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A Special Talk Given by Prof. Anil Kumar

at Orlando, Florida - Part 1&2

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OM...OM...OM...

Sai Ram

With Pranams at the Lotus Feet of our most Beloved Bhagavan,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

INTRODUCTION OF PROFESSOR ANIL KUMAR

Our next speaker this afternoon is no stranger to us, although we may have never spoken to him personally. Prof. Anil Kumar Kamaraju is best known for translating Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's discourses into English. He also gives very popular talks on Sunday mornings at Prashanti Nilayam and visits many Sai centers for the same purpose.

Prof. Anil Kumar was a zonal convener and later a state president of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations of Andhra Pradesh. He has served as principal of the Brindavan campus, and has authored many books on Swami, such as *Universal and Practical Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sai-chology, Divine Lifelines, Divine Directions, Divine Daffodils, and Sathyopanishad Vol.1 and 2 - Questions and Answers with Bhagavan.* Professor Anil Kumar is currently a faculty member of the Biosciences Department of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prashanti Nilayam, India.

He has traveled world-wide, and shares the glory and message of Bhagavan with earnest wherever he goes. The Sunday Talks, which include many Question and Answer sessions, can be found online at the website www.saiwisdom.com. Please welcome Professor Anil Kumar. (*Applause*)

Anil Kumar began his talk with the bhajan "Sai Narayana Narayana".

HUMAN LIFE IS RAREST AND NOBLEST

My humble Pranams at the Lotus Feet of our Bhagavan! I am happy that some more friends have joined us for the second session of the talk. I tell you, my friends, in this world nothing is more worthwhile than God. Life is meaningless without God. Life is purposeless without God. After all, we are gifted with human life only to realise and experience Him. Life is only an opportunity given to us. When this opportunity is not realised, when this golden opportunity given to us is not realised, life is ill-spent.

Jantoonam Narajanma Durlabam.

Of all the lives in this organic world, human life is the rarest and the noblest of all. Having been born as a human being, it is our duty-bound responsibility to find our identity with Him. Failing that, our life is no better than that of an animal. After all, an animal lives its life only in eating, sleeping, and dying.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS WITHIN YOU

Our life is something more, my friends. No animal wants to be better than it is. No dog says, "I want to be a tiger." No tiger would ever say, "I want to be a lion." Every animal continues to remain what it is. No plant would ever say, "How beautiful it would be if I were an animal." A rose plant would not say that. A jasmine flower would never say that. Plants remain where they are. Animals spend their lifetime in the form in which they are born.

But man is not like that. "I am born as a human; let me die as a human." No one says that. Why? Because there is a deep feeling, an innate yearning, an inner urge, an emotional urge, to be something more than what we were when we were born. We are born simply as a human being; but we cannot, we should not, die as a human being. If we die as a human being, then life's meaning is lost. After all, human life has no meaning at all if we die as a human being.

As the *Holy Bible* says, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." The Kingdom of Heaven is within you. Life is to be spent, life is to be lived, realising the Kingdom of Heaven within us. I should realise that I am the Divine. I should understand that I am something more than the body and something more than the mind. I am something more than the intellect. I am the Consciousness, the Divine soul, the Divine spirit. I am something more than what I appear to you, more than what you find in me.

What is apparent is different from that which is not apparent. The building is apparent; the foundation is not apparent. The whole tree is conspicuous, while the roots are inconspicuous, for that which is apparent is that which is conspicuous. There is a

background behind all things, a foundation behind the orderly way in which the world goes on and on. How does it go on? How does it work?

REALISE THE CREATOR FIRST

I was really thrilled to see the Kennedy Space Centre. It was so beautiful—good! I am constantly reminded of what Bhagavan said. What does He say? My friends, believe me or not, whatever book I read, whatever discourse I listen to, whatever scene I look at, I am reminded of His sayings and teachings. Does the Kennedy Space Center remind me of the Divine message?

Kanulakugubadu Drusyamuganchi Sambaramandaku.

Don't be happy merely with what you see. You see the stars, okay, good. You see the planets, why not? You see the galaxy. The solar system and the lunar system are so beautiful, *wah!* Good, but who made them?

I am reminded of an incident which happened in Kodaikanal. Bhagavan materialised a diamond ring. Swami showed it to everyone, but we were not satisfied with that. All the people gathered around that ring and started looking at it, while Swami was seated there. (*Laughter*) Do you know what Baba said? "You want to look at what I created; you don't want to look at Me." What is it? (*Applause*)

CREATION – A GIFT OF THE CREATOR

My friends, the space centre shows us the creation, but urges us to think of the Creator. Created actors act well. Men and women act well, but we don't see the director behind it. The Director of the cosmic drama, the Director of this whole space centre, is God Himself. All the stars and planets are arranged in perfect precision and order. There is no collision. There is nothing like a traffic jam; there is nothing like a hijacking or a kidnapping. (*Laughter*) There is nothing like a strike, a *gherao* or *bandh*, a "pen down" strike, rail *roko*, or jail *baro*, nothing like that. The entire natural world goes on and on, not even expecting a word of thanks from one of us.

We enjoy beautiful sunlight. You Americans know the value of sunlight. We Indians practically live under the sun. I come from a place which is always hot throughout the year—hot, hotter, hottest, and again hot, hotter, hottest (*Laughter*) . . . no other season! But you people suddenly find the sun, and say "Aha, a sunny day! (*Laughter*) Let us go. Please come along with me. I will give you enough heat."

So, my friends, let us imagine the Creator, the Director behind it all, who gifted all this creation to all of us. How is it that the ocean maintains its own level? Why? How do the stars never collide? Why? We have no answer. We only know how, but we do not know why. "How" is the key to science; "why" is the key to spirituality. "How" is given to a

scientist, while “why” is given to a saint. That is the difference between a saint and a scientist. Let us think of the Divine Director behind it all—this cosmic dance, *Shiva Tandava*—the entire universe of stars glittering across the firmament . . . what we call *rasaleela*. Why not?

When I went to the space centre, I was thinking of all of Swami’s poems. In one of His poems He said:

Kramamut Appakābaanudu Udayastamayamulanandanela

Gaganamuna Kanti Kaiseyu Taralu Pagalu

Matramu Daagu Bangiyela

Why do you find the sunrise and sunset everyday, why? How do you find the stars always up in the sky? Why do they not fall on your or my head? (*Laughter*)

Jeevakotula Brova Taapavanundu Sadavivanela

Why do you find oxygen, and the wind that blows the fire, and the cool breeze for us all to breathe and to enjoy? Why? If the wind god goes on a holiday, the world population problem will be solved immediately. (*Laughter*) Why?

How do you get oxygen? What amount of oxygen must we have breathed up until this day? How many cylinders more are we going to breathe? The value of oxygen is known by a patient admitted to a cardiac department. A patient suffering from a heart problem will use an oxygen cylinder worth one hundred dollars. But how many cylinders of oxygen must we have breathed till now? Calculate how much we should pay God, as of today. (*Laughter*)

Jeevakotula Brova Taapavanundu Sadavivanela

Why do you find this cool breeze? Why do you find oxygen supplied to us continuously? Ceaselessly, thanklessly, unnoticed, unhonoured, unwept, and unsung, the world goes on and on and on. Why?

Salilambanginadhi Pravahinchu Chandamela

Kila Kila Navvuthu Salilamu

Banginadi Pravahinchu Chandamela

People say that if you go to St. Thomas, you will find water, water everywhere. I had the opportunity to see the Catharasus, the waterfalls at the border of Argentina and Brazil. *Wah*, it was Kailas, Kailas! What should I say? As the water flowed with the touch of the

wind, gales touched the shore, *wah!* What a rhythmic movement it was! The *tabla* player may miss one or two beats, but the touch of the waves touching the shore never misses a beat. What is the reason? Why? Do we know the answer? We do not know.

Yavaniaanathi Itlu Jaruguchundu

THE DIVINE DIRECTOR

Who is the commander behind the puppet show? Who is the puppeteer behind it? Who is the charioteer behind this world? The car rolls on the street, but how about the driver? He is God, He is God. To realise who the driver is, to realise the cosmic dancer, to realise the Divine director, is the purpose of human life. After all, anyone can eat, anyone can drink, and everyone sleeps. What is so great about it? We cannot calculate our lives in terms of the sounds of coins, No, no, no! After all, money is nothing.

Once Bhagavan said that when death was approaching, Alexander the Great asked everyone if they could extend his life by five more minutes—five more minutes, no more, that is all, five more minutes. No, no! (We teachers give students five minutes more at the time of examination to complete their answers; we are more compassionate than God, you know.) (*Laughter*)

God said, “No more, nothing more, wind up.” “No, no,” Alexander begged. “I will give half of my kingdom for five more minutes.” (*Laughter*) “Finish, that is all. “ “No, no, I will give You all of my kingdom for five more minutes.” Nothing doing!

DO NOT ATTACH VALUE TO NON-LIVING OBJECTS

Therefore, my friends, in exchange for life, where does money stand? In exchange for nature, what is the value of money? Unfortunately, we begin to attach value to non-living objects, forgetting life in general. We forget life in general. Bhagavan asks this question straightaway. Gold is valuable. Yes, why? You buy something. If no one else wants to buy it, you will find it on the road, that is all. (*Laughter*) A diamond is valuable because we want to buy it. If we don't want to buy it, you will find it in the gutter. No one will care about it. Therefore, it is man who attaches value to the material. It is man who attaches value to this materialistic world. But we forget the man.

Someone asked Swami, “The problem is that prices are increasing. What shall we do?” Prices are increasing because of the increasing value you attach to objects. If you attach value to man, prices will come down. If you attach value to objects—the material world, the sensual world, all that you want to acquire, all that you want to have by way of comforts and conveniences—the value of man will certainly come down, and the value of the materials will go up.

Therefore, my friends, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has taken a human form to remind all of us that we are not simply human beings. He reminds us that we are basically and essentially Divine in our compositions, and that Divinity should manifest anytime, failing which, life is not worth living.

DO NOT CARRY ON LIFE AS A FOOL

Baba gives a simple example. There lived a king who had a buffoon in his court to entertain him. The last moment of death came and the king was lying on his deathbed. Any moment he was going to die. At that time, what was the buffoon, the clown, the jester of William Shakespeare, doing? He had a nameplate which read, "I am a Fool." With that nameplate on, he started moving amidst the people. When he came to the king, who was on his deathbed, the king said, "What? Are you a fool? We all know you are a fool. Why do you need a nameplate? (*Laughter*) You are a fool, it is known. Why do you keep the nameplate on you?"

Then the buffoon replied, "O king, you ruled us. You are a very great king. We are highly indebted to you. O Lord, people say that you are going to die any moment. Let us know where you are going. Where are you going?" The king said, "I am going. Where am I going? I do not know." Immediately the buffoon took the name plate and put it on the forehead of the king himself, saying, "You are the fool." (*Laughter*)

Who is the fool today? He is a fool who does not know where he is going. He is a fool who does not know where he has come from. He is a fool who does not know why he is alive. He is a fool who does not know the purpose and direction of life, simply carrying on with the sojourn of life meaninglessly. Therefore, Sathya Sai Baba's incarnation today is a timely reminder to everyone that we cannot carry on the life of a fool any longer. We cannot! After all, we have to realise that we are basically Divine, and that is the purpose of life. We have to outgrow our limitations.

We are so fortunate. Who will speak to us like that? Who will tell us in simple terms about our duty-bound responsibility today? We know that many people are not given to criticism, no! We have so many people, we have so many books. The books are continually explaining things which make us decide not to read anymore. Some people explain confusion in a confounded manner. Bhagavan explains things in the simplest way possible. The secret of the success of the present day Avatar, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, is His ability to communicate the toughest things in the simplest way possible. You can take it from me, in the simplest way, and in a practical way. We don't have to run away from our families. We don't have to leave our families, no! We don't have to close our bank accounts and go to the forests, no!

INDULGENCE AND AVOIDANCE – TWO EXTREMES

Poverty is not the sign of spirituality. Some people look at a person's clothing and describe how spiritual the person is. You mean a spiritual man should be nude or naked? What nonsense do you speak? I tell you there are two extremes in life. One extreme is indulgence, meaning a worldly man, a sensual man, a materialistic man, a man of mundane, worldly indulgences. The other extreme is avoidance. "I don't want that, I don't want this." Then we don't want you either. (*Laughter*) Avoidance is another extreme. "I don't want costly food. I don't want a good, rich life. I don't want a good dress, I don't want, I don't want."

"I want" is one extreme and "I don't want" is another extreme. Indulgence and avoidance are equally bad. Indulgence makes you materialistic, while avoidance makes you non-realistic, non-practical, foolish, and utterly stupid. Then what is religion? It is not avoidance, it is not indulgence. It is transcendence. Spirituality is transcendence. What do you mean? I can manage with or without. I can be happy with or without. I am not bothered with these things. If I have them, fine, and if I don't have them, doubly fine. I am not affected by these things. That is what is called transcendence.

LIFE IS A MIX OF MATERIALISM AND SPIRITUALITY

A new approach to religion is needed today—a happy blend of the East and the West. The materialism of the West and the spirituality of the East should go together to make a happy blend—a happy wedlock, meaning the root and the fruit. The root is materialism, and the fruit is spirituality. There cannot be fruit without a root, and a root without a fruit is firewood. (*Laughter*) Therefore, I cannot say, "I don't want that, I want this. I don't want this, I want that." We don't want that, you understand that. A tree should have both roots and the fruit as well. My friends, life is a beautiful mixture of materialism and spirituality going hand-in-hand.

We also find some people for whom spirituality means starving, or fasting, or observing a vigil. Some people don't sleep at all, and when we just ask them why, they reply that they want liberation, or *moksha*, therefore they are awake. (*Laughter*) If that heaven—*moksha* or liberation—is so cheap that you can get it by observing an overnight vigil by being awake throughout night, then all truck drivers must get *moksha*! (*Laughter*) All hospital nurses should get *moksha*, and all watchmen should get *moksha*. I am sorry, it is not that.

Today that kind of approach to spirituality is not realistic, but rather dogmatic. We give the kind of interpretation which is not practical, and which is not possible. Suppose people say you should spend one hour in meditation, and half an hour in worship. Okay, he will be dismissed from his job; he will be dropped from his office, because he will

start his morning commute two or more hours late. If he meditates for one hour, he will be dismissed for a lifetime.

WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

What do you mean by meditation? What is meditation? Unfortunately people think that sitting straight with their eyes closed is meditation. That gives you a backache, but has no results at all. What do I mean by that? Some people say that they meditate while sitting with closed eyes; but practical experience says that when you close your eyes and sit straight, all your old thoughts come in, because there is no one to disturb you. (*Laughter*) What you did forty years ago, what you did thirty years ago, or twenty years ago, goes on endlessly like a television serial. (*Laughter*) Is that meditation? Can that be meditation?

On the other hand, it is very funny, yet also unfortunate, that we find some people getting carried away. For instance, they may take up meditation for only twenty or forty days. Do you think that saints are idiots to have spent their lifetime in meditation? Meditate for twenty days, pay thirty dollars. Oh, is it so cheap? (*Laughter*) Vashishta could not spend thirty dollars, and Viswamitra could not afford the thirty dollars, which is freely spent here.

See that, my friends? We are perverted, we are misdirected, and we have gone far away from reality. We have not understood what spirituality is. What does Sai Baba say about it? Spirituality means professionalism, excellence at work. You are a businessman, a top man, a number one doctor or engineer, or a top professor, because religion is not for incompetent people. Religion is not for weak people; it is for strong people. One example is Arjuna himself. What kind of a man was Arjuna? He was a man of courage, intelligence, skill, and talent. That is why Krishna chose him. Krishna did not choose another man, no.

Therefore, competence is religion, efficiency is religion. Spirituality means to be efficient, proficient and competent. Here are two words which may be confusing—proficiency and efficiency. Some are proficient, yet they are inefficient. Some are efficient and not proficient. So what do I mean by proficiency and efficiency? Proficiency is knowledge, and efficiency is its manifestation. How practical you are is efficiency. How knowledgeable you are is proficiency. But spirituality is a combination of proficiency and efficiency going hand-in-hand. That is the first point which I want to impress upon you.

OBSERVING HUMAN VALUES IS SPIRITUALITY

Then what is spirituality? Observing basic human values is spirituality. It is not restricted to a day. Some people say that a particular day is approaching next month, so they want to fast. They want to have a heavy lunch and skip dinner at night. What is that?

There are some people who call their housewives and say, “Honey, I will be observing a fast tonight, so keep at least twenty *dosas* ready. (*Laughter*) What is all that? Such fasting solves your constipation problem, but it will never enrich you spiritually. What does that mean? It means that spirituality is the practice of human values.

Sathya Dharma Prema Shanthulu Lekunna

Vidyalanniyu Nerchina Phalamu Sunna

You may be excellent in all the fields of knowledge. You may be a PhD, a Doctor of Literature, but if you do not have truth, righteousness, peace, love, nor practise non-violence, all your wealth of knowledge is useless, zero.

Sathya Dharma Prema Shanthulu Lekunna

Padavulu Elina Phalamu Sunna

You may be occupying exalted positions, very high positions of authority, where you can wield power and control everyone. But without human values, that all comes to a big zero.

Sathya Dharma Prema Shanthulu Lekunna

Bahula Satkarya Labambu Sunna

I may do many acts of charity. I may donate and I may serve, but if I don't have human values, all that comes to a big zero. Therefore, the practice of human values is more important than ritual.

BE SPIRITUAL, NOT MERELY RITUALISTIC

My friends, let me impress upon you: let us be spiritual and not merely ritualistic. Ritual is monotony, while being spiritual is creativity. Ritual is mechanical; spiritual is innovative. Ritual is goal-oriented; being spiritual is spontaneous, instantaneous, and natural. Ritual is need-based and goal-oriented; spirituality is an endless path. It is a journey from the womb to the tomb, from the beginning till the end. That is spirituality.

Therefore, the time has come to know that we have to lead a spiritual life, and not a ritualistic life. That does not mean I am against rituals. Be a spiritual man with ritual performance. Do all the rituals with spiritual awareness. Both are required hand-in-hand: ritual makes you take up the ritual purposefully, while spirituality gives you awareness altogether in a different dimension. That is what I would like to impress upon you.

EQUALITY IS BASED ON EQUANIMITY

The practice of human values is a quality of a spiritual man. Who is a spiritual man?

Panditaha Samadarshianah

The spiritual man is a man of equality, a man of equanimity, but what kind of equality? Well, I treat everyone equally. Okay, if you don't treat everyone equally, no one will want to be bothered by you and you will be ill-treated. If you don't treat everyone equally, you will be ill-treated, that is all.

What do I mean by equality? I do not mean political equality. Those who speak of political equality have inequality in reality. (*Laughter*) I am not referring to that. True equality is based on equanimity, a balanced state of mind, or steadfastness, as described in the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Sanka Yoga*: equanimity, the balanced state of mind—*stitha pragnya*—steadfastness.

A simple example: if someone praises you, saying you are on the top of the world, your feeling will be "Oh, I see. You have come to know that today? Didn't you know that all these years?" If anyone tells you that something or everything is wrong with you, you don't understand it. We are not prepared to accept criticism. We get elated by praise, but we get depressed by blame. We don't have a balanced state of mind. In all positive minds and in all positive moments, we are highly egoistic. During negative moments of time, we are depressed and frustrated. That is not equanimity. Equanimity is a balanced state of mind, and is the quality of a religious man.

How does the religious man conduct himself? Baba gave Himself as an example. If someone says that Sathya Sai Baba is bald-headed, Baba replies, "I am not bothered by that, because I do not have a bald head." If someone says, "O Baba, you have a mop of hair, lots of hair," Baba replies, "I am not insulted, because I have lots of hair." So when anything is said as fact, you don't need to be ruffled. When anything is said that is untrue, you don't need to be bothered. This is the state of equanimity.

SWAMI VISITS KERALA

I remember very well when Bhagavan once visited the state of Kerala. Swami was taken in a procession, and at the head of the procession was Justice Balakrishna Erady. He was taking Swami through different lanes. One moment Swami wanted to go in a particular direction, but Erady, the Justice of India, said, "No, Swami, let us go this way, and not that way."

Swami: "No, no, I will go that way only."

"No, Swami, please, let us go this way."

Swami: "Why?"

"Swami, they are all atheists in that direction. They have no faith in God; they are non-believers. They may raise slogans. There may be a protest. Please let us go over to this side."

Swami: "Let Me see."

Swami went towards those people. He lifted His hands, and they just joined both of their hands together. That is what Baba is.

Nenu Cheyyi Ethinaanu Vaaru Chethulu Kalipinaaru

Swami: "I lifted My hand, and they joined both their hands."

That's what it is, see? He is not bothered about their atheism. He is not bothered by their being non-believers, because when you praise Him, He is not carried away.

At one time, there were two or three speakers who spoke in succession, one after the other, each one praising Swami. Do you know what He said? "I am not at all happy with your praises. I am not a third person. You don't expect your son to praise you. You don't expect your daughter to praise you to the skies. I am not a third person. I am a member of your family. Doing something good is My duty, not for any kind of appreciation, publicity, propaganda, or any sort of felicitation or recognition. I am one with you."

That is equanimity. Equanimity means to grow beyond praise and blame. Equanimity is something beyond pain and pleasure. It may be pain or pleasure, whatever may be.

SWAMI IS HAPPY AND HEALTHY

Some people say, "Bhagavan you look sick. Swami, you are very sickly."

Swami: "Shut up, you are sick, I am not. I am fine." (*Laughter*) He is in a wheel-chair. "But still I am fine."

Why does He say that? A doctor said, "Swami How are you?" He is a top man. I don't mention his name for safety reasons. (*Laughter*)

Swami: "How are you?"

The doctor: "I am fine. How are you?"

Swami replied, "I am fine. If you ask me further, I will throw you out of this place." (*Laughter*)

We find Him in wheel-chair with multiple fractures. "How are you?"

Swami says: "I am very fine. I am the happiest man, I am the healthiest man."

Isn't that equanimity? Isn't that balanced state of mind? Isn't that the quality of a *stitha pragnya*, as mentioned in the *Bhagavad Gita*, the second chapter? The eleven *slokas* in that are the most important. Bhagavan maintains that He is not ruffled, whatever may happen to His body, "After all I am not bothered about it."

SWAMI PERSONIFIES EQUANIMITY

There are some people who come and say, "Swami, thank you for all that You have done." What?

Swami, "You have done a lot. What have I done?"

"Swami, You have given water to everyone. We are heads of different villages, and we have come here as a society to thank you."

You know Baba's reply? "I should thank you for giving Me an opportunity to serve you. You don't need to thank me." That is equanimity. Equanimity is the state of mind which is beyond the duality of pain and pleasure, which is beyond gain and loss, which is beyond praise and blame, pain or gain, sorrow or grief, or joy, whatever may be. It is that state which is transcendental. That is what spirituality is.

What is the quality of a spiritual man? The spiritual man is always a happy man, and is not a moody fellow. Some people go on changing their face: eleven o'clock one face, twelve o'clock another face. We don't know what is wrong with him. (*Laughter*) That fellow may be a billionaire. It is a torture to live with such fellows who go on changing their moods like a chameleon. For God's sake, we shouldn't be like that. We should not go on changing our faces and moods, Why? What for? The blissful state is a quality of a spiritual man. A blissful state and a smiling face indicate a simple man.

Swami goes in lines giving *darshan*. A fellow says, "Swami, my grandmother died."

Swami: "*Manchidi Bangaru*. Good."

"Swami, my leg is fractured."

Swami: "*Chala Manchidi*. Very good."

"Swami, I am going to be married."

Swami: "Very, very good."

Only good . . . nothing bad there. To get married, good. Grandmother died? Very good. (*Laughter*) Everything is a matter of fun. He enjoys. When His brother-in-law, His sister's husband, died, Swami was standing against a pillar, just laughing and moving

about. Someone said, “Swami, we are so sorry that Your brother-in-law died.” They wanted to convey their condolences. (*Laughter*)

You know what Baba said? “I am not bothered.” (*Laughter*)

“What, Swami, You are not...?”

“Yes.”

Why? Here is a station master. “Trains arrive and depart. If there are no arrivals or departures, the station master will be out of job. I am the station master. I am that station master.” (*Laughter*) That is the quality of a spiritual man, unruffled, come what may.

A SPIRITUAL PERSON LOVES AND SERVES OTHERS

There is another quality of a spiritual man and that is to wish good things for everyone. One may go through difficulties, one may have failures, and one may endure agonising moments. You can be grief-stricken, yet wish good for others.

That will not happen in our life. When I am good, I feel good. Only when I am good is it better to see me, because you should not see me when I am not in a good mood. If my son gets first class, good. If my neighbor’s son fails, better. (*Laughter*) If I am happy, then it is good. If you are unhappy, I am happier. (*Laughter*) This is the situation. It is not the quality of a spiritual man.

A spiritual man wishes good for everyone, though personally he may be put through all kinds of difficulties, challenges and tests. A simple example: once around eleven o’clock I went to His residence. Poor Bhagavan sat there on the sofa with His garment lifted up. He usually covers His body to His toes, so that we don’t see anything. But at that moment His garment was up and I could see His feet. I wondered what I should say. Should I say, “How are You?” Or should I say, “What is wrong with You?” (*Laughter*) It is a Divine risk and it is the sort of spiritual danger I don’t want to get into. (*Laughter*) So what could I say? I kept quiet. Silence sometimes helps us, both at home and in public. (*Laughter*)

Prof. Anil Kumar sang “Smitha Smitha Sundara Mukharavinda Nacho Nandalala”.

I was just standing there silently. Swami was sitting there also. Then Swami Himself said, “See, Anil Kumar, the boys forgot to keep soap in the bathroom.” Oh, I see. Should I say, “Shall I bring one soap bar for you?” I didn’t want to get into that stuff. Should I say, “Swami, You are God. Why should you be without soap? You can simply transport that soap from the stores.” Could I say that? I didn’t want to get into it. So silence was golden.

Then I picked up a little courage and said, “Bhagavan, we have all the comforts, while You do not have all of the comforts. You have given us palatial buildings, but You do not have palatial accommodations. You have given us many servants to help us, but You don’t have servants.”

Then Baba said, “My residence does not even have windows, only glass panels.” No! Swami, I pity you. Bhagavan, what should I have said? “Swami, we are affluent and rich enough. How is it that You are like that?”

Do you know what Baba said? “I am happy if you are happy. If you have all the conveniences, well, I am happy. If you are wealthy, I am healthy. Understand that. Your bliss and happiness is my breath and food,” declared Bhagavan.

That is the quality of a spiritual man. That is the quality of a religious man. (*Applause*) Come what may, you may be anything, yet wishing good for everyone.

TRAITS OF A SPIRITUAL PERSON

Another quality of a religious person, at least from the worldly point of view, is treating everyone alike. The way Swami talks to a watchman, the way He talks to a tiny tot from primary school, how He talks to the Vice-Chancellor, or Union Minister, or President of India, are one and the same, uniform—a smile, concern, care, love, an outpouring of love.

On the other hand, we treat a person who is a subordinate with twenty percent love. If the other person is a superior, then we give him fifty percent. If he is going to oblige me, then I give sixty percent. If my promotion or career is in his hands, he gets seventy percent. If my visa and placement are in his hands, then it is one hundred percent! (*Laughter*) This is the percentage of love we hand out; but Bhagavan is not like that. He treats everyone alike.

One day we were waiting for the engineering examination results of my son and Swami was giving *darshan*. On that day the Union Minister Chavan was on a visit to Prashanti Nilayam. He was already there when Swami started approaching. I was sitting there, when Swami came to me and said, “How about the results? Have the results been published?” I answered, “Swami, the results are published, but the Home Minister is coming. Why don’t You go?”

Baba is not one who cares for ministers more than for devotees. “Devotees come first, then anyone else next,” said Baba. That is the quality of a spiritual man. It is the devotion that is important, not your status, not your wealth, not your dignity, not the respect that you command, not your knowledge, not your scholarship, no! That is all nonsensical stuff. Your pure heart, your devotion, is what matters, irrespective of other things.

One day someone got up and said, “Swami, please visit our state.”

Swami said, “Yes, yes, I will certainly come.”

He will never say no. “I will certainly come, *Bangaru, Tappaka*.”

That man came to me and said, “Mr. Anil Kumar, Swami said He will come. We will take Him.” Oh, I see. I went to Swami that afternoon and said, “Swami, there are devotees waiting to take You to their state.”

“Take me?” Baba said, “Am I a piece of luggage to be taken? (*Laughter*) Take me? Impossible. They cannot take me.” And Baba said, “No one can take me anywhere.”

You know *jaggery*. *Jaggery* may be heavy in its weight, but when ants come close, the *jaggery* can be passed on and moved to any spot. Ants are able to carry *jaggery*. “My devotees can take Me anywhere—not these officials, not these ministers, not these scholars”, said Bhagavan. That is the quality of a religious man. That is the quality of a spiritual man. Spirituality embodied, religion personified, is Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

TOLERANCE AND FORBEARANCE

Other qualities of a spiritual person are tolerance and forbearance. Intolerance is weakness, tolerance is Divine. How tolerant is He? He is tolerating all of us. That is enough tolerance. How many types are we? We are so many different types. We never act as He says. We just clap and come back. We will take care of it next time. And if we say, “Swami, I am sorry I could not follow what You said,” He replies, “Past is past, *Bangaru*. That is over, start a new life now.”

Is that not the best example of tolerance and forbearance? On the other hand, how do we act? If somebody did something against you ten years ago, you give it back to him today with compounded interest. (*Laughter*) “You didn’t say ‘Sai Ram’ to me last week. Today I will avoid you.” What is all this? Vengeance and revenge are animal qualities. They are qualities of a snake, whereas a spiritual man will never go by these minus qualities because he never thinks of negative qualities. That is what tolerance means.

Tolerance does not mean accommodating every Tom, Dick and Harry, agreeing with all the dirty stuff. This is not political tolerance. Spiritual tolerance means what? Spiritual tolerance means giving and forgiving. Giving and forgiving is forbearance or tolerance—the qualities of a spiritual man.

BE ESTABLISHED IN DIVINITY

What other quality has a spiritual man? Always established in one's own Divinity, but still moving along with the public in a normal way. He may move among the public in a normal way, but he is established in Divinity throughout.

One simple example: One day Swami was simply talking to boys and they were enjoying it. The higher secondary school boys were taking things for granted. When Swami is close to someone, the person can take for granted that closeness. Some people go on talking about the number of interviews they have had, the number of conversations with Swami they have had, the number of materialised rings they have . . . it is something like a *dhobi* (laundry) list, but all ego!

We should understand that there are many people who are equally blessed, much more blessed than anyone else. How is that? A blessing is unseen. A blessing is always disguised, always hidden. A blessing is not an expression, but an experience.

As Swami sat there, all of the boys started thinking, "Our Swami, after all". Suddenly He spoke to them as individuals: "You will get a zero grade . . . you will get one hundred marks. You are not dull in math . . . you are very dull in science. Hmm, you will do very well tomorrow."

He knows the past, present and future. He is established as Divinity, though He mixes with us as if He is a normal, average, simple man. Any simple achievement will make us highly arrogant--any simple achievement. A mustard seed size of achievement will lead to a pumpkin size of arrogance in our case! Bhagavan, with all His Divinity, is not at all bothered; He simply laughs and suddenly shows glimpses of Divinity.

BE DIVINE IN THE ORDINARY

This is the quality of a spiritual man--not to express outwardly, not to simply exhibit, but to move like a common man. To be common is most uncommon. To be ordinary is most extraordinary. Everyone wants to be extraordinary; that is just ordinary. But to be ordinary is extraordinary! (*Laughter*) To be ordinary is extraordinary, why? Stars are ordinary, flowers are ordinary, rivers are ordinary, the ocean is ordinary, but we want to be extraordinary. This is extraordinary ego!

The quality of a spiritual man is to feel very, very ordinary. How He talks to some people we should see, because those people belong to that area where Swami was born, Puttaparthi. He talks to them in the local dialect that we cannot understand. (*Prof. Anil Kumar talks in the local accent*) (*Laughter*) That is the local dialect we don't understand. The moment He goes to the dias:

Parama Pavanamainatti Bharatavanianandu Sahanamunnadhi Manaku Chakradhanamu

What authentic, pure, chaste language! That is ordinariness!

While He talks to children, He goes on joking, "In your knickers (shorts), one leg seems to be longer than the other. (*Laughter*) What is wrong with you?" Do you expect God to joke like that?

If He does not joke, if He is not ordinary, then we cannot mingle with Him freely. He cannot come close to us. If He goes on saying, "I am God, I am God, please don't disturb Me," then nothing doing! (*Laughter*) "I am God and you are also God. Let us move as friends, let us move together."

God has come down on earth to take us higher and higher, to greater and greater altitudes and platitudes. He has come to change your attitudes; we should be aware of that. Only with sudden jokes, He will bring us very, very close.

A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE

A simple example: A long time ago in Kodaikanal, on May 6th, Eswaramma Day, many preparations were going on for feeding the poor and for the distribution of clothes. In Kodaikanal Swami's usual arrival time to the *bhajan* hall is around eight o'clock, because it is very cold outside. So I was taking things easy. I had just gotten up and I hadn't brushed my teeth either. I was just wearing a bath towel, when suddenly I found that the door opened and Baba came in!

What is all this? (*Laughter*) You know what Baba said? "While all the devotees have come for My *darshan*, you have given Me your *darshan*!" (*Laughter*) I said, "I am sorry, Swami." I could not look at His face for some days. In fact, that has become a memorable event in my life which I shall not forget for a lifetime, impossible!

One day I was taking *padanamaskar* in Bangalore before giving a talk. He said, "You have not put your belt on, right?" Silently He said, "Your belt is missing."

"Swami, I forgot, I forgot."

"Ah, okay, okay." (*Laughter*)

This speaks of the simplicity, utter simplicity, absolute total simplicity, Himalayan humility, down-to-earth temperament, of a spiritual man. Why? In the Telugu language, people will be able to appreciate this. Someone told Ramana Maharshi, the great man of Arunachalam, "Swami, I have *yeruka*." *Yeruka* means 'conscience, awareness'. Swami said, "You don't have *yeruka*, but you have *guraka*." *Guraka* means 'snoring'. "You understand *guraka*, snoring, but not *yeruka*, awareness." What is this? (*Laughter*)

BABA THE MOTIVATOR

Let us not think that the spiritual man is serious all of the time. He mingles with us freely, yet is aware of his Divinity. He talks till the President of India and others arrive, then He sits on the throne like the King of kings.

Rajadhi Raja Ramachandra Sai Jagavandana

Jaya Jaya Raghunandana Jaya Janaki Jeevana

King of kings! When He comes to you, *wah!* Simple Divine romance—one should enjoy that. That is the quality of a spiritual man. Not to have any kind of status, not to have any sort of dignity, simply mingling with everybody.

Another quality of a spiritual man is to bring about awareness in the surroundings, without telling anything. He will never tell you, “Do this.” But He will make you do according to His wish. He will never tell you. He will never tell you to sing, no, no, no! You will start learning to sing. Why? You do not know. Who asked you to sing? You do not know. (*Laughter*) He motivates, Baba the in-dweller, Baba the motivator. A silent listener to every conversation and an unseen guest at every meal, and the Master of the family is Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Once we start loving Him, we will understand no one deserves much more than that. If at all we have to love anybody, let us love Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba—nothing more than that! (*Applause*) If we have to praise anyone, let us praise Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Praise no one else, because others are as human as we are, as mundane as we are. That is why Bhagavan says, “If you have to stretch your hands, stretch your hand in front of Me. Don’t ask anyone; ask Me. I shall give.”

“Ask! Thou shalt be given”, says the *Holy Bible*. “Knock, it shall be opened,” says the *Holy Bible*. That is what He is.

YOGA AND KSHEMA

Yogakshemam Vahamyaham

Ananyaschintayanta Mam Ye Janah Paryupasate

“For those people who sing in praise of Me without any other thought, with unwavering faith and steady devotion, it is My responsibility to take care of their *Yogakshemam Vahamyaham*, their welfare.”

Yoga and *Kshema* should go together. *Yoga* means becoming a minister. It is your *yoga*. You become a millionaire, it is your *yoga*. *Kshema* means safety. Suppose I

become a minister, *Yoga Kshema*; by a no-confidence motion, I then lose my position. (*Laughter*) So Baba says that *Yoga* and *Kshema* should go together.

Therefore, it is the quality of a spiritual man to bring in a sort of awareness, to bring in a sort of introspection, self-evaluation: what am I? Who am I? Where am I? What is wrong with me? Where am I going? How to correct myself? This kind of process is going on in everybody without their being asked to do so. That is the quality of a spiritual man.

Before our moderator asks me to wind up for the question hour session to follow—a generous girl, you see. (*Laughter*) She may be of the age group of my daughters, and hence she may have some daughterly feelings, I believe. (*Laughter*) Thank you very much. (*Some flowers were given to Anil Kumar.*)

So this kind of prompting should come from within: go and do it! I will give a simple example. Long ago I was supposed to attend a meeting, because my life has been about talking, talking, that is all. I was very unpopular at home, because I did not shoulder any responsibility. I can go on talking until you are fed up. (*Laughter*) I was to visit a place in Andhra Pradesh to give a talk and I was ready to go. But suddenly a TV announcement or radio announcement said that all public transportation was cancelled because of political disturbances: no trains, no buses, no transport, nothing. All were cancelled they announced, but I had to go. What was I to do?

I was teaching at home at that time, and one gentleman came to me. “Sir, I have come here to take you.”

I said, “Where?”

He replied, “To my place, why? You are supposed to speak today.”

“No trains, no buses are there, so how do you expect me to go there?” I said.

Then he said, “That Baba will take care! You are coming!”

The area that Swami belongs to is called Rayalaseema. Rayalaseema people have two qualities. If they like you, they give you their life. If they dislike you, they take your life. (*Laughter*) There is no question of bargaining, negotiation, or discussion. Finished!

That man said, “Sir, you are coming. We are going.”

“Hari Om, I will follow you.” (*Laughter*)

I sat with him and the train proceeded slowly, at a snail’s pace, like that of an earthworm, a millipede, and a centipede. (*Laughter*) By walking, I could reach my destination faster than that. What to do? The man was sitting next to me like this. (*Prof. Anil Kumar gestured.*) (*Laughter*)

“Mr. Anil Kumar, you are coming. We are going, I am taking you.” (*Laughter*)

Thank God, he was not taking my life. We passed two stations. By the time we came to the next station, the gentleman was getting down at every station and saying, “Anil Kumar is coming. Don’t worry.” At the third station, he got down. Surprisingly enough, there was an announcement: “All trains will run hereafter in the normal way.” Yes, no more strike! The political situation was settled and everything would run as planned before. So the train started picking up speed.

Talk Given by Anil Kumar in Orlando, Florida

“Satsang for All, Part 2: Questions and Answers”

March 21, 2009

INTROSPECTION IS THE QUALITY OF A RELIGIOUS MAN

Baba will seldom tell you exactly what to do, but He will invisibly make you do that which is in accordance with His wish. He will never command you to sing, but you will start learning to sing just the same if that is His will. Why do you start singing? You do not know.

How does He do this? Baba motivates the in-dweller. Baba, the motivator, is a silent listener in every conversation, and an unseen guest at every meal, and He often guides us without our knowing it. The master of the family is Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and once we start loving Him, we will understand that no one deserves that more than Him.

If we love anybody at all, then let us love Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. If we praise anybody, let us praise Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and no one else, because others are as human and as mundane as we are. That is why Bhagavan says, “If you are to hold out your hand to receive, hold it out before Me. Don’t ask of anybody else. Ask of me, and I shall give to you. Just ask.”

As the *Holy Bible* says, “Ask and thou shall be given. Knock and it shall be opened.”

Yoga Kshemam Vahamyaham

Ananyaschinthayanthomam

Ye Jana Pari Upasathe

Baba says, "It is My responsibility to take care of the *yoga kshemam vahamyaham* of those who sing My praise with unwavering faith and steady devotion. Their *yoga* and *kshema* should go together, should complement each other naturally."

Yoga means 'getting' or 'becoming'. For you, that may be becoming a minister. If so, that would be your *yoga*. If you become a millionaire, that is your *yoga*. And what is *kshema*? Suppose I become a minister, that is my *yoga*; then I lose my position due to some scandal. In that case, my *yoga* and *kshema* have not gone together naturally and harmoniously. Baba says that one's *yoga* and *kshema* should go together, thereby bringing about an awareness in the religious man, which facilitates introspection and self-evaluation. What am I? Who am I? Where am I? What is wrong with me? Where am I going? How do I make the necessary corrections in myself? Everyone goes through these sorts of processes. This is the quality of a religious man.

GOD HELPS YOU EXPERIENCE DIVINITY

Allow me to give you an example of what I am talking about here. Some time ago I was to speak at a meeting. I was to visit a place in Andhra Pradesh to give a talk, but just before I was to depart for the meeting, it was announced on television that all transportation to my destination was cancelled due to political disturbances and labor strikes in the region. There were no trains, no buses, no transport, no nothing, yet I had to travel! What was I to do?

As I was heading home, a gentleman approached me and said, "Sir, I have come to take you."

A little puzzled, I looked at him and asked, "You have come to take me where?"

"To my place."

"Why would you want to do that?"

"You are supposed to speak there today."

"But there are no trains! No buses! The roads are all closed! How do you expect us to get there?"

"That Baba will take care of. Come with me now."

The area this man is from is called Rayalaseema. The people there have two qualities, If they like you, they will give their life for you. If they dislike you, they will take your life. (*Laughter*) There is no room to bargain or negotiate or discuss matters with these

people from Rayalaseema. When that man said that I was coming with him then I was surely going to go!

“Hari Om sir! I will follow you!” (*Laughter*)

We got onto a train that proceeded at a snail’s pace. I could have traveled faster on foot! (*Laughter*) But what was I to do? This man from Rayalaseema just sat there with this stern, stiff expression (*an expression which Anil mimics to the delight of the audience*).

“Mr. Anil Kumar, you are coming, and I am going to take you.” (*Laughter*) Thank God he was not taking my life! We stopped at a couple of stations, and at each one this gentleman got off of the train and assured the people there, saying, “Anil Kumar is coming! Don’t worry!” Okay, so I was worried still.

When we arrived at the third station, however, he again descended from the train and there was a very surprising announcement: “All trains hereafter will run according to schedule.” Yes, there was no more strike. The political situation had been settled and everything was running as usual again. Then the train starting moving again, *tak tak, tak tak*, and I reached my destination at around 5:30 in the evening. Believe me, with God as my witness, this is all true, exactly as it happened! The Doubting Thomas’s can meet me afterward and I will give them this man’s address and phone number!

So what happened when I arrived? There were a thousand people on the platform waiting to receive me with *arathi* and garlands. I gave the talk and then I went to Prashanti Nilayam to tell Swami that I had been able to travel and give my speech after all.

When I saw Swami, He approached me very slowly and said, “You wanted to shirk your duty, to get out of going to speak to these people. You cannot do that!” (*Laughter*) Swami’s programs are not political programs. Once they are announced, they will take place! He sees to it that you will experience the Divine plan. He sees to it that you will also learn from your experience and He sees to it that you will examine it. These are some of the points that I would like to draw your attention to this evening as we begin our question and answer session.

(Anil Kumar sings “Nanda Mukunda Sai Natha”)

Sai Ram Professor! When I was a child, my mother always said that whatever happened was God’s leela. As I grew older, my mother and grandmother always said that whatever happens is according to our karma. I’d like to know what the difference between them is, between leelas and karma, or is it all the same thing?

It’s the same thing. It’s just old wine in a new bottle! (*Laughter*)

Sai Ram! Can you please give us a glimpse into a day in the life of Swami?

Oh! One day of His routine? Come on, cheer this fellow! Let's have a round of applause.
(*Everyone applauds.*)

I'll tell you my own experience. Kodaikanal is God's amusement park, like Orlando in the United States of America. We have a lot of fun there. We play there. So Kodaikanal is the place where Swami plays and allows us to speak of anything under the sun, and I am a regular speaker there.

One day Swami said to me, "Anil Kumar, you speak."

I said, "Swami, if You permit me, I'd like to speak in a different way."

"What?"

"Swami, if You would please excuse me."

"Why all this preparation? Is there something fishy here?"

"Swami, if you excuse me, I'll speak."

With His Divine assurance, I started speaking about one day in the life of Swami. I said, "Bhagavan, You say that I am God, but I know that You are God and I am not, and given the choice, I want to be a human being and not God."

Then Baba looked at me and said, "If you are not God, are you then a buffalo?"
(*Laughter*)

"Okay Swami, I wouldn't be more comfortable as a buffalo, but I am sure that I am not comfortable as God, after seeing you as God. I want to be a human being and not God."

He then asked, "Why?"

People thought that my luggage would be packed then and there, and put outside the gates; but no, I had gotten my assurance that I could speak differently this time. Then He said, "Come on, tell Me what you mean."

I said, "Swami, if I were God, then every morning I should get up at 4:30 as God Sathya Sai Baba does. I cannot. Then, by 6:30 am, I should only have had a half glass of water. I am sorry but I prefer hot coffee. (*Laughter*) As God, I should come every morning, dressed beautifully, having only had a half a glass of water, and like this I should give *darshan* every morning. I cannot do this unless I have had my breakfast! (*Laughter*) As Baba, I would have to give *darshan* every day, and see the same faces every day, because first line people will never allow anybody else to sit there! (*Laughter*) Every day You have to see the same faces. I cannot do this Swami! I want to see some fresh faces." (*Laughter*)

“I want my breakfast! I want my coffee before I face the world! And all those letters You take! What do those letters say? Does anyone say, ‘Thank you Swami, we are made happy by Your grace, Swami, and our family is happy, and our health is good.’ There are no thank you letters among them.”

“They all ask, ‘Can you do me a favour? Help me to get a transfer? Help me to get out of some trouble with the police? Help me to win a court case?’ Some letters are even worse, and say things like, ‘Even if You don’t grant me interview, never grant interview to that fellow. (Laughter) Even if you grant him *padanamaskar*, never look at his face.’ They give You their complaints, and I don’t want their letters; so I don’t want to be God. No!”

“When You go there and sit in the *bhajan* hall and ask the boys to sing, they sing songs not according to Your taste. Each fellow just wants to show off, to demonstrate his own historic talent to You. They don’t sing songs according to Your choice and preference because they want to display their own greatness, and I could not bear them.”

“Then after *arathi*, God goes for lunch. And what is your lunch? One teaspoon of *rasam* and one spoon of curd? You eat two spoonfuls of food, but I want three plates!” (Laughter)

“And you don’t eat sweets. I like sweets, Swami. (Laughter) You don’t eat any ice cream, but I like to have cup after cup of the stuff!” (Laughter)

“Then You have the same routine all over again in the evening. So Swami, You remain God and allow me to remain a human being!” (Laughter)

(Anil Kumar sings “Jaya Jaya Prabhu Giridhari”)

DIVINE VISIONS ARE UNAMBIGUOUS, CLEAR AND CHOICELESS

When Swami comes to you in your dreams, is it His darshan, and is it real?

A very sensitive and personal question! You find two extremes regarding dreams of Him. My wife always see Him in her dreams, and I never dream of Him. (Laughter)

Once I said to Swami, “My wife tells me that You appear in her dreams.”

And Swami said, “So you can go on believing that I don’t appear in your dreams, and she can believe that I am appearing in hers.” Very good! Somehow we have entered into a compromise. Hari Om, that is the dream. (Laughter)

Now, when Swami appears in a dream, we should make no mistake. Very often people see dreams of Him as a prompting of their own mind. Some people interpret these

appearances to represent unfulfilled tasks, incomplete work, unfulfilled desires, or see them as a psychological problem expressing itself. One fellow came and told me about his dreams, and then he asked me, “Mr. Anil Kumar, what happened to you?”

I cut his story short by telling him, “Swami appeared in my dream and He told me not to listen to you. Please stop.” (*Laughter*)

So what are these dreams? Unfulfilled desires? Uncompleted tasks? Suppose I want to beat you. Well, I can't beat you here, but in dreamland I can finish you off! Yes, come on we will settle things there.

Swami appearing in our dreams, however, should never be confused with any prompting of the mind. Swami appearing in a dream is not a dream at all. Please understand that. When Swami appears in your dream, you are having a vision. Don't say that He appeared in your dream. Film actors appear in my dreams. So what? (*Laughter*) Baba appearing in your dreams is not a dream at all. It is a vision.

So what is the difference between a vision and a dream? A dream is a psychological event in your mind while you sleep. A vision is intuitional and intuitive. Dreams are confusing. Visions are unambiguous, straight and clear. Dreams give you a choice. You can go to a movie or to Las Vegas. I have a choice to go or not. A vision is not like that.

He may come to you and say, “Come to Prashanti.” Hari Om! There is then no other option but to go. There is no choice. Visions don't offer choices, whereas in dreams you can choose whatever you want. Dreams are confusing, but a vision is clear. Dreams are promptings of the mind, whereas a vision is intuitional, inspirational, creative, experiential, and existential.

Suppose I were to see you in *bhajans* and then, when I think of you tonight while I am sleeping, you might all appear in my dream, asking me to please stop singing! (*Laughter*) In a vision, however, when you have no thought at all, Swami will appear and tell you what it is to be done. Am I clear? Good.

When every moment of our life is to be surrendered to the guidance of Bhagavan, how can we best hear and comprehend His promptings, especially in a difficult situation?

How do you know that it is a difficult situation? A situation may be difficult or easy depending upon your outlook. Some people are quite brave and courageous in very hard times. Some people find it difficult if they have a headache, and turn it into a crisis of international proportions! (*Laughter*) So, difficult times are difficult to define. It is very difficult to understand the intensity of difficulty. We cannot define it accurately.

As everything happens according to the will of God, how are we to respond to challenges in times of difficulty with a spirit of surrender? I really have only one thing to say in response. We should not respond out of a sense of desperation or helplessness:

“I missed the train; so where was God then?” Whether we experience failures or difficulties, just accept what happens as it happens to you. That is what we call the spirit of surrender.

Some people come to Swami and say, “I surrender my property to You.”

Swami says, “I have enough property, I don’t need it.”

Suppose you were to say, “Swami, I surrender my car to You.”

Swami might reply, “If I accepted all the cars offered and piled them one on top of the other, they would touch the sky. I am not a garage, nor is there a factory here. I don’t want it.”

How about if you offered to surrender your body to Him?

He would say, “Your body is not yours, so how can you surrender it?”

“Swami, I surrender my mind.”

“It is not under your control, so how can you surrender it?”

We are not the owners of our body or mind, and they act in ways that we don’t want. Therefore, let us own our body and mind, for only then we will have the validity, credibility and accountability to surrender them—not until then. I cannot surrender my mother-in-law’s property to someone. (*Laughter*) I cannot do that. Only the owner can do that.

There is a Telugu film in which one fellow asks his servant to shave his head because, he says, “I took an oath which said if I fail, I will have your head shaven.” What! You have your own head shaven! Why should the other fellow do it for you? (*Laughter*)

LIFE IS A GAME, PLAY IT

Good evening, Professor! I asked at the beginning of the program what Swami says about the economic conditions ahead for us in the United States? I don’t want to nag you, but a lot of the ladies have urged me to ask you about that.

I don’t remember any statement that Swami has made regarding the American economy. Whether it is the American economy or that of India, they are one and the same to Him. There they are fighting. Alright, let them fight. Here they are fighting too. Okay, let them fight. He doesn’t restrict Himself in His concerns to any particular country, to any geographical limitations, religion, region or nation. America is passing through difficult times, but this is momentary. America will again return to her pristine

glory. When America was on top of the world, did we ever ask the question, “Swami, why is America on top of the world?” (*Laughter*) How can I ask today then? Life is a game, so play it. That is what it is. Swami tells us to take life essentially as a philosophical adventure, not as a matter of inflation or deflation—it is not that. You take it at the basic level, and you respond in the moment as things are.

EVOLVE TO A STATE OF SELF AWARENESS

Our group from Florida has been waiting to hear from Swami, and I think many of us have the same question. So do you have any inkling or any information?

I will make two points here. When you say, Florida devotees want to hear from Him, why not those from California? (*Laughter*) Why not those from Texas? Why not Nevada?

We are speaking on behalf of Florida. I mean, we are speaking on the group’s behalf.

But then other people will say, “Why not us?” That is one point.

The second point is that we should understand that Baba is spiritual. He is not a simple human personality. He has his own level of contact. To make the point more clearly, on a more metaphysical plane, I would put it this way: if He comes personally and talks to you, if He writes a letter to you, if He grants *darshan* to you, that is all communication.

Communication is achieved through words, letters, books, and between people. That is all communication. Communication, however, is human; but Baba does not simply communicate. He *communes* with you. Holy Communion is taken with the Holy Ghost says the *Holy Bible*, so we have to establish that communion with God. That is not simply communication. Maybe Swami wants us to evolve from the state of communication to a state of communion, of Self-awareness. Am I clear? (*Applause*)

STOP THE OUTER NOISE TO HEAR THE INNER VOICE

Sai Ram Sir! As a teenager growing up in Bangalore in the 70s, much to the consternation of my parents, I preferred parties to Puttaparthi. Now as an almost 50 year-old, Swami has slowly drawn me back into His fold and I have grown very attached to His form. Recently I called up an uncle in Puttaparthi, saying that I would be coming in June. He said Swami is not giving a lot of talks on the formless aspect. Your thoughts on that.

Today Swami's direct communication occurs less and less frequently. His communion with people, or should I say Divine whispers or Divine promptings, His communication with the inner voice, is more pronounced today than ever before. But some people say, "I don't listen to my inner voice." Some say, "I have no inner voice."

To them, Baba says, "Stop your outer noise." (*Laughter*) If you stop your outer noise, you will listen to your inner voice. That is what He said. For everything there is a time, brother, when we should get into His fold. When we are ripe enough spiritually, that is the time.

On a personal note, for seven years He never looked at me. He never took any letters from me. He never gave me even a glance or a look. In other words, He avoided me. When I acted more intelligently, getting a seat in the first line by manipulating the top leaders, that morning *darshan* was cancelled! (*Laughter*) So the time should come. There is a time. We cannot pull the mango out of the tree. It should be mature enough, become ripe enough, and then it falls; it falls on its own. We cannot pull it down and eat it. No! We have to wait.

(Anil Kumar sings "Sarvantaryami Sathya Sai Rama")

We wish that Swami would come to Florida and we wish that every day. We enjoyed your speech today. It was like Swami was here. We want to know when you are coming again.

Oh wow! My daughters are here in the USA. Earlier all three lived here; but one has gone back to Bangalore. Now, two of them live here—one in Wisconsin and another in Dallas. So they always demand my presence here. So I can come again, yes. Thank you very much. There is somebody who wants me! What is this? (*Laughter*) Wow! God bless you. If kith and kin want you, there is nothing extraordinary about that; but the Sai community wanting gives me great satisfaction. Thank you very much. God bless you.

JUDGE NOT, LEST THOU SHALT BE JUDGED

My daughter had a question last night to which I did not really have an answer. I thought you might help us answer that question. She is learning about the holocaust right now and she asked me, "Mummy, we have to see God in everybody, so how can I see God in Hitler?" Her dilemma applies to every one of us. How do we see God in people whom we think are not good? How do we see God in everybody? I find it very difficult. How do we do it?

Good! The girl wants to see God in everybody and therefore finds a problem. How can I see God in Hitler? That is what she asked.

This is the answer. Hitler is the name of a person, and his qualities are known to us. So how do we see God in Hitler? When I experience all that hatred and animosity and enmity toward Hitler, I am a Hitler. Not the historical Hitler, but Hitler just the same. When I have compassion and love, there is Christ in me. When there is a spirit of non-violence, there is Buddha in me. So we should address qualities, not persons.

So, how can we like a person who is very bad? How are you sure that element is not in you? He may be bad today, but you may be bad tomorrow. We say good man in the morning, but by evening we call that same person a very bad man. We are always changing, and good or bad are relative. We say that he is good or that he is bad depending upon our relationship with him.

Suppose you are obliging and say yes to everyone. People may then say, "Oh, you are a really good fellow." If instead when something is asked of you, you say, "Let me think about it", then they will probably say, "You are no gentleman at all."

So this kind of judgment is based upon our own weakness. Judgment is one's own weakness. "Judge not, lest thou shall be judged." says the *Holy Bible*. Never judge.

Bhagavan says, "If you are to judge, judge others by their merits, not by their faults. Seek out your own weakness and others' merits."

So you can tell your daughter, "Anger in you is the Hitler. Desire in you is Dr. Ravana. Devotion in you is Anjaneya. Obedience in you is Sugriva. Truth in you is Rama. Love in you is Krishna. That ferociousness and violence in you is Bin Laden." (*Laughter*) Am I clear? We should consider qualities, not people.

THE GOLDEN AGE

Swami has said that the Golden Age is fast approaching. Is the Golden Age here yet, (Laughter) and if not, how do we get upon the Golden chariot?

Oh good. You want gold now. (*Laughter*) Gold is valuable, so everyone wants it, you see. I can understand that.

Swami speaks of the Golden Age. When is it? When is it going to come, if it has not come yet? The answer is as follows: The Golden Age that Swami speaks of has nothing to do with the metal gold. The Golden Age is psychological, metaphysical, spiritual, religious and based in our awareness. It is beyond the mind, body and intellect. The Golden Age is selflessness and egolessness.

Today, the spiritual message of Bhagavan Baba reaches all corners of the world. If you go to Brazil and say, "Bonjia," they will say, "Sai Ram." If you go to Mexico and say, "Como esta?" they will say, "Sai Ram!" (*Laughter*) If you say, "Gracias," they will say,

“Sai Ram.” So this is the Golden Age. What else could there be? (*Applause*) Swami reaches every corner of the world.

Not only that, you will find three hundred devotees from Iran, all native Muslims. These three hundred native Muslims from Iran, they render *Veda* in front of Bhagavan during *Vedic* chanting. What else could this be but a Golden Age? Recently we had a group of six hundred from Hungary. They were tops in *Vedic* chanting, *bhajans* and cultural programs. What else could this be but the Golden Age?

Recently, a person who had six years of service occupying the highest position in the land, equal to the rank of Chief Justice of India, simply resigned, and now serves Baba there in Puttaparthi. What could be a more Golden Age than this?

I don't mention his name because I shouldn't without his permission. Once this meeting is over, however, I can tell you who he is. Anything that comes to my notice cannot be confidential. (*Laughter*) If you are prepared to let it go public, then tell me. Otherwise, keep it to yourself. The most up-to-the-minute news agency used to be the BBC, the British Broadcasting Corporation, but I am ABC: Anil Kumar Broadcasting Corporation! (*Laughter*)

There is a man from Sri Lanka, Colombo. His house was spread over ten acres, with twenty-five or thirty big rooms. He left all that and settled in Puttaparthi, managing with a 1+1 room in Prashanti Nilayam. Is there any Age more golden than this? (*Applause*)

I remember Brother Kundra from London. He had forty-five rooms in his house, and he left it and settled there in Prashanti Nilayam. 1+1. That is all. Two rooms. What else can this be but the Golden Age?

To rise above wants, to rise above the body, to give up comforts and conveniences, to dedicate life to higher aims, isn't that enough of a Golden Age? Young boys with PhDs and MBAs settle in Puttaparthi, receiving whatever they get, while their classmates get very well paid. They simply left everything to settle close to Him and serve Him. Is it not the Golden Age now?

The Golden Age is about rising above the normal, mundane, ephemeral, momentary passing life. That is the Golden Age and it has already been established by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. We have not noticed it; that is all. Does that answer this question?

BE SPIRITUAL WHILE BEING RELIGIOUS

First of all, I enjoy your talks very much. They are very informative, particularly the sections on characteristics of spiritual process. In connection with that, in your talk you seem to use the terms 'spiritual man' and 'religious man'

interchangeably. I just wanted to know if there is any difference between 'spiritual' and 'religious'.

Wow! Come on! Applaud! (*Applause*) How can you be indifferent to such a beautiful question, such a nice thought-provoking question, such a challenging question?

What is religion? What is spirituality? Religion is the banner, spirituality is the manner. The manner in which you adopt is spirituality, while the banner "I am Hindu" or "I am a Christian" is religion. Religion has rituals. Spirituality contains the meaning of the rituals. Religion divides, while spirituality unites. Religion is specific, while spirituality is universal. Religion is what you call a particular group or a particular faith, and its books, rules or way of life, while spirituality is cosmic, universal, and a generally unifying force.

So I don't want you to give up religion. Let us be religious while being spiritual. Let us be spiritual while being religious. Let us understand the meaning, depth and the significance of religion by also being spiritual. By performing all these *pujas, yagnas*, and daily prayers, you are religious. If you do these rituals in full awareness of their significance, you are also spiritual. That is what I mean. Am I clear? Thank you. (*Applause*)

CONSCIOUSNESS IS THE UNDERCURRENT OF EVERYTHING

Sai Ram! The concept of mind: what is the mind and what does Baba say about it? Is the mind ultimately equal to consciousness?

Wow. Come on! (*Applause*) What is the mind? What is consciousness? Are they one and the same? I am not here to say, "Never mind." I won't say that. Consciousness is that which makes the mind think. It is that which makes the intellect discriminate. It is what makes the body function. It is the energy, electricity, undercurrent and the driving force; whereas the mind, body and senses are only its instruments. They are all powered by the underlying current. That is the difference.

The current in the bulb gives you light. The current in the microphone amplifies the sound. The current in a heater generates the heat. Consciousness makes the eyes see, makes the ear hear, and makes the legs walk. That is consciousness.

So, how about the mind? First, the mind, like the other senses, is also an instrument. Thoughts and counter-thoughts constitute the mind. "Shall I go? Shall I not go? Shall I do that or not do that?" Thoughts and counter-thoughts constitute the mind.

Second, the mind is a bundle of desires.

Third, *Manath iti manaha*. The mind recapitulates and remembers, and again recapitulates, and repeats itself over and over again. The mind is the source of

hypocrisy. The mind is the iron curtain. The mind is from the ego and makes man separate from God, whereas consciousness is the correct perception of reality. The body and the mind will vanish, but consciousness goes on forever.

So, consciousness is eternal, blemish-less, immortal, and nectarine, while the mind is ephemeral, transitory, political, cunning, selfish, egocentric and self-centered. Am I clear? Delusive, Illusive, desire-oriented—we can talk a lot about the mind because we are working on it, and we need psychiatrists for that purpose because we are not able to manage our own mind!

Anil Kumar sings, "Hari Hara Om".

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