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Prof. Anil Kumar Talk in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

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

Sai Ram

With Pranams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Sai Ram everybody! How are you? Thanks to Bhagavan Baba for bringing us to this heavenly place in America, St. Thomas! We are specially privileged to be here. This program was not finalised till the very last minute, so I did not expect this. The credit goes to two important souls, Mona and Mr. Arun. They kept repeating "St. Thomas" in my ear like an *Ashtothram* (a repetition of God's name 108 times). Your love for Swami made it possible to visit this place! Thank you very much each and every one of you! (*Applause*)

VISITING ST. THOMAS IS AN EXPERIENCE

My friends, I would like to bring two important things to your attention that we often confuse and abuse. These are "expression" and "experience". We want to express that something is beautiful or horrible, but experience is above expression. All experiences cannot be expressed. Expression limits the experience; it does not permeate the entire experience because words limit the depth of the experience. In trying to express the experience, we limit it. That was my situation on my way to St. Thomas. It is an experience that cannot be expressed. (*Applause*) A visit to this place is an experience, not an expression.

THE REAL EXPERIENCE EXISTS WHEN EXPRESSION STOPS

"I love my mother" is an expression. How much do you love your mother? "A rose is beautiful." How beautiful is it? Beauty is an experience. Therefore, my friends, the real experience exists when expression stops.

The real experience exists: mother's love cannot be expressed. Several expressions lie within our heart in the form of golden treasures of our experiences. "Oh God, how

beautiful this place, St. Thomas, is!” If I am to see God, I don’t need to go to Kailash. People speak of the mountain range named Kailash, where Lord Nataraj dances. I can visualise Lord Shiva doing *Tandava* on the mountain range in St. Thomas! We should just have an eye for it.

CREATION IS THE REFLECTION OF THE CREATOR

Bhagavan says that in order to see the Creator, one should see His creation. The Creator and creation are not different. If I stand before a mirror, I see my own reflection. Suppose if I stand before the mirror and see an ugly image, it doesn’t mean that the mirror is ugly; it means that I am ugly. Therefore when the creation is so beautiful, it means that the Creator must be equally beautiful. The grandeur, the aura and the beauty of the creation is the reflection of the Creator. That is the reason the holy text *Bhagavad Gita* says: *Sarvam* (everything) *Vishnum mayam* (Divine) *Jagat* (creation). The creation is full of Divinity.

Never neglect or abuse creation. Never pollute Nature because Nature is the gift of God. We have not created anything, but are experts at destroying everything. We cannot create anything that is fresh, innovative, or beautiful; but we can pollute everything. Therefore there is wide range between man and God.

GOD IS INFINITE, LIKE THE VAST OCEAN

Nature is the reflection of God Himself. Look at that vast ocean! There is nothing greater than the ocean that teaches us the important lesson of the infinity of God. If I say God is infinite, you may ask how infinite? Please keep quiet because your expression is finite! So infinity can be taught in terms of the vast ocean, which is limitless and boundless.

OCEAN TEACHES TWO STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The ocean also teaches another lesson. Towards the shore it is turbulent, full of waves; whereas in the deep, it is calm and quiet. What does that mean? The Self in man, the Divinity in man is calm, quiet, balanced, equanimous, unruffled, un-agitated, undisturbed, silent, serene, dignified, and magnanimous; whereas at the superficial level, there is turbulence.

What does that mean? When the wind touches the ocean, there are turbulent waves. Similarly, the stillness of our heart is like the depth of the ocean; when the wind of desire touches it, the mind becomes turbulent. That is a tragic situation. So our mind has two states of consciousness or existence: one of equanimity and the other, where our desires create something like those turbulent waves. That is the lesson of the mighty ocean.

THE INFINITE IS BLUE IN COLOUR

What does it further teach? That which is infinite is always blue in colour. Watch the mountain from a distance; it is blue in colour. Ocean is blue in colour, and sky is blue in colour. *Neelamega Shyama*: Rama is blue in colour, Krishna is blue in colour and the creation is the reflection of the Creator.

WHAT THE VAPORISATION OF SALT WATER TEACHES

By the touch of sunlight and its heat, the salty sea water vaporises into clouds that come back to us as rain. Rain is sweet, unpolluted water, fit for immediate consumption. What does it mean? This transformation of ocean water from salty to sweet is like the transformation of mankind—full of the salt of ego, pride and jealousy, transformed into the sweet and acceptable.

Transformation of man happens by the touch of God, just like the transformation of ocean water happens by the touch of the sun or *Aruna*. That is what the prayer says. It means, “Oh God, bring about a transformation within me so that I become sweet, acceptable and serviceable to everybody; so that I will be humble and respectable to everybody; so that You would look at me feeling proud of your own creation; so that I would be a worthy son of a worthy Father.”

These are all quotations from Swami. I am a student of botany, the science of plants, and I am not capable of philosophy or the spiritualising of subjects. No. I study Sai literature and I have been speaking on Swami for over thirty years. Bhagavan prompts me to speak along these lines. So please consider these as excerpts from the Divine message only.

OCEAN REPRESENTS THREE LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Ocean water has three states: the water itself, the waves and the foam. The water is the basis of Divinity; the wave is the super-imposition or the delusion, while the foam is the worldly confusion. The ocean is the reality and water's Divinity continues forever.

Pradhibadhika Sathya, *Paramardhika Sathya*, *Vevaharika Sathya* are the three levels of consciousness. *Paramardhika Sathya* or the reality is the ocean. *Pradhibadhika Sathya* is the super-imposition of delusion or the waves. *Vevaharika Sathya* is the worldly confusion or the foam.

That is what Swami has said about the ocean. Just coming along the way on the flight, I looked at the ocean and wondered, “God, what a wonderful lesson You have taught us! I'm not simply trying to praise You, My Lord. Who am I to praise You? But to learn these lessons through Your creation so that I would be an evolved soul, a personality that befits Your creation, is a gift.”

MAN MADE OUT OF GOD SHOULD BE GODLY

A jewel made out of gold would have the qualities of the raw gold it was made from. Similarly, man made out of God should be godly. Unfortunately, he is demonic. What an awful situation it is! What a fall, my countryman! Bhagavan's plan today is to bring us back to our pristine glory, to that state of originality. Thus are the lessons from the ocean.

HAIRPIN BEND TEACHES ABOUT THE UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE

Then I think of the mountains ranges full of trees and how we were driving towards them and along them. What a beautiful drive up and down those hairpin bends! What does

Swami say? “Life is full of bends, ups and downs. Never complain that I am down now. No! You saw the up also. Then, why not the down?” So let us not complain that life should only be full of ups. No, it is impossible. It is not the quality of Nature. A simple example is this St. Thomas. Is it all plains, no ups and downs, and no mountains? No.

Take our own human body: we are not like a square concrete pillar. Imagine ourselves like a pillar. We would look horrible! As it is, no one is looks at us! (*Laughter*) So this teaches a lesson of bumps and jumps, lashes and slashes in life. These are inevitable, so let us try to accept both.

FAILURE HELPS UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF SUCCESS

Enjoy the night as much you enjoy the day. Twenty-four hours does not mean dark night throughout, as in Copenhagen, Denmark. Would you like complete darkness everyday? If it is always bright, it's hard to sleep. So day and night may be opposite, but both of them contribute to make a full day, and they therefore compliment each other. So life is beautiful, yet full of paradoxes. Success is good, but failure is equally good: when there is no failure, how do you enjoy the success?

As Baba puts it, if there is no death, nobody will die. If mother stops loving the child, how does it matter, since everyone is immortal? Now, as there is a threat to his life, the mother is constantly worried: would the child be able to go to school easily? What about the traffic? The children may fight at school and he may be beaten up. How will the child return home? What if the teacher slaps the child? These threats make the mother love the child more. On the other hand, if God says all are eternal, we won't be bothered.

Therefore, failure helps us understand the value of success. Success has no meaning without failure. The word 'success' can exist when there is 'failure'; the word 'day' can exist because there is 'night'. This is the fundamental principle of life which we don't want to accept. That is the reason we say, “Oh God, make me at least a billionaire. See that my child is born with a visa. And see that all my relatives have as many properties as Dhiru Ambani or Bill Gates.” What sort of prayer is that! The true desire should be readiness to accept whatever comes to us.

SUCCESS IS A CHANCE TO THANK – FAILURE IS A CHANCE TO CORRECT

Success should never make you egoistic or proud of achievement. Similarly, failure should not make you frustrated, depressed and ready to commit suicide either. If I am a failure, let me understand that God wants to teach me a lesson so I can improve. If I am successful, I should thank God for encouraging me to have higher targets in life. “I will achieve more, thank You, God.” So success is a chance to thank and failure is a chance to correct. There is no reason to be afraid of either. We can maintain our own balance. That is the lesson religion teaches.

ANYTHING FREE IS TAKEN FOR GRANTED

Another important and funny thing is that we forget to enjoy what is freely given to us. Those of us who enjoy home-cooked food will miss it when we are on flights and get only juice. When home-food is available everyday, we don't understand its value.

Children will never know the value of the parents until they go elsewhere for studies, where they are no longer pampered. So anything that is freely given is taken for granted. That is a curse to all of us.

Water is freely available. When that water is supplied through pipes, we have to pay water tax. Electricity is free; but when that is passed through some wires, amplifiers and power stations, you have to pay electricity bill. The whole planet Earth is free, but government wants you to pay land tax. Government has not purchased, but still you have to pay the government for the property of God. How silly it is! We breathe oxygen and a cylinder of oxygen costs about 250 rupees. Ask any heart patient! How many cylinders of oxygen we have breathed till now? What amount should go to God for that? All are freely given, but we are not thankful.

On the other hand, if a fellow offers a cup of coffee, we thank him profusely. Either that fellow dies or we end our life for a cup of coffee! But God has given so much more, yet we are not aware of it!

LIFE IS HERE AND NOW

Do we ever care to watch the beauty of Nature? There is no time, as we are busy running to the office. Life has become a matter of calculation, of management, of dreaming and planning. Why don't you enjoy today? Today is life.

If someone asks, "What is life?" can you refer them to your insurance policy? Can you give them your date of birth? Life is here and now. Life is not the past or the future. Life is here now.

If somebody asks, "Where is God?" what is your response? God is in the temple, God is available freely on Sunday (so I can see Him, as it happens to be the weekend). We want the weekend! Somebody asked when was Baba going to visit United States? I said, "He is ready to come, but you want Him only for a weekend holiday." (*Laughter*) What will you do for the rest of His six days? So my friends, we are yet to cultivate the attitude of enjoying Nature or life.

TREES AND ANIMALS ENJOY, BUT MAN DOES NOT

Look at these beautiful trees. Look at flowers tossing their heads in the wind, like along the Milky Way, like the golden daffodils of William Wordsworth. The flowers enjoy, but we never enjoy our life. Look at the faces of people. They look like they have consumed a bottle of castor oil. (*Laughter*) They have no life. Flowers and animals enjoy their life, but man is not able to. Animals don't have lockers or bank accounts, but they are very happy. We are worried because we wonder if we will be this happy after ten years. I am happy today, but I am doubtful about ten years later; therefore I cry now. See the misery of man!

PLANTS AND ANIMALS DON'T COMPARE, BUT MAN DOES

The plants and animals are very happy. Why? They do not compete. A lilly flower will never compare itself with a eucalyptus tree or a palm tree. "You are tall, while I am short. You are beautiful that way, but I am more beautiful this way."

No tree compares itself with another tree, and no animal compares itself with another animal. Each one is great in its own way—no comparison or competition. Our life is miserable because of this ugly comparison and competition. "I think you are great, forgetting the fact that I am greater than you." You think you are greater than the other person, but both of you are equally miserable!

Our friend was commenting that the other side of the fence is always greener. That's how we always feel. Live in the present and be thankful to God. Enjoy Nature and be natural.

LIFE HAS BECOME ARTIFICIAL, NOT ARTISTIC

Unfortunately, life has become artificial not artistic. Life is full of plastic lipstick smiles, but there are no natural smiles. We are cut off from Nature. Do we ever care to listen to the beautiful sounds of birds in the morning? No. We want to listen to television sounds. Do we ever hear the sound that a river makes? Did we ever listen to the sound that the ocean makes? Do we ever listen to the sound of our own heart? No, there is no time.

The one who is cut off from Nature is unnatural, and that unnatural one will be miserable. But the one who is close to Nature will be natural, and is bound to be blissful. We are not blissful because we are unnatural. Bhagavan Baba, the Divine Incarnation, wants all of us to be natural.

DEVELOP HUMAN VALUES

Animals have animal qualities, plants have plant qualities; but humans also have animal qualities! I don't have to ask a dog to behave like one, but I have to tell a man to behave like a human being! Swami introduced Education in Human Values because we have become inhuman. We have to be re-taught human values!

Monkeys move as a group, birds move as a group, but man does not want to mix with others. Armstrong was successful in landing on the moon, but I don't know whether he was friends with his neighbour or not. We are not able to step into our neighbour's house, but we are ready to land on the moon to collect some dust. There is ample dust here. We don't have to go all that way! So my friends, I urge you to develop the human qualities of compassion, sacrifice, and love of learning from Nature.

TREE TEACHES US SEVERAL LESSONS

Look at the tree. As Bhagavan said:

*Prithigna Nananullu Phalamuluchidea Kathu
Sacchikooda Chilchil Sotharavu*

Jagamangu Tharuvelethu Kurvellu
Sacha Mahina Matta
Eiya Sai Matha

Baba says, "While alive, the tree serves you by bearing fruit; after death, the tree is useful as firewood. So there can be no other creature in this world to teach the lesson of sacrifice other than the tree."

The trees stand straight, but we can't. Tree stands straight because it depends upon the roots which are firmly established; the root is the self-confidence. When you have self-confidence, you will be upright.

The stem and the branches speak of self-satisfaction. When you have confidence, you can have satisfaction. People have no satisfaction because they have no confidence. Only a confident man can be a satisfied man.

The leaves that take in the sunlight and carbon dioxide to prepare food material and supply oxygen stand for self-sacrifice. The fruits stand for Self-realisation. The fruit has juice which is the Divinity.

The tree is a perfect example of self-confidence, self-satisfaction, self-sacrifice, Self-realisation or Divinity. So, we can learn all these lessons from a tree. These are the things we can learn from Nature.

LIFE IS GOD'S GIFT

God's creation is meant to be natural, blissful, and enjoying life. When life is not enjoyable, it means something is wrong with you. Life cannot be disinteresting; life is beautiful. Life is God's gift. Life is to be enjoyed. God is life's affirmative. God is never life negative because life is His gift.

Let us enjoy life; let us enjoy this life blissfully and smile all along. Life is a dance. Life is music. Life is laughter. Life is God's gift. When we make it a matter of transaction, a matter of selfishness and bargaining, we lose the taste of life. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is making everyone enjoy the taste of life. What is the taste of life?

GOD INSPIRES US FROM WITHIN

A gentleman visited Prashanti Nilayam, and he was very impressed with what he saw. He said, "Swami, why don't we have a hospital here?"

Swami said, "Anantapur campus is better. I have a lot of space there, so let us construct a hospital over there."

This gentleman went there and checked that space thoroughly, but returned dissatisfied. He said, "Swami, let us have a hospital here in Puttaparthi."

“I wanted you to come to that decision without My telling you. So you have decided to have the hospital here. Good! Carry on.”

That man sat in his room and had an idea. Next morning he gave a 300 crore (3 billion rupees) cheque for the hospital. Swami never asked him to give the money. Swami never gave him the idea of building a hospital there.

Who is God? God is the one who motivates from within because He is the In-dweller. The tires may move outside, but the steering is done by the driver within who is Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He is an excellent driver, like the car drivers here in St. Thomas!

So my friends, God inspires you from within. If anyone asks you to give him money, he is a man. If there is a force from inside inspiring you to sacrifice, that is Divine. The force within is Divine. An announcement outside is human or inhuman.

SERVICE IS UNTO OURSELVES, NOT FOR GOD

I also know another case where a gentleman came to the hospital, looked around and started sending all the equipment needed. Swami asked, “Why did you send these things?”

Do you know what that doctor said? What would be our reply? We would say, “Swami, I am sending to You; it’s ok.”

The doctor didn’t say that. He said, “Swami, I am sending to our hospital. This is our hospital. Therefore I am not sending this to anybody; it is for our use only. I am not giving You anything.”

Baba said, “I know. To let these people also know, I put that question to you—to let these people know.”

Whatever you do is not a help or service to God. It is a service unto yourself, for your own satisfaction, gratification, progress and enlightenment.

EVERYTHING IS GOD’S GIFT

Nothing belongs to us. A famous musician named Vasudeva Rao, son of music director Rajeshwar Roy, was sitting here. By his side sat another artist named Ramesh. So a music director and a singer were sitting there. While Swami was passing by, the singer said, “Swami, he is my music director. All the music that I present before You is his gift.”

Swami said, “Oh! He gifted you? *Vaadika Evadi Echaadu Kaanuko?* Who gifted him? Find out from him.” (*Laughter*) Who gifted him?

Therefore, nothing is ours; it is all God’s gift. The real understanding of religion is the constant awareness that everything is God’s gift. I read, but I may not remember anything. Memory is God’s gift, while reading is human effort. I eat a lot. That is also

human effort; but what about digestion? Don't claim that everything is in your hands. You can breathe in "*Hari Om*"! But you may not breathe out—finished!

Therefore my friends, nothing works out without Divinity. Without the Divine control, there may be excellent wiring, good bulbs and mikes, but when there is a power failure—gone, finished! It's all over. That power is Divinity, let us understand that. When we understand that Divinity is the cause, we will be more grateful, humble, serviceable, loving and caring, with no chance for ego or pride.

PROBLEMS ARE REFLECTIONS OF OUR ACTIONS

When she was speaking about the prayer, I was reminded of one example that Baba gave in one of His discourses. A boy was weak in mathematics. I know what that is because I was weak in mathematics too. It was exam time.

In examination season, two gods are very busy: one is Lord Venkateswara, and the second is Hanuman. Hanuman represents intelligence: *Buddhi Matham Varustam*. He is the scholar of all *Vedas*. So if we approach Hanuman, he helps us.

This boy went to the Hanuman temple: "Oh Hanuman, you are intelligent. Please help me with my math exam tomorrow. You read all *Vedas*. Did I ask you to teach me the *Vedas*? Just help me in the math paper; that is all."

He continued, "Hanuman, if you help me, I will prepare rice pudding and distribute as *prasadam* to everybody." He offered a bribe, but Lord Hanuman will be happy with just praise. The one who is happy with mere praise is God; the who will be happy with only money is man!

Money and position is for man. Simple *Aastothara* or *Sahasnaama Archana Kodinaama Archana* only pleases God. Even when you break a coconut, you offer only half to God. The other half is for your family to make *chutney* out of it. (*Laughter*) You know that. (*Applause*) If God took the whole coconut, nobody would break it! So let us examine our own devotion.

So this boy prays to God, "Hanuman, please help me for my examination. I promise to offer rice pudding." Hanuman blessed him and leaked all the five questions for next morning's exam.

This boy saw all the five questions, so he could answer them within one hour even though the math exam time was two hours. So he had one hour left. What did he do? He took an additional paper and started writing out the items necessary for the preparation of rice pudding: how much rice is necessary and what is its cost? (*Laughter*) What is the cost of milk and jaggery?

Finally the approximate cost came to 100 rupees or so. "Hanuman, I cannot afford this," he thought. (*Laughter*)

So he took another paper and cut the budget to fifty rupees. He still had fifteen minutes left.

“Oh God, when you give everything, why do you need rice pudding?” (*Laughter*)

So he did not want to give anything because God already has everything. Having concluded this, he submitted his paper and came home. His father asked him how he did in the examination.

“Dad, I did very well.”

He showed his father the answer paper. But he was supposed to submit that answer paper to the examiner. What happened? He had submitted the rice pudding paper to the examiner (*Laughter*) and brought the answer sheet to the father. Is it Hanuman’s fault or his? Hanuman blessed him, but selfishness took over. So he had to follow the example of Muhammad Ghazini by successfully failing twelve times!

Therefore, my friends, the difficulties and the problems are reflections and resound of our own making. As is the sound, so is the action; as is the action, so is the reaction. What is the point of complaining? We don’t need to feel desperate or helpless for our *karma*, the reaction. We have to accept it; but we can pray to God for some concession.

KARMIC EXEMPTIONS ARE PART OF DIVINE ACCOUNTING

Suppose you have to pay fifty thousand dollars income tax. What do you do? You go to an accountant to ask for help.

He asks, “Do you have insurance.”

“Yes.”

“That will get you thousand dollars in remission.”

Similarly, he asks you about your car, property and so on. Eventually tax exemptions bring the tax bill down to fifteen thousand or so. All of you know that. You don’t need a botanist to teach you that! (*Laughter*) Income tax exemption is lawful, but income tax evasion is criminal.

Similarly, if you have to experience 100% *karma* or fate, *nagarsankeerthan* can reduce it by 10%, service activities by 10% and sacrifice by 10%. This *karmic* exemption is the Divine finance and accounting system, according to Sri Sathya Sai Baba. (*Applause*)

Here is a simple example: I eat spicy, hot stuff because I come from Andhra Pradesh and we are used to that. Suppose it is too hot. What should I do? Add some more chilli powder? No, put some salt and that effect will come down.

Similarly, when our fate is tragic and destiny is leading us to failure, there is no point in cursing or crying or blaming the neighbour, or looking at people who are fortunate. Attend *bhajans* – 5% reduction, do some meditation - 10% reduction, take part in service activities – 20% reduction. Thus you will cross this sea of fate.

CHANTING LORD'S NAME IS THE BOAT THAT TAKES US THROUGH

You can cross this ocean of *samsara* or worldly life with a simple boat of *Sai Nam* and *bhajan*. The boat is so cheap that we don't need to buy it or look for a sale. *Sai Nam* is not seasonal, occasional, incidental or accidental. No. *Nama* is readily available and we can repeat this anytime. Even cell phones fail because of poor reception. Computers fail because of virus problems: (*Anil Kumar sings* :)

*Sai Nama Bina Anand Nahi
Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Shanti Nahi*

When we say, "Swami," we get an immediate response. God has taken the Sai form today. Why? He has recognised our weakness. We cannot be religious or meditate or worship twenty-four hours a day because of our highly competitive life. Life is matter of struggle. We can't spend hours and hours worshipping, so God has taken a human form as Sathya Sai Baba. (*He continues singing* :)

*Say His name, See His form,
Hold on, Hold on!*

See His form, come on and hold on! Number nine is the Divine phone number. He is ready with a receiver on the other side, but we have no time to talk to Him. We have no time to call on Him. We have no time to look at Him. So sing a *bhajan* and He will respond immediately!

Therefore my friends, prayer or *bhajan* is the breath of our life. Prayer is a promise for a better future. Today times may be bad, but from tomorrow onwards, there will be good. There is going to be brightness. It is a promise; it is a hope. Life is an endless hope and not a hopeless end. Bhagavan Baba will wait for an opportunity to help you.

GOD IS WAITING FOR OUR CALL

I do not know how many of you have gone through the literature of Shirdi Bhagavan, the merciful Lord. A devotee was a ship's captain, and suddenly the ship crashed and water started flowing in. The ship could sink any moment. The captain had Shirdi Bhagavan's packet.

He looked at Swami and prayed, "Bhagavan, please help us. Let anything happen to my life, but the passengers should not die. Oh God! I am your devotee, Swami. Can't You help me?"

He cried desperately. Suddenly, the puncture or the big hole got covered on its own, and the ship reached the harbour safely!

What happened in Shirdi at the same time? It was *Kakkad aarathi* time and the entire Samadhi was full of water. Bhagavan's robe was full of water. He had to remove his *kafni* and squeeze it out. Then he was drying his hair. But nobody had guts to ask Baba where the water came from because Shirdi Bhagavan was a dictator. He was very merciful, softer than butter, but tougher than a diamond if you took a wrong step.

Oh yes! Our Swami handles the man, while Shirdi Bhagavan manhandled everybody! That is the difference. So nobody had the guts to ask Him.

After some time, slowly, somebody asked, "Bhagavan, where has all the water come from Swami? What is it?"

He explained, "My devotee, that ship was about to sink. I had to go and lift the whole ship, and hence you find all the water in the Masjid."

That is why people say. (*Prof. Anil Kumar chants again :*)

*Dinanatha Sainatha Devaki Thanaya Dayanidhe
Dayanidhe, Krupanidhe (3)
Devaki Thanaya
Darshana Dhijo Devadeva
Dinanatha Sainatha (3)
Devaki Thanaya Dayanidhe*

He is waiting for your call. You will never find Shirdi Bhagavan in a lying posture. He is always seated. Somebody asked Shirdi Bhagavan, "Swami, why are You always seated on a stone like that?"

And Swami said, "This stone is a rough surface. I can get up immediately when required. If I lie down on a foam bed, it may take time to get up. I am always ready to respond."

FEAR SHOWS OUR LACK OF FAITH IN HIM

So, (*again Anil Kumar chants :*)

*Why fear when I am here?
So says Baba, Sathya Sai Baba, Sathya Sai Baba, my Lord
Why fear when I am here?*

He says that when we fear, it means we have no faith in Him.

GOD GIVES US A CHANCE TO REFORM OURSELVES

I can tell you my own example. I know that they are video-shooting and this is not an income tax affair, but I take you as my family members so I will tell you. At one time I

was teaching students appearing for medical entrance examination in a tutorial college. It was high pay, a rewarding time. We were paid a lot for each class and we didn't show it in our income tax. That made it more attractive, so I was very busy teaching.

Suddenly one morning around 9 o'clock or so, I heard footsteps approaching and I looked through the window. The District Education officer and District Collector were entering into every class and taking a photo of every teacher so they could verify their tax records. I watched that, sitting along with the students.

The fellows came. "Where is the lecturer?" they asked. They could not find me. I was wearing a dark brown shirt, crème colored pants, with my hair parted at the centre. It's easy to detect me; men usually don't have centre part like that. But they didn't find me and left.

Then I came to Sathya Sai Baba, Bhagavan's *darshan* after some time. Baba looked at me and said, "Hey, medical entrance, when are you coming? Those fellows should have caught you red-handed. Why did you do that? Stop it. You are the State President (of the Andhra Pradesh Sai Organisation at that time). You should not set a bad example. Stop it." He said.

Bhagavan gives us a chance to reform and transform ourselves.

CRY TO BE ONE WITH GOD . . . NOT FOR WORLDLY MATTERS

He is a taskmaster, but at the same time He loves you intimately. He won't look at you until you cry. He cannot bear the sight of you crying. When you cry, He cannot bear it. Until you cry, He won't come to you. That is it.

Kanneru Sepinsu . . .

He makes you cry . . .

Thanniru Thappinsu.

He makes you stop crying.

Somebody asked Swami, "Why should I cry? Why should You make me stop crying?"

Baba said, "You are shedding tears because of worldly comforts and conveniences. I will make you shed the tears of joy, tears of *Ananda* and tears of gratitude to God. I will see that you don't cry any longer for the world. If you cry, you have to cry to be one with God, to be in the proximity of God."

MEDITATION IS COMPLETE ABSORPTION

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba gives us simple solutions to our problems and easy methods of approaching God. How to meditate, where to meditate, and what is correct

process of meditation? So many people teach meditation, yet we do not know whether it is correct or not.

Let me tell you what Baba says about meditation: "To a business man, business is meditation. To a doctor, treating the patients is meditation. To a professor, teaching students is meditation."

"Swami, is that meditation?"

"Yes, it is."

When you are totally absorbed in something, it is called meditation. Meditation is not a time-bound program. We have people who meditate from 5 am to 6 am, yet after meditation, they shout at everybody! (*Laughter*) Shouting is not the result of meditation.

Do you find peaceful, blissful, smiling faces today after meditation? Those who meditate become more serious with higher blood pressure. This is all nonsense in the name of religion today. Bhagavan has come down in human form to correct this procedure, to rectify the defects in our spiritual processes.

OUR PRAYERS ARE HYPOCRISY

Bhagavan gives us this example: there was an old fellow who had retired from service. He had enough money in the bank, his children were well-settled, and he was healthy. But all this was not enough. He wanted to be known as a devotee.

He was retired and nobody wanted him at home; so he decided to go to the temple everyday and sit in front of the idol and pray. But the priest was not retired; he had his family to look after and errands to run. This fellow would not stop his *Sahasranama* and leave the temple. The priest could not interrupt him and leave. Eventually the priest decided to teach him a lesson.

One day he stood behind the idol of Ramachandra and spoke loudly, "Oh devotee! I am pleased with your devotion. Merge in Me. I will take you into Me now. You will have *moksha* immediately." That fellow ran out of the temple (*Laughter*). He never stepped to the temple again. This is our devotion!

Bhagavan jokes further. On certain important occasions like *Nagarchokelvithi*, we offer milk at the ant hill. We offer milk to the ant hill, offer milk to the snakes, but when you find a snake on Monday or Tuesday, you kill it!

On Shivarathri you repeat *Nama Shivaya, Nama Shivaya* but on other *rathris* (nights), you forget that the bull (Nandi) is the vehicle of Lord Shiva, *Nandi Eswara*. So in the temple you worship the bull, but in the field what you do? You whip the bull. See that.

Rat is the vehicle of Ganesha: *Mushika Vahana Gajanana*. If a rat is seen in your house, you will trap it! So our prayers are hypocrisy!

THOUGHT, WORD AND DEED SHOULD BE IN HARMONY

We don't mean what we say; hence God does not respond. There is no *Trikarnasudhi*. Therefore, Baba says that religion is not colour-changing:

*Vedavitha Mangalunu Velu Seiyunna,
Pakaja Purpali
Chittachutti Lekammunna Cheduvin Vudu
Sathyamaina Maata Me Sai Maata.*

*When there is no harmony of thought, word and deed,
What for is your scholarship?
What for is your ritual?
What for is for your religion?*

So what we need today is harmony of thought, word and deed. What we need is commitment and dedication. What we need today is harmony in the family, in society, in the nation. What we need today is talent, skill, competence. That is what Baba speaks of.

He will never say that we should leave the family. "Hands in society, head in the forest." What does it mean? Serve society and live in society, but be detached. "Thoughts in the forest" stands for renunciation and detachment, *vairagya* and *sanyasa* (renunciation or the giving up of worldly ties; consists of the transformation of one's qualities, one's mind). When there is *sanyasa* or detachment, the head will work your hands.

My friends, I can go on like this any number of days, but I really want to know what you want to know from me. So I leave the floor open for question and answers. Please ask any question without reservation. If I know the answer, I will tell you, quoting Bhagavan. If I do not know, I'll openly admit it. I don't bluff and all the answers are from Swami's literature only. (*Anil Kumar sings* :)

*Govinda Gopala Hey Nandalala
Radhe Gopala Gopi Gopala
Meerake Natha Prabhu Murali Gopala
Govardhana Dhara Gopala Bala
Radhe Gopala Gopi Gopala*

If you have no questions, I have to doubt competence as a professor after forty-five years of experience!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

First, I thank you very much for giving us knowledge about life and about Bhagavan. My question is that, in this hall, we talked about Radhe Gopala, about Kailasha Bhagavan Shiva, Bhagavan Rama. It was very pleasing; but for this stage, I don't see any sculpture for all these Bhagavans. For a layman, there is no vision here of Shiva, Rama or Krishna. Can't we put all these pictures on this stage beside Bhagavan Sri Sai Ram's pictures and Shirdi Baba's pictures? Thank you very much.

We apologise to you for not putting those pictures on the dais. Thank you very much for your suggestion. We should put them there on the dais. Your suggestion is good. Thank you very much. The implication here is that we see them all in Him. We see everybody—Shiva, Rama, Christ Jesus, Allah—in Him. But your suggestion is good. We should have put these also there because we often sing: (*Anil Kumar chants* :)

*Sarva Dharma Priya Deva
Sathya Sai Deva
Allah Easu Buddha Aur Nanaak,
Zoarashtra Mahaveera Tumho*

So, we believe in fellowship of religions, the synthesis of religions. Thank you very much. (*His chanting continues* :)

*Chandra Kiran Kula Nandana Ram
Shri Mardhaya Sara Chandana Ram
Kauslaya Sutha Vardhanaa Ram
Vishwamithra Priyathana Ram*

Next question please!

Sai Ram. I have confusion between Sarva Dharma and Sanathana Dharma? What is the difference between the two?

Wow! Beautiful question! *Sanathana Dharma* is like the ocean, while *Sarva Dharma* is like the waves and the foam. *Sanathana Dharma* is unity, while *Sarva Dharma* is diversity. *Sarva Dharma* is variety; *Sarva Dharma* is plurality, multiplicity. In that wave and foam, the same water is there. So *Sanathana Dharma* is the undercurrent of *Sarva Dharma*, which is the apparent or different religions.

Dharshanambulu Veru Deivam Okate.

God is one, our paths are many.

Pushpajathillu Veru Pool Okate.

Flowers are many, but fragrance is one and the same.

Singaramalu Veeru Bangaram Oketa.

Jewels are many, but gold is one.

So, that single entity is *Sanathana Dharma*, while the variety is *Sarva Dharma*. Thank you. (*He continues chanting* :)

*Harihara Om Sankara Om
Narayana Hari Om (2)
Hey Shiva Hey Madhava Hey
Narayana Hari Om
Paramatma Antharyaami
Narayana Hari Om*

Yes, next question.

How do we ultimately merge with Baba? They say that through meditation, you can see the light or hear a bell and merge with Baba.

All of you heard the question? Or do you want the question to be repeated? The purpose of meditation, the purpose is merger with God. How to attain that state of merger? What is meditation? There may be many others in this hall eager to put those questions.

CONCENTRATION AND CONTEMPLATION LEAD TO MEDITATION

What is meditation? According to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, there are three steps in meditation. He illustrates this with a simple example. If you want a rose flower, what do you do? You go to a garden. The garden has so many plants and trees, but you want a rose so you search for it.

The search for that particular rose plant is concentration. Then what do you do? You pluck the flower, cut the thorns and leaves, and take that flower. That is contemplation. Finally you smell the flower, and that is meditation. So there are three steps: concentration, which takes you to contemplation, and that ends up in meditation. That is the first point.

FORGETTING EGO IS MEDITATION

The second point is this: a river has a name, form and a direction of flow. But once it merges into the ocean, it loses its taste, its name and its form. It becomes one with the ocean. In other words, when I am lost myself, when I forget myself, when I am no more, when there is no other than my deity of concentration and contemplation, I reach the ultimate goal of meditation. So when this 'I'-ness is gone, when this ego is forgotten, that is meditation.

*Govindethi Sada Snanam!
Govindethi Sada Japam!
Govindethi Sada Dhyanam!
Sada Govinda Keerthanam!*

*Sing the glory of God continuously!
Repeat God's Name continuously, fervently, endlessly, ceaselessly!
Think of God constantly!
Sing His glory all the time!*

SINGING BHAJANS IS A BOOST

You may be cooking, you may be in the office, you may be working somewhere . . . but in between, when you find a three or five minute gap, moving from desk to desk, you can sing His glory. (It need not be loudly.)

I give you my own example. You can verify the facts since he is seated here. In those days of teaching medical entrance students, we used to teach ten to eleven classes a day. It was eleven hours teaching on highly competitive basis.

Many of my colleagues used to have Coke or other energy boosters, or they ate a lot. But believe me! I had my breakfast, lunch and dinner, but ate nothing in-between. I was energetic from 6:15 am till 10 pm. You ask anybody, because it was a competitive institution.

The principal used to watch my performance. My secret was *Govindethi Sada Snanam*. When the bell rang, I had to go to another class; but in-between classes, I used to sing *Govinda Gopala Hey Nandalala*.

That was my boost. That is calcium Sandoz. Therefore my friends, this is meditation. Meditation is dedicating our work to God. "Oh God, You are the doer. I am only an instrument." That is meditation. The moment when the 'I'-ness is gone, it is meditation. So long as 'I'-ness exists, it is anything but meditation. When the meditator is gone, there is no one to say, "I am meditating."

How do you say that you meditate from six to seven? Who told you it is seven o'clock? Meditation is beyond time and space. How can you limit it to time and space? Our approach should change so that every act is meditation, an offering to God. That is what it is, according to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. (*Anil Kumar continues chanting:*)

*Gurunatha Gurunatha Sat Guru Natha Sai Natha
Hey Prasanthi Nilaya Sai Natha Sri Sathya Sai Guru Natha*

Any other questions please? These songs are only an incentive so that you will ask more questions! (*Laughter*)

I am one of the SSE teachers, and one of the problems we face is discipline among children. How do we discipline children or what does Swami say about discipline?

DISCIPLINE IS NATURAL

Discipline is natural, while indiscipline is unnatural. Discipline is natural as we see with sunrise and sunset, and seasons with flowering; they all follow perfect discipline. The ocean does not cross its limit. The Earth revolves around itself, while revolving around the sun. There is no collision, no hijacking, and no abduction. So there is discipline in Nature.

Even within our body, arteries carry pure blood and veins carry impure blood; oxygen is inhaled, while carbon dioxide is exhaled; temperature is 98.4 degrees and blood pressure 120/80. Everything is perfect and works in discipline. So we are born with discipline; Nature is full of discipline.

But we become undisciplined. We are born with discipline, yet indiscipline is cultivated. So your question is how to discipline the children.

PARENTS AND TEACHERS SHOULD SET AN EXAMPLE

First elders should be disciplined. The father cannot tell the son, "If anyone comes for me, tell them that I am not at home." The child will say that his father told him to tell you that he was not at home. So first the parents should be disciplined.

Next, the teacher should be disciplined. If he smokes or gambles, he cannot tell his students to not do those things. He cannot impose any sort of discipline. So the parents and teachers should set a good example.

In other words three people—first, the training of the mother, second, the example of the father; and third, the inspiration of the teacher—will provide the right ambience for ideal discipline among children. Am I clear?

I cannot say impose discipline for adults or college students. That won't work. I should tell them about the advantage or profits of being disciplined; how a disciplined life can lead to health and success. If he is convinced about discipline, he will certainly proceed along the path of discipline. Am I clear?

Yes, sir?

I have been attending the bhajans for the past few years. When I am here, I am at peace and feel great. Everybody here has had some kind of experience with Baba. They have experienced miracles such as vibhuthi falling off a picture or something good happening to them. But I never experienced such things personally. Maybe I am not at that level, or am I missing something?

All of you understood the question? Wow! (*Anil Kumar rephrases the question:*) Some people speak of miracles and all that in study circles. Well, I don't have any miracles. Why? Shall I say that I am not eligible to experience those miracles? Or shall I think that you are superior in devotion and that is why you have experienced so many miracles? What shall I do about it?

MIRACLE IS A PROOF OF DIVINITY

My friends, miracles are not for publicity. Miracles are not objects of propaganda. A miracle should never lead to a sense of pride or ego in you. A miracle is proof of Divinity.

A miracle is the size of a mosquito, while Divinity is the size of an elephant, according to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. But we want mosquitoes, so what can we do? We forget the gigantic Divinity!

Baba says that miracles are His visiting card. I want to see you in my office, so I send the visiting card. Once you know me, I don't have to introduce myself every morning and evening for years. So one miracle is an experience of Divinity, which is enough for life.

To know that the ocean is salty, a drop is enough. You don't need to drink the whole sea. It is possible for the sage Agasthya, not for you and me. So we don't have to experience many miracles. That is the next point.

EVERYONE DOES NOT NEED A MIRACLE

Another point Bhagavan makes is that devotees experience miracles if they need it, such as in an emergency.

I'll give an example from Swami's literature: Three fellows came to a doctor. All three fellows suffered from a stomach ache. The doctor asked the first fellow to not eat that night and told him he'd be alright. He told the second fellow to take the medicine and assured him that he'd be alright by tomorrow. The third fellow was told to go into the operating room for appendicitis surgery!

All three fellows had a stomach ache. The first fellow who had to go home and fast that night should not feel jealous of the fellow who was operated upon. "He is operated on, while I am not!" Would you feel that way? No. You are healthy, so you don't need any operation.

You have faith, so you don't need a miracle. Miracle is necessary for those who are yet to experience Him. You may want them, and it is fine if they happen. But why don't you think that it's better if they don't? I take it that way because I have not experienced many miracles. But I speak of the miracles of everybody, though not my own. I don't like blowing my own trumpet. I want Divinity to be understood more and spirituality to be practiced more.

(Anil Kumar chants:)

Sarvaantharyaami Sathya Sai Rama
Sarvamanthra Roopa Sathya Sai Rama
(Sarvaantharyaami)
Sarvakarma Sakshi Bhootha Sathya Sai Rama
Saranam Saranam Saranam Sathya Sai Rama

I have attended many meetings, and by Bhagavan's infinite grace, it I have visited fifteen countries. We come and go, but there is one place I want to visit again—St. Thomas! (Applause) Experience and expresser go together. St. Thomas is a beautiful amalgam of experience and expression of God! (Applause)

I am very grateful to you for your cordiality, for your wonderful reception and your determination to bring me here. We got countless calls from Mona. I think she called us every hour. Only Indira Gandhi, at the time of Bangladesh war, must have made so many phone calls! (Laughter)

I should express my gratitude to Mr. Arun Patel of Orlando. He did St. Thomas *bhajans* all the forty-eight hours of my stay at Orlando. He insisted that I should think of St. Thomas and that I'll love it here. I also applaud his diplomatic skills in convincing my daughter, who had planned this entire programme, to spare my services to your centre. I am very thrilled to be here. I am very grateful to each and every one of you. This is not a place to just come and go. I feel like sitting over there in the sit-out at your residence, watching the sea, the trees and the mountain range from a distance.

(Anil Kumar chants:)

Kailasha Patha Bhagavan Sanjara Sainatha Bhagavan Sanjara. . .

KailashaVasa Mahadeva
Jagadeshwara Hara Mahadeva
Tripuva Bala Baba Sai Deva
Shiva Maheswara Shiva Maheswara Siva Maheswara Sairam
Shiva Maheswara Shiva Sanjara Shiva Mahadeva Sairam

We find the abode of Lord Shiva here. This is *Rasaleela* in Nature. If you have vision, but do not realise this beautiful gift to mankind, it is a pitiable matter. If a man with a diamond in his hand begs on the street, we have to pity him. It is such a beautiful landscape—the canopy of trees and the ocean jumping with joy! What more do we want in this life!

You are blessed to have been born and living here. You have been blessed to have chosen this place for your business or profession because this is the best and blessed

place for *sadhana*. It is far from crowds, disturbances, politics and pollution. You are here in the purity of Nature.

May God bless you! May Baba be evermore with you! Sai Ram. Thank you.

(Anil Kumar chants:)

*Jai Jai Prabhu Giri Dhari Natavara Nandhalala
Natavara Nandalala Hey Giridhari Gopala*

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

Asato Maa Sad Gamaya

Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya

Mrtvormaa Amrtam Gamaya

Samastha Loka Sukhino Bhavantu

Samastha Loka Sukhino Bhavantu

Samastha Loka Sukhino Bhavantu

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

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