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A Special Prof. Anil Kumar Talk

Questions and Answers from USA and the Website

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Sai Ram to everybody!

We are now going to address the questions submitted during my visit to the USA that I didn't have time to answer while I was there.

SAI ORGANISATION HELPS US TO EVOLVE TOGETHER

What is the value of being involved in the Sai organisation?

Good question! I can start by saying that man is a social animal. He does not lead his life all alone in the forest. He is born into a society, and he grows up in that society. He earns his name and fame in that society, and he interacts with the other members of that community. Therefore, man is a social animal.

While working with like-minded people, as we find in the Sai community, we have the opportunity to grow further. If you are in the company of businessmen, you will learn more about business. If you are in the company of politicians, you will learn much about politics. If you keep company with religiously devoted people, you will proceed further along the path of devotion.

Therefore, the Sai organisation provides a venue, a sort of fellowship, which assists in our mutually encouraging each other to grow and evolve spiritually. We think of Bhagavan Baba's *leelas*, His miracles, and we are encouraged. We participate together in *seva*, supporting each other, and thereby our devotion to service grows. When we sing together *namasmarana* and *bhajans*, we get lost together in ecstasy as we join in the chorus along with other members of the congregation.

Therefore the Sai organisation helps us to evolve together. It helps all of us by creating a spiritual fellowship, with emphasis on service and singing the glory of God. Thereby, we experience the Divine manifestation within and without. That's it! Thank you.

How do we control our thoughts and desires? How do we feel God within us?

The answer is very simple. Once I am convinced that God is within me, I look forward to receiving His directions. That is what is called the 'inner voice'; it is an intuitive feeling. God is the conscience within me. He directs me regarding what to do. If you feel like attending *bhajans*, then it is God's prompting you. If you feel like participating in service activities, then it is the Divine will guiding you.

So God directs you from within. He talks to you, He speaks to you, and He appears in your dreams. He directs you, and once you are convinced of the fact that He is within you, Bhagavan Baba will always guide you, if you care to listen within to His voice. He is always ready to direct you and talk to you. This is the kind of bliss you will ultimately enjoy, the state of happiness that you will finally get from any spiritual activity. It's the proof that God is within you. Sai Ram!

“TELL ME YOUR COMPANY, AND I SHALL TELL YOU WHAT YOU ARE”

Are we supposed to stay away from evil forces? Can we influence evil forces to change their ways?

This is a very funny question. Not only should you stay away from evil forces, but you should run away from them. Do not stay with them! Run away because indeed you can be influenced; you cannot influence them. In trying to influence evil forces, you will end up in the grip of the evil force itself.

That's why Baba tells us to “*Tdvaja Duriana Samsargam,*” run away from bad company! *Bhaja sadhu samagamam.* Always keep good company. “Tell me what your company is and I shall tell you what you are,” says Bhagavan.

So then, how shall we help bring peace to a world so full of many horrible conflicts? We can be at peace with ourselves, despite the conflict around us. You see, on the surface you have turbulent waves. The waves come at you, one after another, at a terrific speed. We may feel that the whole ocean around us is disturbed; yet deep in the ocean, there is silence to be found. Deep in the ocean, there is absolute and complete silence. It is only on the surface that we find the waves agitated and churning.

Similarly, in our heart we should stay silent. We should be peaceful even though outwardly there may be thoughts that oppose each other. Conflicting, contradicting ideas and thoughts may lead to disturbances; but still in our hearts we can remain at peace. How is this possible? Sing His name! Do some *bhajans*! Meditate upon Him! Focus your attention on Him and that will silence all the disturbances.

A PURE HEART IS THE TEMPLE OF GOD

Could you tell us about Swami's residence? Have you visited it?

Physically speaking, Swami's physical residence is the *Yajur Mandir* located in Prashanthi Nilayam. Have I visited it? Yes! Why not? I have visited there many times. But, my friends, let's look at this question from a spiritual perspective.

Yajur Mandir is the name of His physical residence. The *Yajur Veda* is one of the four famous *Vedas*. The *Yajur Veda* speaks of holy and spiritual rituals, of *yajnas* and *yagas*. Wherever spiritual rituals are performed, whenever there is spiritual activity, there resides God.

His altar is our mind, and our spiritual activity is an offering to Him. There you find God seated. Therefore, Swami's residence, *Yajur Mandir*, means 'the place of spiritual activity'. The mind is the altar where you feel His presence. So then, it is not only myself who has visited His residence. All of you visit His residence, which is our heart. That's all!

“A pure heart is the temple of God,” says Bhagavan. Let’s all visit His temple within us right now. Let’s not run after physical temples. No! Sai Ram!

How can we be positive all the time?

Why shouldn’t we be so? Man lives by hope! Let us live in endless hope rather than heading toward hopeless ends. Life is sustained by hope. Life is positive. As you think, so you become. Positive thoughts will make our lives better. Instead of saying, “The glass is half empty,” let us say, “The glass is half full.” Instead of saying, “The rose has thorns,” let us say, “The thorn has a rose!”

Positive thinking will help us to see the beautiful, precious, sacred things of the world. Knowing that we are all the recipients of these gifts of Divine providence is the right attitude to have. In fact, there is nothing negative in the world. That which you regard as negative now will ultimately prove to be positive. Therefore everything is positive!

Positivity is an attitude. Positivity is an outlook. Positivity is a way of thinking. Positivity is Divine. Once we cultivate this attitude and maintain it at all times, we can afford to be equanimous, transcendental, peaceful and blissful. Yes, it is quite possible.

REALISATION OF GOD WITHIN

How should we best use our time if our only goal is to realise God within?

We make the best use of our time once we know that God resides within us. Then you will even see Him on the outside. Stand in front of a mirror. When you stand in front of a mirror, you don’t see anybody other than yourself. When you look at the mirror, you don’t see the face of a monkey, do you? No! You see your own face.

Similarly, when you know that God is within you, you will also see God outside. Whosoever you meet is going to appear as a Divine form. Whatever you say will be filled with Divinity. Whatever you think will be Divine thoughts.

A simple example: here is a vessel full of sweet juice. Make some holes in the vessel and the juice flows out. Similarly, God within flows out through the holes of our senses. Our senses are the holes. Our heart is the pot and God is the nectar, the ambrosia. The Divine electricity flows out through the holes, through our senses. That is the best way to feel Him, within and without!

CONFIDENCE IS AN INNATE GIFT GIVEN TO MAN

How can we cultivate self-confidence? How has Swami guided His students to cultivate self-confidence?

My dear friends, please understand this! Self-confidence need not be cultivated. You have self-confidence. When you go out to a market, you have confidence that you will return safely. When you go to a restaurant or a movie, you have confidence that you will come back safe and sound. When you talk to someone, you have all the confidence in the world that you are correct when you put forth your positions. When you meet someone, you have confidence that you will win him over. When you go for a job interview, you have confidence that you will be hired. So confidence is an innate, inborn gift given to man; but we have to take this a step further, a step higher.

We have confidence in the physical power in our body. We have confidence in our mind, in our mental faculties. But once we have confidence in the Self, in God within, that is called Self-confidence. Confidence in the Self is Self-confidence. We have confidence in the power of our muscles, in our memory, and in our mind and our sharp intellect. Once we have confidence in the Self, however, we will have confidence in everything else. That is what is needed today.

HARMONY OF THOUGHT, WORD AND DEED

What is constant integrated awareness? How can youth cultivate the feeling of constant integrated awareness?

What do you mean by 'integrated awareness'? We have awareness, but it is not integrated. Why? Our thoughts are one thing, but what we say is different. The way we act again is totally opposite to what we say and what we think, so there is no integration. We show no harmony of thought, word, and deed. So let us have the awareness that our thoughts, words, and deeds are not in conformity or harmony with each other. Let us have that awareness first. We are trying to be gentlemen but we are not. When what we say and do are divergent, how can we be gentlemen? We are not aware of this. Let us first be aware.

The awareness of our disharmony, the awareness of this divergence between our thoughts, words and deeds, the awareness of the conflict and contradictions within must be examined. We must know this. We must cognise it, feel it and experience it. That is very important.

Next we should make every attempt to develop harmony of thought, word and deed, this uniformity of thought, word and deed, this oneness of thought, word and deed. That makes for an integrated personality. Then once our personality is integrated, only then will we be consistent. When we are integrated, we will have the constant integrated awareness of being one with the Divine. Only then will we be spiritual.

In all states of awareness, be it in waking state or dream state, know that you are Divine, that everything is Divine. This feeling is called constant integrated awareness. Speak sweetly and softly. That's how you make your speech Divine. Let all your acts be righteous and cooperative. Acts of service foster a constant integrated awareness. Let your thoughts be pure and Divine! That is constant integrated awareness. When our actions, when our thoughts, when our words all reflect Divinity and stand for Divinity, that is called constant integrated awareness.

THE WORD OF PRAYER IS AN OFFERING OF FOOD TO GOD

Regarding food prayers, on one hand food should be offered to God before eating, but on the other hand I feel that God should be served good food. Sabari tasted before offering to Rama, so can we do the same? What does Baba say about this?

I am glad that you are convinced that we should offer a word of prayer before we eat and I am also happy that you realise that food has to be offered to God!

There are two points raised in this question: first, that we should say prayer before we eat, and second, that food should be offered to God. My friends, these are not two questions. When you say prayers before you start eating, rest assured that it is offered to Him. Prayer is an offering of food to God. That sanctifies the food; that purifies it. Therefore, food becomes pure and sacred

once we say our prayer to Him before we eat. So offering a prayer satisfies both requirements. It is an offering to God and it becomes sacred as you partake of it.

The next part of the question discusses Sabari tasting food before offering it to Lord Rama; therefore, this person asks if we should taste food before offering it to Him. Sabari could do that because she had been waiting for God's arrival for years and years. She was living in constant thought of God. She was in a constant state of waiting for Him, all the while singing His glory. She would rise in the early hours of the morning, cleaning the front path to receive Lord Rama and His consort Sita. That preparation, that constant awareness, that constant waiting, yearning and pining is the deep penance that Sabari did.

Therefore, she could taste the fruits before they were offered to God. If we also rise to that level of awareness, living in constant integrated awareness of the Divinity, only then can we act like Sabari.

FORGIVE AND FORGET

How should we respond to humiliation? Should we forgive and forget, or should we follow what Krishna told Arjuna?

Very good question! The first part is about humiliation. I can understand why you want to know about that. Forgiving and forgetting is something I can also understand your interest in; but the second part of the question, "Shall I act according to Krishna's directions to Arjuna to fight," seems contradictory.

The first part of the question asks if we should forgive and forget. Good! The second part asks if we should fight back as Krishna advised Arjuna. The situations here are different. Let me first clarify Krishna and Arjuna's conversation in the correct context.

Krishna advised Arjuna to fight in retaliation for all the humiliation he had suffered at the hands of his enemies. The issues raised in their conversation are about *dharma* (righteousness) and *adharma* (unrighteousness), about justice or *jnaya*, and injustice or *unjnaya*. Do the matters and concerns of the whole clan, the whole nation that Arjuna rules, mean that he must defend that kingdom? It is the duty of a king to uphold *dharma* or righteousness. His is not about individual humiliation. His is about the humiliation to the entire kingdom. Therefore, the kingdom has to be defended.

Moreover, Arjuna is a warrior. The warrior has a *rajasic* emotional quality, so he retaliates, he reacts. That was the situation with Arjuna. However, the point you have raised in your question is in relation to individual humiliation. Someone may humiliate you as an individual, but you can forgive and forget that, or you can take them on.

You may think that you are humiliating me; but when I don't mind it, it doesn't get at me, and the person who wants to humiliate me is then himself humiliated. When we accept defeat at the hands of our enemy, our enemy triumphs. They win. When you do not accept or acknowledge defeat, when you don't care what happens, then your enemy is defeated.

When you don't accept a registered letter, what happens? It goes back to the sender. When you accept a registered letter, the contents belong to you. When you do not accept a registered letter, it will go back to the sender. Similarly, when humiliation is rejected, when humiliation is

negated, it does not bother you, and then the other person will be humiliated. Not you. Forgive and forget. Good!

Then how do we deal with friends who question Baba's Divinity?

You don't need to reply to them. When they question His Divinity, how can you reply to them? Your words will not satisfy them. Your behaviour, your life, your experiences, your balanced state of mind, your peace, your bliss, your happiness and your good actions will all stand as a testimonial, will stand as a witness, will stand as proof to others.

You should express your belief in the Divine not by words, not by replies, not by retort, not by explanation, and not by interpretation. Let your life be an example. Your life of love and your life of service should be an illustration for others to emulate.

LOVE IN REALITY IS DIVINE

What does it mean to love God?

Good! I was researching this topic when I came across this question from a question and answer session. What does it mean to love God? First of all, let us understand love in the ordinary sense. Do we know love what love is? Let us admit that we do not know what love is. We mistake attachment for love. We mistake lust for love. We mistake possessiveness for love. We mistake friendship and affection for love. But love is different from all of these. These are all expressions of love, but they are not in reality love itself. Real love is Divine. So love at a human level, in relationships, is viewed as lust, attachment, possessiveness, affection, friendship, and so forth.

My friends, your love is lust. Love among equals is friendship. Love toward children is affection. Love toward the downtrodden is concern, pity, and sympathy. Love toward elders is respect. The relationship between you and God, however, is real love. We cannot call this relationship toward others as love. No, no, no! It is not true love. A correct relationship between you and God is love. And so what is it?

It is universal. Love for God, Love of God, Divine love, or pure love is condition-less. It is universal. It is all encompassing, and it is present in every cell of our body, without any conditions based on gender, nation, age, dignity, position, or status. Anything that transcends all these factors, that alone can be called Divine love. If there is any limit on love, then it is just limited as human love. Divine Love is limitless.

You have lived in close proximity to Bhagavan and may have asked Him the same question or, at the very least, you may have experienced the love of God. I was hoping you would give me your perspective of what it means to love God, as you understand it.

Good! It is a personal question. I have come close to Baba because of my service activities in the organisation. I have come close to Him because of my interest in spreading His message. I think I have drawn Baba's attention because of my activities spreading His message, which I have been doing for more than three decades.

As I spread His message, as I speak about Him, I lose all sense of time. Maybe that has drawn His attention. Maybe that has made Him love me. I love to speak about Him. I love to spread His

message. I love to plan all His programs. I love to take on His projects. I love to take His message door-to-door. I think that is what got me into the mansion of His Divine Love.

I have been going through a lot of your talks. I really want to know the meaning of Swami coming in my dream a few days ago.

Swami came in your dream a few days ago? Do you mean that He said, “Hello! How are you? You seem to be forgetting Me! You seem to be a bit too relaxed. You seem to have been playing a bit too much. You seem to be too worldly!”

When Swami appears in your dreams, He says, “Hello, think of Me also, now and then. Here I am.” He is reminding you that He is present within you! That is the meaning of Baba appearing in your dreams.

In my dream, I was walking in a newly built huge hall on a freshly washed floor along with our Swami and many other people. Suddenly Swami stopped and cleaned my white dress, which was soiled with mud and water. Then He sweeps the floor with His robe and I clean His robe as He had cleaned mine.

Very good, my friend! The ‘floor being cleaned’ means what? It means that your heart is being cleaned. The ‘clothes being washed’ means what? It means that impure thoughts need to be washed out. A pure mind is a cloth that is pure white and bright. A pure mind will be white; this represents pure thoughts. So, cleaning the floor means cleaning the heart, and washing the robe means purifying the thoughts. That’s what I think.

Then, after I go to another hall, I see Swami sitting on a huge sofa with my husband who stands next to Him, and he is wearing a white cloth around his head and neck.

Good. Where there is pure thought, there is God. Swami standing by your husband means that He is with you also. Hindu beliefs state that half of the husband is the wife, *Ardhanari Ishwara*. So when your husband is standing by Baba’s side, you’re there with Him. It is a blessing for both of you. Don’t worry! You share equally in this benediction.

I then got a feeling of being so happy and filled with Swami’s love. When I look at His huge smiling picture on my wall now, I thank Him profusely, with tears of joy in my eyes. I feel so good!

The taste of the pudding lies in the eating of it. So goes an old proverb. Your tears of joy are an expression of the blissful state of your mind. Your happiness speaks of the bliss of your heart. Why? Because the very thought of Swami, either in your dreams or in a wakeful state, makes you ecstatic. Experience and enjoy that blissful state. I can understand how you feel. A personal and direct experience is different from a general experience. Good! God bless you.

The next question is from a boy of 14 years. Good! The boy says that he is a spiritual person. Very good! The boy seems to be interested in meditation and all other spiritual things. His question is very funny.

Do demons evolve spiritually as humans do?

My boy, where are these demons? Let me have their addresses. Demons are not here. They do not exist; they are not anywhere. Whenever you are bad, you are the demon. Whenever you are wicked, you are the demon. Whenever you are cruel, you are a demon. Cruelty, wickedness, inhumanity—these are all demonic qualities.

So demons are not somewhere else. They are you and I. We evolve when we are free from demonic thoughts, from evil thoughts, from evil. So the evolution of a demon means the evolution of man into the full realisation of the demonic nature within him.

MIND MAKES HEAVEN OUT OF HELL AND HELL OUT OF HEAVEN

The Pandavas have gone to heaven, and the Kauravas have gone to hell?

Mythology is only symbolic. Heaven is a symbol; hell is a symbol. The Pandavas represent virtues, and the Kauravas represent evil qualities. Do not take them literally. They are symbolic. The Pandavas going to heaven means what? It means that all virtuous people go to heaven.

What is heaven? Bliss is heaven. What is paradise? Bliss is paradise. Where is it? Right here, right now. Heaven is here on Earth. Yes! As John Milton said, "It is mind that makes heaven out of hell and hell out of heaven."

So, you can make hell here, or you can make heaven. It is in your hands, the moments of happiness, the moments of loveliness, and the moments of friendship. These are the stuff of which heaven is made.

Misery, worry, anxiety, and sorrowfulness all constitute hell. They are not present elsewhere. You can make that too if that is what you choose.

Is it true that when you are in the company of a person, when you think of a person, you get the illness of that person?

I don't believe that to be true. It is estimated, after all, that we have some 64,000 thoughts per day. Per day! 64,000 thoughts! This is a rough calculation by a westerner, but you get the idea. So, if you were to catch the diseases of all those whom you think of, you would be suffering from some 64,000 diseases. No, no! God save man! So you aren't going to get their illness merely by thinking of them. And remember, we won't get their sickness because God is with us. Just chant His name and that sickness has got to go!

When there is sunrise, where is the darkness? Even if you think of darkness, it cannot exist when the sun is rising. So, sunrise is wisdom, sunrise is the knowledge of the Self. Any thought of any man is darkness; it has to be dispelled. It cannot continue. Therefore, by having this *Atma vidya* or knowledge of the Self, you will not be affected by any thoughts. Forget about sickness. It is only a psychological construct, a misguided conception.

GOD IS TRANSCENDENTAL

If God is attributeless, then can Dharma and other attributes be associated with Him?

Yes. Please understand this. God has two dimensions. A simple example: the light illuminates, and the microphone amplifies. Why? Because of electricity. Thanks to electricity, the bulb illuminates. Within a bulb, the quality of electricity is light. The mike amplifies sound, and so the

quality of electricity in a microphone is sound. So what is electricity then? Is it light or sound? It is both and neither. As electricity, it is neither light nor sound. But when it is in the bulb, it is light, while when it is in the mike, it is sound.

So God functions with attributes, and at the same time He is beyond attributes. You see?

Another simple example: there are three different glasses—a blue glass, a green glass, and a red glass. I fill these three glasses with water. In one, the water looks green because of the green glass. In another, it looks red because of the red glass. So the colour of the water depends upon the colour of the glass; yet, at the same time, the water is colourless. As is the colour of the glass, so is the colour of the water.

Similarly, attributes are functional aspects of God, *saguna*; yet, at the same time, God is attributeless.

Sarvendriya Guna Bhasam Sarvendriya Vivarjitam.

At the operational level, at the functional level, God has all attributes; but God is also transcendental, and that is attributeless.

Swami says good and bad must co-exist. So if Divine is associated with God, surely then Divinity cannot mean the same thing as good.

Please understand this! Good and bad depend upon your mind. It is only the mind that demarcates or differentiates between the two. It is the mind that distinguishes between what is good and what is bad. It is the mind that perceives and divides things into these two categories; but in reality, there is neither good nor bad.

Baba has given us this popular illustration. You eat a good ripe fruit today. That's good. Tomorrow morning, the fruit becomes foul. So that which is good today is bad tomorrow. It is the same fruit; the only difference is time. It is only a difference in time that makes it good or bad. Left to its own, it is neither good nor bad.

So Divine is neither good nor bad. When things are favourable for you, you say they are good. When things are not so favourable for you, you say they are bad. That's all. It is your mind that decides. Left to Him, it is neither.

MESSAGE OF JESUS TO HUMANITY

Jesus was a person. The *Bible* clearly says, "Jesus was the only Son of God." Jesus was the messenger of God. Jehovah is God. Why Jesus was the Son of God? Here we have to understand one thing: Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, has become a messenger. He is spreading the Divinity of his Father. He lives the Divine message same as his Father. So he is of the same stuff, the same Divine material as his Father. So, the Son of God became a messenger of God. Due to his proximity, due to his nearness, he becomes Divine. That means that whatever he speaks also is totally Divine.

Finally he says, "I and my Father in heaven are one and the same." Being the son, he has the same Divine qualities. Being the messenger, he spreads the same Divine message. Finally he says that he and the Father are one and the same. That is the experience of non-dualism, the

three levels of consciousness. There are three levels of awareness, there are three levels of attainment. That's what we have to understand as a message of Jesus Christ to humanity. Everything is preordained in life. Whatever that has been decided will happen now. That is what is called destiny.

SURRENDER TO GOD

When everything happens as per our destiny, how are we responsible for the results? When we surrender to God, are we still responsible for our actions? Will He not take care of them? Are we still responsible for all our actions after having surrendered to God?

These are indeed very good questions. Now let us examine them

First, when everything is already decided, when all is predetermined, when our destiny is already cast, how am I responsible for my actions?

Understand well that whatever happens is according to destiny. That is correct. Your actions, however, are not predetermined. You can exercise discrimination. Man has been given the freedom to discriminate. Through *sadhana*, you can improve the quality of your life.

So then, when I surrender to God, am I still responsible for my actions? I understand the question; but asking it implies that you have not completely surrendered. If you have completely surrendered, there is no question of one taking responsibility, because in surrender you do not exist.

In full surrender, only God will exist. I have surrendered to God and so 'I' am no more. So there is no question of me taking responsibility for my actions. In surrender, whatever happens, He is responsible, not me. I am not responsible because I have surrendered.

So the absence of 'I'-ness is surrender. Once you surrender, you won't ask the question, "Am I still responsible?" If we add an 'I' into this question, it means we have not surrendered. That is the answer.

STRENGTHEN YOUR FAITH

When there is doubt, will you still maintain your faith and devotion? Will doubt overtake faith and devotion? How can we overcome this doubt?

Doubt! Understand doubt clearly. When do you doubt? Doubt is born out of uncertainty. When you are not sure of something, you begin to doubt. So doubt is another name for uncertainty. When you are not sure, you doubt. This doubt naturally overtakes faith. Why? This happens because your faith is not strong. You have not developed strong faith, and therefore your doubt will shake your faith.

Now we come to devotion. Devotion is born out of love. When it is born out of pure love, devotion will be continuous. Nothing can shake it. But when devotion is only emotion, and not born out of selfless love, then doubt will overtake it. Doubt will have an upper hand when faith is not strong. Doubt will have an upper hand when love is not at the centre of your devotion. When love is not the foundation for your devotion, doubt will overtake everything.

So strengthen your faith. Make your faith strong. And see that you love God so that your devotion can grow stronger. In these ways, you will not leave room for doubt to enter into your life.

"I AM GOD"

When man is God, to whom should he pray? Why should he pray?

This is a very good question. You say that man is God, that you are God. This is only a theoretical concept. This is only a notion. This is only a hypothesis. It has not come from your experience. You have not realised that you are God. Simply because scriptures say that you are God, you say, "I am God." But, it's not born of your experience. You heard somebody say that you are God, and so now you declare that you are God.

Therefore, my friends, it is not enough to say that you are God. You should feel God. You should experience God. Then you will be able to declare, "I am God." Then you won't need to pray to anybody.

Suppose I tell somebody, "I am searching for me." Where am I? Lost? I am in search of me! People will laugh at me. You cannot search for yourself.

Similarly, when you are God, you don't need to pray to anybody. You don't need to seek anyone. But you have not realised that fact! You have not experienced that truth. So until that time, you have to pray to God. Until that time, you should seek Him. That is the answer.

Baba transforms people. There will be transformation in my life. But the question is this: how long will it take for this transformation?

How long? A very good question. The answer depends upon the intensity of your determination.

If we put the heat on the stove higher, the milk will boil sooner. If the heat is lower, the milk will take more time to boil. So for something to boil quickly, more heat is necessary. Therefore, it depends upon the heat.

Similarly for transformation, it is the intensity of your effort. It is the intensity of your feeling that will determine the duration of the process. It is the intensity of your determination that will hasten the process of transformation. So, effort and transformation are directly proportional to each other.

BEST THOUGHT IS THAT OF LOVE

Which is the best thought to follow and put into action?

What is a thought? Where is it born? Thoughts arise from the mind. The mind is the birthplace of thought.

When the mind is pure, pure thoughts are born. When the mind is impure, thoughts are impure. Therefore, what we have to do is make our mind pure. Let us make our mind full of love so that our thoughts will be loving. These loving thoughts will lead to lovely actions. So the best thought is the thought born from a loving mind.

We need a mind full of love so that our thoughts will be full of love, and as these thoughts lead to action, those actions will be full of love. Therefore, those actions are bound to be righteous, lovely ones, full of love, which will help you to experience peace inside. So the best thoughts are those of love, and those will then be put into action, and those actions will be righteous and full of justice. That is the answer.

There are three periods of time: the past, present and future. Into which does the blissful state belong? Into which state of time does it fit?

Where does it belong? Where does it fit? In which of the three states?

Describing past action, you say that, "I was good." Good!

Today, you say, "I am good!"

Regarding the future, you say, "I will be good!"

Okay. So 'I' is the same in all three periods, regardless of whether you were, are or will be. This 'I' is a blissful state. The past may be good or bad. The present may be good or bad, and the future is uncertain; but this 'I' is that blissful state. Why do I say that?

The past is experienced by 'I'. When the present comes, the past disappears. When the present goes, the future settles, and yet the 'I' continues in all three periods of time unaffected.

The past, present, and future are like passing clouds. One goes as another appears, but the 'I' is continuous, unaffected. That is the blissful state of 'I'-ness. The eternal witness, the super-consciousness, is not affected. It fits into all these three states of time.

A simple example: yesterday, I wore a full suit. Today, I am in a shirt. Tomorrow, I will change my dress again. However, 'I' am same. Be it yesterday, today or tomorrow, I continue to be the same. Even tomorrow, 'I' do not change. So this changelessness, this one of continuity to eternity, is this 'I'-ness, which is the blissful state.

INTERVIEW SHOULD LEAD TO INNER-VIEW

Does Baba give interviews? And what is ragi malt?

Baba gives interviews, yes. He continues to give them. However, more than that, He gives you an 'inner view', and this inner view is more important than the interview. The interview should lead to an inner view. Otherwise, the interview is just momentary.

Interviews are not permanent. Interviews are not eternal. The inner view is permanent. The inner view is ever-lasting. Therefore, my friends, Baba gives interviews so that you will have an inner view.

So then, what is *ragi malt*? *Ragi*, as you know, is finger millet (reddish brown Indian millet). Out of the crushed grain, they make some paste-like substance, something like a mass or a ball of paste. That is *ragi malt*. It is highly nutritious. It is something like porridge, something like cereal, something like a morsel (ball) of rice. In this part of India, we eat it a lot. Baba relishes *ragi malt* very much, along with ground chutney.

BABA IS A CONTINUOUS TOURIST

Swami's world tour! When is He going to make a world-tour?

Very good question! A world tour need not be physical. He has been touring all over the world because people everywhere experience Him. People see Him everywhere! Therefore, Baba's tour has already been. He has been touring eternally. He is a continuous tourist. He is an eternal tourist. He can go anywhere at any time. That is what has been happening.

But physically? I don't expect Him to take that sort of tour. He is rather busy here!

Somebody said I should go to a Sai centre for service, but my car won't start. What should I do?

The answer is obvious. If the car won't start, how can you go there? How can you serve there? Don't worry about it. Service is to be done when it is convenient, not when the car breaks down or when you fall sick. So be comfortable. Relax and then do the service. You cannot serve while you are tense. No! Relax!

Why do we commit same mistakes again and again?

The answer, my friend, is simple. When I do something, do I realise then that I have made a mistake? Have I understood that it is a mistake? If I really understood that it was a mistake, would I repeat it again? If I repeat it again and again, it only means I have not realised completely that it is a mistake.

A simple example: at twilight, not seeing clearly (as darkness was just creeping in), I thought that I saw some rope along the road, so I picked it up. Suddenly I realised that it was not a rope at all, but it was a snake! What to do? I threw it down immediately! I don't play with snakes. I had started playing with it, thinking it was a rope. But once I know it is a snake, I don't play with it any longer. No!

Similarly, once I know something that I have done is a mistake, and such a mistake will ruin me, I don't repeat that mistake. Therefore, we repeat mistakes because we do not understand them. We do not understand the implications of the mistake, and so we repeat it. The best thing to do is to understand what mistakes we have done, so that we will not repeat them.

We are a youth group between the ages of 15 and 18. What is Sai's message to us?

Baba's message is simple. Love your parents. Please your parents. Make them happy. Make your parents happy. That is the message to youth.

Some children brought up in a Sai family are given in marriage to somebody who is not in the Sai fold. Is it then possible for them to continue with the same faith? Is it possible to continue service activities in the same way? When somebody is married to a non-devotee, is it possible?

Yes, it is possible. Many, many people have become followers of Baba because of the influence of their spouse. The wife influences the husband. The wife influences her in-laws. She also will

influence her children. So, the mother is the pivot, the propeller, the centre of devotion in the family; she will influence everybody.

Don't worry if you marry into a family of non-devotees, those who don't believe in Sai. Very soon they will believe in Sai. Don't force them. The way in which you behave in that family, the way you serve them, the way you love them will make them realise that it is Sai in you that made you acceptable to them. By loving and serving them so much, they will come to appreciate your positive qualities, and soon will recognise that Baba is the cause for all your goodness. So they will later become devotees themselves. Don't worry.

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME

People go everywhere else to serve, even when their neighbour is suffering. They go to the ends of the world to serve somewhere else. What do you have to say about that?

It is wrong to ignore people who are suffering around you. How about your neighbours? How about members of your family? Charity begins at home. It is wrong to leave people here behind and go there in the name of service. It is wrong and meaningless.

Baba says the tree has to grow where it is planted (born). If the tree is seeded here, then you cannot expect the tree to grow over there. It grows at its birthplace. The plant grows into a tree where it is born or planted. Similarly, charity begins at home. You start by serving your own people. Start by serving your neighbourhood, so that you can then serve everywhere. Expansion of love is life.

ACCEPTANCE OF LIFE

How are we to face adverse situations?

My friends, adverse situations cannot be escaped. Adverse situations cannot be avoided. The first step in dealing with adversity is acceptance. Let us accept that life is a combination of both positive and negative experiences. Life is a combination of pain and pleasure. Through acceptance, you will not suffer as much as you would if you were to reject and resist.

Second, in times of adversity, you can pray to God. Pray to Him. He will calm you. You will be able to settle down, and you will be able to bear the adversity much more easily.

Third, as Baba said, take it as true that life is a challenge. With a spirit of challenge, you should face life head-on and emerge triumphant. You cannot run away from life. Face it with all the courage you can muster, come what may! God is by your side. He will help you. To do this, deep conviction is necessary, and to cultivate that conviction, faith and love for God will help.

Take life as a challenge!

Baba says we should be desireless. Is there anything wrong in setting goals?

You have not understood Baba. If you want to come up in life, very good; but if you do not rise ultimately, you should also feel good.

You want to pass your examination; but if you don't, you should still feel good. So don't be result-oriented. Don't be goal-oriented. Desire, yes, there is nothing wrong with it. I desire to be

good, but if I am not; I still feel good. So results should be surrendered to God. Your ambitions and desires, however, are quite natural.

You work for fulfilment; but be prepared for whatever the result is, because things that happen will be for your own good. Baba wants you to take the results as God's gift. "Whatever happens in life is for my good. It is for my good." That should be your feeling. That is what desirelessness is.

ENERGY IS IGNITED

Mr. Anil Kumar, you have so much energy! You give us so much energy! How are we to maintain this energy after you go?

I tell you, energy is not given and energy is not taken. Energy is ignited. That's all! There is already energy in you. I just ignite it. It's something like fanning you. I just ignite it.

Similarly, you can ignite yourself. You can charge yourself. How do you charge yourself? There is a battery there, but you have to charge it. How can you charge yourself? *Bhajans*.

How can you charge yourself? Meditation.

How do you charge yourself? Prayer.

You can ignite yourself! Don't worry! When Anil Kumar is gone, Swami will ignite you. Swami is here.

BE ONE WITH AMERICANS

There are many of us Indian people living in the USA. We come from many Indian states. How can we take Baba's message to the Americans?

There are Indians from many different states who have settled in America. There are Gujaratis. There are Andhras. There are Tamilians. There are Punjabis. There are Malayalis. Yes, we have representatives from every Indian state who have settled in America. So how do we take Baba's message to other people?

Simple! Through your *satsangs*! Through your *bhajans*! Through your service activities! By your own love! By your example! In this way you can take Baba's message to everybody.

But how do we take Baba's message to non-Indian Americans? To white people? To native Americans?

You can take Baba's message to them by being one with them. Do not maintain that you are separate from them. When you are in America, be one with Americans. Be one with them. Don't organise into a separate gang. Don't make yourselves a separate group. Andhras in America form an Andhra group. Tamilians in America form a TAMILIAN group. No! No!

If you want really to be part of an Andhra gang, if you really want Andhra, please come back here. Why live in America? If you want to live in America, be an American. Be one with them! Love them! They are your brothers! They are your sisters! They are your family! You are

breathing their air. You are eating their food. Why would you want to organise into a separate group?

So to take Baba's message to Americans, be one with them. You should love them and mingle with them as brothers and sisters, not organise into an Indian group, a South Indian group, an Andhra group, or a Tamilian group. That is totally wrong. It is hypocritical. If you have so much love for your state, please come back to India! If you want to stay in America, be an American. Don't say, "I am an Indian." No! No!

So, to take Baba's message to America, to make Americans Baba's devotees, make them know that you are their brother. Be very free with them. Invite them to your house. Go to theirs. Go to church. Read the *Bible*. Attend their festivals! Win their confidence and love so that they will also be Baba's devotees. Be one with them, love them, and then you can take Baba along with you.

Sai Ram!

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