

*The Sunday Talk Given at Prashanti Nilayam
by Prof. Anil Kumar*

“Sai Silence”

January 18, 2009

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

Sai Ram

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

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This morning’s topic is: “What is it?” We generally ask, “What is the cause for my agony? What is the cause for my anguish? What is the cause of my misery? What is the cause of my family problems? What is the cause for this sense of fear or worry? Why? What is the cause?” So, let us explore and investigate the answers to these questions—the cause for family problems, the reason for fear, anxiety, misery, hatred, and anger, and also how to get rid of these.

Also, what is the role of a *guru* here? How does he help me to know the main cause? And what should I do to get rid of this fear, anxiety, worry and problems? Unless I know the cause, how can I work to be rid of it? How do I know the formulae to be free of these problems? That is the topic for this morning.

My friends, we shall answer these questions one after another, and delve deeply into this subject. I am particularly grateful for this group as it is helping us to go deeper and deeper into the subject, rather than just being satisfied with superficial points that we already know. This is really a true *satsang*, where you and I join together, going deeply into such problems and understanding the cause and remedy as well.

DIVINE LOVE

Most of you, most of us—in fact all of us with no exception—love ourselves. I love myself more than anybody. So do you. I don’t think we love anyone more than our own selves! But why do I love myself? I do not know. What is the reason? I do not know. I love myself, that’s all. But when I love you, there is some reason.

I love you because I want a favour from you. I love you for your company, or because I am feeling lonely or isolated, or neglected, or frustrated and I need somebody. So I love you for the company you give me, I love you for the help you give me. So to love somebody else, you need a cause, you have a reason; but to love your own self there is no reason. So the only thing to do, my friends, is to love everybody as I love myself. That is called Divine love. That is vast, expansive love, infinite love. So that is the kind of love we have to cultivate by and by.

What is the reason I don't love everybody as much as I love myself? As Jesus said, "Love thy neighbour as thyself!" So why don't I love my neighbour as myself? There must be something wrong with me, and I should work to be free from that defect. Love is there, but it is focussed, it is self-centred, it is not all-encompassing. It is not limitless; it is limited. What is the defect? I should try to overcome it.

The mistake lies with my *buddhi* or intellect. *Buddhi* is self-centred; it is not expansive. It has not yet reached infinity; it has not yet recognised that vastness, that which is limitless, that which is without boundaries. This is the first point I would like to share with you this pleasant morning.

SUCCESS AND FAILURE

The second point is this. When anything good happens in life, when anything leads to success, we run and grab the credit for ourselves.

"Why did I get a gold medal? Don't you know how hard I studied? How hard I worked!"

"Do you know why I am successful in business? Understand my honesty, my sincerity, my planning, my ability, my capacity, *my, my . . .*"

So I am ready to grab all my successes, and ready to own all my achievements. I stand as the champion for all my attainments. OK, so that's understandable. But when anything negative happens, when anything leads to failure or if anything is a total flop, what do I do? I don't take responsibility.

"My friend did it."

"My gang of opponents did it."

"God Himself is responsible for it. God is negligent, God is indifferent, God is merciless—He seems to have forgotten the sense of justice! He seems to be enjoying the weekend. He seems to be out on a holiday. That is why I am a failure!"

So it is very interesting, and it happens in everyone's life: success is mine, while failure is yours. This is a universal feeling or sentiment, without an exception.

Why do I call a thing a failure? What is failure? We just need to understand this: failure is that which I do not like. When I don't like something that happens, I say it is a failure. When I like the way it happens, it is a success. When all the people of Pakistan are killed, it is success to an Indian. When all Indians are killed, it is success to the people of Pakistan. So you would like *those* people to die, while *your* people survive. I like my neighbour to fail successfully in the examination, while I want that only I should pass. No others should pass . . . no. If they also pass, who will congratulate me? Let maximum number of fellows fail so that I may be singled out to receive all certifications!

Therefore my friends, let us understand that failure is nothing but that which you do not like; whereas success is nothing but that which you like.

LIKES AND DISLIKES ARE RELATIVE

Once you analyse and go deeper into psychology, you may find that what you like today you may not like later. In the past, I liked movies. As a student in my youth, I liked to go to cinemas and watch the heroes and heroines. I would imagine myself as a hero (*Laughter*) who liked to go running in the rain. But that actor fellow would never catch a cold; whereas I *can* catch a cold, even influenza, if I start running in the rain. In the movies the hero goes on teasing the heroine successfully; but if I tease anybody, I'll be arrested. (*Laughter*) However, it made me happy to watch films and imagine myself as a promising, prospective hero!

Today it is a matter of shame to think of all the things I liked in those days. All of us cannot talk open heartedly about the things we liked in the past. We are not proud of the things we were fond of in those days. We want to forget them, and amuse ourselves now and then by recalling, seeing our sons repeating the same mistakes. (*Laughter*)

So my friends, our likes and dislikes do not remain the same. At the age of twenty-five, I did not like going to temple. I would go to church or temple only to please my father and mother. But I liked going to the casino! Today going to the temple is paradise. The temple is a place of solace to me, church is comforting, rewarding and promising. So today I like going to the temple, but in the past I didn't.

Now tell me, my friends, what is success and what is failure now? A success at one time is a failure later. A failure at one time is a success later. So success and failure are not absolute; they are only relative, only comparative. They depend upon our state of mind, the norms of the society, or the prevailing conditions.

Similarly, in earlier days I felt like running after Swami's car—I used to run and run! But today I can't run due to the age factor. I was so romantic then . . . but so rheumatic now that I cannot run! (*Laughter*) I used to think running was *sadhana* in those days. Today I find that running is meaningless. I used to run in the street in those days, but today I run within myself. I should run to reach Him within. I used to run to reach Him without. I would run behind His car and if Swami looked at me through the glass, I would think, "He is only looking at me!" (*Laughter*) So when I saw Him outside, I had a claim, an achievement—it was ego-fulfilling. But when I see Him within, to whom should I say I have seen Him within? When you experience Him within, who would you tell? So my standards now are different from my standards then.

In those days, I used to count the number of trips to Prashanti Nilayam, the years of my acquaintance with Swami and the intensity of closeness with Him. If anyone were to say, "This is my first visit," my immediate response was, "This is my hundredth visit!" If anyone were to say that he received *vibhuti*, my immediate response was, "I received *vibhuti* an infinite number of times." So my calculations in those days were different, and today my parameters are different.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

Years have gone by; day after day rolls by, year after year is passing by. Oh Lord, what have I achieved? What have I attained? What have I experienced? What have I given up? What have I acquired? Am I a better human being now? Am I a better devotee now? Am I close to You, my Lord, within You, feeling You within me? Oh Lord, do I have a place in Your heart? Oh Lord, do I see You in my heart? These are the questions today. So my friends, the failure and success, the achievement and attainment at one time are not necessarily the same later. This has to be clearly understood because things go on changing as time passes.

FAMILY

The third point is this. We say that we are tired of our families. Many people say, "Same family, same life . . . get up in the morning, go to bed at night . . . same routine . . . it is really terrible, really horrible." But this is an ungrateful statement. If I tell my family that I am vexed with them, that family life is terrible and horrible, what would be their reaction?

The housewife will immediately say, "You have been eating breakfast, tea, lunch and dinner for 45 years, and now you say your family is not good?! It is horrible to say that. You have been enjoying your children; you have brought them up, you feel proud of them and now you say, 'I am tired of my family!' It is an ungrateful statement, a thankless statement, ridiculous and hypocritical."

So what is family, my friends? Is 'family' just wife and children? No. Many people have families. People speak of the seven *rishis*—*saptha rishis*—or seven saints. They are all in the form of stars,

super stars. All of them are married; all of them have families. No *rishi* said, “I am bored with my family.” No *rishi* said, “I am vexed with my family.” So now we have to define ‘family’. What is family or *samsara*?

According to Ramana Maharshi, our favourite sage, *samsara* or family is nothing but being caught up in the cycle of birth and death. So, to be caught in the cycle of birth and death is *samsara*—it has nothing to do with wife and children. I may be a bachelor, I may be a celibate, I may be unmarried, yet if I am caught in the cycle of birth and death, then I am a *samsari*. As long as we are in this cycle, we are a *samsari*, whether householder or *brahmachari*.

So it is our duty to get out of this cycle of birth and death; then we become true *brahmacharis* or celibates. *Brahmachari* means *chari*, ‘that is the one who moves in Brahma, the Reality’. The one who moves along the path of Brahma is *brahmachari*. Getting married or not getting married has nothing to do with spirituality, nothing to do with religion. This kind of bondage to the cycle of birth and death is *samsara*. Wife and children are not the bondage of family life: this has got to be understood clearly.

FROM ELOQUENCE TO SILENCE

Nowadays we find that Bhagavan is not talking as He used to. He is not talking to anybody—you must have noticed. At least for the last six or seven years, His interaction with people is less and less. He openly said, “Some people feel that I am not talking to them.” That is what He said in a discourse, “Why do you feel that I am not talking to you? I am not talking to anybody.” So we need not feel jealous of those with whom He talked. “I am not talking to anybody, so why do you feel that I am not talking to you?” If He talks today, it is one hundred percent purposeful, need-oriented, administrative-oriented, focussed, that’s all. Or else He doesn’t talk.

‘How am I to understand the Lord’s silence today? Oh Bhagavan, I enjoyed your eloquence then, I pray to You to make me fit enough to enjoy Your silence also.’

Baba’s eloquence is as powerful as Baba’s silence. Baba’s eloquence was periodical . . . now and then. His eloquence was a message conveyed; but His silence has greater depth. The silence is more profound. His eloquence is time-bound; His silence is beyond time. His eloquence is repetitive, whether in the Sai Kulwant Hall or the college auditorium—but His silence is beyond space, His silence is beyond time. His silence is eternal, continuous. Eloquence is not continuous and eternal.

Therefore my friends, Baba’s message to all of us is to travel from eloquence to silence. Eloquence is sound, while silence is soundless. Eloquence is full of words, whereas silence is wordless. Eloquence is articulation, while silence is depth, profundity. Eloquence is thought-provoking, whereas silence is Self-oriented. Eloquence is informative, but silence transformational.

Brothers and sisters, these are my thoughts as I reflect on Baba’s silence today. If we do not understand Baba’s silence in this context, in the correct direction, we lose our spirits. If we go on depending on outer words, outer gestures, outer talk, and outer proximity continuously, we end up with frustration. We will be depressed, we will be disappointed. That should never happen. God forbid my friends, it should never happen. The worst thing that could happen is disappointment because of His silence, or hopelessness because of His silence. That should never happen, God forbid.

Silence is a better communication than eloquence. Silence is communion, while eloquence is communication. Eloquence is verbal, while silence is the rhythm and tune in our heart. So silence is elevating. Eloquence leads to silence.

Simple example: we recall those days of talking to Swami. Today we recall them in silence. We recapitulate—we bring them back to memory, we relive those days in silence, which is everlasting and permanent . . . an invaluable impression on the sands of our memory. Such an impression will

take you away from depression! Therefore Baba's eloquence should leave an impression on us, leading us to enjoy His silence. Therefore my friends, our journey today is to a point of silence with Bhagavan.

SILENCE OF BHAGAVAN

Swami is not talking today as much as He used to. Suppose I am in charge of an activity, Swami may come to me and you may feel, "Anil Kumar is lucky, Swami has spoken to him." But what did He say? "You have spoiled the program." (*Laughter*) What did He say? "It is My mistake to have kept you in charge of this." (*Laughter*) Because His talk is administrative-oriented, organisational—it has nothing to do with the elevation of your soul or your spirit. The elevation of your soul, the feeling of awakening, the identity with the inner consciousness, will happen in silence. So now what do you prefer, administrative communication or spiritual elevation? Is it administrative, instructional, verbal talk—or elevating, transformational, inspiring, spiritual, inner voice or silence?

I was so happy when Bhagavan was speaking about the inner voice in His latest discourse. Kindly recall what He said about the inner voice. Perhaps He wants us to listen to Him, the inner voice, but we are not aware of any inner voice at all because we are engrossed in outer noise.

The TV sets are never switched off. Radios, transistors and recorders are busy twenty-four hours each day. These things are brought forward even in our dreams. In a TV program, we see how a heroine is harassed by the hero, and the same thing is repeated in a dream. Or we find two people fighting, making such a noise, and people shouting on TV. The same thing is brought forward in a dream: noise.

Where is the silence? What is silence? It is something very strange to us. Silence is foreign, alien, new, mysterious, unknown, and peculiar. It is not experienced. We have not known silence. So if I have not known silence, how do you expect me to learn the meaning of Baba's silence? I am not silent. When I am not silent, how can I learn from His silence?

Therefore, the time has come for us to qualify. To get admission to a postgraduate university, I should first qualify with an undergraduate degree with high scores, so I'll be eligible to get into this university. Therefore, to enjoy Swami's silence let me be silent first. To receive His message as He is silent, let me listen to His voice inside. This is the correct direction, the correct way of introspection, the correct conclusion that we arrive at, as we make our self-assessment today.

In fact, somebody said this about Ramana Maharshi: Ramana Maharshi's communication, his communion, was always in silence. His message was conveyed in silence; his Truth was experienced in silence.

Mouna Vyakshya Prakatita Brahman.

Mouna means 'silence', *Vyaksha* is 'interpretation', *Prakatita* is 'expression', *Brahman* is 'the Reality'. Brahman, the Reality, is 'expressed' in a state of silence. Therefore, Bhagavan wants us to experience a spiritual transformation, a spiritual evolution. He wants us to enjoy spiritual progress by listening to His silence today.

Why can't we smile, watching Him silent? "I don't smile unless He looks at me; I only smile if He talks to me." Gone are those days, my friends! Brothers and sisters, it is all *maya* or illusion, all the outer is *maya*. Let us enjoy the Reality in the depths of silence. That is what someone speaking about Ramana Maharshi said.

Mouna or silence is gold. Silence is gold, while expressing in words is silver. (Thank God they didn't say copper or bronze!) (*Laughter*) Good, at least there is some value in silver. So silence is golden. So, do you want gold or silver? Naturally you will go for gold, which is more valuable. Don't you think

so? If you don't, check with your wife! (*Laughter*). She will tell you, "You fool, don't you know that much!" She will see to it that you get it all! So my friends, the silence of Bhagavan is golden, which is most precious for everybody.

ONLY ONE ANSWER

Today what should be our aim, my friends? We have been struggling very hard till now for recognition. I really pity those who have crossed seventy years, still craving for recognition. I really feel very sad for those who are nearing eighty years, fighting for first row seat in the *darshan* line! I cannot forget a situation yesterday evening: I saw two elderly people, over eighty years, fighting for a seat in the front row. One gentleman usually sits there, but yesterday evening it happened that another elderly person with a bandage, who had an eye operation, sat there, finding it vacant. The regular, permanent occupant was pushing and shoving him. Both are above eighty; both have seniority, staying here for thirty to forty years. What should I tell them? What message do they convey to others? My friends, this is all *maya*. *Maya* is nothing but an outer interaction; *maya* is nothing but outer vanity.

The day when we come out of that *maya* we are realised. Till then we will be restless; till then we will be worried; till then we will be oscillating, vacillating, receiving flashes and lashes, bumps and jumps from nature, which are unavoidable and inescapable.

What is all this due to? My friends, usually there is one answer to one question . . . as a teacher I can say that. A fellow cannot write two answers for one question and leave it to the examiner to choose the right answer. When I say choose one of the two questions, the student cannot say, "I have written two answers . . . choose the best one." (*Laughter*) Can you say that? Long back when I was new as a lecturer, (I was better looking in those days) (*Laughter*) I gave an exam question asking the boys to write down the cross-section of a stem. One fellow wrote two answers, root this side, stem that side in a tabular column. The question was on the stem.

I called that fellow and said, "Why have you written about the root when I asked you to write about the stem?"

"Sir, in the question paper, you said 'either, or'. So either, or, what does it matter? Give me marks for it." (*Laughter*)

Then I asked with love, "I can understand, I can certainly give you more marks than you deserve, but let me know why you did it."

He said "Sir, since I don't remember the stem apart from the root, (*Laughter*) unless I write points about the root also, I cannot recall points about the stem. Therefore I have written both for you to choose one." (*Laughter*)

Another fellow (this is not a joke--it really happened, but it has become a joke when we think of that incident) brought a paper to copy in the examination hall. Naturally I went there and saw it—it was a slip concerning botany. But that day's examination was about zoology! (*Laughter*)

I said, "Today it is zoology examination, so why do you copy the botany slip?"

He said, "Since you have questions as you thought, I am writing answers as I brought." (*Laughter*) I write answers as I brought and you gave questions as you thought, so tit for tat. (*Laughter*)

"Good, my boy, you are quite smart!" (*Laughter*)

So similarly my friends, surprisingly enough, shockingly, unbelievably, mysteriously and unexpectedly enough, in spirituality there is only one answer for several questions. But in the world, each question

has its own answer. Five questions have five answers. You cannot say, "For five questions, I have written one answer, so give me 60% score." You cannot say that.

IGNORANCE

Now my friends, what is the point here? What do I want to convey? All our miseries, all our aggravations, all our problems, all the sadness that starts in our family life, the jolts that I receive in my profession, failures which I don't want to think of, successes I feel proud of . . . all these pose different questions; but the answer to all of them is in one word—ignorance. Ignorance is the answer for all these questions. Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi was the best teacher who gave us not one-sentence answers, but one-word answers. So our ignorance is the cause for all the success and failures. So what is ignorance, tell me? Do I look ignorant? I don't know because I am quite happy with my ignorance . . . very happy and comfortable with ignorance.

What is ignorance? Ignorance is to mistake that which is not true as real. To think that my shadow is a reality is ignorance. My shadow is not me; I and my shadow are different. As I am walking, my shadow may fall on some stones, or some gutters or slum areas. Am I angry? You are not in the gutter, thank God, so be happy. Or when my shadow falls on stones, do I feel the pain? No. Looking at your shadow as reality is the very definition of ignorance. Ignorance is considering something to be true when it is not at all true . . . in fact, it is false. Therefore this ignorance, my friends, is the cause that is responsible for all our misery.

My grandfather used to tell me of his experiences in younger days. Those who speak of the past, including myself, you can take it from me, reveal the advancement of their age. Speaking of the past is the first sign of old age. So my grandfather used to speak of his experiences. He went to a drama about Harishchandra, where Harishchandra the king was put to so many difficulties by one fellow called Nakshathraka. Nakshathraka put Harishchandra, the king, through many miseries. There was one angry man in the audience who, after half an hour, could not control his emotions. He ran to the stage and started beating Nakshathraka. (*Laughter*) That actor-fellow, with folded hands, said, "Sir, this is a drama. We are friends. Why do you beat me like this?" (*Laughter*)

The same thing is happening in our life. Baba has made a beautiful statement many times. We can think of that again and again, everyday. What is that statement? "This is a daydream, and that is a night dream. Both are dreaming." When I cry here, it is a dream; when I cry there (in my dream), it is equally a dream.

Suppose you see me crying. You might ask me, "Anil Kumar, why are you crying?"

"I lost one *crore*."

"One *crore*? Where is that one *crore*?"

"In my dream. In my dream, I was a millionaire; but I lost it all, so that's why I am crying now."

What would you say? "Enough is enough, please come back to your senses before it's too late!" (*Laughter*)

IGNORANCE HAS TO GO

So similarly my friends, when you wake up from a dream, do you cry for the loss of your property, your belongings, or your people who were in a dream? No. Similarly, we should not cry for the loss of articles, or people, or belongings of the daydream. Both are dreams.

So to take it as real is ignorance. The false is taken as truth; the false is considered to be true. This kind of false identification is ignorance. So my friends, the quintessence, the essence, the summary or one-word answer to the all the questions about our various miseries, all the happenings, all the

shocks and bumps that we feel in life, the brickbats and bouquets we receive—the main cause is ignorance.

So ignorance has to go. “Where is that ignorance? Oh, let me kill that ignorance! Where is it? I’ve got a strong poison. I’ll use this poison on ignorance so that it will die immediately! What time can I meet ignorance? Mr. Ignorance, where is he? Is he on Samadhi Road? Or is he available in a shop or a lodge? Please give me his lodge address, so I will go there and finish him off.”

My friends, that ignorance is *in* me; that ignorance is *within* me. Why do I not see the ignorance within me? All that exists outside I know; but that which is inside I do not know. It is *maya*, it is illusion--meaning you see that which is not, and do not see that which is.

The reality is inside, but I don’t see it. I see all this falsity outside. This is *maya*. Therefore, ignorance is within me. It has to come out from within me. When there is ignorance inside here, I cannot search for ignorance outside. When I have a headache, I can’t apply ointment to my joints. So similarly, when ignorance is within me, I should make an attempt to get it out of myself. That is done in a state of silence.

Silence helps us get out of *maya*, get out of the clouds of darkness. To emerge from the thickness of the darkness of ignorance, silence is the light. Silence is the light that dispels the darkness of ignorance. That is the message of the silence of Sai as you observe today.

Thank you very much for being with us this morning. May Bhagavan bless all of you. Thank you very much for being here.

Sai Ram. (*Applause*)

OM...OM...OM

Asato Maa Sad Gamaya

Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya

Mrtyormaa Amrtam Gamaya

Om Samastha Loka Sukhino Bhavantu

Samastha Loka Sukhino Bhavantu

Samastha Loka Sukhino Bhavantu

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

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