

## *A Special Talk Given by Prof. Anil Kumar*

### *“Prof. Anil Kumar in Dallas”*

*April 18, 2009*

*OM...OM...OM...*

*Sai Ram*

*With Pranams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan,*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

#### *SAI DEVOTEES AND OTHER SPIRITUAL ORGANISATIONS*

Let me first express my gratitude to Bhagavan for making it possible for me to visit here at this time. I was very doubtful in the beginning that it would be possible for me to obtain permission as a lot of mental preparation is necessary to proceed with a request. When you have a request, Bhagavan avoids you. *(Laughter)* When you have no request, He comes close to you and asks you, “What do you want?” when you have nothing to ask for. *(Laughter)* This has been the Divine romance going on and on successfully for the last eight years. He enjoys the Divine *leela* or the Divine play that way.

Anyway, Swami blessed my trip and I am very happy to be here amongst you this pleasant morning. *(Applause)* As we were driving here, I could observe the rain, which was more or less reminiscent of summer showers in Brindavan. Therefore, summer showers in Brindavan and summer showers in Dallas are quite similar in that there is a shower of grace, there is a shower of mercy, and there is a shower of Divine benediction. This rain or shower, called *varsha* in Sanskrit, actually conveys *harsha*, the joy of Bhagavan. This morning’s *varsha* is the *harsha* or joy of Bhagavan Himself! That’s how I am feeling.

#### *WALK FOR VALUES*

I am really very grateful to the regional president, brother Mukesh. He made certain important comments that I am extremely happy about; I wish I deserved them.

Before I actually proceed with the points I want to share, let me express my thanks to all the devotees who have come from different places, and who have driven long hours to be here on time, which is no easy task. Thanks to the devotees from Austin, St Antonio, Louisiana, Nacogdoches, Arlington, Ft. Worth, Mineral Wealth, Longview, and others. I can see them from this position, right from this dais.

I want to give our host centre, Dallas, a standing ovation in appreciation of their presence here. I also welcome them to kindly join me in conveying my thanks to all the devotees for being here. *(Applause)*

I am also happy to listen to Nani Bhai’s words of welcome. I first met him earlier as master of ceremonies, and he continues to maintain his standards. I also observed improvement,

(*Laughter*) particularly when he talked about walking for values, as Nani Bhai is full of humour. I really appreciate it. May God bless you, Nani Bhai, with many more years of opportunities for service of this kind!

Sri Nagaraju introduced certain points relating to the “Walk for Values.” Walk for values, or values for walking--I have a chalk to write this on the board as I have been a teacher for the last forty-five years. This idea of a “Walk for Values” is really great and marvellous. A few years ago I was in Toronto, Canada, when they were planning this walk. I am glad that the Dallas centre and also the nearby centres in this region thought themselves fit enough to have such a program.

“Walk for Values” is something that will make you energetic, that will make you committed and dedicated, and finally, that will make you determined to practice the human values. May this particular program “Walk for Values” bring the choicest blessings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on each and every participant! May Baba be with you forever and ever!

Then Vinod Patel wonderfully and successfully quoted me profusely. I am happy to find somebody that reads my writings so thoroughly. (*Laughter*) It's good, so good, because sometimes I feel that no one quotes me like that. I am so happy and quite encouraged that I can get along that way, and will undertake a few more endeavours of this nature in the future as well. Sir, I am very thrilled and excited. Thank you very much for your fine words.

After that, Sri Latha introduced my wife, saying that Vijayalakshmi has been living with Swami for many long years. I should also congratulate her for living with me for many long years! (*Laughter*)

### *IF YOU DO SWAMI'S WORK, SWAMI WILL DO YOUR WORK*

Living with Swami is tough indeed, but living with me (she would say in my absence) is tougher still (*Laughter*) because I was never available to her any time, as I was so busy with organisational responsibilities and obligations.

I will share with you the situation of all office bearers who are seated here. In the beginning, here's what every housewife says: “My husband is not as devoted as I am. I am completely devoted and dedicated to Swami's service. (*Laughter*) I am praying to Swami that my husband will come and join me.” In response to their fervent, sincere appeals and prayers, Bhagavan will inspire their husbands to also join His mission.

Then when the poor fellow joins the mission, he gets deeper and deeper and deeper into the organisation, and the same housewife comes and says, “Here is my husband who has no time for me!” (*Laughter*) What is to be done? It is really very tough for the housewives to manage, especially in the case where their husbands are office bearers. These wives need to have a little more forbearance and patience, and total understanding.

But I can tell you one thing: whatever sacrifice you do, whatever extra responsibilities you may have to undertake because of the domestic irresponsible behaviour of the husband (since he is now international and no longer on the domestic front anyway) (*Laughter*) and whatever sacrifices you undertake, you will be amply rewarded. When you do Swami's work, Swami will do your work much, much better than what you would have done for yourself. This is a guarantee; this is a fact of facts, very well experienced all the world over, for which I am truly appreciative.

### *THE GIFT OF LIFE IS THE MOST VALUABLE THING*

Shri Latha also made a mention that she found it difficult to understand how so-and-so could be the wife of Anil Kumar. Yes, as is often the law of nature, we find contrast among couples: one is so busy, while the other is silent; one is active while the other, though not passive, is not as active. It is a contrast indeed; perhaps the contrasting colours naturally make life colourful. Therefore, I am happy to find this kind of gathering, including members of the organisation and also those possibly here for the first time.

I would like to make it clear my friends: life is most valuable. There is nothing greater than the gift of life. Most unfortunately, we value lifeless things in preference to those who are living. I care more for my car than my fellow being. I care more for my buildings, mansions, and bank accounts than my fellowman. Once we start attaching value to the non-living things, we reduce human values. We do not realise the value of life. I would like to make it more clear by saying it this way: with all the comforts and conveniences we have, with all the influence and authority we enjoy at our command, we still do not find life interesting.

Observing from the outside, we know that a particular man is well-settled in life, with good amounts of credit in the bank, a high position, and all the esteem that we can imagine. And yet, that man bears a very long face—what we'd call in India a Shakespearean face, or in Swami's terms, a "castor-oil face". (*Laughter*)

Why this castor-oil face? You have everything in life. What is it that you need but don't have? You have everything on earth, and yet you don't enjoy life. You may say, "Why do you say I don't enjoy life?" The face is the index of the mind. Watching the faces of some people, we feel like running away from them! (*Laughter*) Because some faces are equal to, as Baba Himself says, bulldogs and Pomeranians as there is no positive response. They are totally negative; their presence sends forth a negative vibration. We feel like leaving their company. But from all norms of societal status, respect and dignity, and knowledge-ability, that man is well settled. Yet, there is no charm, aura, or charisma about him. What's the reason? The reason is that such people do not value life as much as they value lifeless things.

### *NATURE DOES NOT COMPARE OR COMPLAIN*

Life is the most valuable gift given to every one of us. Let us compare ourselves to the plants that are totally carefree, the flowers that toss this way and that, the stars that glitter, or the animal world that jumps in joy. None of these complain of boredom. The grass blade will never complain, "Here is a tall tree. I am jealous of it." The eucalyptus tree, so tall, will never say, "Here is the grass! After all, why is it in front of me?" The lily flowers so short, tiny, small, and beautiful, have their own charm, and the tall trees have their own dignity and majesty. There is no comparison at all.

But we humans go on comparing ourselves in every silly aspect and respect, losing the preciousness of life, and forgetting the value of life. Life is most sacred, the most noble and precious gift given to us, and that is most unfortunately ignored. So, my first request to all of you is to realise how valuable life is. This life has not just come all of a sudden.

### *UNCONSCIOUS EVOLUTION IN NATURE*

We have gone through so many births, repeated births, to reach this present life. The consciousness goes on blossoming from one stratum to another: from the mineral world to the plant world, to the animal world, and finally to the human race. The consciousness goes on expanding, manifesting, and blossoming in full.

So here we are. I may be human, but I behave like an animal. It means I am reversing the process. It is no longer evolution. It is just movement in a downward, regressive way, not progressive evolution. You know, we do not know how a rock evolves into a plant, how a plant evolves into an animal, and how an animal evolves into a human being. All the evolution from mineral matter to that of an animal is unconscious evolution.

If you ask an animal, "What are you going to be?" it will say, "I do not know." No plant is able to explain how it is going to evolve. Yet, evolution proceeds in an unconscious way. It is unconscious evolution. Having been born as a man, we should make every effort to proceed with conscious evolution. Unconscious evolution is choice-less; unconscious evolution is mechanical, a routine, and goes on it's own without any conscious effort.

### *MAN SHOULD EVOLVE CONSCIOUSLY*

Hereafter, as a man, conscious evolution should take place. Conscious evolution requires effort, conscious evolution requires determination, conscious evolution requires God's grace, and conscious evolution needs to know the reality, the Self. Therefore my friends, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's message to everyone is to make a most sincere effort in this process of conscious evolution.

What do I mean by conscious evolution? We don't have to tell a dog to behave like a dog; we don't have to tell a buffalo to act like a buffalo; but unfortunately, we have to tell a human being to behave like a human being, because he goes back to his earlier stages. To quote Bhagavan here, the one with a wavering mind, who goes on shifting his loyalty from one preceptor or *guru* to another master, from one place to another place, from one idol to another, from one deity to another—something like the railway platform passengers with a wavering mind—with a faith that is not steady, represents the quality of a monkey, coming from a previous life. That's what Baba has said.

Now no one can blame me. I am no exception. Here we are just reminding ourselves of Baba's teachings. I am not speaking from a high pedestal, certainly not. We all travel together, we all explore together, and we all share the knowledge of Sai teachings with each other as fellow pilgrims. I am in no way superior to anybody.

Therefore my friends, again Bhagavan has said that the one who has the quality of not looking straight ahead, of just looking that way and this way, must have been a crow in an earlier life. A person who has the habit of snatching simple things like a pencil or a spoon (it is not his mistake), had an earlier life of a cat. Excessive sleep, gluttony, inertia, and passivity are the qualities of a he-buffalo in a previous life.

I would add another point: each animal is great, but with its own negative features. Each one of us represents a zoo—a collection of many animals, composed of all different features-in-one. Therefore, my friends, conscious evolution is to be aware of our own pitfalls, to be aware of our own minus points, to be aware of our own limitations. Make every effort to grow out of them.

As Baba puts it, first say to yourself, "I am not an animal, I am not an animal, I am not an animal." Why should I say that I am not an animal? Though you do not know that you are an animal, the neighbour knows it! (*Laughter*) Therefore, to say that I am a man is a half-truth. That's what Bhagavan says. Rather, it is better to say, "I am not an animal, I am man. I am not an animal, I am man." Therefore, I should be free from these bestial features of animality. Rise above the animal qualities and be a human now by conscious evolution, by personal effort.

The next stage of evolution is: "I am not simply human, I am Divine."

*Srunvanthu Visve Amrutasya Puthrah.*

*I am the son of immortality.*

*I am the one of eternity. I am the one of continuity.*

### ***LIFE HAS NO BEGINNING OR END***

This life has neither a beginning nor an end. Life is a continuous journey. Therefore, let us understand that this precious life of a human being is to be led by reminding ourselves that we are passing through conscious evolution with Divine grace so as to find out, to discover the innate, latent, immanent Divinity within each one of us.

That's what the *Holy Bible* says: "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." The Kingdom of Heaven lies within you, yet man finds the world a hell. Until I find that heaven within myself, I should realise that I am yet to grow, I am yet to evolve, that there is a long way ahead of me. So, conscious evolution requires us to get out of this animality, to live in humanity, and then in the final stage, to realise Divinity. Divinity is the ultimate step in this conscious evolution.

One time Bhagavan was in a good mood, with students all around. Why a good mood? Has He any moods at all? No. I say a good mood because Swami was joking a lot as He likes to do when He is in the midst of his students. Here's the scene:

"Any question, any question?"

"Swami, I have a question."

"Yes, yes!"

"Swami, You always say, 'You are God, you are God', but it is very difficult to believe that. How am I to know that I am God? How am I to believe that I am God?"

Baba laughed and said, "If you don't want to be a God, be a he-buffalo!" *Dunnapothu anuko saripothundhi*, a he-buffalo. As you think, so you become. As you think, so you become. Understand you are God. This point got registered in my mind.

Then two years ago in Kodaikanal, Swami wanted some kind of fun and He asked me to speak. Naturally I got up and started speaking this way: "First, Swami, You should forgive me for saying certain things that might put me in Divine risk or religious danger! I should have spiritual insurance coverage (*Laughter*) so that I don't have to repent later."

And Bhagavan said, "No problem, no problem. You can go ahead."

"Swami, am I sure? Are You sure?"

"Yes, yes, no problem, no problem." (He wanted to have some fun!)

### ***BEING SWAMI IS A VERY DIFFICULT TASK***

When it finally happened, it was the last day of our trip in Kodaikanal. People were very busy packing to come back home. Some students were singing songs and crying, as if they were losing something, which upset Swami. He was asking, "Why do you cry? After all, I am with

you. You are coming with Me to Puttaparthi.” But the boys must have planned that it was time to cry, (*Laughter*) and maybe the occasion warranted a cry.

Then He told me to go and speak. I took taken all the precautions, and then started speaking: “Bhagavan says you are God, but I find it very tough to believe. With Swami’s permission, let me declare to myself, I am God, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, (*Laughter*) and let me know your opinion towards the end.”

As Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, I need to get up at 3.30 or 4:00 every morning, which would be impossible for me personally. After that, I have to come down, doing all my normal work, and then talk to some people, and start giving *darshan*, after taking only a glass of water. It’s impossible to dream of doing so, because I need at least three cups of coffee before I go to my college. (*Laughter*) So to come out with only a glass of water, as Sathya Sai Baba does, is very difficult for me.

And then, I start giving *darshan*. The people who are seated in the front row on both the men’s and women’s side feel as if they own that particular place they occupy every day. They forget the fact that thousands sat before them, and that thousands are going to sit there in the future. Therefore, if anyone else sits there, they will look at them as if that seat is their grandfather’s property, (*Laughter*) or as if they are the legal heirs. They are very serious about it. Bhagavan wants some fresh, new faces to sit there, but the old, awful faces will not give space to these people. So, Swami passes by, and I, as Sathya Sai Baba, have to look at the same old, oily faces. (*Laughter*)

At this point, Swami was laughing and laughing, laughing and laughing. So by then, all the boys’ faces are smiling like blossoming morning roses, but those in the front seats look as though they consumed one litre of castor oil at least! (*Laughter*) As Sathya Sai Baba, I cannot bear such long faces.

As I proceed, I have to receive letters, such a number of them. What kind of letters are they? Letters full of complaints: “Swami, do not give an interview to so-and-so. (*Laughter*) Bhagavan, never look at the face of so-and-so. Bhagavan, do not forget to look at me only. (*Laughter*) If you give someone a ring, never forget to bless me with a chain, at least.” (*Laughter*)

I have to receive these complaint letters. Do I receive any letters such as: “Oh Lord, I am grateful to You! Oh Bhagavan, You have given me this most precious life! Oh Swami, how can I express my thanks for this precious life, given the chance to be born at this moment as Your contemporary, gifted with this opportunity to know You are God, and blessed to work for Your organisation.” No letters giving thanks, no expression of gratitude; only letters of demand, prayers of repeated requests, and those of desires. Tired, I cannot receive such letters of complaints and desires as does Sathya Sai Baba.

Then I slowly move and call a group for an interview, as I am Sathya Sai Baba now. They are all seated in the interview room. My desire as Sathya Sai Baba is to spread spirituality, to kindle in them a sense of awareness, to let them know that they are Divine, and to make them tread along the spiritual path. But these guys are so busy in giving me letters and flowers and talking thus: “Swami, I have joint pain, I have a cataract, I have bronchitis, pneumonia, spondylitis, and arthritis.” I want to convey something spiritual to them, but they are too busy with their own complaints. I cannot bear that any longer.

The moment I come out of the interview room, I sit on my throne as Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Sometimes, on special occasions, I tell the boys to sing songs with a fast beat. If they go on singing those with the classical touch, nobody will join in. A *bhajan* is not a musical concert; a *bhajan* is not an exhibition of one’s own talent. A *bhajan* is an expression of the rhythm of life,

the heartbeat of thanksgiving to our Lord, a kind of personal dialogue between you and your God. So, as Sathya Sai Baba, I want them to sing songs with a fast beat, which they never do, and I want them to sing some *Sarva Dharma bhajans*, which they often forget. And then the *pujari* gives *aarathi*, and as I come out, I see the same old first row of occupied seats with the same oily faces.

Now, as it's time for lunch, I invite a few people to the dining table to join Me, as Baba will never be alone. Baba will never eat alone. He wants some company, perhaps Central Trust members, or special guests such as Union ministers. As Sathya Sai Baba, I have my own guests there at the dining table. While all the others enjoy all kinds of dishes, sweets, and ice cream, as Sathya Sai Baba, I have to be satisfied with one spoon of *ragi* malt, no ice cream, and one spoon of *rasam*, and then say goodbye, while all the others are eating so many items. This would be unbearable to me in this life.

So then I have to come out and meet with some heads of some different bodies there to listen to them. They just say certain things and need My direction everyday on the same issues. The same thing repeats itself in the evening, and so it keeps going on.

“Bhagavan, forgive me, I don't want to be God. I am very comfortable as a human being. *(Laughter, Applause)* Why? Because, I can eat what I want—like hot, hot pickles, which you, as Sai Baba, do not eat. I like ice cream, but there is no chance to eat ice cream as God, so let me remain a human being.” Swami laughed and laughed and enjoyed that session. I did not refer to that talk again, because I know where it will take me. *(Laughter)*

### *SPEAKING ABOUT GOD IS THE GREATEST BLISS*

One time in Brindavan, Bhagavan looked at some of the boys, and some chosen, selected guests of honour, seniors and office bearers, then suddenly looked at me and said, “Anil Kumar, what do you want?”

It is a very inconvenient question. If Baba asks you what do you want, will you ask, “Will You give me twenty-four hours time?” *(Laughter)* It's because we need so many things, we want so many things.

Yesterday I was talking to my grandson and asked him, “Do you want things or money?” The little fellow said, “I want things plus money.” *(Laughter)* I said, “When I give you things, then why will you need money? Why do you want it?” He said, “I need many more things than the things that you give.” *(Laughter)*

So when Baba asks you what do you want, it is a very inconvenient question, you see, because we need at least twenty-four hours notice to list and submit our list of requirements. A list of requirements!

So I was shocked. But anyway I said, “Swami, when I am in the company of God, Bhagavan Himself, who grants me so many things without asking anything, when You grant me Your shower of Grace, Bhagavan, I have nothing to ask for. You give me everything, all that is possible. So I have nothing to ask.”

But Bhagavan catches you one way or another. He said “Come on, what you want? Ask!” He insisted.

### *DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SANTOSHA AND ANANDA*

“Swami, I don't want anything,” I said.

“Ask for it, and I will give it to you now!”

What shall I say? Then I said, “Swami, please leave me at this stage. Please leave me at this stage.”

Then Bhagavan said, “*Moksha*, liberation, I’ll give it to you. Do you want it?”

I said, “I don’t want it.”

Bhagavan asked, “Why? People of all religions, no matter what religion they belong to, whichever faith they belong to, whatever path they adopt and prefer to practice, everyone aims to get liberation, *nirvana*, *moksha*. How is it that you don’t want it?”

Then I said, “Bhagavan, no one has returned from the state of *moksha*, and no one has explained to me how *moksha* sounds, how *moksha* tastes, how *moksha* looks; whether *moksha* is beautiful, charming or ugly, whether *moksha* is tall or short, sweet or hot. I do not know about it because no one has told me how it is. So why should I want that of which I have no idea? Nor has anyone given me any at least second-hand information. Why do I want it? I don’t want it. But since You are insisting, Bhagavan, I have a request to convey.”

“Come on, come on.”

“Swami, I know what joy it is, what excitement it is, how ecstatic the moments are, when I speak about You. When I talk to the devotees about the Divine play, I forget myself. I know not the limitations of time; I am not aware of what I am speaking. I do not know where I am, because I taste Your Divine Love. Since You insist that I should speak, that I come forward with a request that You grant me immediately, this is my prayer, Bhagavan: Let me be born again and again, so that I can visit every country, every Sai centre all over the world, and speak about the glory of Sathya Sai Baba. That is what I want. (*Applause*) I don’t want anything here.”

Then Bhagavan said, “Good, very nice. That was the prayer of Swami Vivekananda too.” That’s what He said.

My friends, I am not placing this before you so that I can blow my own trumpet. There is some message behind it. The message is this: one has to struggle and one has to focus to be close to God. I also want God to be close to me. Yet, why do I want to make business with God by bargaining, by asking for tinsels and trash, when He is prepared to give me the heavenly, blissful state of awareness and consciousness? If I want to ask just for a single cup of coffee, what a poor situation it is!

Therefore, conscious evolution requires a state of awareness of the immanent Divinity within us, so that we continue to remain in a blissful state. Make note at this moment: Bhagavan said, “What is the difference between *santosh*a or happiness and *ananda* or bliss?” You cannot give whatever answer you know, because you are sure to be wrong in front of Bhagavan. But I love to commit mistakes deliberately because I will have excellent information from Him. To deliberately commit a mistake, I said, “Both are the same, Swami.”

“*Noru Musko*, keep quiet.”

If both are the same, why would there be two words? So Swami said, “*Santosh*a means *fractional*, momentary, decimal, negligible happiness or joy. That which is everlasting, that which is eternal, that what you are is *ananda*.” *Santosh*a, happiness or joy, is dual, whereas bliss is non-dual. Happiness or joy is physical, while bliss is spiritual. Happiness or joy comes from external things, as senses interact with the outer material world, resulting in happiness or joy. But bliss is that with which you are born; you don’t get it from outside—it is within you.

*Anandaswarupalaara*, that's how Swami addresses us, as Embodiments of Divine bliss. You are born with bliss. Therefore, conscious evolution requires you to know and experience the ultimate, blissful state of non-duality with the Divine.

Life is an adventure. Why? In an adventure, we do not know where the adventure will lead. We may be successful or may end up in total failure; we may win or lose. Adventure requires courage, so spiritual aspirants need to be courageous and adventurous. Spirituality is not given to cowards; spirituality is not given to weak people.

### *SPIRITUALITY IS FOR THE ADVENTUROUS AND COURAGEOUS*

That's why:

*Nayam Atmena Balahinena Labhyaha.*

*Balahinena labhyaha*: Weak people never experience the spiritual goal. Therefore, one needs to be courageous enough to take life as an adventure. Not sure of the future? The future may be a failure or a success; nevertheless, whatever it may be, let me take up this adventure. Life is an adventure, and life is one of uncertainty.

Therefore:

*Durbhalam Hridaya Daurbhalyam Chakthotishtha Paranthapa.*

So says the *Bhagavad Gita* in the second chapter.

*Durbhalam hridaya daurbhalyam*: Give up weakness, cowardice, timidity; *Chakthaha*: give it up immediately; *Utishta*: get up; *Paranthapa*: oh man of valour.

Therefore, the spiritual path is for competent people who are ready to undertake adventurous tasks with all the needed courage, commitment, firmness and conviction. Life is an adventure.

### *LIFE IS CONTINUOUS WITHOUT BIRTH AND DEATH*

Thirdly, life is a pilgrimage, which means it has no beginning nor ending. Then, what is the fun of celebrating birthdays? Why anniversaries? The appearance of the body is birth, and the disappearance of the body is death, while life is continuous.

When this point was brought to the notice of Bhagavan, "Swami, is life permanent?" Baba said, "Yes, it is." Then what is the fun of birthdays and obituaries or death anniversaries? What does it mean?

Baba explained it this way: there is a flow of electricity. As long as the filaments are fine, the bulb is able to illumine or shed light. When something goes wrong with the filament, the bulb is gone, although the electricity is still there. It is the bulb that sheds light while on, but even when the bulb is off, still the electricity continues. Likewise, there is birth and death, but I am eternal. Life is eternal, without beginning or end.

*Adhi Madhyantha Rahithudu Anaadhi Vaadu.*

That's what Bhagavan says:

*Adhi Madhyantha Rahithudu*

*He has no beginning nor end.*

## *Anaadhi Vaadu*

*He is ancient, most ancient.*

That's what you are. That's what I am.

So a spiritual seeker will never have fear of death. If there is fear of death, it means he has not known the essentials of Vedanta, the essentials of the spiritual principles.

### *LIFE IS CONTINUOUS WITHOUT BIRTH AND DEATH*

Have no fear of death; I was never born to die. What you find here is only a body. Spiritual life is a pilgrimage: life is a pilgrimage, life is an adventure, and life is most sacred. Life is again gifted to us with a particular purpose. Life has the highest potential within it. A small seed planted in the ground, when watered, grows into a sapling which grows into a gigantic tree, spreading branches all around. A small, tiny, banyan seed can grow into a gigantic tree.

In the Calcutta botanical gardens, there is the Adyar, a banyan tree in the Theosophical Society, the biggest in this country, born out of a tiny seed. Therefore, some people come and say, "Swami, all cannot reach that level; all are not of that standard."

"All are!" Swami said. "Shut up." (*Laughter*)

Further, the *Bhagavad Gita* says that all are one; the *Holy Bible* says the same thing. "All are one, My dear Son, so be alike to everyone." Be alike to everyone! That potential is in you, the same as in everyone. Christ may have been a person, but the attainment of Christ on the cross, the experience of Jesus Christ on the cross, is not limited to Christ. Christhood, the Christ state of non-duality, the Christ state of consciousness, the Christ state of realisation, the potential of Jesus Christ, is within every one of us.

Similarly, Lord Buddha may be a person; Gautama or Siddhartha was his name, but he was given Buddha later. Buddha is not His name. Buddha is a title. You don't call someone, "Hey Collector, come here." Collector is a position that he holds, but his name is not "Collector". Likewise, Buddha is a state of attainment; Buddha-hood is a state of awareness and is a state of consciousness. So Buddha could manifest, Buddha could bring forth that latent potential within him, like the seed that grows into a beautiful, gigantic tree as years pass by. Similarly, we have got to understand this particular point that there is every potential within us. That's what Baba tells us.

Some people say, "Swami, I go on worshipping, doing *puja*, I go on observing fasting, Swami."

Very good, but that is not the ultimate.

### *RELIGION IS DIFFERENT FROM SPIRITUALITY*

The fasting, the worship, and the rituals that we observe are no doubt religious, but they are not spiritual. Religion requires ritual, while the spiritual demands awareness. Religion will make you come under a particular 'brand', allows you a path to follow, adopt, and practice, whereas spirituality will take you to universality, catholicity, broad-mindedness, and unity in Divinity.

So Bhagavan's message is meant for universal application. It is meant for the being and not for the time-being. Being is different from time-being. I am your friend for the time-being, but

tomorrow I may not be your friend. But you are a being, and I am a being. We are all beings through and through.

Therefore, my friends, life is a challenge. Let us not run away. There is a centre president here equal to your regional president (we call them district presidents there). This regional man is a very soft, a very good man, known to everybody, a very senior devotee, now seventy-two or seventy-four. He could not bear all the criticism from all sides. The position naturally lends itself to such things, and we have to bear them as part of our *sadhana*. People started attacking him, criticising him, that district president. He could not bear that and came to Swami: “How long can I bear this character assassination, mud-slinging, and constant criticism? Please relieve me of this, Swami. I will be happy then.”

Bhagavan said, “Similar was the situation of Arjuna. He could not remain there in the battlefield, for he was not prepared to fight in that Kurukshetra and Dharmakshetra war, because of his blood relationship with all the brethren around, and because of his own devotion and love towards his teachers. He was not prepared to fight and wanted to run away.”

*Bheeruvuale*: such a man is a *bheeru*, a coward, but Krishna made him a *veera*, a warrior to face life in general. Life is a challenge. To run away from responsibilities, to run away from family responsibilities is not a solution, is not befitting the life of a seeker.

*Aaliasthini Veedi Adavikeguta Kaadhu*

*Manasunandhu Thucchavaanchula Veedute Tyagamagunu*

*Manasunanthu Thucchavaanchula Veedute Thyaagmugonu*

*Sathya Maina Maata Ee Sai Maata*

*Sathya Maina Maata Ee Sai Maata*

### ***A SEEKER MUST NOT RUN AWAY FROM FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES***

Yoga does not mean leaving your family. *Thyaga* does not mean running away from family responsibilities. To be in the family and do our responsibilities there, totally detached whatsoever from praise or blame—that is the goal of a spiritual seeker. A spiritual seeker does not mind what comes his way.

So, life is not a matter of explanation; it is a matter of exclamation! Life is not given to explanation; it is given to exclamation. Life is not a question where you go on questioning everybody; no, life is not a question.

Some people say, “My life has become a big question mark.” (*Laughter*) Because of over-eating, your stomach may become like a question mark. (*Laughter*) But life is never a question mark. An example: when a particular gentleman was just walking along the veranda, Swami was joking with the boys, “See that fellow, see how he is.” That gentleman does not know what is happening here. It’s a Swami and Krishna action play. And then He says: “*Maadiri undadu, em atta undaadus?*” “He is like that (shaped like a question mark). Why is he like that?”

### ***LIFE IS A QUEST, NOT A QUESTION MARK***

He may be shaped like is a question mark, but life is not a question. Life is a quest. Life is a quest, not a question. A question may find an answer, leading to another question. There may

be questions unanswered; there may be answers without questions. But the quest is one that is continuous. In answer to a question, we'll never get satisfied; but the quest gives us satisfaction along the journey to the Self.

On our spiritual journey, the journey itself gives us satisfaction. Life is being; life is not for becoming. Some people say, "I am spiritually evolved." How do you know that? There's no weighing machine that can say how spiritually evolved you are. No thermometer can ever gauge the temperature of spiritual attainments. To say that I am spiritually evolved is Himalayan ignorance. Nobody can save such people! Spirituality is not an attainment, spirituality is not an achievement. Spirituality is your own nature, spirituality is your own birthright. There is no cause for recognition or praise, for compliments or tributes, or a special function to be organised in honour of your awareness. Nonsense! All that has no meaning at all!

### *SPIRITUAL LIFE IS BEING AND NOT BECOMING*

So, spiritual life is not one of becoming; spiritual life is one of being. It is not becoming, it is being. That we have to understand. Some people say they attended the talk of so-and-so, or they read a book called such-and-such and then analyse and elaborate on it, using logic. But life is not logic. If life is logical, then it will be like mathematics. In mathematics there is no chance involved. If asked what is two times two, it's four. If the answer is three and one-half, then there is something suspicious. (*Laughter*) If it is four and one-half, then it's something thrilling. Two times two equals four, yes? It has been that way since the beginning of this universe. There's nothing charming about it.

So life is not logical or mathematical. Life is mystical and a mystery. Life is a mystery and mystical, not mathematical, not logical. Life is love; life is not prose. When some people start speaking, there is no modulation in their voice, there is no resonance; nothing like that. It's all the same show, something like *nadaswara shruthi*. We will be waiting for that man to conclude, or be ready to hit the fellow who invited such a speaker! (*Laughter*)

So, it's not like that. Life is not prose. That's the reason we say, "His talk was prosaic," which means it was lacklustre, lacking glitter, lacking taste, lacking freshness. So, life is not prose; life is poetry. Life is interesting, and life is a celebration. Let me celebrate my life for having been born as a human being. Let this day be full of joy and celebration. If we wait to celebrate only once in our lifetime, it is rather the worst of tragedies that could ever happen!

Rabindranath Tagore, just a couple of days before his last days of earthly sojourn, prayed to God: "Oh God, I thank You for this day! Oh God, I am grateful to You for this lovely life! Oh God, I thank You for this charming life. I thank You for the wonderful experiences You have given to me and the beautiful day right now." Therefore, we have to understand this feeling that life is a celebration, life is a festival, life is a pilgrimage, and that is what makes life interesting.

Being contemporaries of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is not an ordinary thing. Jesus Christ's Divinity was known to eleven of his disciples. Out of the eleven, one was a doubting Thomas. Their next of cousin, a very close relation, was Krishna. His Divinity was known by five people, the five Pandavas. There were one hundred in the Kaurava gang who did not know Him and also turned against Him. Even his immediate uncle, Kamsa, was about to kill Him (a spiritual Naxalite perhaps or Maoist, if I may put it that way). (*Laughter*)

The nearest people to Lord Krishna have not understood Him. Even the nearest people to Ramachandra have not understood Him either. His own stepmother Kaika, who loved Him so much, much dearer than her own son Bharatha, wanted Rama to be sent into exile for fourteen years. But Kaika was an attorney of American standards. Why? She could have asked Him to

go for ten years, or eight years, so why fourteen years? If one is absent for fourteen years, they lose their legal rights. *(Laughter)* So even if the fellow comes back, he can never be the king at all. What an attorney she was! Dasaratha received Rama in response to his prayers, his yearning and pining for children. He performed the *Putra Kameshti Yaga*, but still he died from separation; he did not realise. Even Rama's wife Sita had also not understood: knowing Rama as her husband and Master of the universe, she wanted a golden deer. Had she asked, Rama would have brought her a couple of golden elephants—why golden deer?

### *SPIRITUALITY IS NOT AN EXPRESSION, BUT AN EXPERIENCE*

What I would like to impress upon you, my friends, is this: it is not enough to be born contemporaries of the Divine. It is more essential to know the taste of the Divine, more essential to know the depth of Divinity so that we are lost, so that we cannot speak.

Suppose someone asks, "How is Sathya Sai Baba? What do you feel like, being with Him?" If I go on giving a discourse, it means I have not understood anything at all. Spirituality is not given to expression; spirituality is an experience. Spirituality is an experience which is close to you, which is so dear to you that it cannot be expressed.

That which is expressed is not really experienced. We say, "Hi, Hi, Hi," but we don't mean anything. We say, "Good morning," but feel within that it's actually an awful morning to have met this gentleman, at this hour. *(Laughter)* We say, "See you later," but mean, "Better not in this lifetime." Things are like that.

Therefore my friends, we have to experience Divinity and not talk about it. Experience it continuously. People say, "Would you talk about a few experiences?" How do you talk about an experience? Every moment is an experience!

At ten o'clock at night, a person taps on my door, comes inside and says, "Sir, we are leaving by bus first thing tomorrow morning."

"Good, God bless you." *(Laughter)*

"Would you tell us something about the latest miracle?"

At ten o'clock at night!? The latest miracle?! I tell them that Prahlada is not the latest, Dhruva is not the latest, Rama is not the latest, but you want the latest miracle? What a pity it is! I don't pity you; I pity myself for having met such a man. *(Laughter)*

What is a miracle, my friends? What is a miracle? What is an experience? Some go on saying, "My son got a medical seat, so it is a miracle." But if he is unsuccessful as a doctor later, it is again a miracle. My son is a collector now; but if he is suspended because of irresponsible action, then again it is a miracle.

What is a miracle? After all, a miracle is that which is quite surprising. A miracle is one that is positive to us; that's how we experience it. Certainly not! There are no miracles performed; there are only experiences performed. Experiences, not miracles!

One day Prof. Gokak said, "Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba performs miracles." Baba called him and said, "Not perform! Miracles happen." Miracles happen; they are not performed. Because performances are human, happenings are Divine. Performances need some kind of eligibility, desirability, ability, and capacity, whereas happenings are beyond your comprehension and beyond your imagination.

So, living with Bhagavan needs a kind of awareness, a kind of joy. One day when we were just coming out of Brindavan.....Mr President Srinivas, kindly let me know when I should wind up. I

am ready to wind up any time you say. Someone was speaking about a bell I think. Mukesh Bhai was speaking about a bell. We teachers need a bell to begin and to end! *(Laughter)* So please kindly feel free to let me know, because the long life with Him naturally may make me forget the time limitations. I beg your pardon, but you are quite free, if you have got any reservations, you can indicate slightly so that you can act with your own modesty and courtesy. I still love you, though you ask me to conclude right now! *(Laughter)*

Therefore, Bhagavan Baba will make our life very interesting. Why? Because it is a journey from "I to We." Whether we have been leading our life as an individual, or leading our life as a family unit, having come to Bhagavan, it is an expansion of life, an expansion of love; there lies the joy.

Having come to Bhagavan, we have developed the spirit of equanimity and composure. If anyone says, "You are great," you just don't say, "Have you realised it only today?" You will never say that, but, "Am I great? Well, I do not know. Is that so? It's God's grace." If anyone says that you are horrible, say, "Oh, is that so? I'll try to improve." Otherwise had you not come to Bhagavan's magnetic field, if anyone praised you, you'd be there up in the sky. And if anyone blamed you, you'd be ready with a truckload of rowdies to attack. No! Therefore:

*Pogatalaku Pongaka, Nindalaku Krungaka, Longaka, Vongaka, Jeevinthaani Saaginchitaye Bhakti.*

*Not to be carried away by praise and blame is spiritual life, as Bhagavan explains.*

Therefore the *summum bonum*, the quintessence, is this:

*Kaamitharthamulellanu Kalpataruvu Valenu  
Daya Cheyu Devundu Kaladu Manaku  
Durlabhambu Agunara Janma Dorakukathana  
Athanigaanchute Parama Lakshyambu Manaku  
Athanigaanchute Parama Lakshyambu Manaku.*

*God is a wish-fulfilling tree.  
He will grant us whatever we want, whatever we desire,  
But life's purpose is not the fulfilment of desire;  
Life's purpose is to be desireless.  
Desire to be desireless, so that we'll experience Divinity.*

*Mr. Anil Kumar concluded with the bhajan "Sai Sai Sai Enare"*

Friends, I have one important announcement to make, which I'm sure you will take as a solemn duty and responsibility. This afternoon, around one o'clock, the young adults...what time, sir? At two o'clock, I believe. I stand corrected. We are going to have a sort of symposium to be presented by the young adults of this region.

Let me tell you a brief history about it: this program you are going to witness, this symposium in which the young adults are going to participate, speaks of the standards of excellence of Dallas, there is no doubt about it. The boys are so enthusiastic and highly qualified, that it is our duty to encourage them.

Towards every conclusion of Bhagavan's convocation address, He insists that all should stay and watch the cultural program staged by His college students. So, as members of this region, it is our religious responsibility to stay here for the presentation to be given by the young adults, who are doing it for the first time. After all, they are our children.

When such an activity among young adults is taken up for the first time, in such a big way, I am sure you will stay, give them all your support, encourage them, and congratulate them for their effective participation. By now you must have understood how particular we are about your gracious presence and support. Thank you, and may Bhagavan bless you. Sai Ram! (*Applause*)

*OM...OM...OM...*

*Asato Maa Sad Gamaya*

*Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya*

*Mrt'yormaa Amrtam Gamaya*

*Om Samastha Loka Sukhino Bhavantu*

*Samastha Loka Sukhino Bhavantu*

*Samastha Loka Sukhino Bhavantu*

*Om Shanti Shanti Shanti*

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