

**PROF. ANIL KUMAR'S SAI PEARLS OF WISDOM SATSANG:
BABA'S CONVERSATIONS WITH STUDENTS**

**"Sai Pearls of Wisdom"
Part Thirteen**

February 7th, 2003

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**Sai Ram!
With Pranams to Swami,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

MAY 2001

My friends, let me tell you that we have now completed the talks for 2002 and have begun the talks held during 2001. Today we will take up Bhagavan's conversations with students, held on the veranda at Prashanti Nilayam in the month of May 2001. I thank you for the keen interest that you have shown in hearing what Swami has said, and I appreciate the spiritual service you have done in sharing this with others.

"If You Follow My Command, You Will Be Free From All Troubles"

Bhagavan made a comment that is of immense value to all of us. He said the following: "If you act according to My words, if you follow My command, you will be free from all troubles. You will be free from all problems."

And the second statement was: "God is like a magnet and with that magnetic attraction He draws everyone towards Him. Nothing is wrong with the magnet. The magnet is perfect and attracts everyone."

Well, let me explain Bhagavan's two statements. In the *Ramayana*, there is a very important character by the name of Hanuman. Hanuman scrupulously followed Lord Rama's command and therefore attained the state where he is entitled to receive adoration and worship from everybody.

Following the command of God will make you eligible to receive worship from the community. Society will look to you as an ideal and as a role model. Incidentally, I can also tell you, in the *Mahabharata*, the Pandavas followed Krishna strictly and therefore were rewarded. They were victorious in the end and highly acclaimed by everybody to this day.

If You Follow the Footsteps of God, You Will Reach Him

Here I want to share with you a simple anecdote mentioned by Bhagavan in His discourse. You must have heard about Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna, as a child, was always in the habit of stealing curd and milk from the neighbours. Those who have some idea about the *Maha Bhagavatha* will understand this. It is not really a question of stealing. This action has an inner significance. But the story is that Lord Krishna went to neighbouring houses, drank milk and ate butter without anyone noticing.

In this case, butter is the human heart, milk is devotion and the pot is the human body. The act of stealing is God capturing the human heart in secret, without your knowledge. That is the inner significance.

One day Krishna started drinking milk. How did He drink the milk? He kept His feet on the rim of the lower pot and started drinking the milk from the upper pot. He tilted the upper pot upside down, and started drinking by keeping both the feet on the rim of the lower pot containing milk.

Mother Yashoda went to look for Krishna and finally found Him. Krishna immediately jumped up and started running. Mother Yashoda could not find Him anywhere. Ultimately she found the imprint of the footsteps Krishna left behind, because they were drenched in milk. (*Laughter*) So, based on those footsteps full of milk, Mother Yashoda could finally trace Him.

This episode from *Maha Bhagavatha* shows us that if you follow the footsteps of God, you will reach Him. By following the footsteps of Krishna or God, His mother, the devotee, could catch Him. Similarly, we, the devotees, should follow His footsteps to reach Him. That is the anecdote mentioned by Bhagavan.

God is the Magnet

Here is also another thing. Some of us may feel that we are not drawn by Baba or that Baba has not drawn us close to Him. We may feel that way, but we are wrong. Why? God is the magnet. We are the iron pieces. There is nothing wrong with the magnet. But the iron piece that is full of dust and rust will not be drawn to the magnet. So the mistake lies with the iron and not with the magnet. Hence, the iron must be pure and clean in order to be attracted by the magnet.

So, God is the magnet and the devotee is the iron that should be free of the dust of attachment and the rust of ego. In the absence of these two, the magnet automatically attracts the iron. That's what Bhagavan said.

There are no Obstacles on the Spiritual Path

Watching the situation, and the mood of Bhagavan being quite welcoming, I dared to ask a question.

“Bhagavan, why do we find obstacles on the spiritual path? Why are there obstacles or problems along the way in our spiritual life? Why, Bhagavan?”

And Swami gave a straight answer.

“There are no obstacles on the spiritual path at all. It is your weakness and lack of faith that is responsible for all the obstacles. Actually, the spiritual path is straight, without any obstacles.”

Bhagavan said there are two reasons for the obstacles along the spiritual path. What are they? The first one is lack of faith. The second is the consequences or the reactions of the previous life. These are the factors that will not allow us to walk along the spiritual path without problems.

“Where There Is Strong Faith, You Will Be Able to Face Any Problems”

And then Bhagavan said a very important point for all of us: We think we are on the spiritual path; but strictly speaking, we are not. Why? Because our goal is worldly - our goal is mundane and physical.

Here’s a simple example: I want to pass the examination. I go to the temple, break a coconut, and make some offering to God. Is it devotion? No! My going to the temple is only in order to pass in the examination. The goal is worldly. The purpose is worldly gain, selfishness; but it cannot be called devotion in the true sense.

So Baba made this statement: “Anything that you do out of selfishness and self-interest is not at all spiritual.”

Therefore, the spiritual path requires unconditional love for God, without any worldly gain or any worldly objective. Now, you find two classes of people in mythology. One is the *devas* or the angels. The second is the *rakshasas* or the demons. The *devas* or angels had devotion that was totally spiritual and selfless, so they were worshipped. However, the demons, who also did penance for years and years and followed every spiritual path, are condemned because their motives were worldly. Their motive was born out of selfishness. They were totally egoistic, and therefore Bhagavan says, “Your devotion should be selfless.”

Further Swami added another statement, which is quite encouraging to all of us: “If you have strong faith and if you strengthen your faith - make it stronger and stronger - you will be able to overcome any number of obstacles on the way.”

This is true with all of us. I don't think that we are here in a most comfortable way. I don't think so. We are able to overcome all our problems and face all the obstacles because of our own strong faith in God. So, where there is strong faith, you will never fear. You will be able to face any problems. That's what Bhagavan has said.

“There Are No Levels in Spirituality”

Then I said, “Bhagavan, excuse me for asking this question. How do I know that I have reached a very high state, a very high level in spirituality? How do I know that I have gone to higher and higher levels?”

Immediately came the reply: “There are no levels in spirituality - nothing is low, nothing is high. All are the same in spirituality.”

And further He explained, “There is a caste system; also there is class structure. The class structure, the caste system - the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’, rich and poor - these are all the levels in the world. These are all the levels in the community. However, on the spiritual path there are no levels. There are no heights. All are equal because God is One-without-a-second. God is One-without-a-second. So there is no question of one being higher than the other.”

“Why Don’t We Follow You?”

“Swami, I know that I am crossing my limits, but please excuse me. I have a doubt here. All of us know that You are God. But why are we not able to follow You? Why don’t we follow You? We know that You are God. So why don’t we follow You?”

These are questions which require some courage to ask (*Laughter*) and His grace and mercy to have tolerated such questions. It is really risky.

The answer Baba gave was this: “Look here. At home, mother cooks; mother prepares all cookies, all sweet dishes, all delicious items, but the son wants to go eat at a hotel or restaurant. (*Laughter*) He doesn’t want to sit and eat anything that is cooked at home by mother. He wants those things in the hotel or restaurant. That is fate. Similarly, though God is here with all the Love, you don’t understand, you don’t understand.”

Further He added another statement:

“A mother will not serve sweets to one son, but she serves all the sweets to another son. That son who did not receive any sweets should not feel bad. She has not served him sweets because he is diabetic. He should not eat sweets. Therefore, she doesn’t serve him. Similarly, God fulfils the desires of some people. He does not fulfil the desires of others. Why? It is good for them. He knows what is best for us.”

Then Baba said, “Some people are not able to follow Me because their wishes or their desires are not fulfilled.”

“Swami, Come to the Hostel”

Suddenly the boys started raising their voices, pleading with Bhagavan in chorus. All the boys said, “Swami, come to the hostel, Swami come to hostel.” Everybody shouted.

Swami said: "All right, I will come. Wait."

And then He said, "Boys, I want all of you to live together as brothers. There should be unity among you. Live together, learn together, and grow together in fraternity and in love. This is very, very important."

And then Swami said, "India achieved independence, but it has not achieved unity even today. There is no unity yet. So unity is most important."

Then He gave an example:

"Threads can be cut with two fingers, but cloth cannot be cut with the fingers. Why? All threads are woven into a cloth. When threads are woven into a cloth, the cloth is strong. You cannot cut it. When there are individual threads, they are easy to cut it. Similarly, when you stand united, nobody can defeat you; nobody can attack you. Unity is very important."

And further, Bhagavan used three words: one was *rakthi*, which means 'fulfilment', another was *bhakthi*, meaning 'devotion', and the third was *mukthi* or 'liberation'. So, when there is unity, there is fulfilment, *rakthi*. Unity is *bhakthi* - devotion. And unity leads to *mukthi* or liberation.

Then Bhagavan went to the hostel. He spent some time there and He gave such joy to the students.

Desires and Ideals

The next day He spoke about the earthquake in the State of Gujarat in the year 2001. There was a terrible loss of lives and property. Swami made a comment on the earthquake.

"Natural calamities, why do they happen?"

Swami gave a beautiful answer for all the devotees to know. One thing He said was: "If you are a slave to your senses, you are going to be a slave to the whole world. If you conquer your senses, everybody in the whole world will become your slave. So, be a master of your senses. Never allow yourself to be a slave to your senses. No!"

Swami said, "Today, people have more desires or *aashalu*, meaning 'building castles in the air'. But, people do not have *aashayalu*, which means 'ideals'. *Aashayalu* are ideals and *aashalu* are desires. So, people have desires; they don't have ideals. That's how the present day society is."

Then I asked, "Swami, what is the difference between *aasha*, desires, and *aashaya*, ideals?"

(If we don't take the opportunity and ask Him, we'll never get it again. I strongly believe that an opportunity lost now, is lost forever. So we should grab every opportunity.)

So the question was, "Swami, what is the difference between *aasha*, desire, and *aashaya*, the ideal."

Bhagavan said, "*Aasha*, desire, is individual. *Aashaya*, ideal, is fundamental. We have forgotten this fundamental ideal, but we keep with us the individual desires. You spoil yourself by doing this."

The Need for the Spirit of Sacrifice

And then Bhagavan started explaining about the need for the spirit of sacrifice. Sacrifice or *thyaga* is very, very necessary.

Bhagavan said, "Whatever you do for your name and fame is not sacrifice, no!"

Further He said, "If you go on giving to others, you will get more and more from God. Learn to give, so that God will give to you. But if you don't give, if you amass, if you hide, if you keep it to yourself, nothing will grow. Nothing will grow. If you start distributing and sharing, everything will grow."

Swami continued, "Having been born as a human being, lead your life in such a way as to be called a 'good man'. Live to be good. Live to get a good name in society."

But today, how is our life? Many people say in front of you that you are good. Behind your back, they do not have the same feeling. So, people should say you are good in front of you and also behind your back, which means you should be perfect in every possible way.

Is Life So Artificial?

"Swami, is life so artificial?" I asked.

Swami said, "Yes!"

"I see. So, can I be successful in leading an artificial life?"

Swami said, "No! Because your artificial nature cannot continue. One time or another, your natural quality will come out."

"Any person, while in a sad situation or in a bad condition, will come out with the truth. The truth will come out of him when he is under trial, when his life is at stake."

And here Bhagavan described a small story to explain that point. It seems there was a great scholar who could speak excellently on Lord Narayana and Lord Shiva. By listening to his talks, you could not tell whether he was a devotee of Narayana or Shiva. If he spoke excellently on both Christ and Lord Rama, how could you decide whether he was a Christian or a Hindu? Impossible! Similarly, this

scholar was speaking in a very high way about Narayana and Lord Shiva. People could not figure out whose devotee he was.

But there was a very clever lady. She brought an iron rod, put it in the fire, heated it and branded him with the hot iron rod on his back. He shouted, "*Abba! Narayana, Narayana, Narayana!*" (*Laughter*) Then everybody knew that he was a devotee of Narayana! See! So the truth will come out when life is in danger or when you are in difficulty. That's what Swami said.

How Are the Boys?

Then Swami started inquiring about the boys. He called the warden to come close to him and said, "Warden, how are the boys?"

"Swami, they are fine."

"How about the food?"

"Very good, Swami."

"Hmmm, good. How are they? How is the food?"

The Warden said, "Swami, they eat well. *Baaga tintunnaru, tintunnaru*. They are eating well."

Swami said, "*Tintam kaadu* - not *eating*, but *untam* - *life* is important. *Baaga untunnaru* - they are well. Tell Me that they are *very good* rather than telling Me that they are eating nicely. I don't want it. I want a report from you that they are very good there."

See! Here there are two words, *tintam*, meaning 'eating' and *untam*, meaning 'living'. So, they should live well, not simply eat well. That's what He said. Oh! There were peals of laughter.

No Language that is not Known to Him

But then, suddenly Swami started speaking in Italian saying "*amore*" or something like that.

Well, Swami said, "Italian, Italian!"

Oh! I looked at Him and He said, "You know what '*amore*' means?"

"I don't know, Swami."

"It means that you like it."

"Oh, I see, Swami."

Then I could understand there is no language that is not known to Him. He knows all the languages. Well, we were very much surprised.

And then He started making fun of one boy who does not know Telugu. He called that boy from Bihar.

“Hey boy, do you know what ‘*kaanthi*’ means?”

‘*Kaanthi*’ is a Telugu word, but that boy did not know Telugu.

Somebody said, “Hey!”

Swami said, “Tell, tell.”

Somehow the boy said, “Swami, ‘*kaanthi*’ is ‘light’.”

Correct answer, “Oh-ho!”

Then Swami said, “Do you know ‘*kaantha*’? Who is ‘*kaantha*’?”

The fellow did not know. (*Laughter*)

He said, “Swami, the giver of light is ‘*kaantha*’.”

Everybody laughed. ‘*Kaantha*’ means ‘woman’. (*Laughter*)

Everybody laughed -- that’s how Swami cuts jokes and enjoys, making everybody laugh.

“I’m Ready to Give You that Infinite Love”

And then the warden said, “Swami, Your Love is infinite. Your Love is so deep like an ocean. It is so vast.” That’s what warden said.

You know what Baba said in reply?

“Yes! I’m ready to give you that infinite Love, but there are none to receive it. There are none to receive that infinite Love from My hands. What can I do? I am ready to give it.”

Why We Are Not Liberated?

Then, “Swami, one question please, please!”

“Ah, come on, come on! What is that question?”

“Swami, today when God is present in the form of Avatar, an Incarnation, why are we not able to realise and work for liberation? Why? We are contemporaries of the Avatar, but we are not liberated? Why? Liberation is not given to everybody. Why?”

Baba answered, "Many participate in a running race, but only one fellow stands first in the running race. So, you may be My contemporaries, but only one may attain liberation, not all, as in a running race. This is what is said in *Bhagavad Gita*."

Swami gave an example about the running of the race: "*Bhagavad Gita* said long ago, out of millions and millions and millions or billions of people, only a few people are interested in God. Out of those few people, very few people are interested in liberation. Out of the very few people who are interested in liberation, only a handful may attain liberation. "

Similarly, while we are happy being the contemporaries of the Avatar, we should also know whether we deserve liberation or not. Also, I should tell you an example given by Shirdi Sai. What did He say?

Shirdi Sai said, "A mango tree has so many flowers. Every flower will not develop into a fruit. So many flowers fall from the tree, therefore only a few flowers develop into fruits. Similarly, many of you may come here, but only a few will attain liberation."

JUNE 2001

So, having said what happened in the month of May 2001, now I pass on to June 2001.

What is the Difference Between the Mind and Heart?

This is the question: "Swami, what is the difference between the mind and the heart?"

Then Swami said, "It is not the physical heart; it is the *spiritual* heart which is important. The difference between the spiritual heart and the mind is that the mind is wavering, while the spiritual heart is steady. The physical heart is present on the left side. The spiritual heart is present throughout the body."

And Bhagavan said, "The spiritual heart is steady, while the human mind wavers -- it shakes."

Then I said, "Swami, I don't understand what you mean about the spiritual heart being steady, the spiritual heart being on the right side and the physical heart being on the left side. I don't understand, please!"

Then Swami said, "Values like truth, love, sacrifice, tolerance, forbearance, patience - they are all born in your heart. Intelligence, logic, sciences, humanities - they are all knowledge of the world. They are all contained in the mind."

"Swami, all right, but I pray with my mind. I am praying with my mind. What shall I do?" I think you all follow my thinking on this, right? Bhagavan had said, "Heart is important," but we pray with our mind. So, what shall we do?

Bhagavan gave this answer. Please note this; it is very important for all Sai devotees or devotees of any religion, for that matter.

“Whatever you do with your mind is going to give you temporary satisfaction. Satisfaction is the result of all efforts done with your mind. But, if you do it wholeheartedly, pray wholeheartedly with all your heart, you'll be successful. You'll get permanent bliss, unlike the happiness and satisfaction of the mind, which are temporary.” That's what Bhagavan has said.

But my mind was still not free from doubt. My mind was not able to digest all that Bhagavan was saying.

What is the Difference Between a Good Mind and a Bad Mind?

Then I said, “Swami, please permit me to ask another question: We often say, ‘He has a good mind and his is a bad mind.’ What is the difference between a ‘good’ mind and a ‘bad’ mind?”

Bhagavan gave a beautiful answer: “The mind is like water, which is steady. On the surface of the water, you find waves or ripples. They are your feelings. The feelings decide whether it is a good mind or a bad mind. If the feelings are bad, it is a bad mind. If the feelings are good, it is a good mind.”

Where is the Mind in Deep Sleep?

Then I thought that I had a little intelligence. (*Laughter*) I felt that I knew a bit of philosophy. I wanted to exhibit it.

“Swami, I have one doubt.”

“Yes, what is it?”

“Swami, in deep sleep, where is the mind?”

Baba said, “The mind is there in calmness. The mind is there in stillness. The mind is there in equanimity. The mind is passive and silent in the deep sleep-state. It is not that the mind is absent, or that the mind has run away, no! It is just passive, silent, and in a neutral state.”

I had not heard this interpretation before. Very good!

“Do Not Run After Your Mind”

“Swami, all right. Somehow I got my mind - whether it is artificial or natural, good or bad, whether it is passive in deep sleep or active in the waking state - somehow the mind is really making a monkey out of me. I have one question. My mind is running everywhere. It is wavering. What shall I do?”

Baba said, "Let your mind run, but you do not run after your mind." (*Laughter*)

"Oh, I see! How? How?"

Baba said, "A child will play everywhere, but will eventually return to its mother. The child may play here and there, but will come back to its mother. Similarly, the mind is like the child. Let the mind - the child - go play everywhere. It will come back to you. But, if you also run after the mind, well, you are lost completely."

That's the beautiful example Bhagavan gave.

Mind is not Independent

He continued, "The mind is not independent."

"Oh, I see! I didn't know that. I thought that I was controlled by my mind."

Swami said, "The mind is not independent. You are the master of your mind. The mind is not your master. You are the master of your mind. The mind is only an instrument and you are the master. It is up to you to control your mind."

And Bhagavan said, "The same mind can be used to attain liberation, or the same mind can take you to bondage."

"Swami, the same mind takes me one way or the other?"

"Yes!"

"How?"

Baba said, "If you turn the key to the left, the lock closes. If you turn the key to the right, it opens. The same key yields different results, depending on the direction it is turned. Similarly, if the mind is turned towards the world, it is in bondage - locked. If the key is turned towards God - if the mind is turned towards God - the lock opens. That is liberation. It is the same key, just a difference in the turning. So, is it turned world-side or God-side? Same mind."

"Swami, what a wonderful example! Now I understand. You tell me that I should not follow the mind, that the mind should follow me. Then who am I?"

Then Baba said, "Above the mind, there is *buddhi* or intellect. The intellect is the decision-making part in the human personality. The intellect judges and decides. Therefore, the intellect has power to discriminate. So, what should you do now? Let the intellect decide. What is decided by the intellect may be thought by the mind. Whatever is thought by the mind will be enacted by the senses."

Is that clear? Whatever father says, mother should understand. Whatever mother conveys, children should follow. Father is the intellect, mother is the mind, and children are the senses. I speak of an ideal family! (*Laughter*) I am not speaking of the modern family. I am sorry, because mother will say 'thank you' to the father

(Laughter) but the father will never say that to the mother and the children are not there, because they are busy outside. But I am speaking of a traditional, good family, where children obey the mother and where the mother obeys the father -- an ideal family.

Similarly, the intellect, having discriminated, should decide. Then the mind should take instructions from the intellect. The mind should think and pass this on to the senses to act. That's what Bhagavan said.

The Intellect, Mind and Senses

"All right, Swami. Sometimes I am at loss about what to do and what not to do. 'To be or not to be, that is the question.' Most of the time, I am fine; but sometimes I wonder, 'Hmm, shall I do this or not? What shall I do?' I am in utter confusion. What should I do then?"

At this point, Baba said: "This confusion is because, when the mind does not act in accordance with the intellect, there is conflict. If the mind follows the intellect, there is no conflict. There is total agreement. There is total agreement when the mind follows the intellect, because whatever the intellect says is final. Whatever the intellect decides is in your own interest. But the mind will not follow, because the mind has its own vagaries, its own whims and fancies. So when the mind and the intellect disagree, there is conflict and there is confusion." That's what Bhagavan said that day.

One Should Not Be Overweight

While He was speaking, Swami turned and noticed a man with a hefty build coming. Even if four of us were combined, I do not think we would equal his size. *(Laughter)* Ah! He came to the veranda to take his seat.

Swami looked, "Hmm! *(Laughter)* See that? See him -- how he is, with his stomach is like a big question mark. *(Laughter)* Ah! See that! You should not be overweight; you should not be obese; you should not have extra weight because, if you have so much weight, it leads to heart trouble. The heart is affected. So, you should control your body."

And then Bhagavan said, "While walking, you should not be gasping for breath. *(Anil Kumar demonstrates, panting for air)* While walking, if you start gasping, it means heart trouble is starting."

So Swami said, "Be careful with your food habits. Hurry, worry and curry. Hurry -- we are constantly in a hurry. Worry -- we are constantly worried. Curry -- the oily stuff that we eat in the canteen. They are responsible for heart complaints."

That's what Bhagavan said.

How Not to be Worried?

“Swami, please pardon me. Please be sympathetic towards me. I have one doubt, Bhagavan.”

“*Hmm! What's your doubt?*” (*Laughter*)

“You say that I should not worry. However, how do I not worry? How? We are all married people. We have children and a wife. She is the source of worry to me; I am the source of worry to her; and the children are the source of worry to both of us. (*Laughter*) We are the source of worry to them. So everyone is the worry to the other nearest person. So, how can we be free from worry?”

“We married people envy *sanyasins*, the renunciates. We think they are very good and comfortable. (*Laughter*) We envy them. It is too late to copy them. (*Laughter*) But as a householder, how to be worry-less?”

Then Baba said, “Worry is not the solution to your problems. No! If worry solves your problems, come on! Worry and worry and worry. Worry is not the solution.”

“Ah, so, Swami what shall I do?”

“Always remember: What is bound to happen will happen. What is not destined to happen will not happen. Things happen in their own way. Don't worry about it; just leave it.”

“Oh, I see.”

I kept quiet because if I questioned further, “Swami, I may get worried later” when He is saying, “Don't worry”, then why should I be worried now on this question of how not to worry?

“Swami, practically speaking, is it possible not to worry? Is it possible?”

He said, “Yes, definitely.”

“How, Swami?”

“Look at Me. I have so many projects. I have so many responsibilities. But I am never worried.”

Then I said, “Swami, You are not worried because You are God.” (*Laughter*)

I said that!

“*Noru Musko!* Be quiet!” He said.

A Prolonged Period of Darshan

Then Swami left us, but finally He came back and said, "Today I spoke for a long time, you see, and all those people sitting there are not able to hear Me. *Ah-re*, what a pity it is!"

I wasn't sure how to respond. Should I say 'yes'? But if I say 'yes', He might not come to speak with us tomorrow. And I could not say 'no', because His statement was true -- all the devotees were not able to hear Him. So what should I say?

I decided to say, "Swami, all the devotees are happy to have a prolonged period of *darshan*. They are very happy. They may not be able to hear You, but they were able to see You from a distance for a long time."

"*Hmm!* Very good! If they are happy, good, good, good, good." (*Laughter*)

Pain and Pleasure

And then, the next day, there was some kind of a discussion on pleasure and pain. He told us about pleasure and about pain.

I said, "Swami, I want pleasure. I don't want any pain. What shall I do?"

It's a simple question. Do you want pain? Do you? No, nobody wants pain. Everyone wants pleasure.

"Swami, what shall I do?"

He said, "It is impossible. (*Laughter*) No. Your feet and your head belong to the same body. You cannot say, 'I want the head only; I don't want the feet.' You cannot say, 'I want only the feet, but not the head.' Both are necessary. The head represents pleasure and the feet represent pain. They go together. There cannot be pain without pleasure. There cannot be pleasure without a pain."

And Swami said, "Pleasure is an interval between two pains. You cannot avoid it."

"Swami, since I see You in the physical form, I don't expect any pain as I see You here. I expect only pleasure, because I see You."

Baba laughed and said, "In the temple, do you ask God there? When you go to your church, do you ask Christ, 'O Christ, why am I suffering?' Do you ask him there?"

You go to temples, the Rama temple, the Krishna temple -- do you ask Rama, 'Why pain? Why not pleasure?' Do you ask Him? No. But, because you see God in a human form today, talking in front of you, you doubt; whereas, if God is in the form of an idol, you never doubt."

“Therefore, understand one thing: Whatever happens in your life is for your own good. Then there is no question of pleasure or pain. Even pain turns into a pleasure. If you understand whatever happens to you is for your own good, you will try to reconcile with any situation.”

That's what Bhagavan said.

What are Values?

And then Swami said, “What happened this morning in the college? What was the program in the college?”

Then I said, “Swami, one fellow from America spoke on values and management.”

“*Hmm!*”

Swami was happy about it. And then He asked, “What are values?”

We had heard the lecture for one hour, but we could not give Swami the answer to His question, ‘What are values?’ Finished!

Then Bhagavan said, “Values are of two types: the values that change from time-to-time, depending on the circumstances, the civilisation, the social order, and norms of the society. They are the individual values. But the values that do not change -- like truth, peace, love -- they are fundamental values. So, values are of two types -- values that are individual and values that are fundamental.”

My Place

And then I said, “Bhagavan, I have one doubt. We know the temples are managed by trustees -- every temple is managed by trustees.”

Trustees are what we call *devasthanam* -- *devasthanam* meaning ‘trustees’.

Swami made a pun of the word: “This is not *devasthanam*; this is *naa sthanam* - *My place*. *Naa sthanam*, *My place* is not *devasthanam*.”

Here we should understand that the word ‘temple’ does not mean the property held and the land around it. No, no, no! ‘Temple’ means ‘the place where God is’. So when Swami says, “It is not *devasthanam*; it is not a mere temple. *Naa sthanam* -- It is *My place*,” that makes all the difference. Let us pray in that temple, where we have the feeling of the Divinity.

The Poet Pothana

It happened to be a Sunday. Usually Swami talks to boys in the evening. I do not know why, but on this particular Sunday, He wanted to speak to the students in

the morning before the *bhajan*. After the interviews, He came out around 8:15 A.M. *Bhajan* starts at 9:00 o'clock, so there was still 45 minutes left. He wanted to talk with us during that interval. So He took advantage of the 45 minutes left and began speaking to us.

There is a great poet by name 'Pothana' -- three syllables, Po-tha-na. He wrote the *Bhagavatam*. Swami spoke about him.

See what a great poet Baba is! '*Po*' means 'go' and '*thana*' means 'the Self'. The very name 'Pothana' means that all the bad should '*po*' or 'get out', so that '*thana*,' the Self, will remain. Do you understand this? So, if we let all the bad '*po*', get out, then just '*thana*', the Self, remains. So that is the meaning of 'Pothana'. That's what Bhagavan said. What a wonderful interpretation it is!

Pothana, who was such a great poet, led a very poor life. His was a life of poverty and begging. He did not have enough money. Nevertheless, he was a very great devotee. And his brother-in-law was also a great poet, a very rich man. See that. His brother-in-law was also a great poet by the name of Srinatha. Srinatha, who was a great poet, was a rich man. However, his brother-in-law, Pothana, a devotee and a poet too, was a very poor man.

Then I said, "Swami, what is this paradox? One is rich; the other is poor. Both are poets. What is this?"

Then Baba said, "That man was rich from the point-of-view of wealth. But the other man was rich from the point-of-view of devotion. That rich man was so called in a worldly and money view, but he was poor in devotion. And Pothana was poor with respect to property. So, both are rich and poor. See that? Pothana was rich in devotion, but poor in wealth; while Srinatha was rich in wealth and poor in devotion."

"Oh-ho, Swami, You alone can say that. We cannot understand."

Then I said, "Swami, people say that Pothana was a *yogi*, a man of spiritual realisation. My question is this -- can a realised soul be a poet?"

I think you understand my question. Can a realised soul be a poet? Because in being realised, one does not remain. In realisation, we are one with God. So then, where does the question of composing poetry come in?

Then Bhagavan said, "No! With this realisation, one can do anything with total awareness. Because Pothana was a realised soul, his composition was full of devotion."

And this is what is called '*yoga*'. *Yoga* is perfection. *Yoga* takes you to perfection. So, Pothana is a *yogi*, attaining the state of perfection in the field of literature. That's what Bhagavan said. So, one will be expert with *yoga*, with spiritual awareness.

Then I wanted to get some more information. "Swami, are there any more people of this type or is this the only example?"

He said that there are many people. Who are they?

“Annamacharya, Tulsidas, Thyagaraj -- all these people were *yogis*, realised souls, and they were singers. They were men of fine arts. Why not?”

That's what Bhagavan said.

How Do We Experience Bliss?

Then one gentleman asked, “Swami, how do we experience bliss?”

Very good question!

Swami said, “With the senses, you cannot experience bliss. With your mind, it is impossible to experience bliss. Bliss is not an experience. Bliss is the experiencer.”

Please pay attention to this -- bliss is the experiencer; bliss is not an experience.

“Oh-ho. Swami, who is the experiencer and what is the experience?”

He said, “You are there now in the waking state; you are there in the dreaming state; you are there in the deep sleep. *You* are there. And that real ‘you’ is bliss. Not simply waking state or dreaming state or deep sleep state.”

So, Bhagavan said, “The experiencer, the real you in all the three states of consciousness - the waking, the dream and the deep sleep - that real ‘I’, that spirit, the *Atma*, is bliss and not the experience.”

“Wonderful, Swami. Wonderful, now I understand.”

All right, in what form is it? Somehow or other, I wanted to pinpoint the problem and get the answer. I didn't want to say ‘thank you’ and go, no. Let me get the direct answer, since He was so kind to answer. Everything was quite favourable. Why shouldn't we get the best out of it?

Then I said, “Swami, in what form is it?”

Then He said, “In a gross form, in a gross body, bliss is in a subtle form.”

Oh-ho.

“In a subtle body, bliss is in a gross form.”

Oh-ho. Further confusion. (*Laughter*)

“In a gross body, bliss is in a subtle form. In a subtle body, bliss is in a gross form.”

“Swami, I don't understand. Please excuse me. How can it be gross here and subtle there? I don't understand.”

Then Swami said, "Here is a mango seed. When you sow that mango seed, it grows into a mango tree. Right? So, where is the mango tree? The tree is in the seed! So the seed is subtle and the tree is the gross that is present within the subtle. Within the seed, which is in the subtle form and the subtle body, there is a gross tree inside. Do you understand? It is the tree in the seed that comes out as the tree. Is it clear?"

"Oh, I see."

"And the big mango tree will have fruit, inside of which there are seeds. The gross tree has the subtle seed. The subtle seed has the gross tree. Therefore, bliss is present in a subtle form in a gross body, while it is present in a gross form in a subtle body."

"Now I seem to understand, Swami. It is getting into my head now. Now I understand."

Who Wants These Things?

Then I said out of gratitude, "Bhagavan, who will tell us all these things?"

Then Baba said, "Who wants these things? Everyone wants his or her favours, worldly progress, money, position and family. I am ready to tell these things, but who wants these things? No one. No one. Therefore, don't say, 'Who will tell these things?' I am here to tell you. But who is ready to hear Me? They have their own desires and their own problems. Since there is no one who wants these things and who can understand these things, I do not speak of these things. But in fact, I want to speak on these subjects."

That's what Bhagavan said.

Swami, Don't Take Pain Upon Yourself

That year, when Sivarathri festival was over, Swami made some statements. It is very interesting.

During Sivarathri, He had asked a boy to speak before His Divine discourse. In the course of his talk the boy said, "Swami, we don't want to see the *lingam* today, because You struggle so much to bring the *lingam* out. We don't want to see You suffering like that. Swami, do not take the pain upon Yourself. We don't want it."

But still, Swami materialised the *lingam* for all of us. The next day Swami called that boy forward. "Hey boy, come here. What did you say yesterday?"

"Swami, I only said, "Don't struggle and don't undergo any pain. We don't want it. No *Shiva lingam* today, Swami, because we don't want to see You suffering like that."

Then Baba said, “No, no, no. To make you happy, I am ready to suffer. I am ready to suffer to make you happy - to give you a sense of satisfaction. It does not matter what happens to Me.”

Then He looked at me and said, “Yesterday that boy said, ‘Don't materialise the *lingam*, Swami, we can't see you suffer like that.’ Now tell me whether he won or lost, whether he succeeded or failed. He did not want Swami to materialise the *Shiva lingam*, but Swami materialised it anyway. So, is this boy successful or did he fail?”

Then I said, “Swami, I think in explaining from his heart his feelings for You, suffering so much from the emergence of the *Shiva lingam*, that he succeeded. However, You did not hear him and You materialised the *lingam*, so he also failed. He succeeded and he also failed.” (*Laughter*)

So, we also learn from Divine art, now and then. (*Laughter*) Spending all the time with Him, we also learn, you know!

Then Baba said, “No, no. He won on both the grounds.”

Because He has the final word, He will not accept anybody else's answer. His is the ultimate.

“No, no, no. Why do you say that he succeeded and failed? No. He succeeded on both the grounds.”

“How, Swami?”

Bhagavan said, “In making a prayer out of his heart, he succeeded. Very good! But, in listening to his prayer, had I not materialised the *lingam*, all these people would have blamed him. Because that fellow said, ‘We don't want the *lingam*’, and if Swami didn't do it, they would speak ill of him and blame him. Now people have not blamed him. So, in that way he also succeeded. He is free from the public blame. In that way, he succeeded. In offering his prayer to Me wholeheartedly, he succeeded. So, he was successful on both grounds.”

And now He said, “*Naa ku noppulu levu.*”

Noppi means ‘pain’.

Swami said, “I have no pain whatsoever. *Anni Oppule.*”

Oppu means ‘correct’.

“Everything is perfect - no *noppi*, no pain. All *oppule* -- all are correct. Whatever I do is correct.”

That's how He made a pun with the Telugu word.

I Will Not Be Carried Away by Your Praises

Then I said, “Swami, I want to thank You for one thing.”

He said, "What is it?"

"When You sit and materialise the *lingam*, everyone is not always able to see it. I was praying within, 'Bhagavan, why don't You put some TV sets around, so that all can see the emergence of the Shiva *lingam*?' I was praying, Swami. However, You were so kind. Without arranging for TV sets, You got up when the Shiva *lingam* emerged out of Your mouth, so all of us could see it. That was very kind of You, Swami! It was not be possible for everybody to see the emerging Shiva *lingam* because of the huge crowd. You stood up out of compassion, so that everybody would be very, very happy."

Then Swami said, "I will not be carried away by your praises. (*Laughter*) No. I will not be affected by your praise or blame. I do it for My happiness. I do it for My bliss. What is that bliss? The bliss of all My devotees makes Me blissful. That's all. Not for your praises."

That's what He said.

What Should I Do to Get Out of Maya?

Then I said, "Swami, during Sivarathri this year in the course of Your discourse, You made mention of *maya*, illusion. What should I do to get out of *maya*? What should I do?"

He said, "You don't do. You don't have to *do* anything. It is enough if you know what *maya*, what illusion is. Then it will go."

"If I know, it will go?"

"Yes."

"I don't have to do anything?"

"Correct. What do you say now?"

"Swami, please, I don't understand."

Then He gave one example. This is the common example that He gives every time.

"You are walking in the evening time. While you are walking, you see a snake on the road. And suddenly you are afraid of it. You turn on a flashlight and you see that it is not a snake. It is only a rope - only a rope that You have *mistaken* to be a snake. Once you know that it is not a snake, that it is only a rope, you are free from fear. You are free from fear."

"When you know it is *maya*, it will leave, just as fear will leave by knowing the truth. Similarly, when you know that it is *maya* or illusion, then it will leave by the very awareness of it."

Removing the Covering: Awareness of the Self

Now Swami gave some examples. Sometimes, around forty or fifty years of age, we may develop cataracts, an eye condition, where a layer is formed on the eye and thus reduces visibility. Nowadays youngsters are also getting it. This layer that covers the eye comes from the eye, not from the outside. No layer from my neighbour's house has got into my eye. It is only from my eye that a layer is formed covering my eyeball.

Similarly, there is water in a pond. It is covered by moss. The water forms the moss, and this very moss covers the water. Does that make sense? Here is a fire. Out of the fire, ash arises; meanwhile, ash covers the fire. The sun is the cause of a cloud, and the cloud covers the sun. Similarly, *maya* arises from within you. Nobody has put you in *maya*. It has arisen from within you. So *you* have to take it out. It is your duty to come out of *maya*, because it is there within you. It has not come from anybody outside. Is that clear, please? Those are the examples that Bhagavan gave.

"So, what shall I do now, Swami? It has come from within me, all right. What shall I do?" (*Laughter*)

Then He said, "Here is fire covered by ash. What should you do? (*Anil Kumar blows a few times, as if blowing away the ash from the fire.*) Blow it off. The ash will go and you can see the fire. Here is water covered by moss. What should you do? Remove the moss and you will see the water. Clouds cover the sun. What should you do? Wait. The wind will take away all the clouds. Then the sun will certainly spread its light. You will see the sunlight."

"So, blowing the ash, removing the moss, the wind removing the clouds - they are all comparable to awareness or knowledge of the Self. If you have the knowledge of the Self, the reality of 'who am I', the covering of illusion or *maya* will go on its own."

Such a beautiful answer!

This is what is called awareness, the knowledge of the Self, which only Bhagavan can explain. Nobody else can explain in such a simple way.

But, being a weak man (*Laughter*), there is still some question in a corner of my head.

Will Illusion Come Back?

"Swami!"

"Ah, yes... what...?"

"*Maya* has gone. Is there any danger of *maya* coming back to me? Illusion has gone. Will it come back, or has it left permanently?"

Baba laughed and said, "Remember these three: One, if it comes, it will never go. Second, if it goes, it will never come back. The third, it neither comes nor goes."

Oh-ho! Three things -- I had asked one question and Swami has produced three answers!

"What are they, Swami?"

One, if it comes it will never go -- that is knowledge or awareness. Second, if it goes it will never come back -- that is ignorance. Third, the one that neither comes nor goes -- is your true Self, the *Atma*, the spirit or consciousness. "

What is Rahukala?

Hmm, all right. I wanted to make the discussion a little lighter.

"Swami, what is *Rahukala*?"

Rahukala: You must have heard devotees saying 3 to 4.30 A.M. is *Rahukala*; or, 5 to 6.30 A.M. is *Rahukala*. Even today I do not understand anything about it. And I have no faith in it -- let me be very honest about it. So, when Baba talks about it and when devotees are talking about it, for courtesy and decency, I keep my mouth shut. But I have no knowledge of *Rahukala*. I asked the question to make the discussion a little lighter, because it was very heavy up to this point. (*Laughter*)

So I asked Swami, "What is *Rahukala*?" (though personally, I have no faith in it).

"*Rahukala* is the time that is inauspicious. It indicates the planetary conjunction and the position of planet earth near the equator as it revolves around the sun. That is called '*Rahukala*'."

"Oh-ho. Swami, what does it have to do with me? When the planet is rotating like that, when the position of the sun is like that, what am I having to do with it?"

Then He said, "During that period, there will be some poisonous element in the sun rays. One has got to be careful. All those things that you do during that time will not be fruitful or successful. Therefore, *Rahukala* is very much observed." That's what Bhagavan said.

All right. But I did not proceed further because I am not very much interested in the topic, first of all. And secondly, I did not question further because I would have to exhibit my ignorance on the topic. I didn't want to take the risk. So, I just kept quiet with folded hands.

"I Don't Want Politics Anywhere Around"

Then a very big politician, who also was a minister, came to Swami on that day. And he said, "Swami, You are unique. Let all the colleges and universities in

this country be managed by You. It is the prayer of all ministers. It is the prayer of everybody. You run the hospitals. You run the universities. It will be excellent.”

Baba is Baba. He said, “My administration has got nothing to do with politics. You people come and go. You people change your parties. But I don't come and go. I do not change. I am the only One-without-a-second. I continue to do, that's all. I always keep politics away from Me. I do not want politics anywhere around Me. You politicians can twist your tongue. Today you say ‘yes’; tomorrow you say ‘no’. I am not that type. Whatever I say, it is only one. I hold on to it, I stick to it and I'll implement it.” That's what Bhagavan has said.

The Golden Lingam

And then, since we should not conclude the evening session with this harsh, serious note, I wanted to say a nice goodbye.

“Swami, the *lingam* that you materialised is a golden *lingam*. Is it really gold? That gold *lingam* that came out of Your body, is that gold?”

He said, “Yes, definitely.”

“Oh, I see.”

Then Bhagavan said, "All metals are in your body. All metals are there in every human body, including gold. And this gold in the body, because of severe heat, gets into a particular shape. And as it takes a definite form, heat is generated. It takes a definite form only because of the heat. And this *lingam* comes out with terrific force. That's why - you must have noticed - the *lingam* came - *tack!* with terrific force and fell on the ground. You must have noticed. So, because of the heat generated, the gold takes the shape of a *lingam* and gets released with a sudden force. That is a *Hiranyagarbha lingam*.”

That's what Bhagavan said.

“Oh, Swami.”

“This is also there in you. But I can bring it out, while you cannot.”

He was Mentioning All the Names

On the next day, Bhagavan started telling about His olden days. He talked about his visits to Madras and Delhi. He was mentioning the names of all the streets and the localities in Madras.

Then I said, “Swami, You know the names of all the localities in Madras?”

“*Eh!* I started visiting Madras right from the age of eleven. At the age of only eleven, I went to Madras. I know every corner of Madras.”

That is what He said.

And then He mentioned names of a number of ministers -- great people, union ministers, state ministers, artists, *maharajas*, *zamindars*, and judges -- all who have visited him when Bhagavan had been to Madras. Swami went on narrating about all those big people who visited Him.

Then Swami said, "Look here, people are attracted to this place just as honeybees come to the lotus flower to suck the honey. All people visited this place."

The Tree Has to Grow Where it is Born

Then Swami made a statement, with which I close the session for this evening. Please follow this very important statement.

"Many people visited this place and requested Me to move to cities, because Puttaparthi is a small village. In those days, there were no approach roads and no buses. People would have to travel by bullock cart. You know that? They found it very difficult to reach here."

So, people from the cities prayed to Swami, "Swami, please move to Bangalore, where we have trains, buses and flights. Why don't you move?"

But Baba said, "No. The tree has to grow at the same place where the seed is sown, where it is planted. The tree has to grow where it is born, not elsewhere."

That was the reply Swami gave.

And today we understand the significance of this place -- a tiny village has grown into the stature of a global village, attracting people from all countries, giving peace, solace and bliss to everybody coming from all over the world. That is the Divine Master Plan of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Jai Bolo Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Ji Ki Jai!

Om Om Om!

Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu.

Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu.

Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu.

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.