

The Sunday Talk Given by Prof. Anil Kumar

“Godavari Water Project”

June 28, 2009

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

Sai Ram

With Pranams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

There are two important things which I want to share with you this morning before I get into today's topic. The first one is regarding yesterday's event, which, I am sure, most of you (the non-Telugu speaking people) would not have followed at all. There was a request from a large section of our friends to facilitate their understanding, requesting that I give some English version of what happened last evening--which I am quite glad to do.

PROMISE MADE TO THE HILL-TRIBES OF GODAVARI

Andhra Pradesh is a state in southern India. In Andhra Pradesh, there are two districts which are considered to be the food bowl of the state. These two districts are located on either side of the river Godavari, and these two districts are called East Godavari, and West Godavari—on the two sides of the river. Something like your river Ohio, with Indiana on one side and Ohio on the other. So it is the river Godavari, with East and West Godavari districts.

Yesterday's function was jointly organised by both of them, East Godavari and West Godavari districts, located in the state of Andhra Pradesh. About two to three years ago, Bhagavan Baba made an announcement in Sai Kulwant Hall that He would provide drinking water to the hill tribes living in East Godavari. There are hill tribes who do not have any good water supply and who have to walk long distances to fetch a pot full of water for their consumption. As drinking water was not available, they had to depend on the local water resources, which are highly polluted. Years and years went on like that.

The hill tribes are cut off from the madding crowds; they are cut off from the modern civilisation and culture, as there are no approach roads, no electricity supply, and no proper housing facilities. So they depend on their forest resources, like gums, latex, and certain fruits of the

forest trees. The urban people started de-forestation or felling of the trees for timber, to make their furniture. The forests are deprived of gigantic trees today, with the result that those hill tribes do not have anything to eek out their living. They do not have any income also. Poverty-stricken and illiterate, living in diseased areas, they have no representatives to represent them, and there is no indication at all of forthcoming help, no sign of any promise or hope.

Then one day, our good God announced that He is going to supply pure drinking water to the hill tribes of the East Godavari district! All of a sudden, He got up and announced this. No one knew of any such thing about to happen. So this is my observation, in this context, my friends, which I am sure you will all agree with me:

*The one who does without asking is God,
The one who will never do, in spite of our request, is man.*

The second observation I would like to draw your attention to: the moment He made an announcement that He would supply drinking water, work started simultaneously there! Work started immediately at a diligent speed. Therefore, promise and execution are simultaneous in the case of the Divine, whereas in the case of man, promise may be made, but execution is always missed. We don't uphold the promises that we make. That is human. Bhagavan, as He usually does, promised water to the East Godavari hill tribes, and the work started at once!

These two districts of East Godavari and West Godavari are known for their devotion, discipline and sacrifice. It is not my native place. Do not think that I am trying to blow my own trumpet. I am not given to that, as of today. It is not my native place, nor my father-in-law's place. These people in these two districts are known for their charity and their sacrifice. Why? We have national conferences and international conferences, celebrated here in Prashanthi Nilayam, attended by the delegates from all over India and overseas also. You can verify with anybody every word that I am telling you: the rice supply, the main food item, comes from Godavari districts for all these conferences--and it is really great! We also come across some of those people who just send truck-loads of rice to Prashanthi Nilayam, without any propaganda, without any publicity, without any notification in the newspapers. That's quite amazing!

SEVA CAMP IN DIVISEEMA

A personal note here my friends; I apologise to you if it sends any wrong signals. Long back in the year 1977, there was havoc caused by floods in the Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. Baba asked all *seva dal* groups, Sathya Sai devotees, to go there and organise the rehabilitation camps. Thousands lost their lives; all electrical wires were cut off; all houses collapsed, and we had to walk on dead bodies. That was the situation in Krishna district, in the year 1977 at Diviseema. So, all *seva dal* people started moving to that area to render service. I am glad to tell you that all the service camps were headed by East Godavari leadership. The East Godavari *seva dal* people played the main role in organising the rehabilitation camps in Krishna District. This I am telling you only to let you know how experienced they are, and how devoted they are.

I was new to the organisation, still young I believe, and I too went there to participate in that camp. The camp was spread over a period of two months. It is very difficult to stay for two months in a service camp, because we have our own preferences of food items, and we have our own habits of repeated number of cups of coffee--and I am known for that! So I had to be there, but I didn't know what to do. Somehow I was participating in the service camp, though I

was quite new to the service activity. Somebody asked me to serve food to those villagers who were poor and homeless at that time; they were very poor people.

LESSONS LEARNT IN THE CAMP

I started serving food. Suddenly I heard a person shouting loudly, “What nonsense are you doing?” I had already put in about 14 years of service by that time, and it happened to be my native place, my native district--and some fellow was yelling at me, “What are you doing?” He was shouting at me! It was a matter of prestige and also a blow to my ego, which was so big then. I don't think it is totally gone today; some traces are still left.

So he said, “What are you doing?”

I turned back. “What is it that I am doing? I am just serving food.”

That man said loudly, “Don't you know that you have to serve food without footwear? You are wearing slippers and serving food! You should not do that. Don't you know that much?” he said.

I honestly confess I didn't know that. I said, “I am very sorry, gentlemen. I did not know that. I am very sorry, I will not repeat it.” That is the first lesson I learnt there in Diviseema, Krishna district, in the year 1977, when the leadership was under East Godavari *seva dal* people.

Then what happened was we had no electricity that night; we had only petro-max lights. The camp went on till 1 a.m. because there were thousands waiting for food, so the food had to be served to batches after batches of people. Somehow the *seva dal* leader, state *seva dal* leader at that time, found in me some leadership qualities. I do not know why. He said, “Mr. Anil Kumar, it is your duty to engage all these people who are sitting here, as the food is not yet ready.” Because thousands were sitting there, and five or six batches of people had to be fed which will take up until 1 a.m., it is your duty to engage them, he said.

How to engage all these people? There were no mikes, nothing, because there was no electricity. Then what I did was I picked some youngsters and I wanted them to sing together, all five of them, so that they wouldn't need any mikes. The villagers were lost in ecstasy as they joined in *bhajans* with all of us!

And then, there were no instruments. What to do? But there were some metallic, dome-shaped pots to carry rice. I just reversed them, collected two sticks, and started beating on them—something like a drum. Somehow we could engage everybody and the whole camp was very grand and spectacular. It was a life-time experience for me—to learn of the leadership qualities and sacrifice of East Godavari people.

There is one village in East Godavari called Kothapeta, and just a handful of people came from there. They started constructing houses--temporary shed-like things for the homeless people. They went on working for 24 hours. Within 10 days, most of the residences were ready. These are villagers. It was an eye-opener for me: most of us are highly educated and we spend most of our time in planning and paper writing. We are so busy in committees and ‘comfort-ease’ as Baba said, ending with nothing. But those villagers, how did they do that? It was an eye-opener for me! Thank the good Lord for His influence—how He influences the local villagers! Marvellous!

HOW TO GET THE FULL GRACE OF BHAGVAN

At one time I got tired and wanted to go back because I had already stayed at the camp for one month. I went to the leader and said, "Sir! Would you permit me to go back?" When I said I wanted to go, I had some followers at that time, you know, and they too said they would like to go. The leader noticed this.

Let me tell you my friends, in East Godavari and West Godavari, they have a different slang in speaking Telugu, which is so sweet. Godavari district people are known to convey the toughest things in the sweetest way. Toughest, very bitter things they can convey in the sweetest manner. You will only understand after half an hour what they really meant!

So the leader said, "Sir, Anil Kumar *garu*, since this camp is organised in your district, we are giving a chance to all of you; but if some of you are prepared to go, I will just send a telegram and 300 *seva dal* are ready to work here from East Godavari," he said. Did that mean I could go or not (*Laughter*)? Shall I go or not? I just wanted information. But he said some other things I didn't understand.

After ten minutes, I understood what he meant. Then I wanted to seek clarification from him. So I met him again and asked, "Sir, I will just go and come back. Is that ok?"

Then he said, "You are a professor, Mr. Anil Kumar. If you write answers for two questions, you will get marks for two questions. If you write for four you will get marks for four, and if you write for five, you will get marks for all those five questions." So, if you stay here for half of the camp, naturally you will get half of the grace of Baba; but if you stay full time, you will get hundred percent grace of Baba.

A GOOD LEADER

He went on speaking in terms of examination and evaluation, having found out that I was a professor in the education department. Then I thought he is not an ordinary man. (*Laughter*) He spoke very softly to me. He was also the first man to get up in the morning. A state convenor, he is very much here, his name is G.V.G. Krishnamoorthi. He was the first man to get up in the early hours of the morning at 3:30 or 4 a.m. and the last man to go to bed at midnight. No one knew he was the state convenor or anything. He was the first man to start the work.

It was Lao-Tse, a Chinese philosopher, who said, "A good leader is hardly known." A leader who is known will make a career in politics. But in spirituality, leaders are hardly known. So first when Krishnamoorthi spoke softly conveying very tough things, matters of discipline, it was a pleasant shock to me, and of course I am not yet successful at this. Such qualities are there in Godavari blood. But I am not from there, so what to do?

And then at another time, finding out that all the *seva dals* are working so hard in the service camp, some Sai devotee sent a big basket of *laddoos* (sweet *prasad*) for distribution to *seva dal* members so that we would be encouraged to work more! Someone was carrying that basket; I saw it. I know those people also. This state convenor asked them to take that basket of *laddoos* back! I heard this. I could not bear that. There is some limit for everything, I say!

Immediately I went to him and said, "Sir, this is too bad. You cannot ask a basket of *laddoos* to be taken away when most of us are ready to eat."

Then he said softly, “Sir, this is a rehabilitation camp. This is a place where we have flood victims. This is a place where thousands and thousands lost their lives, where thousands of people are homeless. There is no power supply, famine is here and they don’t have food to eat. At this moment, if we eat *ladoos* it may not look fair. Therefore I asked him to go back,” he said. Oh! I see. That is the second lesson I learnt from them. That is what East Godavari is.

SEVA AT THE FEET OF RIVER GODAVARI DURING PUSHKARA

I should also bring to your attention another point. In India, these sacred rivers have a celebration every 12 years. That celebration is called *pushkara*. *Pushkara* is celebrated every 12 years. Those who take a bath in the sacred river during that season, the belief says that they will have a birth reserved in *Vaikuntha* or heaven. So *pushkara* is a season where *lakhs* (one *lakh* is one hundred thousand) of people go to the rivers to take a holy dip. *Lakhs* of people! It is very difficult even for the government to organise camps and to maintain law and order.

I tell you, subject to verification—all those people are here. All *pushkara* celebrations on both sides of the Godavari in the East and West Godavari districts—the discipline, queue system, the main supply of drinking water, the supply of food, and also the maintenance room where the pilgrims can keep their slippers and their belongings—the whole job is done by 3000 *seva dal* volunteers, men and women, from East and West Godavari, most successfully. The government agency is nothing in front of them! (*Applause*) Nothing in front of them! You can go and enquire with any district collector, any minister. It is an open challenge. Why?

These ladies, these men of commitment and devotion, they get up around 1 a.m., start cooking and then go to the river bed in the early hours of the morning around 3 a.m. They maintain the cloakrooms because the river tracts are full of devotees who come to take a bath and go back. They organise it in such a fantastic way that nobody could ever dream of! Free food, buttermilk, cloakroom—all free. Cleanliness is most important because *lakhs* of people go there, and so it could be unhygienic. In fact, the whole atmosphere can be polluted. But these *seva dal* people maintain cleanliness and hygiene. It is excellently maintained by them.

The district collectors and ministers visited those parts and saw the *seva dal* people with their organisation scarves--men and women working hard 24 hours near Godavari. Ultimately what happened? A big function was organised by the district collectors, attended by the ministers, where the Sathya Sai organisation was recognised and specially honoured by the government for the excellent, unparalleled, devoted, committed, dedicated services extended to the pilgrims! (*Applause*)

SATHYA SAI ORGANISATION SERVING THE HILL TRIBES

Why am I telling you all this? This is the background of Godavari I know. That is why I am trying to recall and recollect those days. Yesterday we saw those people, the hill tribes who live about a thousand feet above ground level. The whole area is full of forests. As I told you all of them are illiterate and poverty-stricken, but yet they don’t beg. Begging is not known among the hill-tribes. They live with whatever little they have with no complaints. That is the culture of the hill tribes. They have their own local dialect. They don’t mix with people.

Somehow when Baba announced that there will be a water supply to those people, our *seva dal* people started moving towards those areas. They had to make the way. They had to lay roads to those spots. The government was not prepared to do this. The government has not done

anything for them. But the Sathya Sai Organisation took up the job of laying roads to that hilly tribal area.

Watching our *seva dal* in white clothes and orange scarves, those hill tribes started running away to avoid them, thinking they were the police. It took a long time for these *seva dal* people to befriend the tribals and be close to them. And later what happened? The tribals started waiting for these people. The bonds of love were strengthened between our *seva dal* people and the hill tribes there in East and West Godavari. After laying the roads, they started constructing small houses for them. The whole project was undertaken by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. It was financed by Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.

As the houses were ready, so then what did they do? They could understand that the rural population is not as healthy as it should be because of pollution all around. So they organised medical camps for them. They also constructed a small temple for the tribals to meet and do some *bhajans*. Then pipes were specially laid out, and water tanks were built on the top of the hills and connected by many water pipes, so that these tribal people could draw water out of the taps easily without any problem.

Then some of them started *Balvikas* centres to train children. From the educational side, schools and *Balvikas* training was given to them. From the health point of view, medical camps were organised. Houses were constructed and water supplied. So yesterday was a matter of celebration, of jubilation, of gratitude, of thanksgiving to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, for all that he has done for these tribals, who were forgotten, neglected, and not counted as part of the human population for all these years.

That is Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba! There is no duplication of work. It is not due to any request; it is not political and there is no funding, no gain, no recognition. It is just a call from within. It is just the Divine will that has manifested itself in the form of a stupendous project of such magnitude!

TRIBUTE TO BABA FROM RIVER GODAVARI

Truly it is unbelievable how those illiterate boys from the East Godavari hill tribes, cut off from the madding crowds, could present so many items yesterday! How many types of dances we witnessed yesterday? And how much training they must have had? What freshness and innocence was there on their faces! They didn't know which direction to go, they didn't know when to stop. That is innocence. Innocence is Divine, my dear friends. Ignorance is foolishness. God is innocent; a child is innocent, villagers are innocent, and those hill tribes are another name for innocence. That is why God is with them.

All day yesterday we could see so many dances. There was one song, which I won't sing for you—don't be afraid, you don't have that threat right now! But I can communicate the meaning of that song. It is so nicely written. The meaning of the song is that the river Godavari is praying to Bhagavan to visit those places once again. It was so beautifully written!

Godavari is praying to Bhagavan, "O Swami! We still remember your visit in the past. We still recall all your *mahimas*, all your *leelas*, and the Divine sport along the Godavari. O Baba! We remember the number of idols You materialised out of the river bed at Godavari. We also remember how you materialised so many eatables, sweets, piping hot sweets out of the sand near Godavari. Oh Swami! We also remember the boat ride you had when you visited Godavari

in the 1960's, Swami! So Godavari prays to Bhagavan: I want You to visit us once again. I have come to visit this place to request You to come again. As I come to this place, I find Puttaparthi has totally changed. When You visited us, Puttaparthi was different. When I have come to You to request You to visit us once again, Puttaparthi is altogether different, Swami. But I continue to be simple and humble. I won't forget Your love for me. And I have come to beg You to visit Godavari districts once again." It is a song beautifully written, highly meaningful and with so much depth.

That is all that happened yesterday, and I understand that today there is a drama also. Tomorrow I understand there is going to be distribution of instruments and implements to different people for their livelihood. So it is a three-day celebration, the Godavari festival! You are very fortunate to be here during this season of celebration to experience His Divine love.

Reading a book is different, talking is different, and imagination is indifferent. But to meet these people who are recipients of His love, to see these people, the innocent people, how they are benefited by Baba's munificent grace is a sight for the gods! I am sure you will enjoy this day and tomorrow.

"SAI- THE INDWELLER"

The second event which I want to mention to you this morning is this: we have about nine books covering our Sunday talks. Nine books in English! And the last, the latest, is *Sai - the Indweller*, released by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba just two days ago. This is a publication of our Sathya Sai Book Trust, *Sai - the Indweller*. This book could come to light because of the continuous efforts and dedicated service of a team of transcribers, editors and translators, headed by brother Lakhi, who is with us this morning. Because of their thorough understanding of the subject, because of the time they could spend, and because of the height of their devotion, this team's efforts have made this possible. I thank you, Lakhi, for all your efforts. Please convey our thanks to your team members. Please give them a big hand! (*Applause*)

Of these nine books, at least five sets are edited by Prof. Vaidyanathan from Trivandrum, in the state of Kerala. I thank Prof. Vaidyanathan and his team of youngsters, who helped him with the release of this book. Prof. Vaidyanathan is above 70 years I am sure, but the speed with which he has been doing the work, I am no match for him! Professor, I accept defeat at your hands because I am not able to keep pace with you. The other book is ready and another book is almost ready, but I am not yet ready! What to do?

Anyway this book *Sai - the Indweller* contains many important things I would like to draw your attention to. Baba granted me an opportunity to visit South America—the three countries of Mexico, Brazil and Argentina. Such sweet experiences indeed! Two of them are Spanish-speaking countries, Mexico and Argentina. Very few people speak English there. In Brazil, they speak Portuguese. But believe me, brothers and sisters, what is meant by the "language of the heart", not as a quotation of Baba, not as reference from His discourses, but the truth of the "language of the heart", I experienced in Brazil, Mexico and Argentina. (*Applause*) It is not the language of words; it is the language of the heart. Their faces started speaking to me, their smiles started speaking to me, and the movement of their eyebrows had umpteen numbers of expressions! Their bubbling joy—wow, what a wonderful experience! I have no words to thank Baba for this experience of a lifetime, visiting those three countries.

MEXICO

Mexico City, which is mentioned in this book *Sai - the Indweller*, is a city with culture, with history, the same as India. The Mexicans are very proud of their culture just as we Indians are; it is genuine pride. It is a very beautiful city indeed, with beautiful buildings on all sides, and there's a square at the centre of Mexico City, in the heart of the city, surrounded by all palatial buildings. At that centre, a few *lakh* people gather once every year to listen to the address by the President of the nation. It is such a beautiful place! Some of those experiences have been mentioned in this book.

I also had a boat to hire in Mexico. The boats you hire are so lovely; they are specially decorated, purely meant for honeymoon trips. (I don't come under that category because that has been over long ago!) But anyway, when we were going in such a boat, the other boats containing the honeymoon groups also joined us in singing the praises of Baba, with all the instruments playing *bhajans*--what a lovely sight! I could enjoy and experience the very presence of Baba there! That is also narrated here in this book.

BRAZIL

While coming to Brazil, the Mexican leader said, "Mr. Anil, you are singing and dancing too much here in Mexico. Better you keep quiet in Brazil because if they start singing and dancing there, you cannot stop them." I said, "Let us see."

What he said is hundred percent true! In Brazil, during the public meetings, towards the end when I started singing, there were some gestures-- unknowingly, unintentionally, unconsciously, involuntarily--and all the people got up and started dancing! (*Laughter*) Nobody could make them sit. Impossible! So then it turned into music-cum-dance session.

That place happened to be Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, a beautiful place indeed, and the orchestra they had! Rio de Janeiro has the statue of Jesus Christ on the mountain top, 40 feet high like our Lord Venkateshwara on the mountain top. Being a product of a Christian college, tears went rolling down my cheeks when I saw that wonderful statue of Jesus Christ with both his hands outstretched like Shirdi Bhagavan waiting for his devotees, or like Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba waiting for his devotees: Jesus the embodiment of love, Jesus the redeemer, Jesus the saviour, Jesus the only son of God waiting by the sea, waiting to receive. We were very happy to be in Rio de Janeiro. The city located at the centre, surrounded by sea all around and all those things have been mentioned here in the book *Sai- the Indweller*.

Oh! She is from Brazil (*referring to a lady in the audience*). When she found out that I am very fond of Jesus Christ, she presented me with a cross with Jesus, and it adorns my residence! They are all like her, just love. They don't have to speak; their faces speak. That is all. When we speak, we speak without any sense; but the heart communicates.

ARGENTINA

From Rio I went to Argentina, another beautiful country indeed: Buenos Aires. Those experiences also are mentioned here in this book, *Sai - the Indweller*. That is a Spanish-speaking country once again. Somehow I took the help of a friend and had my speech written in Spanish language, Roman script. Then I wrote all the Spanish words in Telugu, so that I could read it out to make them happy. I was a little bit successful, though not one hundred percent! But one word that was in my mind: people everywhere say, "Thanks, thanks." *Gracias!* People

greeting and enquiring about everyone: “*Hola Hola! Comastas.*” That really thrilled and excited me.

Finally, there was my visit to the waterfall close to Buenos Aires; my passport also had a lovely bath in the waterfalls! When that happened, I had a terrific heart-beat and my blood pressure also shot up because, when something happens to the passport, we cannot return! From the temple I would have to go to the jail there in Buenos Aires! (*Laughter*) The passport was totally wet. I didn’t know that I was carrying it in my pocket. The boat took us at a terrific speed under the waterfall. I enjoyed it. Later I noticed that the passport also had a pass. I was sweating awfully. It was at that time my friend said, “Don’t worry.” He put my passport right under a hair dryer. It looks something like the *papads* we fry: the pages are swollen, but the letters are still there. That let me come back safely. All these experiences are also mentioned in this book.

ULTIMATE QUALITY OF EDUCATION SYSTEM

I also visited a number of schools. My friends, it is no exaggeration if I tell you once again that the Sathya Sai Education system in Argentina is going on at the fastest rate and in the greatest magnitude. They have Sathya Sai Education from nursery to PhD levels! Nowhere else in the world does such a situation exist! In Argentina, they have a governing body comprised of engineers, doctors, administrators, politicians, and statesmen. They have evolved a system: how to introduce Sathya Sai Education in Sai schools and how to introduce Sathya Sai Education in government schools; how to train teachers for Sai schools; how to train teachers for government schools; how to train parents. This system I have not seen anywhere else!

Without any reservation, (let me be honest to this assembly because I don’t like any dishonesty) I attended their board meeting in Buenos Aires: Sathya Sai Education. It started in the morning around 9 a.m. and went on till 4 p.m., non-stop! They put forward a number of questions and a lot of discussion went on. But I tell you one sample question, which would make the voice fumble and legs tremble. They put a straight question: “Take for example, one human value: Peace. How do you explain Peace at the high school level? Or at the college level and at the university level? What work would one do for a doctorate, a PhD, in this single human value of Peace?”

“Would you make a presentation Mr. Anil Kumar, please? High school level, college level, university level, PhD level on Peace . . . would you do that?”

I was torn to pieces. (*Laughter*) Somehow I said, “Please give me some time.” I might not be able to reach out at all levels; but at one level, I will be able to do justice. Shamelessly, I tell you that sort of research work on Sai Education and Human Values is not yet done even here in Prashanthi Nilayam as it is done in Argentina, that great country. (*Applause*) We have to learn from them; I told them that openly.

We have learnt English this way: A is for apple, B is for biscuit, and so on. But now it is revised: A is for Argentina, B is for Baba! Be for Baba! Such lovely things I witnessed there! All those things are written in this book so that people can read and enjoy them. At every place I had a volley of questions, which I could answer quoting from Sathya Sai literature. Those questions and answers are also here in the book.

Now I request, on behalf of all the transcribers, editors, translators, and the rest of the team working on this project of the publication of volumes, covering our Sunday talks, brother Lakhi to receive this copy of the book, *Sai - the Indweller*. Brother Lakhi! (*Applause*)

WE ARE ALL ESSENTIALLY DIVINE

Anyway, these are the two events which I wanted to bring to your attention this pleasant morning, after having witnessed a wonderful programme yesterday. Now we are all set for another day and another programme this evening. But let us leave with some food for thought; I just want to mention a few points for a couple of minutes just now. (Don't worry. I am conscious of the time.) Most often when I start speaking about Baba, I forget the limitations of time due to my weakness, my love for His literature, and due to my long association with His mission. But I shall not do that; I'll be careful to watch the time because of this evening's programme.

One point which I want to make very clear, my friends: all of us, every one of us, are essentially Divine. No matter what weakness we may have, no matter what pitfalls, mistakes, sins or whatever you might call it, everyone is essentially Divine.

Well, it might seem rather funny! How can I be Divine when I have so many weaknesses?

My friends, the answer is very simple. You may claim to be virtuous, you may claim to be noble, you may claim to have so much intensity of *sadhana* or spiritual practise, so you may feel superior. Or, you may feel that you are nobody because you are doing nothing, or that you are distracted by sensual pleasures or by love for food or other things, such as taking extra sleep. Thus we feel we are inferior.

However, both these views are wrong. The one who feels superior because of *sadhana* is absolutely wrong. One who feels he is inferior because of love for food, sleep, or position is equally wrong. Why? This way or that way, it is the mind or ego that feels superior or inferior. So, it is only the ego that makes us feel superior or inferior. But the individual soul, the individual consciousness, has nothing to do with the mind and nothing to do with ego. It is beyond all that.

CONSCIOUSNESS, LIKE THE SUN, REMAINS UNAFFECTED

A simple example: the sun is shining brilliantly but some clouds appear in between. I cannot say, "Oh Sun, you are finished because of these clouds! You cannot shine. You have this weakness of being hidden behind the clouds."

What would the sun say? "Wait and see." Why? Because when the clouds pass by, the sun will once again shine brilliantly. Clouds cannot affect the sun. No! The clouds come and go. They are only passing clouds, as Baba says.

Now that the clouds have cleared, there are no clouds at all and the sky is clear. The sun is shining in the hot summer. If I say, "Oh Sun, you are shining brilliantly," he will say, "It is my nature."

If I tell honey, "Oh honey, you are so sweet," it will tell me, "Have you only come to know this today?"

If I say, "Oh rose, you are so beautiful," the rose will say, "Were you blind till now?"

Similarly, it is neither a tribute nor praise to the sun if you say, “You are shining brilliantly,” because it is his nature. And when some clouds appear, you cannot blame the sun either saying, “You are finished!” He will say, “Just wait.”

Consciousness is like the sun; awareness is like the sun; the individual soul is like the sun, unaffected by the clouds of virtues or weaknesses. A virtue is a cloud, while weakness is also a cloud. But the sun remains the sun.

Another example: it is a moonlit night, a full moon night, and the moon is reflected in the waters. There is some flowing water where the reflection of the moon is shaking. There is some still water in a tank where the reflection of the moon is very clear. There is some water, which is full of moss, where the moon is not reflected properly, in the gutter of polluted water. Now the still water where the reflection of the moon is clear, cannot say, “Oh Moon, you are so great!” The flowing river where the reflection is also shaking, cannot say, “Oh Moon, are you shaking? Stop the shake dance. Be steady.” It cannot say that. The gutter water, the polluted water, the water covered by moss cannot say, “Oh Moon, you are not reflected here, so what kind of a moon are you?” The moon will simply laugh. Whether you are steady water, or water full of moss, or running water, I am what I am. That is consciousness.

So, my friends, as religious seekers, as spiritual aspirants, let us not be worried about weaknesses. Let us not bother about pitfalls. Let us not feel inferior even in the wildest state of our dreams. Let us not claim superiority by any standard, and let us not brag about our *sadhana*. No! Moon will remain the moon, no matter what the circumstances.

PURPOSE OF SADHANA

Then the question arises, “Why *sadhana*? Why purity? Why *japa* (repetition of God’s Name) then? Why *puja* worship? If they are only clouds, why should I do that?” That would be a natural question.

The answer is simple: When clouds clear, you can see the moon clearly. You are not doing anything for the moon. Can you say, “Oh Moon, I am helping you by clearing the clouds?” Are you helping the moon? No! To have a correct view of the moon, clouds should be cleared; that is all. You are not donating anything to the moon. You are not doing any sacrifice to the moon. No, no, no! You are not doing any favour to the moon. If you want to see the moon clearly, the clouds should clear.

Similarly, our worship, our meditation, our penance, the repetition of God’s Name—these are all ways of clearing the clouds (of the mind) to see the moon (pure mind) exactly as it is—as consciousness or the eternal witness. Consciousness, the eternal witness, can really be experienced when all these clouds clear out. So that is the purpose of *sadhana*, *namasmarana*, and meditation. These are only means to an end, but not an end in themselves.

It is something like a boat: you get into a boat to travel from this shore to another shore, not to continue to live on a boat. You don’t continue to live on a boat, do you? No! You just cross, that is all. *Sadhana* will help you to cross from this shore to the other shore. It is only a vehicle. It is only a means of transport; it is not an end in itself. Once I reach the other shore, I cannot keep describing the boat because there I have some other things to do. Before I get onto the boat, I also cannot keep describing it because I have got some other job to do. Before getting into the boat, I cannot dream of a boat or speak highly of a boat, because it is already there.

Therefore, my friends, *sadhana* should not be a matter of advertisement, or a matter of pride or publicity. It should not lead us to develop a complex, nor should it make us feel like we are a special species or tribes--like hill tribes, "*sadhana* tribes"! It is not so, my friends. We are only helping ourselves to experience consciousness, the supreme Self, in all its grandeur, in all its splendence, in all its beauty, in all its radiant grandeur. We are doing *sadhana*, but not contributing anything.

Therefore, to feel God within, which is consciousness, is the purpose of *sadhana*. But unfortunately, we are all outward: we want to see, we want to hear, we want to touch, we want to taste and so on. But all these senses are outward, while spirituality is inward. I cannot fly on the surface of the sea; a ship cannot fly, an aircraft cannot move on the surface of water. We are doing the same thing: spirituality is an inward journey, but we are going along an outer, external journey. Therefore, we are unhappy and discontented.

So, we should get out of this discontentment by knowing the correct route in spirituality, which is inward. That inward journey requires the clearing of the (mental, emotional) clouds, which is done by practising *sadhana* or meditation, in order to see the moon or sun (pure mind or consciousness) which is already there: *Koti Surya Samaprabha*. It is already there in you. Divine consciousness is within already. May Bhagavan help every one of us in this pursuit, in this process of travelling within eternally.

To my utter surprise, I heard a young man saying, "I crossed that stage."

I know that boy. So I asked, "What do you mean, you crossed that stage?"

He said, "Sir, I crossed the *namasmarana* stage."

"Oho! But you have a name, right? So how can you cross? You have a name or *nama*, so how can you say you have crossed that stage? Until you lose your identity, until you lose your name and form, you cannot say, 'I have crossed.' It means nothing."

Therefore, my friends, let Bhagavan help us in this intensification of *sadhana*. Years and years are passing by, days are simply rolling along. We cannot be kept quiet any longer; we cannot be glorified. We cannot be attracted or enchanted any longer by these external objects, by these simple external experiences. The real gold mine is inside. When that 'I' and 'mine' are gone, the gold mine (mind) of Divinity is ever within us, ever within everyone! (*Applause*)

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 Shantih

Jai Bolo Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Babaji ki Jai!
Jai Bolo Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Babaji ki Jai!
Jai Bolo Bhagavan Shi Sathya Sai Babaji ki Jai!

Thank you. God bless you.

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