highlight just two such instances, the first one being the *Grama Seva*. It was She [Swami] who monitored the whole project by calling the teachers inside and discussing with them in detail how the *Grama Seva* should be conducted. Then She observed how Her children went for work and the way they did it. Whenever we travelled by trucks, sometimes sitting on the edges of the trucks, She cautioned us. Throughout the *Grama Seva*, there was not a day when the sun shone brightly. It was always cloudy with a steady breeze blowing all the time. When Her children

came back from *Grama Seva*, She stood there ready with juicy apples to encourage the children. When the *Grama Seva* was coming to an end, She rewarded all Her children by giving them a pair of clothes.

Another occasion in our lives is Convocation Drama. It is She who monitors the whole drama right from the time the story is made till the last scene is enacted. She even observes Her children who are acting in it during rehearsals and when She finds a mistake, She calls that child and personally teaches him how it should be done. She then helps the child again and again until he finally performs to Her satisfaction. During these rehearsals if at all anytime Her child seems to have made a mistake for which he thinks he is going to be scolded by the warden or the higher authorities, She goes up to him and says, "*Chala Manchidi. Chala Santosham*" ("Very good, Very happy"). On the 22nd of November, after all the thousands of devotees who come here to celebrate birthday have witnessed the whole drama, She goes up to the stage as if She was never concerned with it and rewards Her children with gifts.

It is said that when you are a baby, a mother is a caretaker; when you grow up, she becomes a teacher; when you are a grown-up adult she becomes a friend; when you finally become a man, she becomes an observer and thus throughout our life she remains God.

For those of us who have been studying here from the first standard, I would like to take you back to those cherished moments of our lives. When we were in the first class, we only knew that this person in the orange robe as One who used to give us sweets on every Thursday and Sunday. As we grew up to be boys, we saw Her in the role of a teacher. When there used to be too much noise, She would come out of the interview room and stand in front of us with a finger on Her lips telling us to keep quiet. When She saw that some of Her children were not sitting straight, She would hold up Her forefinger straight and say, "Sit like this". And as we grow up and become adults, we find Her playing the role of a friend. Teaching some lessons silently and some aloud, acting and at the same time cracking jokes with us. At times when we are depressed and feel that there is no one to look up to, she calls us out saying, "*Dear child! Fear not, for I walk in when the world walks out.*"

When we come to the stage of a man, She becomes a silent observer, an observer whose presence is constantly felt and throughout our life she remains God.

*Well! That's my Mother, my Divine Mother...
Mother Sai, please give us
So much strength that we should ask only for
Love, love and love from You,
Instead of anything else.*

~Sai Shyam Sharma

Source: *Sai Nandana 2005* (80th Birthday Issue)

Thought of the MONTH

The True Meaning of *Sharanagati*/Surrender

It appears to Me that the real meaning of the word *sharanagati* or surrender has not been properly understood. Our elders, by the study of many scriptures and texts, have conveyed to us the meaning. Despite this, we get the impression that the word surrender means putting at the disposal of God our body, our mind, all our powers, and all that we have. We take it that “placing these before God” is the true meaning of the word surrender. This is not the correct and proper meaning of the word. Our body is not in our control at all. Our body, under some circumstances, is posing to us several problems. Under such circumstances, when the body is not under our control, it is not understandable how we can say that we will take such a body and surrender it to God.

When we look at the mind, it is even worse. It leads us to many distorted meanings. While we are not only not in control of our mind even for one moment, but we are even slaves to our mind, and we foolishly enjoy the mind’s wanderings. Under such circumstances, to say that you are surrendering your mind to God is something quite un-understandable. When you must struggle so much to control your own mind, even for a short while, and when your attempts in this direction are often futile, to take such a mind and put it at the feet of God and say that “I am surrendering my mind to you,” seems to Me to be ridiculous. Let us take the case of your various organs. When the situation is that the mind, which is the ruler and controller of all your organs, is in such a condition, what is the point in talking about the organs and surrendering all your organs to God.

So, when you say that you are surrendering to God your thought, your word, your deed, it is simply a kind of trivial satisfaction to yourself. This cannot represent the truth and the meaning of the word surrender. God also never wants you to surrender and hand over to Him everything that you own. In fact, God has never asked for such a thing. If you make a proper attempt to understand the true meaning of the word *sharanagati* or surrender, you will understand that *sharanagati* really relates to another aspect and it should be interpreted in the background and context of Divinity only. Only when you accept and when you believe that the Divine is present in every human being and in every living thing, that Divinity is omnipresent, can you understand the meaning of surrendering in thought, word, and deed and you will also become one with God. There is some justification for your talking of *sharanagati* or surrender when you are in full control of your mind, your words, and your body. As soon as you can recognize the aspects of the omnipresence and the omnipotence of God, the feeling of ego, the feeling that there is an “I”, which is a distinct thing, will disappear.

~Summer Showers 1972

Of course, you can and do announce, "I surrender my mind, my thoughts, my feelings and imaginings to God." But your monkey-mind escapes from your hold; how then can you capture it and claim it and surrender it to God? What authority do you possess to offer something you are not master of? The whole process reminds one of the Telugu proverb about gift by son-in-law of the property owned by the mother-in-law. How can anyone give another what he does not own?

Is your body under full control? When blood starts flowing out of a vein on your hand, you cannot stop the flow. You rush to a hospital and call out, "Doctor! Doctor! Tie a bandage!" When you suffer from a stroke, and limbs on one side are paralyzed, you are helplessly unable to repair them. How can you dedicate your body, which you cannot rule over? Such statements like surrendering body, mind, and heart are only rhetoric sanctioned by tradition and long usage.

The act of surrender is often highlighted as *atma-arpana* [complete surrendering of the self]. The expression is even more ridiculous. When you are *atma* in essence, how can *atma* (self) offer it to itself? The body is a composite of the five elements; it cannot avoid disintegration, but the dweller within the body has no birth or death, no desire or despair, no attachment or bondage. In truth, that dweller is the God of Gods who resides as *atma* in you. This is what the seers have experienced. So *atma-arpana* is a meaningless expression. You have nothing in you or belonging to you that you can claim as yours to offer to God. Then, what does surrender of the self signify or imply? To experience God as Omnipresent, to be aware of nothing other than God—this is true surrender. To see God in everything, everywhere, always is true *sharanagati*.

~Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 15, Dasara, Vijayadashami

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