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1. The End of Education is Character

You may gain mastery over sciences, reign among scholars,
Fight bravely in battles,
Take birth as an emperor and rule over kingdoms,
And donate untold gold and cattle in charity.
You may be able to count the number of stars in the sky,
Name all the species of living beings,
Study the eight limbs of scholarship¹,
And even travel to the moon.
But can you control the body and the senses,
Steady the mind and turn it inward,
And acquire a firm, selfless heart?

Embodiments of Love!

Students, teachers, and patrons of education!

The world is ruled by science and technology. First, scientists have made astonishing strides in the fields of plastics, electronics and computers, atomic power and space research. Satellites have been sent into space. Boundless time, effort, and money is spent on the investigation of atomic power, but there is no corresponding benefit. In the anxiety to exceed each other's achievements, scientists have set aside morality and human values. Second, we have political and financial turmoil. Men quarrel and wage wars on the basis of religion and nationality. Attachment to family and power is untrained. Regional differences and hatred are dividing the sacred and ancient land of *Bharat* (India) into pieces. Violent agitations by students have grown beyond limits. Science has become all-important and morality

¹ Panini's eight texts on Sanskrit grammar, considered as definitive references on the language. Not to be confused with Sage Patanjali's eight-fold path of *Raja Yoga*.

has declined. What is the cause of such retrograde progress in these two aspects?

Human values: today's prime need

What must humanity desire today? We need virtuous, selfless boys and girls. We need heroes who are ready to sacrifice for the welfare of the motherland. Unfortunately, people wrongly expect happiness from wealth and comforts. Truly, worldly objects bestow no happiness. If one feels joy in their midst, it is only temporary.

Chatrapati Shivaji² had no dearth of wealth and power. Then what is the significance in his surrendering to Samartha Ramdas³ and requesting his guidance? King Janaka⁴ also abounded in material prosperity. Then why did he seek refuge with Sage Yagnavalkya⁵? Since ancient times, even the most powerful emperors of India have approached penniless renunciates to earn peace and security. Peace, the prime need of man, is available only through Knowledge of the Self⁶.

It is essential for students to understand why morality and spirituality have disappeared from society. Education without character, science without human values, commerce without ethics, and politics without truth are responsible for the erosion of virtue. Students have a duty to develop patriotism and restore these

² Founder of the Maratha kingdom in western India during the 17th century

³ Great devotee of Lord Rama from the state of Maharashtra

⁴ King of Mithila in ancient India, father-in-law of Lord Rama

⁵ A great sage to whom certain sections of the Vedas are attributed.

⁶ *Atma Jnana*

forgotten values. Today's education makes one clever but does not instill virtue. Students transform their heads (*mastakam*) into books (*pustakam*) without practising human values.

There is no benefit in turning your head into a book or vice versa. Recognise the path of Truth and demonstrate it in day-to-day living. How can we develop human values?

Sinning by losing fear of sin,
Adopting a path devoid of love for God,
People have destroyed their human qualities.
This is the cause of unrest in the world.

You must fill your heart with love for God (*daiva preeti*), fear of sin (*paapa bheeti*), and morality in society (*sangha neeti*). Instead of restricting yourself to pride in your state or province, develop love for the Motherland and help bring about prosperity in the country.

Present-day education develops cleverness,
But not even a trace of virtue.
You may master a million subjects. But devoid of
virtue,
What fruit can they bear, what is their use?

"The proper study of mankind is man." Unity in thought, word, and deed is most essential. The world can be benefitted only by those who demonstrate humanness in actions, not by those who are human only in name. Scientists and politicians set many destructive precedents for youth of the country. The world has no need for slogans written on walls, statements issued by politicians, and speeches made from high platforms. The world needs people imbued with integrity. All that is learned must culminate in behaviour. Life today is based on show, expenditure, and comfort. Humanity's problems can be solved not by money or science but by humanity alone. People must transform themselves to live as human beings. People live like demons, like animals.

Education must develop selflessness

Students, you see education as a means to secure a job. Education and a job must be disjoined. "Education should be for life, not for a living." Animals and birds also feel the pangs of hunger and try to fill their stomachs. So, mere living is not enough. We must understand the secrets of life. Schools propagate knowledge about living but not about life. Human birth is divine. Unmindful of the sanctity of our birth, we aspire for pleasures of the world.

Worldly comforts are necessary, but life should not be dedicated to their pursuit. Worldly pleasures are subject to change and destruction. People are bound to die, but ideals remain immortal. Students should not merely cultivate ideals but spread them in the world.

Since ancient times, India has propagated the endless stream of Knowledge of the Self (*Atma Jnana*). But today we find discord, falsehood, injustice, and devilish qualities ruling people's minds in *Bharat*, the birthplace of spirituality. Students alone are the inheritors of these problems, and they alone are capable of solving them.

Students, embodiments of Love!

Fill your hearts with the aim of dedicating your lives to the Motherland. Selfishness is unworthy of you. "Fish is better than selfish!" People are not able to rid society of wickedness and immorality because they act with selfishness. Love must be developed, and the heart must be expanded.

Love lives by giving and forgiving.
Ego lives by getting and forgetting.

In ancient *Bharatiya* (Indian) heritage, we have 18 *Puraanas*⁷. Their essence is: "Help Ever, Hurt Never." Follow these principles tenaciously. By neglecting these guideposts, people descend into unrighteousness with every step. In every statement, truth is absent. In every look, love is diminished. In every desire, foresight is put aside. Every ambition is selfish. Ideas that promote long-term progress are nowhere to be seen. Divine Consciousness in humanity is asleep, while differences based on religion and caste are uppermost in the mind. Attachment and hatred roam the world. Truly, human qualities have been devastated in the world today. We need "quality", not "quantity". A teaspoon of cow's milk is useful. Why have barrels of donkey's milk?

Money is desirable, within limits

Money, money, money... Earning (*sampaadana*) is not as important as values and traditions (*samskaaram*). Excessive money makes people mad. I advise students always to earn whatever is necessary for daily living. There can be no progress without limits (*Nah sreyo niyamam vinaa*). Our body temperature is 98.4°F. A reading of 99°F is a fever. Our eyeballs can see only a limited brightness. Excessive brightness burns the retina. Blood pressure is normal at 120/80. Variation beyond these limits signals heart-trouble.

⁷ Gist of the *Vedas* written in parable form by Sage Vyasa for the benefit of laymen.

Yes, to lead an independent life, to avoid reliance on others, money is indeed essential. But it is surprising to see what 'educated' people do in the interest of money. Even illiterate villagers have a sense of sacrifice, but educated people have none. Wherever there are more universities and law colleges, we find more uncultured behaviour and injustice! In remote hamlets and forests devoid of such institutions, people lead peaceful and simple lives.

What is the reason for this despicable state of morality in our country? Selfish desires are growing beyond limits. Less luggage, more comfort. Reduce your responsibilities and desires. Money is like a shoe. When the shoe is loose, we cannot walk; if tight, it causes pain. Excessive money as well as shortage of money are undesirable. Keep as much as you need. That is the way to peace. Peace is within ourselves, not outside. Do not look for peace in degrees and positions.

What is the use of all your education?
Who can change the destiny written on your forehead?
As soon as wrong ideas enter your mind,
Your intelligence dries up like a pond in summer.

Education does not mean collecting facts about the world in your head. "May all the worlds be happy (*Lokaah samastaah sukhino bhavantu*)."
When everyone is happy, your happiness is automatically assured. Educated people care only about themselves and their family, not about society. Can we exist independent of society? Our life is intermingled with society. The welfare of society alone is our welfare. The journey of life starts with the individual, but it must progress to the family and then, to the society — from "I" to "We".

Who am I?

What is the "I"? There are two kinds of "I": The single-letter "I" and the three-letter "eye". "Eye" is the body, "I" is the soul. You are not the body, the senses, or the mind. They are only instruments. Using them as tools, base your life on the letter "I".

Many new students are attending today. Students! From waking to sleeping you say, "My house, my car, my pant, my shirt, my book, ..." Everything is "my, my, my". Who are you? I cannot see students who ask themselves, "Who am I?" When you say "my body," you are different from the body. Then who are you? Enquire along these lines, and the foundation of spirituality will dawn in you.

"Skill" your knowledge

Science has advanced but ignorance has also grown correspondingly. They have moved together, balancing each other. A person's entire life is developed on the basis of knowledge. How does one use this knowledge? When we "skill" our knowledge, life is well-balanced. When we "kill" our knowledge, the balance is upset. Today's students are "killing" their knowledge. How?

See no evil, See what is good.
Hear no evil, Hear what is good.
Talk no evil, Talk what is good.
Think no evil, Think what is good.
Do no evil, Do what is good.

Bad looks, bad thoughts, bad talk, bad work: This is "killing" knowledge. Tongue must speak sweet, speaking truthful and beneficial words (*Jihve rasagne madhura priyatvam, satyam hitam tvaam paramam vadaami*). Our tongue is sacred. We should not allow bad words to form on it, especially words finding fault with others. We should not speak about others' faults, make fun of them or belittle them. If possible, help others. If you cannot, sit quietly without harming anyone. That too is a big help!

*Brahmacharya*⁸ is the foundation for life. The householder stage is like the walls. *Vaanaprastha*, the forest-dweller's, is the roof. In the same way, self-confidence is the foundation, Self-satisfaction the wall, Self-sacrifice the roof. Self-Realisation is the life. These four stages depend on the strength of the foundation. Our life can be full of happiness and peace only when these years are well-utilised.

Students, practise the precepts you learn here and transform yourself into exemplary men and women. Science and technology are very necessary. Science is not evil but it is being misused. You can use a knife to slice a fruit or to slash someone's throat. The fault lies with the hand, not the knife. Science is similar.

Science, science, science ... Without the support of spirituality, science is blind and cripple. We must see science and spirituality as "positive" and "negative" and use them harmoniously. Science grants worldly happiness while spirituality grants happiness hereafter. Science is incomplete because it does not encompass the mind and *Atma*. Science is just knowledge, a collection of facts... it is "gas". Humanity got the name *manishi*⁹ from the word *manas* (mind). The mind, the disting-

⁸ Four stages of life: *brahmacharya* (student, till 25 years), *grihasta* (householder, 25-50 years), *vaanaprastha* (forest dweller, 50-75 years) and *sanyasa* (renunciant).

⁹ Man, in Telugu.

uishing feature, must discriminate between the permanent and the temporary.

Today, there are five types of knowledge. First, *bookish knowledge* is found everywhere. This turns later into *superficial knowledge*. Everybody has these two but the third, *general knowledge*, is zero! The fourth, *discrimination knowledge*, is being used but in the wrong way. Today “individual discrimination” is used: “Is it convenient and beneficial to me and my family?” No, no. We must exercise “fundamental discrimination”: Is it good for me, my family, for the world... Is it the Truth? Only with such discrimination does the fifth knowledge, *practical knowledge*, dawn.

Practical knowledge is scarce. Based on bookish and superficial knowledge, people enter into lengthy arguments. If one says “yes,” another says “no”. We spend our lives in such shallow thinking. No, we must descend deep into life! We must face everything!

Life is a challenge, meet it!
Life is a game, play it.
Life is love, enjoy it.
Life is a dream, realize it.

Control your senses

We must stand up against life’s situations! Only when we face and conquer circumstances will our conscience exude contentment and satisfaction. We must walk the path that satisfies the conscience. Students are interested in satisfying only their “conscious”, not their “conscience”. Conscience is our real power, strength, and awareness. It is unchanging, beyond understanding. How can scientists, who do not even understand themselves, grasp anything about the conscience?

Even Churchill declared, “Scientists today struggle to understand everything, but they make no efforts to understand themselves.” Scientists exert to control everything external, but they are not able to control their senses. This is exactly what young Prahlada advised his father, Hiranyakasipu¹⁰:

You, who have won supremacy over all the worlds,
Father, cannot control your own mind and senses.
Father, you have won over the worlds, even
subjugated the five elements of Nature.

¹⁰ Hiranyakasipu, a hater of Lord Narayana, tried to kill his own son, Prahlada, in many ways because the boy was a devotee of the Lord. Finally, the Lord assumed the Narasimha (Man-Lion) *Avatar* and vanquished Hiranyakasipu.

But your senses and your mind remain beyond your control.

So what are your undisputed power and strength worth?”

Therefore, control of the senses is most important for students. The world abounds in violence only because students are slaves of their senses. We must be “masters”, not “slaves”. When can we be masters? Only with control of the senses.

Too much freedom is harmful

Students! Young children are pure at heart. Only due to faults in the education system do they seek destructive paths. Students are selfless and sacred. Parents at home and teachers in schools lead them astray. It is natural for parents to be attached to their children, but it should be within limits. Parents must always be watchful about their children’s behaviour. Today’s parents themselves do not know what is right conduct. How can they guide children? There is too much freedom. Yes, freedom is desirable. What kind of freedom?

The end of wisdom is freedom.
The end of culture is perfection.
The end of knowledge is love.
The end of education is character.

Yes, this kind of freedom is definitely worth pursuing. But by giving children the liberty to act as they please, by letting them return home at 1a.m. or 2a.m., by not questioning their whereabouts, parents totally ruin them. Students have no manners and discipline. However, this is not entirely their fault. Excessive love of the parents encourages their waywardness.

Serve your motherland

Students, strive to demonstrate your purity in every field of activity. Do not study for degrees alone. Study for self-satisfaction. Serve your country, serve your country, serve your country — This is absolutely essential. To depart to Iran, Iraq, Germany, the USA, or Japan soon after securing an engineering or medical degree is treason to the Motherland! You must serve Mother India, which gave birth to you and brought you up. Every individual should serve their country. Is it proper to leave one’s own mother and consider some other lady as mother? The mother and motherland are worth far more than heaven itself (*Janani janma-bhoomischa svargaadapi gariyasi*¹¹).

¹¹ Sri Rama’s words from the epic *Ramayana*

If all the educated children go abroad, what will become of our nation? Rather than earning hundreds of thousands outside, you will enjoy greater peace of mind if you earn hundreds here. This is morality. “Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows.” Students, develop patriotism. If you do not have love for your country, how can you love your body? The country (*desa*) and your body (*deha*) are reflections of each other. We do not need to go abroad and beg for a living! What is available in *Bharat* is not present anywhere else.

Loving Mother India is not a matter of shame! Since ancient times, India alone has propagated spirituality and various kinds of knowledge throughout the world. But Indians are in the same pitiable state as an elephant unaware of its strength. The elephant, unaware of its own strength, shudders at the sight of the small iron rod shown by its master. In the same way, we become a prey to attraction, attraction, attraction... We get attracted by the money and glamour of foreign countries. No, no. We do not need this attraction.

Mind determines bondage and liberation

We do not need different kinds of “information”. We need “transformation”. This is the difference between worldly and spiritual education. Science is “outlook”. Spirituality means looking inward. What is the use in looking outward? Even animals experience the world through the five senses of touch, sight, hearing, taste, and smell. We must cultivate inner vision. We must introspect in every situation, “Is it right or wrong?” Our mind alone is accountable for both bondage and liberation.

Students! Your heart may be compared to a lock. It is not possible to open it with any key. Your mind alone is the key. When you insert the key of the mind into the lock of your heart and turn “right”, it opens. When you turn left, it locks. When we turn our vision to the world, we develop attachment. When we turn to Divinity, detachment results. Therefore, for attachment and liberation, our direction alone matters, while the lock and the key are the same. Cultivate inner view. This is true education.

Yes, worldly education is necessary. I do not ask you to give it up. Whatever you do, do it with dedication (*sraddha*). “The secret of happiness is not doing what you like, but liking what you do.” Every act must be suffused with Love. If you say, “I can do only those acts with Love that I like to do”, that is the wrong approach. Whatever you do, infuse it with interest and Love. See all work as spiritual exercise, as an offering.

Then, work is transformed into worship. This is the way to serve our nation and set the right examples for the progress of India.

Honour Your Parents

Students! For your birth, for your upbringing, for your education in *Bhaarat* – For these invaluable boons, you must bring a good name to your parents. Our culture teaches four guiding principles:

Treat the mother as God: *Maatru Devo bhavah*
Treat the father as God: *Pitru Devo bhavah*
Treat the teacher as God: *Acharya Devo bhavah*
Treat the guest as God: *Atithi Devo bhavah*

No matter how high your position in life, even if you become the Prime Minister, you are still your mother’s son. First and foremost, love and respect your mother. Second, respect your father. The world can never honour one who does not respect his own parents.

Students! Each of you must sit alone in solitude and ponder upon this important issue: “Food, blood, and head” are gifts from parents. First comes gratitude to the parents. Everywhere I look, I find students who do not even *feel* gratitude to their parents! Parents also indulge their children, instead of pointing out this deficiency in their character. Children consider parents as “friends”! Parents should not permit such reckless behaviour. Why? It will only ruin the children’s future.

I know I am taking a lot of your time, but I want to tell you this significant point. You may have heard of the poet, Premchand¹². There is a nice example in his life. He had two sons studying in Allahabad. Premchand and his wife planned to depart to Nainital one day. They told their sons, “You must come and see us off at the railway station”. Both the sons went to the station as instructed.

The older son bowed low at his parents’ feet and said, “*Namaste*¹³, father. *Namaste*, mother”. The second son walked-up arrogantly with hands in his pockets and exclaimed, “How are you, mummy and daddy?” [Laughter] He did not salute them or show reverence. Premchand was shocked, but he kept quiet, talking only of their studies and health. The train started moving. The older son stood respectfully with folded hands on the platform till the train went out of sight. The younger son shouted out, “Ta ta, bye bye”!

¹² Munshi Premchand, a famous novelist and poet of the Hindi language

¹³ Traditional Indian greeting. *Namaste* = *Namah* (my salutations) + *Te* (to you). Also, *Namaskaaram*.

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In the train, Premchand was very restless. He paced up and down nervously. His wife asked, "What is the problem?" He explained, "Didn't you notice? Our younger son showed us no reverence?" His wife said, "Poor boy, he is young and inexperienced. Why should you find fault with him? Why worry over such a triviality?"

Premchand lay down. Before falling asleep, he told his wife again, "Our younger son didn't show us respect". He could not think about anything else. He spoke of this incident on many occasions. His wife always replied in defense of their son, "Has he caused us any harm? You should stop worrying about it". Premchand would tell her strongly, "You think I'm concerned for myself? No. Such behaviour will jeopardise his own future."

Only a student who honours the parents can enjoy a safe and secure future. This truth was amply demonstrated in the lives of Premchand's sons. The older boy passed his examinations in flying colours and, in due course, became a judge in the Allahabad High Court. Wherever he went in the city, people bowed down to him. The younger son worked as a clerk, also in Allahabad. Instead of receiving respect, he had to salute everyone! Do you see? One who respected his parents became worthy of everyone's respect. The one who did not respect his parents was compelled to bow down to all. This inevitable law can never be changed by anyone.

Regardless of your degrees and positions, first respect your parents. Parents may give you freedom due to their attachment. Love and respect them, and do not misuse that freedom. From their point of view, they have given you certain liberties. From your perspective, you can use the freedom constructively. Respect your parents.

During this fortnight learn the right ways to think, speak, and act in different situations. With the hope and blessing that you imbibe sacred ideals, I bring My discourse to a close.

[The National Anthem of India, *Jana Gana Mana*, was sung upon Swami's instruction]

20 May 1991



2. The Vedic Heritage of India

The Creator shines within the universe,
And the universe is reflected in the Creator.
God and Creation are eternally bound as friends.
The words of Sai convey the Truth.

The Earth and the Sun

The entire cosmos resides in God (*Isavaasyam idam jagat*). The world is where we take birth, grow up, and die. The Earth is the foundation for the world. Wind pervades all places at all times, without a moment's rest. But it is not visible to people. Work, travel, and care of the body is undertaken during the day. Nature sleeps silently at night. One sees light during the day and darkness at night. It is essential to recognise the relation between light and darkness.

Look up, and you perceive the glorious Sun across the backdrop of the blue sky. In the infinite sky, there is only one Sun, who sheds brilliant light. Activities are undertaken in this world every moment. Good deeds, duties, births, deaths, marriages, celebrations ... —such actions are performed ceaselessly by people while they vacillate between joy and sorrow. There is no end to this routine.

Hunger assails a person just after birth. As soon as the umbilical cord is severed, the baby cries for food. It stops crying when honey, glucose, or milk is fed to it. Therefore, the first trouble encountered is hunger. Food is the means to satisfy hunger. Food grows with the help of water. Machines and computers may have been invented, but food and water alone satisfy hunger. The Earth accepts the offering of water and supplies grain to humanity.

Evolution of human intellect

As people cultivated the Earth, population increased. Agriculture, cattle, towns, and cities developed. Human society progressed by understanding nature and using it for its basic needs. Human beings began collecting articles for their daily needs. They discovered a few secrets of nature. They went further and understood that what they know was limited compared to what they needed to discover.

Humanity cannot create the Earth or create water. When two branches of a tree rub against each other, sparks are produced. People did not introduce fire into

wood. The fire, although immanent in the branch, protects the branch without burning it. This is something beyond humanity. In this manner, one gradually recognised that there was a power that was invisible, inaudible, and beyond the mental capacity.

Gayatri mantra

To know anything, direct experience is necessary. People began enquiring into methods to obtain direct proof of this superhuman power. They developed the faith that the Sun was one such proof of the existence of Divinity. Without the Sun, there would be no light. For the growth of crops or living beings, hydrogen is very essential. The Sun's energy comes from hydrogen and helium. The world cannot exist without these two elements. Therefore, people were convinced that the Sun was a direct perception of God. They also discovered a few subtle secrets pertaining to the Sun.

Thus, the Sun God began to be considered the patron deity of the *Gayatri Mantra*. *Dhi yo yo nah prachodayaat* —Our intellects must glow as brilliantly as the Sun— such prayers were offered. Invoking the Sun God through the *Gayatri mantra*, people revered the *Gayatri* as the Mother of the *Vedas*.

The *Gayatri mantra* is not restricted to a certain period of time, to a particular country, or to a certain class of people. *Bhoor bhuvah svaha* pertains to all three times —past, present, and future. Light alone dispels darkness. *Bhargo Devasya dheemahi* —to dispel the darkness of ignorance, the Sun God was invoked.

God through numbers

Gradually, people began learning numbers. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten —of these ten numbers, number 1 is primary. All others are merely its combinations. Two is 1 repeated two times. Nine is the repetition of 1 nine times. One realised that all numbers were alternative forms of the number 1.

Hence, “Truth is one but seers describe it in many ways (*Ekam sat vipraa bahudaa vadanti*).” Mankind realised that the basis underlying creation was one, while people saw it as multiple forms. The *Vedas* express this concept as: “The One appears as many (*Ekoham bahusyaam*).” Without the number ONE, no

other number can exist. Even through mathematics, mankind arrived at the truth that God is One.

Significance of God's names

Thus, people firmly believed that there was an all-powerful Force in the universe, and that it was One without a second. That single power had assumed multiple names and forms and pervaded the universe, it was discovered. The *Vedas* announced this truth in the words: *Isaavaasyam Idam Jagat*.

People of ancient India called this power by the name *Aaditya*. *Aaditya* means one of the twelve *Aadityas*, namely, Vishnu. Now, Vishnu is not just a four-armed Being holding the conch, discus, mace, and lotus. Vishnu is the principle that is omnipresent. Of course, we have gradually attributed a form to that omnipresent power. *Vishnu* means omnipresence.

Why do we consider Aaditya as the One underlying the cosmos? Consider vessels made of silver, gold, brass, copper, and mud. When filled with water, you can see the Sun reflected in all of them. The pots may be different but the Sun appears equally in all. A thousand pots will produce a thousand images of the Sun. People grasped the truth that although the pots can be many, the Sun was One. On this basis, people began considering the body as a pot. The body is temporary, made of mud (*mrinmayam*), but it houses a bright, golden, indestructible consciousness (*chinmayam*), which was called *Hiranyagarbha*.

Thus, people started humbly, made steady progress in their understanding of the cosmos, and finally arrived at the Ultimate Truth about the One appearing as many. People gave another name to that One Power: *Iswara*. This word means, the One who has inexhaustible wealth. What is this wealth? Health, money, education, good qualities, intelligence, mind, senses —everything is a form of wealth. *Iswara* is the embodiment of all forms of wealth (*sakala aisvarya svaroopam*).

Next, people addressed God by the name *Siva*. *Siva* means one who is beyond the three *gunas* (qualities of nature) —purity (*sathwa*), restlessness (*rajas*), and inertia (*thamas*). Since He transcended the *gunas*, He was also called *Suddha Satwa* (one with pure nature). This is the power bestowing auspiciousness. Joy and well-being result only in the absence of the three *gunas*. *Gunas* lead to inauspiciousness. *Siva*, therefore, was the most auspicious one.

Humanity progressed further, giving a fourth name to God: *Sambhava*. What is the meaning of *Sambhava*? One who expresses and manifests Himself according to His Will, unrestricted by rules, wherever and whenever necessary, is *Sambhava*. The *Bhagavad Gita* says:

Whenever righteousness declines, O Arjuna,
And unrighteousness rises, I incarnate.
To protect the pious and destroy the wicked,
To establish *dharma*, I incarnate in every age.

*Yadaa Yadaa Hi Dharmasya Glanirbhavati Bharata
Abhyutthanam Adharmasya Tad Atmaanam Sru-
jaamyaham
Paritraanaaya Saadhunaam Vinaashaaya Cha
Dushkrutaam
Dharma Samsthaapanaarthaaya Sambhavaami
Yuge Yuge.*¹

The word *sambhavaami* means: He incarnates whenever necessary, wherever necessary, not bound by any rules. Thus, man recognised the various qualities of God and attributed names describing each aspect.

Another name attributed to God was *Isa*. Now, we must understand how sublime were the intellects of people by this time, namely, the sages of ancient India. *Isa* meant property, wealth, fame, beauty, knowledge, and renunciation. The One adorned with the six kinds of prosperity was *Isa*.

The intellect became sharper and sharper, and finally, God was addressed as *Aprameya*. This means: One who cannot be measured by any proof (*pramaana*). We can possibly measure the ocean with a tape or even the dimensions of the sky. But it is impossible to fathom God. The three kinds of proof² —*pratyaksha*, *anumaana*, *sabda*— are unable to reach God. Man began propagating that this immeasurable God was all-pervading. The world cannot exist without Divinity. Whether man believes in it or not, Divinity is omnipresent.

Peak of human intellect: humans are potentially divine

In order to come face-to-face with this divine Power, sages of ancient India undertook penance (*tapas*). They understood that the primary goal of a human life was to recognise God, and this became the basis of life. While everyone started their spiritual quest with zest, some gave up after deciding that it was an impossible task. Some others did not even bother trying because, they said, “We are so fallen and God is so exalted. How can we experience the lofty state of Divinity?” No, no. This sacred human birth has emerged from nowhere except Divinity!

¹ *Bhagavad Gita* (IV:7)

² *Vedas* list logical methods (or *pramaanaas*) of arriving at any truth. Three primary methods are: (a) direct evidence, *pratyaksha*, (b) by inference, *anumana*, and (c) by holy words or sounds, *sabda*.

An eternal spark of Myself became the individual souls in the world of mortals

*Mamaivaamso jiva loke jiva bhootah sanaatanah*³

A human being is a spark of the Divine, nothing less. It is absolutely necessary for a son to recognise his father! Pondering in this manner, some sages persevered in the face of countless troubles and inconveniences. Ultimately, the energy generated by their penance granted them the knowledge of Divinity. The enlightened sages did not hide this knowledge but propagated it throughout the world.

“Arise, awake, and achieve your goal, O people in the sleep of ignorance (*Uttishtata, jaagrata, praapya varaannibodhita!*)”, declared the sages. “Witness the Divine effulgence for yourselves. We have seen Him. Where? God is present inside, outside, everywhere (*Antar bahischa Thath sarvam vyaapya Narayana sthitaha*). Do you know how God looks? It is impossible to describe that Great Person, brilliant like the Sun. (*Vedaah vedam Purusham Mahaantam, aditya varnam tamasah parastaat*). Where is He present? Beyond darkness (*thamas*).”

Unless we transcend the darkness of ignorance, we cannot experience Him.

How can we achieve the Truth without renouncing ignorance (*thamas*)?

Devotion cannot dawn without letting go of passion (*rajas*).

Purity (*sathwa*) alone is a divine instrument.

Do not forget this sensible advice.

First of all, we must get rid of the ignorant-inertia (*thamasic*) quality in us. Did we acquire the body only to eat and sleep? No, no. Eating and sleeping are bestial characteristics. The human quality which transcends animal nature is discrimination. Removal of *thamas* makes discrimination possible and allows passion (*rajas*) to surface. *Rajas* binds by luring the mind into a continuous chain of desires. When *rajas* is also surpassed, purity (*sathwa*) reigns and brings enlightenment.

Students! The secrets revealed in the *Vedas* are unfathomable and momentous. Those who approach the *Vedas* with faith and dedication (*sraddha*) find the path very simple, indeed. The person who opens their eyes can see billions of stars in the sky. But one who is blind or refuses to look cannot see even a powerful bulb kept in front of them. We are unable to discern Divinity although it shines with the brilliance of a million Suns! We must open the eyes of faith (*sraddha*) and devotion—These are the eyes of wisdom, which see beyond physical eyes.

³ Bhagavad Gita (XV:7)

Where is God?

Where is God? Students pray before meals, but they do not grasp the meaning. You say:

The offering is Brahman, the *ghee* is Brahman, Offered by Brahman into the sacred fire, also Brahman.

That one shall reach Brahman
Who perceives only Brahman in all actions.⁴

*Brahmaarpanam Brahma Havir
Brahmaagnau Brahmanaahutam
Brahmaiva Tena Gantavyam
Brahma Karma Samaadhinaa*

The food is an offering (*arpanam*). To whom? In the prayer you offer it to Brahma. Where is Brahma? The answer is present in the next part of the prayer :

I am present as The Cosmic Person (Vaisvaanara)
In the bodies of all beings.
Along with *Prana* and *Apana*,
I digest the four kinds of food.

*Aham Vaisvaanaro Bhootva,
Praaninaam Deham Aasritah
Praanaapaana Samaayuktah,
Pachaamyannam Chaturvidham*

God says, “O madman! I am in YOU, in the form of Vaisvaanara. Without My presence in your body, you would die of indigestion! I am the One who digests the food you eat.” Therefore, one has no excuse for doubts.

Do not doubt

The one who doubts can never be convinced by anyone. You can get a person’s attention by calling their name. A sleeping person may be awakened by two or three nudges. But it is impossible to awaken one who is pretending to be asleep! This is what the cowherd maidens (*gopikas*) told Krishna: “Lord! You are not awake, you are not asleep. You only pretend to be asleep. How can we wake You? Please stop acting and listen to us.”

God needs no sleep. If God sleeps, the whole universe will fall asleep! God is never awake, either! How can God be characterised as “awake” if God never sleeps? Can you wake up a person who is never asleep? Waking and sleeping apply to those who distinguish between night and day. Truly, there is nothing known as day or night. Depending on the course of the Sun and the place, time is categorised as such. When the Sun

⁴ *Bhagavad Gita* (IV:24). Brahman is the formless God. In *Vedic* rituals, *ghee* (clarified butter) is offered into fire. *Ghee* is symbolic of the object being offered to God, and the sacred fire takes the offering to the Lord.

peers over the horizon, we call it day. When the Sun sets, night. But to the world, there is no day or night.

East, west, north, and south are illusions as well. We ascribe names to directions, based on the rising and setting Sun. That is why scientists say that sunrise, sunset, and the directions are fallacies. Yes, they *say* so, but do not demonstrate it in action. He says, “Good morning, Sir”. Where did this “morning” come from? [laughter] If they believe that morning and night do not exist, why do they use the term at all?

Therefore, as long as we are subservient to nature, living a worldly life, we must obey its laws and live by its standards. Till when? As long as we perceive the distinctions of “I”, “you” and “she”. When we forget these three entities, we reach the *Atma*. The distinction between yourself and another must be rejected. This is not easy, but anything is possible with practice. Unfortunately, man does not persevere with faith and patience.

God’s will determines birth and death

People were initially animals, able to do little more than eat and sleep. Gradually, they developed intelligence and discrimination, observed the world around them, and invented comforts. Although they investigated everything external, they stopped short of explaining the reasons behind birth and death.

What is the secret behind birth and death? One who is born must necessarily die. But we do not know if the expired person is reborn again. Great sages of India exerted to discover such laws. They concluded that birth and death transcended human understanding, that they happened due to God’s Will. Why?

Are people able to live as long as they want? A person may tell himself, “I am healthy. I can easily live for 10 more years.” That very evening, they might die in a car accident. Did good health guarantee a long life? What was responsible for the death? Not health, strength, money, or property, but God’s Will alone.

Countless activities take place without one’s efforts. Does a person make their heart pulsate? Does they voluntarily inhale and exhale, or bring about blood circulation? These are divine Will, not human effort.

The sages concluded that nothing could surmount God’s Will. “O man, people may tell you that you will live a hundred years. Do not believe such words. You cannot tell if you will die as a child, as a youth, or in old age, in a village, forest, or water. While life lingers in your body, know God, know yourself!” the sages exhorted. Do not postpone such important matters. No one is exempt from death. Death is also God’s Will and

Grace. Hence, the sages advised man to keep God in mind ceaselessly.

Accomplishments of the sages

Where does this life-force reside in the human body? The *Vedas* declare — *Neela thoyadha madhyasthaa vidyulleke ubhaasurah* — In our backbone, we have a spinal column composed of 33 rings. Between the ninth and twelfth rings, there is a “lightning flash” (*vidyulleke*), known as the *sushumna nadi*. It is resplendent and fast like lightning. It energises organs of the body. Some people maintain that the life-force dwells in the heart. The heart is merely the “main switch”. When a heart is transplanted, does the life-force leave the body? Only the *sushumna nadi* makes the heart function.

The ancient sages are looked upon as ignorant mendicants, who did not know anything about science or the workings of nature. In fact, those sages discovered volumes more than today’s scientists. The greatest scientist was none other than Hiranyakasipu. He not only investigated nature but brought the five elements under his sway! Present-day scientists cannot claim even a thousandth of Hiranyakasipu’s achievements. Hiranyakasipu could journey at will to the bottom of the ocean. The heights of space or the bowels of the Earth could not limit him, either. He researched into the nature of atoms. Despite his towering accomplishments, he did not know himself. And our sages were far greater than Hiranyakasipu. Therefore, it is not possible to compare the sages with anybody. What efforts they made! What stupendous powers they won!

The doctors of today pride themselves on their skill at operations. After reading piles of books, after travelling abroad, after making martyrs out of many unfortunate souls, they proclaim themselves accomplished doctors! Even for that, they are dependent on various electronic instruments. But in ancient India, there was one sage who was an adept at health science: Bharadwaja.

Sage Bharadwaja mastered medicine and surgery and propagated it as *Ayurveda*. What is *Ayurveda*? *Ayu* (age) + *Veda* = *Ayurveda*. That branch of the *Vedas* which grants us life is *Ayurveda*. Unfortunately, these days we have lost faith in it due to our impatience. We want fast results! Quick cures can just as easily produce quick diseases.

For instance, antibiotics. Quick results! Two drops of antibiotics reduce a fever in no time. Yes, it is cured. But *more* fever ensues later, as a delayed reaction. The power of penance gathered by the sages made them eligible to discover methods without such adverse reactions.

The achievements of our sages were based on penance. They could envision distant places, and converse with people thousands of miles away. Today we spend millions, time, and effort to install telephone networks for such communication. Our sages did not have to spend a single penny! They only made their mind and hearts pure with divine feelings, and all powers became subservient to them.

Do not shun troubles

Therefore, students, understand how humanity started at an animal's level and made gradual progress, ultimately comprehending the secrets of creation and the Creator Himself. Nobody is born a scholar or seer. Humanity could gradually accumulate knowledge about the Truth only with faith and devotion.

We undertake untold troubles to secure two letters like B.A. or M.A. Do we expend even a fraction of that labour to recognise Divinity? What have we offered to become worthy of God's Grace? Nothing at all. We *must* make efforts proportional to the fruit we expect! By practice alone can you succeed. We must not give up saying, "I do not know." The unknown alone is worth pursuing! This was the sense of adventure of our great sages. To this end, they bore troubles, sorrow, heat and rain, and surmounted all obstacles.

Nowadays, we want every undertaking to be peaceful, smooth, and free of hurdles. We cannot tolerate even the slightest inconvenience. The one who desires peace all the time cannot achieve anything. The one who sets their sight on victory loses the right to demand peace! Therefore, we must renounce everything and offer ourselves to God! Then, all transcendental wisdom springs forth within us.

Humility

Despite their mastery over countless branches of knowledge and superhuman powers, the sages of those days had no trace of pride. The scientists and researchers of today discover the smallest fact and behave like they are beyond everyone's reach! This arrogance wrecks their intellect. A truly educated person can never be conceited.

Students must make particular note of this point. Humility is the jewel of a student's character. After all, what has science accomplished? We congratulate ourselves on tiny successes and develop ego for no reason. A small example. The Sun generates tremendous energy every moment. If the Sun's energy is 3000 units, no more than 2 units is harnessed by scientists. If a mere 2 units could saturate the world with so much

energy, imagine how resplendent this planet would be with remaining 2998 units!

Therefore, even a ray of God's Grace makes us capable of every achievement. Acknowledging this truth, our sages prayed in all humility, "God, shower an infinitesimal ray of Your Grace on us." Even a spark of God's Grace gives endless bounty. Without Him, no one can achieve even the smallest victory.

An eagle will not rise even an inch if it does not want to. With the inclination, even an ant can walk hundreds of miles. Practice is supreme. Practice and effort is the duty of man, while success and failure are God's Will. Therefore, resign to God's Will, and you will always enjoy success! "Success begets success." First earn God's Grace, and thereafter, you can scale any height.

Offer yourself to God

Students! Today your Vice Chancellor raised a very pertinent question: "How can one visualise, reach, and experience one's innate Divinity?" The question of attaining Divinity is profound, but the solution is deceptively simple.

No abstruse spiritual practice (*sadhana*) is required. Gajendra tussled with the crocodile for thousands of years!⁵ He fought hard, but on what basis? With his physical might, his personal ego. As long as you rely on ego-based powers of body, intellect, power, money and so on, you can never win. Ultimately Gajendra got exhausted. He realised his folly and called out, "Lord, forgive me! I have none other than You! Come and rescue me!" When he surrendered — "none other than you" — he was saved.

Look at Arjuna. He prided himself on his intellect as well. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, till the eighth verse of the second chapter, Arjuna bombarded Krishna with a volley of questions! But he expended all his philosophy in a short while. After all, how far can human intellect go? Poor fellow, his lifelong accumulation of intellectual ideas was deflated in Krishna's presence! Finally, he could not utter a word more and acceded with folded hands, "I shall do as you say (*Karishye Vachanam Tava*)."⁶ Then Krishna assured him, "Good! Come on, now I'll teach you.

Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me,
Sacrifice to Me, bow to Me.
I promise that you shall come to Me.

⁵ The story of Gajendra (elephant king) in the epic, *The Bhagavatam*. The elephant, a devotee of Vishnu, was caught by a crocodile while drinking water from a lake.

⁶ *Bhagavad Gita* (XVIII:73)

Know this truth, for you are dear to Me.⁷

*Manmana bhava Madbhakto,
Madyaaji naam Namaskuru
Maamevaishyasi satyam Te
Pratijaane priyosi Me*

“Now you are My devotee. From this moment, I shall take care of You.”

Dedication to the Lord is the easiest way to fulfil your life. Unfortunately, devotees do not understand the concept of offering themselves (*arpitam*). They behave like “shareholders”! “Half is mine, half is Yours. Let us do business.” They treat spirituality as a partnership. “I shall do my job — Prayer. You do Yours — Shower grace on me”. No, no, this approach will not work. “I offer myself to You” is the correct attitude! He will take care of every detail Himself.

Effects of environment

I cautioned students about this point in Kodaikanal. As long as boys are in Swami’s physical presence, listening to discourses, and living in this spiritually charged environment, they are pure and cheerful. The day they depart, they change for the worse. Why?

The human body is made of mud, it is perishable. A small example. Take a clay mug full of water. If you leave it untouched for a day, three inches of water are absorbed by the clay. But if this water-filled mug is kept afloat in a barrel of water, the water inside the mug does not deplete.

Our students are like the clay mug. We fill them to the brim with the water of spirituality, but their inner feelings are drained when they step into a worldly environment. If we spiritualise our surroundings, there is no scope for such danger!

You have *satsanga* (good company) here and *dus-sanga* (bad company) outside. Create and seek *satsanga* everywhere you go! Only when you engage yourself in good actions with good company will your devotion (*bhakti*) grow steadily without being smothered by worldliness.

Name on lips, work in hands

Merely chanting *mantras* or repeating God’s Name is of no use. We must engage ourselves in God’s work, as I have told you a number of times. Hanuman reached Lanka and befriended Vibhishana. During their conversation, Vibhishana expressed grief, “Hanumanta, you are fortunate, indeed. You are ceaselessly engaged in service to Rama, thereby worthy of His Grace. I’ve been

repeating the Name of Rama for many years now, but I haven’t secured His *darshan* yet.”

Hanuman asked him beautiful questions, “Vibhishana, you chant Rama’s name, but are you involved in Rama’s work? Without working for Rama, how can you expect Grace? It has been many weeks since Sita Devi was brought captive to Lanka. Isn’t service to Sita a valuable service to Rama? Have you ever gone to the Ashoka grove and consoled her? Have you even met her once? Have you familiarised yourself with her troubles and taken steps to provide her with conveniences?

“My every *roma* (hair) says Rama! But I did not stop there. I offered my life to Rama. I am engaged in actions dear to Him, day and night.” Therefore, the lesson is: The name of Rama in the heart, the work of Rama in the hand (*Dil me Ram, haath me kaam*). This is the way to offer our lives to the Lord.

Such was the spiritual discipline (*sadhana*) undertaken by the sages of ancient India. Their investigations were of pure intent also. Therefore, man is not ordinary. A human birth is rare among all species (*Jantoonam nara janma durlabham*). To make this valuable birth meaningful, we must plunge into divine contemplation and enquire into God, as much as possible.

Changes to daily schedule

Students! From this day, I have decided to bring about some changes. The number of students in our hostels has grown. All want to take a bath in the morning before Swami’s *darshan* (audience). Some students are compelled to wake up as early as 2 a.m.! Baths begin at 2 a.m. and end at 8 a.m. With insufficient sleep, the poor students are dull in afternoon classes.

Therefore, I suspend afternoon classes from tomorrow. When you come for this assembly in the evening, your minds will be fresh. Attend three classes in the morning and have lunch at 11:30. Use the afternoon hours to review your lessons and rest. When you come for My discourse at 4 o’clock, you should be fresh. Now, I see you are sleepy. Despite the beautiful words of Swami, I notice... [Swami let His head fall forward as if in sleep, and all laughed]. Priceless advice is thus wasted on inattentive ears.

As per these instructions, the Vice Chancellor will arrange for three classes in the morning, instead of the usual two, and terminate school at 11:30. However, you must not waste the afternoon hours in frivolous talk. Either review the morning lessons or catch some sleep.

Starting tomorrow, I shall expound on the subject “*How Man Can Reach Divinity*”, as requested by your Vice-Chancellor. This is the most compelling goal of

⁷ *Bhagavad Gita* (XVIII:65), Sri Krishna to Arjuna

man. Having taken birth as a *maanava* (man), your prime aspiration must be to become *Maadhava* (God). Today we hear news from many countries. But we do not pay heed to the voice from within. Discard “news” about others and look inward —then you will find it easy to discard the “nuisance” within you.

Attend evening discourses with fresh and clean minds from tomorrow onward. You will hear priceless lessons, so clean the container of your heart to receive them. You will hear nothing different from the teachings of the *sastras*, *Upanishads* and *Vedas*. Everything is contained in the *Vedas*. But, owing to the absence of persons who can digest them and explain the essence of these scriptures, young people have lost interest in them. I have decided to deliver these grand truths to you in a lucid manner. There will be no afternoon classes from tomorrow.

[Swami concluded with “*Govinda Krishna Jai, Gopala Krishna Jai*” in His golden voice]

21 May 1991

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3. Thath Twam Asi —That Thou Art

Invisible in the visible world,
He shines as the consciousness, the *Atma*.
Like a thread through a necklace of gems,
The Creator permeates the whole universe.

Embodiments of Love!

Everything is Braman¹ (*Sarvam Khlavidam Brahma*). This is the essence of all *Upanishads*. The entire universe, living and non-living, is encompassed in this small statement. There is nothing that is not Brahman. Like fire latent in wood, like oil in seeds, God is present wherever we turn.

Creation, sustenance, and destruction are God's Will. The wheel of Time rotates as per God's command, whether one believes it or not. People forget that it is their duty to sanctify time by using it meaningfully.

Brotherhood of mankind

The sun shines, the moon lends its coolness to the world, rains pour, rivers flow, crops are harvested. Nature showers bounties for all humanity, not for any individual. Every person has an equal birthright over Nature.

People do not strive to understand the principle of equality. It is only among children that we find the spirit of brotherhood. Nourished by their mother's milk, enjoying the cool breeze, forgetting themselves in mothers' sweet lullabies, babies alone are able to plunge into the spirit of love. As the years pass, feelings of "mine", "yours", and "theirs" develop.

Selfishness is on the rise, sacrifice is disappearing, and human values are being destroyed. Why? The absence of faith in the *Atma* and faith in oneself, forgetting that the *Atma* is all-pervasive. Narayana is present in you, outside you, around you, everywhere (*Anthar-bahischa Thath sarvam vyaapya Narayana sthitah*).

The world teems with rich, strong, virtuous, and educated people, but not with self-realised individuals. Who is said to be self-realised? That person's body looks the same, and it even looks like they have a mind. But in truth, that person has gone beyond the mind and become the *Atma*. That person is engrossed in the *Atma* without interruption. In ancient India, many sages

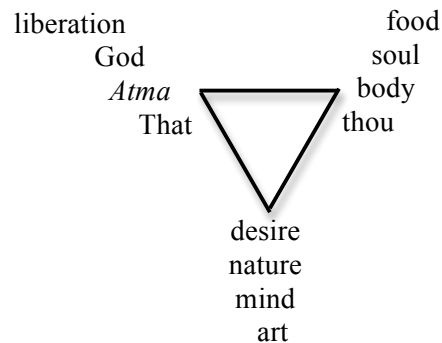
(*rishis*) experienced the divine sweetness of the *Atma* and have propagated it to the world.

Body, mind, and Atma

For the benefit of laymen, sages (*rishis*) classified the essence of the *Upanishads* on the basis of a triangle: body, mind, and *Atma*. The body is gross (*sthula*), the *Atma* is subtle (*sukshma*). The mind connects the body and *Atma*, making it possible for them to come together. The harmony and integration of these three elements was called Nature (*Thathwam*).

People do not understand the term *Thathwam*. *Thath* is "That". *Thwam* is "this". What is "That"? When something is distant or unknown, we refer to it as "that". What is near is called "this". Our senses determine what is near and what is far. The physical body, in close proximity to the senses, was called "this" by the *rishis*. The principles beyond the reach of the senses is "that", the *Atma*. The characteristic of the mind is to merge the distant *Atma* with the proximate body. This merger is represented by the term *asi*. Thus we have the *Vedic* injunction *Thath thwam asi* (That thou art).

A human being is a blend of body, mind, and *Atma*. "That thou art" has no abstract, complex meaning. The joining of "that" and "this" is "That thou art": the unity of the indivisible *Atma* and the visible body, leading to Divinity.



Another triad used by the sages was individual soul, universal soul or God, and nature or world or creation (*jiva, Deva, and prakriti*). Also, food, liberation, and desire (*bhukthi, mukthi, and rakthi*). The world itself is made possible only by desire. Food is essential for the upkeep of the body, and liberation is the attainment of

¹ The One Formless, Eternal, Infinite Divinity.

the *Atma*. Therefore, “That thou art” teaches that food, desire, and liberation are all necessary for human life.

Through the teaching of “That thou art”, the *rishis* harmonised people’s higher aspirations with everyday life. They taught that “That thou art” flows as a continuous stream through the past, present, and future.

The *rishis* imparted beautiful teachings to humanity using “That thou art.” A river flows and ultimately merges into the ocean. Water from the ocean evaporates into vapour, which takes form as clouds. Clouds descend to the earth as rain. Rain collects into streams, which collect together as rivers. Where does the river come from, and what is the source of its water? The river itself has no idea! But once it reaches the ocean, it says, “That thou art” — I am no different from the ocean.

A seed sown in the soil sprouts and becomes a plant. The plant grows into a tree with branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits. From where did the branches, leaves, and fruits emerge? Although a fruit, leaf, and branch look and feel different, they are essentially one, from the same source. Ancient Indians knew this truth. The seed proclaims, “That thou art (*Thath thwam asi*) —the branches, leaves, and fruits emerged from me alone.

The *rishis* propagated, “The entire universe abides in God (*Isaavaasyam idam sarvam*). When you dissolve sugar in water, it is no longer visible or tangible. But it is definitely present, a fact easily proved by taste. What does the indivisible sugar assert? “That thou art” —the sweetness is mine, not of the water! The great sages used such simple examples to emphasize the fundamental truth that God pervades the entire universe, that the universe dwells in God.

Om — the seed of Creation

There is only One, but it appears in various names and forms. The *Upanishads* declare that unity in diversity is the cornerstone of Indian culture. We waste our lives trusting in external differences, overlooking the underlying unity.

We have the three syllables *a*, *u*, and *m*. The unity of these sounds is *Aum* or *Om*. This sound, also called *pranava*, is a reflection of the world, and the world is a form of *Om*. These two principles, *Om* and Creation, intermingle and coexist. To recognise the *Atma* in their unity is the purpose of life, the *Upanishads* say. Why? Because *Om* is present within every individual as silence.

We might doubt, “I do not see or hear *Om* anywhere in my body.” What are inhalation and exhalation? What is the circulation of blood? They are nothing but the flows of *pranava* (*Om*). When the wind blows through trees, you can hear *Om*. Go to an electric pole and put

your ear to it —you will hear *Om*! However, we allow other thoughts and forms to distract us from its awareness.

For instance, we inhale *soooo* and exhale *hummm*. This cycle of *so* and *hum* becomes *sohum* —this is *Om*. *Sohum* (I am that) is not different from *Thath thwam asi* (That thou art). The *Vedas* say, “Brahman is the one-syllable *Om* (*Om iti ekaaksharam Brahma*).” Now, you may ask, how are *so sohum*, *Thath thwam asi*, and *Om* all the same?

Sohum = *so* + *hum*. Consider the first syllable, *so*. The *s* sound represents the four stages of *saalokya*, *sarupya*, *sameepya*, and *saayuja*². When you fall into deep sleep, forgetting the good and bad of the waking state, then you effectively subtract the *s* sound from *so* and are left with *o*. In the second syllable, *hum*, sound similarly falls away in deep sleep, leaving just *m*. The original sound of sound of *sohum* is, therefore, *Om*. The *s* and *hu* sounds prepend to *Om* only in the waking state, for inhalation and exhalation.

$$\begin{aligned} So &= s + o \\ hum &= hu + m \end{aligned}$$

Remove *s* from *so* and *hu* from *hum*. What remains is:

$$o + m = om$$

What does this mean? In the waking state, absorbed in the world of duality, we forget the single-syllable, non-dual Brahman, *Om*. We see duality, indicated by *sohum*. When we turn our vision to the world, we automatically become victims of pleasure and pain. In deep sleep, the waking world and its duality recede into imagination. For this reason, the *Vedas* say, “Deep sleep is the state of equanimity (*Nidre sthithih samaadhihi*).”

Cultivate faith

The *Upanishads* condense complex concepts into simple statements that ordinary people can understand and apply. *Upanishad* = *upa* (near) + *ni* (down) + *shad* (sit). The inner meaning of *Upanishad* is to approach the *guru* in humility and act as per the *guru*’s instructions.

God is as close or distant as you imagine (*Dhura adhure antike sah*), say the *Vedas*. Your feelings alone take God you closer or farther from Divinity, because God is everywhere, at all times. God is present in the smallest of atoms, and He encompasses the entire creation. He is smaller than the smallest (*Anoraneeyan mahato maheeyaan*), vaster than the cosmos. When one

² *Saalokya*: vision of God. *Saarupya*: acquiring a form similar to God. *Saameepya*: nearness to God. *Saayujya*: merger with God.

resolves to reach that glorious Divinity, when one perseveres in spiritual enquiry with faith and devotion, one will definitely achieve the goal.

But people do not strive to understand these concepts. They dedicate their life to mundane activities, not allotting even a few moments to the eternal journey. This lack of faith and dedication (*sraddha*) is a disease. One with faith acquires wisdom (*Sraddhaavaan labhate jnaanam*).

Peace of mind

People have no peace of mind and do not know why. Narada, son of Lord Brahma, an expert in the scriptures and a master of all sciences and arts, also lost his peace of mind once. He went to Sanatkumara³ and prayed, “Kindly explain to me the reason for my disturbance, eliminate it, and bless me with spiritual wisdom (*jnana*).

Sanatkumara asked him, “Narada what qualifications and skills do you possess? What have you studied? Narada was an adept at the 64 sciences described in the scriptures —not just one or two ordinary subjects but 64! He was also an authority on the four *Vedas*, the six *Vedagas*⁴, and the four *Upangas*⁵. But what good did these studies do him?

What is the use of any number of studies?
Who can escape destiny written on one’s forehead?
As soon as wrong ideals enter your mind,
Your virtues dry up like a pond in the summer.

Why did Narada lose his peace? “I am educated; I am a master of all scriptures.” Ego cut his peace at the root. Sanatkumara heard Narada patiently and said, “You think you are very learned. This is just talk. Degrees are just words, just denominations. There are many things beyond the shallow education you possess, Narada.”

Prana —the life principle

Narada was surprised that Sanatkumara casually dismissed his vast learning. Sanatkumara elaborated. “Greater than the name is speech. Mind is greater than speech. Will rules over the mind. Memory is predominant over will. And meditation is better than memory. Spiritual wisdom (*jnana*) is better than meditation, water

is better than wisdom, brilliance (*tejas*) is better than water, and life force (*prana*) is greater than brilliance. When you understand the life force, you will understand ‘That thou art (*Thath thwam asi*)’².” The life-force principle is essential to understand.

One small example. If we starve for a fortnight, 15 attributes (*kalaas*) in our body are depleted. With food, these attributes are restored. The body is composed of food (is *annamayam*). When food is denied, the body loses the life force.

The body is subject to decay, but the indwelling *Atma* is indestructible. The body, composed of the five elements, is bound to collapse, but the Indweller is immune to birth, death, attachments, and duality. The eternal *Atma* shines ceaselessly in this ephemeral body.

Sanatkumara advised Narada to enquire into this eternal Indweller. This concept was reiterated in Sage Uddalaka’s teachings to his son, Svetaketu.⁶ “Fix your vision on That by knowing which you will know everything,” Svetaketu was instructed.

True spiritual discipline: focus on Atma

Therefore, one needs to comprehend only one truth to understand everything. What is this truth? The *Atma*. Today, we have no faith in the *Atma*. We are interested in everything except the *Atma*. What spiritual discipline is expected of us today? Is it meditation, yoga, repetition of the Name, penance, sacrifice, or vows? None of these. We need only reject whatever does not pertain to the *Atma*. Then we come face to face with our reality.

No spiritual discipline is necessary. All spiritual discipline is done by the mind, for the mind’s satisfaction. How can an effort of the mind turn around and control the mind itself? Can a thief arrest himself? Similarly, the mind cannot control and destroy itself. We must reach the state of mindlessness (*amanaskam*). Absence of all thought is mindlessness. When we restrain thoughts, the influence of the mind will subside and, without doubt, gradually leads to cessation of thought.

Therefore, if self-realisation is our goal, we must align the body, senses, and mind as per the prompting of the *Atma*. Every thought that emerges must be directed toward the *Atma*. This is called merger with God (*saayujya*). The rivers Godavari, Krishna, Yamuna, and Kaveri look and taste different, but they lose their individual names and forms and become one with the ocean. The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman (*Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati*). Therefore, when one merges all thoughts into the *Atma*, one becomes the *Atma*.

⁶ The subject of the *Chhandogya Upanishad*.

³ Another son of Brahma, perpetually absorbed in the *Atma*, abiding with Narayana.

⁴ A group of auxiliary texts designed to aid in the proper pronunciation and interpretation of the *Vedas* as well as correct use of *mantras* in various ceremonies.

⁵ A class of writings supplementary to the *Vedangas*, composed of *Puranas*, *Nyaya*, *Mimamsa*, and *Dharma Sastras*.

There is nothing besides *Atma*. All that exists is the *Atma*. We fail to see the omnipresent God because our vision is worldly, not divine. One small example. When you see this tumbler as a tumbler, you notice nothing more. If you enquire into its material, you see the silver and forget its tumbler form.

Another example. People go for pilgrimage to Tirupati or some other temple. At each place, they take *darshan* of the particular form of God. As long as we look at the idol, we do not think about its material. When we ignore the effect and go to the cause, we notice the rock instead of the form.

Likewise, we pay attention only to the names and forms. We see rivers, mountains, mansions, roads, trees, and so on. If we could grasp the basis for these physical entities, we would see their unity. Trees are composed of wood, mountains are made of rock, earth is mud, and the body is flesh and blood. These are nothing but combinations of the five elements, which, in turn, are merely facets of the *Atma*.

Our sages taught unity in diversity since time immemorial. Ornaments (*sringaaram*) are many, gold (*bangaaram*) is one. Cattle are of many colors, but milk is one. Beings are many, the indwelling God is one. Castes and values may be different, but birth is one. Visions are varied, God is one. Flowers are different, worship is one. We attach too much importance to names and forms and nurture divisive feelings—all in the interests of this short-lived life.

Another example. In the waking state, we meet various people, go to places, and experience different situations. In dream, we create circumstances. We create joys and sorrows, we create the world, we create even ourselves and bind ourselves in it! In deep sleep, all is forgotten and we approach the state of perfect equanimity. The same entity is present in the waking, dream, and sleep states. The states are three but the individual is one. This is “That Thou Art (*Thath Twam Asi*).” In the three times and three states, the one who experiences is the same.

Human values

We understand the human body but not human values. Regardless of our education, wealth, and fame, we must live by human values. Human values can flourish only in a spiritual atmosphere. A seed germinates only in fertile soil, not in tin. True human character blossoms only on the foundation of spirituality, *dharma*, and morality. Every student must cultivate human qualities.

Affection for family and relations is limiting. Before birth, who is the mother and who is the child? Before

marriage, who is the husband and who is the wife? These relations are cultivated midway through our eternal journey. They are “passing clouds”. One must neither desire nor fear such temporary associations. Life is a vast ocean, with short-lived waves of union (*samyoga*) and separation (*viyoga*).

We are prodded into effort by hundreds of desires, without a moment’s rest. We spiral into endless worry by yielding to worldly allurements. Spirituality alone is the guiding light for humanity perplexed in search of peace. With the destruction of spirituality, India will be annihilated. We must nurture the treasure of spirituality with care.

Culture and spirituality

The banner here says, “Indian Culture and Spirituality”. In My view, culture and spirituality are not separate. Culture is an aspect of spirituality. With spirituality, all arts and sciences acquire a new light, a positive direction. Devoid of spirituality, if you simply say culture, culture, culture, ... What is this culture? It is “meaningless culture”.

Culture is heritage, traditions (*samskriti*). The word *samskriti* means that which has undergone the process of purification (*samskarana*). Purified by what? By spirituality alone. There can be no refinements without spirituality. Without refinements, there is no culture.

Therefore, spirituality must come first. But spirituality has become a matter of derogatory jokes today. Yes, spirituality is ridiculous—to whom? To fools who consider this temporary, worldly life as all-important! To one who knows that worldly life is a “passing cloud”, spirituality is not just a guiding light but an invaluable gem, their only ornament and wealth. That is the only ornament we must desire today.

Babar’s regard for Indian culture

Students, it is not possible to limit Indian culture. People of all nations, religions, and times have bestowed glorious accolades on our heritage. You all know the Mughal Emperor Babar of the Muslim religion⁷. He had absolute faith in Indian culture. Babar’s son, Humayun, succeeded him as Emperor of India.

On this happy occasion, Babar wrote a lengthy letter to his son, “Huma! You are fortunate, and I am doubly fortunate to have a fortunate son as yourself! You are now the emperor of the sacred land of Hindustan⁸—the

⁷ Mughal, invader from Central Asia, who conquered and settled in India in the 16th century.

⁸ Persian name for India, meaning, “Land of the Hindus”.

land that tolerates all religions, the culture that teaches unity in diversity, the Hindu religion, which is truly the essence of all religions. You are blessed to rule over such a nation!

“Never be an obstacle in the way of Indian culture and traditions. The Hindu culture is sacred and mighty. There is nothing it cannot accomplish. Do not oppose this ancient culture. In fact, include Hindus in every decision you make and earn their love.”

Babar was the great and courageous ruler who established the Mughal dynasty in Delhi. What high regard he had for Indian culture!

Understand your religion

Unfortunately, Indians themselves are shredding our culture to pieces. It is a matter of shame and humiliation for every Indian! I wish that as Indians, you students clearly grasp the message of our culture, put it into practice, protect it, and derive joy therefrom.

I never say that one religion is great and another is not. The underlying precepts of all religions are noble. But people only fight in the name of religion without following teachings. This is a major fault in human character today. Understand the significance of your respective religions. Everyone who makes a sincere attempt to recognise their Self has the right to enter the gates of immortality without preference to religion or country of birth.

Therefore, first recognise human values. Then progress to Divinity instead of slipping into demonic qualities. All the *Upanishads* propagate methods to achieve Divinity and immortality. Not by good deeds, children, or wealth but only by sacrifice is immortality attained (*Na karamana na prajaya na dhanena tyaagenaike Amritatvamaanasu*). We shall discuss the relation between sacrifice (*thyaga*) and worldly enjoyment (*bhoga*) tomorrow.

[Swami concluded with “*Prema Mudita Mana Se Kaho, Rama Rama Ram*”]

23 May 1991

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4. Isaavaasya Upanishad – Renunciation and Pleasure

*Creation emerges from Truth
And merges back into Truth.
There is no place without Truth.
All that exists is a manifestation of pure, unsullied
Truth.*

Truth is one, but seers describe it in various ways (*Ekam sat vipraah bahudaa vadanti*). Truth is not the property of any one person. It is not related to a particular country, religion, or era. People of all times and places have equal right to attain the Truth.

Truth does not follow anyone—all must follow Truth. The forefather of mankind, Manu, taught this fact. The word *manuja* (man) means “one born of Manu”. Manu also decreed that one must be prepared to sacrifice everything for Truth. However, people yield to the pressures of situations and give up Truth for everything else!

Speak the pleasant truth

People perceive Truth as their enemy and derive enjoyment from falsehood. They endeavour to understand everything except the Truth. All pleasures and prosperity emerge from Truth alone. Since ancient times, kings ruled only with the strength of Truth. Truth is character, Truth is religion, Truth is life, Truth is penance, Truth is God. It is weakness to forget the eternal Truth and trust in falsehood.

Manu declared another aspect of Truth to mankind. He said, “Speak the truth, speak pleasantly, and do not speak an unpleasant truth (*Satyam brooyaat, priyam brooyaat, na brooyaat satyam apriyam*).” Meaning, we should not lie to sound sweet. On the other hand, we should not bluntly state the truth when it is difficult to palate. Truth must be spoken all the time, but in a way producing a beneficial effect on the listener. This is also emphasised in the *Gita*: Speech must be truthful, pleasant, beneficial and cause no excitement (*Anudvega-karam vaakyam satyam priya hitam cha yat¹*).

Suppose you meet a blind man. If you shout, “O blind man!”, it will pain him. The words are true, but unpleasant. When you call out to a lame man, “Hey cripple!”, you will hurt him badly. It is best to greet him in some other manner. Never hurt others under the

excuse of truth. Day-to-day actions accrue to become our character. It is important to speak the pleasant truth to develop a sterling character.

Isaavaasya Upanishad

The *Upanishads* are the head in the body of *Vedas*, among which the *Isaavaasya Upanishad*² is chief. This *Upanishad* appears as a collection of *mantras* in the *Sukla Yajur Veda*³. The path of action, *karma yoga*, is expounded in the *Sukla Yajur Veda* till the thirty-ninth chapter. *Jnana yoga*, the path of wisdom, begins in the fortieth chapter. This is also the beginning of *Isaavaasya Upanishad*.

Action (*karma*) flourishes in knowledge (*jnana*). Knowledge is strengthened and demonstrated by action. This union of action and knowledge is explained in the *Upanishads*. You have no choice but to engage in action. But don’t let attachment dictate to you, “I must enjoy the fruits of this action.” Recognise the misleading voice of ego when you feel, “This action happened because of me.” Attachment and ego bind you to actions.

Pleasure with sacrifice

The *Isaavaasya Upanishad* proclaims that all pleasures (*bhoga*) should be enjoyed with a feeling of renunciation (*thyaga*). Upon casual enquiry, pleasure and renunciation seem to be opposites. A renunciant does not crave for pleasure, and a pleasure seeker cannot even entertain thoughts of sacrifice! Therefore, you might ask, how can one enjoy pleasures with an outlook of sacrifice.

The *Isaavaasya Upanishad* reveals that when you perform actions without ego and when you experience the world without attachment, no distinction remains between pleasure and renunciation. Work without ego and attachment is selfless work—a pleasurable sacrifice. All selfless work is nothing but delightful renunciation.

Every person must perform actions without the egoistic feeling, “These are the results of my action.” When one considers the action as one’s own, it is

¹ *Bhagavad Gita* (XVII:15)

² Named after its first phrase: “*Isaavaasyam Idam Jagat – Creation resides in God*”.

³ The *Yajur Veda* is divided into two sections: *Sukla* (bright) and *Krishna* (dark).

natural to take credit for the results and get attached to them. The *Isaavaasya Upanishad* demonstrates that *yoga*, the path to Knowledge of the Self (*Atma Jnana*), is the merger of renunciation (*thyaga*) and pleasure (*bhoga*).

Yoga and welfare (kshema)

What is *yoga*? the divine treasure earned after spiritual practices is called *yoga*. Krishna told Arjuna, “I shall look after your *yoga* and welfare (*kshema*) (*Yoga kshemam vahaamyaham*⁴.” In everyday usage, the terms *yoga-kshema* mean the welfare of wife, children, job, property, and so on. But Krishna did not intend this worldly concept of welfare.

Yoga is the name given to attempts to achieve Godhood. To attain the unattainable God is *yoga*. To envision the invisible Divine is *yoga*. To bring into daily experience that which cannot be seen by the eyes, heard by the ears, comprehended by the mind, or felt by the heart is *yoga*. To manifest the unmanifest Divinity is *yoga*.

The treasure of *yoga*, won after arduous spiritual effort, needs to be safeguarded. This preservation of *yoga* is *kshema*. Therefore, the true significance of Krishna’s usage of *yoga-kshemam* is (1) the attainment of Divinity, which is beyond the mind, and (2) the preservation of that sacred Realisation. *Yoga* with *kshe-ma* is, therefore, equivalent to pleasure (*bhoga*) with renunciation (*thyaga*).

The inner instrument

Pleasure (*bhoga*) with renunciation (*thyaga*) is most important. Sacrifice is the soil in which divine traits of man sprout. Instead of treating the *Upanishadic* statements as worthless dry grass, people should try to live them in their daily life and, thereby, watch Divinity dawn in themselves.

A person is not just a combination of body and mind. A person possesses *prajnaana* —constant integrated awareness. *Prajnaana* is the permanent witness or awareness pervading the inner instrument (*antah-karana*). What is the inner instrument? The thinking faculty is categorised into four entities based on function: mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), memory (*chitta*), and ego (*ahamkara*).

What is the mind? The mind is a bundle of thoughts. The mind continuously decides for and against issues (*Sankalpa vikalpaatmanam manah*). A cloth is made of vertical and horizontal threads —comparable to likes and dislikes. When the thread is extracted from one side, the cloth falls apart. Similarly, pull out and discard

the thread of thought, and the cloth of mind ceases to exist. This is expressed in our scriptures as: Repetition strengthens thoughts (*Manana traana sammilitam*). We strengthen our mind by repeatedly remembering unnecessary matters.

Next, memory. This is just a repository of past impressions.

The third, intellect. The intellect is the link to the Divine, discriminating between the temporary and the permanent.

The fourth, ego, identifies with the body. *Aham* (I) + *aakaaram* (form) is *ahamkaaram*, ego. Ego merges the sense of individuality with the physical form.

All four —mind, intellect, memory, and ego— are aberrations of the true mind. The one mind has four names. For example, a *brahmin*⁵ is called a cook-*brahmin* when he specialises in cooking for feasts. The same *brahmin*, engaged in worship, is called a priest (*pujari*); when imparting *Vedic* education, he is called a teacher (*acharya*); when reading a horoscope, he is called an astrologer (*panchanga brahmin*). The *brahmin* is one but, based on his task, his name differs. The mind, intellect, memory, and ego are thus synonyms.

The inner instrument (*antahkarana*) is not a separate entity. It is part of our other instruments (*karanas*). Our senses are instruments pointing outward. The eyes see the external world, ears hear external sounds, and nose breathes air from outside. Similarly, the mind, intellect, memory, and ego are inner instruments. When the inner instrument is sacrificed, it does not matter if the external instruments contact worldly objects. This is exactly pleasure coupled with sacrifice (*bhoga* with *thyaga*).

Desireless actions purify the mind

First, purify the inner instrument. To this end, it is compulsory to engage in action. Without activities, the mind cannot be purified. The *Vedas* say: The mind is refined with action (*Chittasya suddhaye karmaha*). Every person must undertake good deeds to purify the mind. What are ‘good actions’? Without an eye on results, without selfish intent, all actions performed are desireless actions (*nishkama karma*). *Nishkama karma* is nothing but pleasure with sacrifice (*bhoga* with *thyaga*).

Thus, the *Isaavaasya Upanishad* elaborates beautifully on the unity of pleasure and sacrifice. We must not be inactive. Action sanctifies the body and time. The goal of human life is to harmonise time, action, cause, and duty (*kala, karma, karana, and kartavyam*).

⁴ *Bhagavad Gita* (IX:22)

⁵ A person of the priestly class

How do we use our time? We increase our selfishness, selfishness, selfishness. How then can we expect the union of pleasure and sacrifice (*bhoga* and *thyaga*)? Instead of merging *thyaga* into *bhoga*, we attain *roga* (disease) through *bhoga*! Aspire to be a *yogi*, not a seeker of pleasure (*bhogi*). What is *bhoga*? Eating, sleeping, and living life forgetful of time.

Craving is a disease, action is the cure

Food is necessary for the upkeep of the body. Food protects the body, clothes shield against adverse weather (*Bhikshaannam deha rakshaartham, vastram sheeta nivaaranam*). The body is the home of mucus, phlegm, urine, and disease. The body is a mound of waste matter, hardly the boat to ferry one across the ocean of birth and death! O mind, do not trust this body. Instead, seek refuge at the Lotus Feet of Hari. The body is bound to rot like waste, collapse like a broken chariot.

To prevent disease, we must take medicine. What is disease and what is good health? Everything is a disease. Hunger is an affliction, food is its medicine. Thirst is the disease, water is the cure. For every disease, there is a prescribed remedy.

Similarly, the craving for pleasure is a disease. Action is the medicine. We may desire bliss. But how can we secure it without action? You can place potato and *chapati* in a plate and repeat their names as long as you wish —your hunger is not satisfied. To fill your stomach, put your hand and mouth to work! Meaning, hands busy in work and mouth busy in repetition of the divine Name. With such dual effort, you will definitely attain bliss.

Everything in this world is a disease (*roga*). With the right outlook, we can convert every situation into *yoga*. Our scriptures say that a person who eats one meal per day is a *yogi*, two meals a day makes one a *bhogi* (pleasure seeker), and three meals make one a *rogi* (diseased)! One who eats four times a day is as good as dead! These days, we struggle to fill our stomachs but not to get established in an idealistic, moral life and realise the goal of human birth.

Students! Everything perishes with time. When time, deed, circumstances, and duty (*kala, karma, karana, kartavya*) so decree, the body itself will collapse. The body may die, but ideals remain immortal. Be idealistic and live in hearts forever.

Yes, some desires are necessary, but they must be within limits. Keep limits, focus on the welfare of all, and perform actions with a sense of duty —This is the union of renunciation and pleasure (*thyaga* and *bhoga*). Truly, the joy we derive from selfless actions cannot be measured. Through the sacrifice of service to society,

we are able to experience the pleasure of bliss. When we act with the fruits in mind, joy eludes us.

Forget your help and others' hurts

In this world, if we forget two issues, we succeed in bringing renunciation (*thyaga*) and pleasure (*bhoga*) together. First, the good we have done to others. If we recollect favours done by us, we begin expecting something in return and open ourselves to disappointment. This also paves the way to jealousy and hatred. Forget the help you give, immediately.

Second, forget the harm others have done to you. With the recollection of suffering, you develop vengeance and related defects. Before such harmful feelings sprout, forget the harm caused by others.

When we are able to set aside these two thoughts, we merge renunciation and pleasure (*thyaga* and *bhoga*). If we unearth these issues in our memory all the time, we become a heap of foul-smelling vices. Our thoughts create reactions. In ancient Indian tradition, reactions of actions are held paramount.

Sacrifice to receive more

Indian culture stands on certain strong convictions:

- (1) Results of action (*karma*) are inescapable.
- (2) God incarnates in human form as an *Avatar*.
- (3) Everything in the world is a form of God and is naturally sacred.

With purity, patience, and perseverance, we can realise the truth of these ancient beliefs.

Students! Enquire into these matters from a tender age. Desire renunciation (*thyaga*) with pleasure (*bhoga*), not disease (*roga*) with *bhoga*! Renunciation, renunciation, renunciation ... renunciation is our true pleasure.

I often quote: Not by actions, wealth, or children but by sacrifice alone is immortality attained (*Na karmana na prajana na dhanena thyaagenaike amritathwamaanasu*). If we do not release the air we inhale, do we help or hurt ourselves? Our lungs will perish. If the remnants of digested food are not excreted, is it sacrifice or pleasure (*thyaga* or *bhoga*)? It is neither. It becomes disease (*roga*), and the stomach suffers.

Just as we release air and food, we must sacrifice the money we earn. In the above quotation, what is wealth (*dhana*)? Wealth refers to education, youth, wisdom, joy, and so on. For instance, having earned the wealth of education, you must apply it to serve others, disseminate its gist to others. Then your knowledge will grow. If you do not propagate and apply your skills, you lose them. The more you sacrifice, the more you receive and

progress. Never feel that you help someone else. You help only yourself!

Every day is an opportunity

Students! In our worldly, physical view of life, we pay attention only to growth but not to the decay that accompanies it. Our body grows, but our life span decays correspondingly! We rejoice upon sunrise and sunset. At sunrise we feel, “Good, now I can do my tasks.” At sunset, we feel equally happy, “Finally, I can take some rest”. This is nothing but ignorance. Every sunrise and sunset consume a day of our lifespan, which we treat carelessly.

Therefore, engage in your duty by understanding the significance of dawn and dusk. Sri Ramakrishna used to pant for the Lord’s vision from dawn to dusk. At the end of the day, just before sleeping, he used to look around dispiritedly and cry, “Oh no! Yet another day has gone by without the Lord’s vision!” Treating every moment as a day, he used to ache for the Lord without interruption. Our ancient *rishis* also turned their yearning into penance and experienced Divinity.

Unity and purity in thought, word, and deed

What is meant by penance (*tapas*)? Standing on your head and squinting your eyes is not penance! Unity and purity in thought, word, and deed (*trikarana suddhi*) is penance. A great soul has unity in thought, word, and deed (*Manassyekam vachassekam karmanyekam ma-haatmanam*). A sinful soul is characterised by disagreement in thought, word, and deed (*Manas anyat vachas anyat karman anyat duraatmanam*).

When thought, word, and deed are not one, only darkness (*thamas*) will result instead of penance (*tapas*). A human birth is rare in living beings (*Jantoonam nara janma durlabham*). We should aspire for the Divinity beyond us, not for worldly pleasures beneath us. Therefore, it is no mistake to pursue secular education. But keep the permanent goal of life in view. We are truly *yogis*, not *bhogis* (pleasure seekers) or *rogis* (sick people). *Yogis* are known by sacrifice or renunciation (*thyaga*).

Attain God through troubles

Students! The *Upanishads* express the most profound subjects in the most lucid manner. Secrets are inherent in every statement of the *Upanishads*. If we enquire where secrets are present, it is only in pain and troubles. The *Vedas* say: There is peace in unrest, light in peace, supreme light in light, and God in supreme light (*prasanti in asanti, prakanti in prasanti, parama jyoti in prakanti, and paramatma in parama jyoti*).

Without darkness, there is no value for light. No-body would value food if hunger did not exist. Without the oppressive heat of summer, why would anyone buy air conditioners? Happiness does *not* result from happiness (*Na sukhaat labhate sukham*)! True tranquility is obtained only through difficulties and troubles. If you spend the entire day in an air-conditioned room, you become desensitised to its comfort. Step outside for two hours and return — you will realise why air conditioners are so desirable! Thus, human life is necessarily a combination of joy and sorrow, profit and loss, heat and cold. Without duality (*dwaita*), there is no value for the state of non-duality (*advaita*).

Lesser truth to higher truth

Today man is half-blind. How? “A man with dual mind is half-blind!” Today, we perceive a difference between “that” and “this”. “That” is the *Atma*. “This” is *thwam*, the body. “That” is He, “this” is I. We must experience that He and I are really not separate. We must journey from I to “we”. We feel we need to proceed from untruth to truth. No, no. Our path starts at “lesser truth” and ends at “higher truth”. How? Imagine a full circle.

That is full, this is full,
From the full emerges the full again.
If the full is subtracted from the full,
What remains is full.

Poornamadah poornamidam
Poornaat poornam udachyate
Poornasya poornamaadaaya
Poornam evaavasishyate

Think of a circle. Inside this circle is a smaller circle. Inside it, a still smaller circle. The smallest circle is the body. The middle circle is the mind. The largest circle is the *Atma*. The circle of the *Atma* is immutable. We must broaden our heart, enlarge the innermost circle ... expand, expand, expand, till it becomes the middle circle. That means: merge into the mind. Then, expand the mind, make it vast as an ocean, till it merges into the *Atma*. That is when we realise the unity of the body, mind, and *Atma*.

Another example. You see a wall clock here. It has three hands: the second hand, the minute hand, and the hour hand. Which is more important? The hour hand is of no use if the second hand is absent. The minute hand is equally useless. All three are essential, but the chief hand is the second hand. Sixty revolutions of the second hand cause once in the minute hand. Similarly, the hour hand circles once every sixty revolutions of the minute hand.

Our body is a wall clock. When innumerable good actions are done, our mind is refined slightly to a purer

state. When the mind, in turn, entertains innumerable thoughts of the Divine, the *Atma* dawns in it gradually. Therefore, good deeds with the body and good thoughts in the mind are the only means to attain bliss of the *Atma*.

Atma pervades everything

In the world, we find three indispensable elements (*aadhaara*) for existence: earth, sky, and light. Water and air are food (*aahaara*). Without *aadhaara* and *aahaara*, nothing can exist. The presence of water and air is evidence of the *Atma*. The *Atma* is ever present, even in the absence of water and air, but they cannot exist without the *Atma*. The *Atma* is not related to anything in any way. It is described as:

Attributeless, stainless, eternal, the final abode,
Ever pure, intelligent, free and purity itself.

*Nirgunam niranjanam sanaatanam nikanam
Nitya sudha buddha mukta nirmala swaroopinam*

Everything thrives and survives only on the power of the *Atma*. You find fathers without sons, but can you find a son without a father? You find water without fish, but not fish outside of water. Similarly, *Atma* exists even without air and water, but these two elements cannot exist without the *Atma*.

The five elements do not constitute the *Atma*, but rather, they are formed and sustained by the *Atma*. The five elements are nothing but a manifestation of God's divine glory.

To experience Divinity through the five elements with renunciation (*thyaga*) is true pleasure (*bhoga*). Every moment, we cannot but experience the five elements. Can we stop breathing? Air is all around, inside and outside us. But it is invisible and intangible. Likewise, God is omnipresent.

With hands, feet, face and head everywhere,
Pervading all the worlds, God envelops everything.⁶

*Sarvatah paani paadam, tat sarvatokshi siro mukham
Sarvatah srutimal loke, sarvamavritya tishtati*

Expand love to experience God

God is everywhere, but God is not realised through the senses. Fools demand sensory perception. No, no, God can only be experienced. He is called *aprameya* because He is beyond physical measurement. Here is a tumbler full of water. If you mix sugar in it, it dissolves. Where is the sugar? It is at the bottom, top, all over. But you cannot see it or touch it. How do you realise its

existence? Place a drop of water on your tongue, and you can taste its sweetness. Therefore, God can be known only through experience, not by physical measurements. Direct experience of God is the bliss obtained from spiritual effort.

Thus, enquire into the *Atma*, fix your sights on eternal Bliss, desire only proximity and merger with God and expand your Love. Then the embodiment of Love Himself will awaken in you.

In these hearts barren without Love,
To sprout the seedlings of Love,
Shower nectarine Love
To drench everything,
To make rivers of Love flow,
Compose melodious notes on the flute,
— O Krishna, play a song!

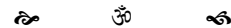
The cowherd maidens (*gopikas*) prayed, "Krishna! Our hearts are deficient in Love. For Love to sprout, we crave water. What water? The rain of divine Love."

Words of love are pure, cool rain. Our hearts are fields where this rain produces a harvest. Love is like flowing water, and our bliss is the fruit of Love. This flow of bliss leads us into the ocean of Divinity.

The individual who seeks to offer himself into the infinite ocean of Grace must tread the path of Love. This is renunciation (*thyaga*) coupled with pleasure (*bhoga*). The pleasure united with renunciation is not the pleasure of the body or the mind. It is the pleasure of the *Atma*, which is natural to us, not artificial or acquired. It is the bliss of the *Atma*. Today, anger and hatred are so pervasive that it seems that dry grass placed between any two people will catch fire! Therefore, expand your hearts and cultivate Love.

[Swami sang "Prema Mudita Mana Se Kaho, Rama Rama Ram" in His Golden Voice.]

24 May 1991



⁶ *Bhagavad Gita* (XIII:13)

5. Kenopanishad

Where do you search endlessly, O crazy mind,
For the vision of the Lord?
Brahman is within you!
Recognise this truth and see Him within yourself.
Sai's words reveal the path of Truth.

Love cannot be grown on trees,
Nor can it be traded in a market.
Be he a King or a commoner, only when he gives
up ego
And becomes a man of sacrifice,
Will he know the divine Principle.

Embodiments of the divine Atma!

Every pilgrim travelling on the path of life is granted certain instruments (*karanas*) to pursue righteousness (*dharma*). These instruments are the mind, speech, ears, eyes, nose, hands and feet. Three objects are essential for any achievement in this world: instrument (*karanam*), cause (*karanam*), and doer (*karta*). The one who uses the instrument is the doer. That which is used is the instrument. The desire of the doer is the cause. A person's primary duty is to know the unity of instrument, cause, and doer.

We say that the eyes see, the ears hear, and the tongue speaks. If so, what happens after death? The sense organs stop working. Why? There is a power that makes them function. This divine Power is called the life principle (*prana*).

Where did the life principle come from? Where is it going? Who sends it here and there? This is the question posed by *Kenopanishad*. It asks, "Is the power to see, hear, speak, and walk provided by the life principle, or is there a greater power still?"

The sun shines, and its brilliance makes the moon shine. The earth shines because of moonlight. But why does the sun shine? Due to hydrogen and helium. Where did these elements emerge from? divine Power.

The *Upanishads* call this power *Brahman*. They declare that Brahman makes the world shine. Brahman lends His illumination to others, but nothing makes Brahman Himself shine. Brahman's effulgence makes the eyes see, but they cannot see Brahman! The mind can think only with Brahman's power, but it is unable to grasp Brahman Himself. The *Upanishads* declare, From where words and thoughts return, unable to comprehend anything (*Yatho vaacho nivartante apraapya manasaa sahaa*) — That is Brahman.

People are unable to realise Brahman within. Why? They cultivate external vision instead of inner vision. They can arrive at the Truth with proper enquiry, but they consider themselves weak and powerless. How should one enquire into this divine principle?

Kenopanishad declares that Brahman is the life of the life force (*prana*), the mind of the mind, the eye of the eyes. Current is essential in a car for the headlights to shine, for the horn to blare, for the wheels to turn, and for the engine to move. Similarly, all human faculties perform their functions by drawing strength from the *Atma*. All blooming flowers do not become fruits. All fruits do not ripen. But once ripe, fruits must necessarily fall down from the trees. This is a secret of human life. When the time, cause, and situation so decree, the body becomes weak, even lifeless. Thus, what is the basis for the life force (*prana*)? It is the *Atma*.

People consider the senses as most important. Beyond the senses is the mind. This mind is called *Indra* by the *Upanishads*. *Indra* means the master of the *indriyas* (senses). The *Kenopanishad* declares that Divinity is attained when the senses are merged in the mind and the mind merged in the *Atma*.

We let the mind run amuck along worldly paths, thereby creating a division between the mind and the *Atma*. Why does a people fail to recognise the *Atma*? Because of reliance on physical and mental strength, wealth, and ego.

The senses are inert. When the eyes see an object, the eyes are the seer and the object is the "seen". It is possible for the eye to become the seen. How? If the mind wanders, the eyes do not perceive what is in front. Thus, the mind becomes the seer and the eyes, the seen.

Then again, the mind can become the seen and the intellect, the seer. This happens when there is no sense of discrimination. For example, in sleep, the mind does not exist except merely as the seen. But the intellect is present as consciousness. Finally, in *samadhi* (total absorption, perfect equanimity), the intellect becomes the seen with the *Atma* as the seer.

The *Atma* is the ultimate seer. The senses, mind, and intellect are all "seen" — That is why they are called instruments (*karanas*). In the absence of the *Atma*, the most valuable instruments become useless. Expensive machinery is but a block of iron without electricity. It is one's primary duty to use one's faculties in a proper manner. However, it is not very easy to change one's worldly outlook.

You may cultivate onions in a field of camphor,
Using saffron and rose water for irrigation.
But won't the resulting onions still smell like
onions?

You may attend countless meetings with good people (*sathsangs*) and perform many spiritual practices, but the worldly tendencies that have dogged you for many lifetimes will not let go easily.

Hence, first understand the body. What is the body? Is it merely a bundle of waste matter, urine, and blood? Yes. But it also houses the priceless gem of the *Atma*. Gems are not found on trees but deep within the earth. Though they are within dirt (*mrinmaya*) they are eternal (*chinmaya*). In the same way, the body is full of filth but the indwelling *Atma* is divine.

Human life is the rarest among all species (*Jantu-naam nara janma durlabham*). Today, people sell their priceless heart, a gem, for pieces of coal. They do not recognise their own value. When a man dies in an accident, the government gives his family a sum of Rs. 5000. Is that all human life is worth? No! Human life is invaluable —no value ascribed to it is enough.

Some people keep very sturdy iron safes in their homes. The safe itself is cheap, but the jewels inside are very valuable. The body is like the safe. Divinity is like the priceless ornaments. O man! Value the jewel, not the iron safe. If a jewel is placed in a golden safe, thieves will decamp with both! That is why ornaments with value are placed in a worthless safe. This is a secret of creation. The body is temporary; the *Atma* is eternal.

The eternal *Atma* resides in the worthless body. For this reason, safeguard the body without neglect. For how long? As long as we have not recognised the Truth, we should keep the body healthy. Instead, giving undue importance to the body and forgetting the Indweller is not true humanity. When ego sprouts, we forget everything. When clouds cover the sky, even the effulgent Sun is not visible. Does that mean the Sun is absent? No, the clouds are merely blocking it. Are these clouds permanent? No, no! They are “passing clouds”. The clouds of ego and pride prevent us from understanding the *Atma*. Since we cannot see the *Atma*, we conclude it does not exist.

Why do you bother with so many Gods? You are God Himself! One example. If you go to a storage room that has many objects, you will see everything except one object —yourself! You are searching in this world. You see everything, but not yourself —that is a big fault. If you recognise yourself, you will be able to recognise all else easily. Since the vision is directed outward, the seer is not seen. Walking on the street with a flashlight, you can see the road but not yourself. Turn the flashlight on yourself to see yourself. This is divine

vision. When you turn your vision inward, you understand the Blissful, Nectarine, Immortal *Atma* in its brilliance.

Once upon a time, the Gods had won the war against the demons. They were celebrating their victory. They grew arrogant and unruly and forgot the reason for their victory. They swaggered around with inflated egos.

Lord Brahma noticed their state and decided to open their eyes. He assumed the form of a celestial being (*yaksha*) and appeared in their midst. Lord Agni, the God of Fire, was there. The *yaksha* asked him, “Son, who are you?” Agni replied, “Don't you know who I am? Listen. I am the powerful God who can reduce anything to ashes in an instant. I am Agni. I can melt and burn down even iron.” He was arrogant. Brahma threw down a blade of grass and said, “Agni! Burn it.” Agni smirked, “What an easy task!”, but he could not. He bent his head in shame and retreated.

The Wind God, Vayu, appeared and gloated, “When I blow, seas swell and entire cities are leveled. Don't you know about cyclones and storms? They are all my power!” The *yaksha* said, “Is that so? Please move this blade of grass.” Vayu attempted but failed.

Then Indra appeared. The *yaksha* disappeared and a woman appeared in his place. Indra saw her and asked, “Mother, who are you? Who was here before you arrived?”

She replied, “My name is Uma. Lord Brahma was here before me. Your arrogance has grown beyond limits. The Lord appeared to destroy your ego, to grant you His *darshan*. He donned a *yaksha's* form because those with ego are not eligible to see His true form. You are Indra —master of the senses. Fire, wind, and other elements are merely the senses. You are their Lord. Even you don't deserve to see Brahma. You have become the embodiment of desire. To destroy desire in you, I have appeared as a woman —the symbol of desire.”

The Gods realised their folly to some extent. They set aside their egos and meditated on Brahma. Imagine, such powerful Gods could not move a blade of grass!

How can one become powerful? Ego and attachment hide this power from humanity.

Then Indra bowed his head and said, “Without Your Will, not even a blade of grass moves. What is the use of intelligence, strength, education, and wealth? Without the power to know You, O Lord, all other powers are just curses. Only the powers of devotion and Love can reveal You. No power is higher than devotion.”

What is devotion (*bhakti*)? Loving the Lord with an unselfish heart and a humble attitude is devotion. Hence, consider the senses as instruments. Instruments

may be afflicted with diseases at times. What are these diseases? For example, a crowbar loses its sharpness with constant use. This is a disease. When plunged into fire and hammered, it becomes as good as new. That is the cure.

Similarly, the eyes have a disease. When the eyes are healthy, white is seen as white, yellow as yellow, and black as black. But a jaundiced eye sees everything as yellow. Is that a problem with the world? No! As long as the tongue is healthy, sweets taste sweet, salty items taste salty, and sour ones sour. But a malaria patient finds even sweet food bitter. The senses are plagued by diseases (*roga*) and attachments (*raga*), but have no *yoga*. Only when you control your senses do you become a *yogi*. Therefore, Patanjali said, *Yoga* is control of thoughts (*Yogah chitta vritti nirodhakah*). First control your senses. Teach them discrimination between the temporary and the permanent.

Students! The senses are very powerful at this age. The eyes, especially, are very sinful. They flit from person to person with impure motives, thereby accumulating a great deal of bad *karma*.

Educated people ask, “The eyes have been given to see. Why not see everything?” True, the eyes are meant to see, but see good, not bad! The mouth has been given to eat, so do you eat mud? The consequences of bad *karmas* are not readily apparent, but they cannot be escaped. Control wrong vision, wrong speech, and wrong hearing. Also control wrong thoughts and actions. This is the true spiritual path.

See no evil, see what is good,
Hear no evil, hear what is good,
Think no evil, think what is good,
Talk no evil, talk what is good,
Do no evil, do what is good,
—This is the way to God.

When we do not follow these teachings with real effort, we condemn ourselves to a future full of difficulties. The period of youth is extremely fleeting, but characterised by arrogance. Yielding to the senses, one reduces the future to ashes. In this period, make an effort to regulate the senses. This is the advice *Kenopanishad* gives to people, gods, and sages (*rishis*) alike.

In addition, it also sets ideals for people and divine beings, “O humanity! The fruits of your good and bad actions are not seen instantly, like milk seen flowing out of a cow’s udder upon milking. Rather, they are like sowing a seed.”

It takes many years for a seed to become a tree, more time for fruit to appear, and still more days for the fruit to ripen. Be careful! You may commit a sin and then assure yourself that you do not see any punishment.

It takes time for the result to hit you, but it cannot be avoided! You may avoid anything, but not the consequences of your actions. Hence, use these years to develop purity. “Start early, drive slowly, reach safely.”

The sanctity of the tongue

Make a conscious effort during youth. Speech is very pure. Jaideva¹ said, “O Sacred tongue, you can discern taste, you are endowed with sacred speech, you are the embodiment of Goddess Saraswathi. Why do you use impure words? In repentance, utter the divine names Govinda, Damodara, Madhava.”

The tongue has a great sense of sacrifice, respect, and honour. When it tastes a sour fruit, it stops it from reaching the stomach. God is present within humanity as Vaiswanara, the digestive force. The tongue decides that the sour fruit is not an appropriate offering to God within and spits it out on the ground, saying, “Mother Earth, please receive the fruit you have created.” If the fruit is sweet, the tongue says to Vaiswanara, “O Sweet Lord, please experience this sweet fruit.” The tongue does not experience the sweetness itself. It offers the good to God and the bad back to the world. Such is its sense of sacrifice!

The tongue has forbearance as well. How carefully it lives amidst thirty-two sharp teeth! This is what Vibhishana told Hanuman, “O Hanuman! Among these teeth-like demons, I live like the soft tongue, which chants the Lord’s Name. If I am not constantly watchful, these demons will end my life. I want to secure the vision of the Lord before I die.”

Hanuman replied, “Vibhishana, you equate your perilous state to that of the tongue. It is true. But which fall away first, the tongue or the teeth? The teeth. So do not worry. You will attain the proximity of Rama. These demons will be uprooted like the teeth.”

The tongue has a great sense of honour. It does not roam from house to house like a street dog. It stays within its doors —the lips— and never ventures out. Such is its honour. It may speak a lot, but does it ever come out? Like a royal queen, it lives within its limits, with dignity and honour.

Further, the tongue chastises a wrong-doer, “You are behaving like an animal (*pasu*)!” It praises a pious man, “You are like *Pasupati* (God) Himself.” The sacred tongue should be used only along sacred lines.

The sayings of the *Upanishads* are simple, sweet, and delicate. We forget these nectarine sayings. The *Upanishads* are the essence of all *Vedas*. No one makes

¹ A great devotee of Lord Krishna and author of *Gita Govinda*.

an effort to understand them today. The smallest pills can remove illness in the body. Similarly, these compact words can dispel ignorance and light the lamp of knowledge.

Students should make a sincere effort to live a sacred life from their early years. Along with wisdom, cultivate humility. Without humility, all education becomes useless. Respect your parents, teachers, and elders; love those younger to you. Avoid excessive talk.

Today people are heroes when it comes to talk
But zeroes when it comes to action!
Life is full of show.

This is the state of students today. Do not be pompous. How should life be lived?

Within education, wisdom should shine,
Just as brilliant lightning underlies dark clouds.

Do not be argumentative based on bookish knowledge. Arguments are not conducive to education. Only one who knows nothing argues. One who knows all remains silent. An empty banana leaf flutters in the wind, but one that is “full” with food² stays still. We should shine as “full” individuals. This is the royal road for students.

Pride, show, and arrogance are beyond limits in the period of youth. This is a result of bad habits and food. Such defects should be removed.

Students in this country have a reputation for causing unrest. Our students should offer protection to the fear-stricken and attract society with their loving nature, just as a magnet attracts iron. They should mingle and work with everyone. This is conveyed in the *Vedas* as, *Sahanaavavatu, sahanau bhunaktu, saha viryamkara vaavahai* —What is the meaning of this verse?

Let us mingle together, let us grow together,
Let us cultivate our knowledge together,
Let us live together happily without impurities.

This alone will grant peace. If we desire world peace, we should live without skirmishes.

Ponder the purity of the feelings expressed in the *Upanishads*. The sages of yore were not fools. They were far more accomplished than today’s scientists. Scientists have not approached even a thousandth of their discoveries. Scientists sit in dark rooms —they are akin to a frog in a well³. The sages (*rishis*) were expansive

² Banana leaves are used in south India as disposable plates since ancient times.

³ From an ancient parable. The frog in the well is visited by a frog from the ocean. The ocean-frog attempts to describe the vastness of the ocean, but the well-frog

like frogs in the ocean, and their investigations were broad. Today’s discoveries are mired in self-interest. The ancients were egoless and selfless. We might misjudge the declarations of our sages to be hallucinations or imaginary. In reality, they were gems of wisdom conferred upon the sages that have nourished humanity till this day. The *Upanishads* are the essence of the teachings of divine sages.

I conclude My discourse blessing you that you may take at least the smallest teachings of the *Upanishads*, put them into practice in simple activities of daily life, and experience divine life thereby.

Tomorrow we shall take up another *Upanishad*. All *Upanishads* lead you closer to the Divine. *Upa* means “near”, as in nearness to God. Your Vice-Chancellor requested on the first day that I teach you methods by which proximity to God can be attained.

Hence, chant the divine Name and exemplify pure and peaceful lives. Unrest and agitation have *grown* beyond limits today. In such an environment, students should foster fearlessness, happiness, and goodness. This is what I desire.

[Swami ended with the *bhajan* “*Bhajana Bina Sukha Shanti Nahin*”.]

25 May 25 1991

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refuses to believe that anything could be larger than its well.

6. Prasnopanishad – Answers to the First Student

Trees bear fruit for the benefit of others.
Rivers flow to help others.
Cows give milk in the interest of others.
This body has been given to serve others.

Embodiments of Love!

Trees do not eat their own fruits. They bear them for others. They are full of selflessness. Rivers also do not drink their own water. They offer themselves to the people subsisting on them. Out of concern for people, cows yield milk. They do not drink it themselves. However, people have forgotten that they acquired this body for helping others. They follow, instead, the narrow-minded path of selfishness.

People do not have even a thousandth of the sacrifice demonstrated by trees, rivers, and cows. From waking to sleeping... selfishness, selfishness, selfishness. What is the reason for the deplorable state of our country? Selfishness alone. Yes, selfishness and self-interest are necessary. But, there cannot be lasting good without limits (*Nah sreyo niyamam vinaa*). Selfishness must be within limits. A selfish person cannot even sustain human qualities. If today a person can live like a human, that itself is equal to attaining Divinity!

God and the world — cause and effect

What you think you see does not exist.
What you cannot see alone exists.
For all time, there is only one God.
Only God exists, not the world.

The world cannot exist independent of God. The world is full of Vishnu (God) (*Vishvam Vishnumayam jagat*). All this is Brahma (*Sarvam khalvidam Brahma*). God resides throughout this world (*Isaavaasyam idam sarvam*). The world and God are not separate. *Prasnopanishad*¹ investigates into the unity of God and the world.

Every object (*padaartha*) has a higher basis (*paraartha*). No material can exist without a basis. A living being ceases to exist when its life force departs. The object is a gross manifestation (*sthoolam*) while its basis is the foundation (*moolam*). The foundation is the cause (*aadhaaram*) while the object is the effect (*adheyam*).

¹ *Prasnopanishad* = *Prasna* (question) + *Upanishad*. This *Upanishad* deals with questions posed by six students.

In a worldly sense, these two concepts seem contradictory. However, the spiritual vision knows that just as an animal cannot survive without its life force, nothing can exist in the world without a consciousness. Science calls this duality—matter and energy.

Unity of gross and subtle

Prasnopanishad emphatically declares the unity of matter and energy, the unity of Siva-Sakthi. Therefore, science and spirituality are not disjoined. We confine science to the material world and spirituality to philosophical enquiry. The object and basis (*padaartha* and *paraartha*) are inseparably intertwined. The impact of the *Upanishads* is to teach this oneness in glorious terms. Unfortunately, people regard the *Upanishads* as a bundle of spiritual teachings that have nothing to do with the material world. They are convinced that spirituality is itself to be distinct from the world. This is a big mistake. Spirituality is the life force, the world is the living being. One is the foundation, the other is its manifestation. Creation is a synthesis of these two concepts.

To believe in God while rejecting the world is also a narrow outlook! We must strengthen faith in the truth that the world is not different from God. We are helpless in our search for God without the aid of the world. We are able to enquire and conclude as to what is true and eternal only because the world is present for our observation. Strive to experience Godhead with the world as your foundation. That means, to understand Divinity, first understand what it means to be a human.

The six students of Sage Pippalada

Once upon a time, there were six students². They were skillful enquirers into the Truth. They wanted to know the secrets inherent in a human birth and considered this quest their primary duty. To this end, they approached Sage Pippalada. They bowed to him in great humility and said, “*Maharshi!* From where did this world emerge? What is the purpose of human life? Pray, teach us and dispel our doubts.”

Pippalada said, “Sons! You are indeed fortunate to be curious about the Truth. However, the questioner

² They were (1) Kabandhi, son of Sage Katya, (2) Bhargava, from the kingdom of Vidarbha, (3) Asvalaayana, son of Asvala, (4) Gargya or Souryaayani, grandson of the Sun God, (5) Satyakaama, son of Sibi, and (6) Sukesha, son of Sage Bharadvaja.

must meet certain qualifications. Without eligibility, you will misinterpret my answers and be dissatisfied.”

Only a doctor is eligible to prescribe medicine to a patient. An engineer alone is qualified to construct a bridge. Even the smallest worldly task requires eligibility. The amount of water gathered depends on the capacity of the container.

“Yes, your aspirations are noble. Take time, enquire. Discriminate between the temporary and the permanent. Gradually, you will recognise the Truth. With haste, you will go farther from the goal. Impatience leads to waste of time, waste of the body, and worry.”

Haste makes waste.
Waste makes worry.
So do not be in a hurry!

“Curb your impatience. Be patient, stay in the hermitage. and obey the disciplines,” was Pippalada’s reply.

The Sun — basis for the world

One year passed. The son of the great sage Katya, Kabandhi, came to Pippalada and said, “*Swami*, I’ve stayed for a full year but I find none of my intents satisfied. Bless me with peace of mind. Who is responsible for the Universe? Who created the countless beings?” Pippalada replied, “Prajapati created all”. Kabandhi’s heart sank. “Is this the answer I deserve after such patient dedication?”, he moaned.

“Who is Prajapati?”, he asked next.

“Food itself is Prajapati, the sustainer”, said Pippalada.

“Who is the basis for food?”

“Lord Varuna. He causes harvests, which lead to other commodities. Son, conduct is most important. As is the fire, so is the smoke. As is the smoke, so is the cloud. As is the cloud, so is the rain. As is the rain, so is the crop. As is the crop, so is the food. As is the food, so is life. Thus, the primary basis for human life is food.

“Now, food itself has a basis also. The Sun represents the life principle and the Moon, inert matter. This union of matter and energy forms the basis for Creation. Matter (*jada*) and energy (*chaitanya*) occur naturally in the world. The Sun’s rays extend all over the Earth and even enter the digestive fire (*jatharaagni*) in humans. Through that avenue, the Sun makes creation possible.

The Sun’s rays are indispensable for the Earth composed of soil, trees of wood, mountains of rock, and bodies of blood. The rays are saturated with life force, which creates and sustains the whole world. Therefore,

for creation, sustenance, and destruction, the Sun is the cause”, said Pippalada.

The goal of life

The sage continued, “Son, students do not recognise their innate power. They struggle to satisfy fleeting desires. As a result, they become defeated, dispirited, and, in frustration, cause disturbance in society.” Every person should recognise their capacities. No one tries to understand the goal of life. They do not even regret their ignorance about this matter. One in a thousand or a million exerts sincerely to know the Truth about existence. This is the first step in spirituality.

Most people, when asked about the goal of human life, reply that it is for the satisfaction of hunger, sufficient sleep for the eyes, clothes for the body, and a house full of children! This is their purpose in life! No, no. Even animals satisfy these four mundane needs. People’s nature is such that they cannot be appeased by mere eating. They eat, then move around in the world. They develop familiarity with good and bad and make an effort to follow the good. They convey the good to others for their welfare. This is the true purpose of life.

A fish dwells in water, consumes the dirt, and purifies the water. Likewise, students must enter society, transform its ills, establish ideals, experience bliss, and propagate it to others. This is the answer of *Prasnopanishad*.

“Son, life is not meant to be solitary. It is to be woven into society. The individual cannot exist without society. The joys and sorrows of the individual are contained in those of society. Therefore, desire the welfare of society above all else. May all the worlds be happy (*Lokaah samastaah sukhino bhavantu*). That automatically assures our happiness. Our happiness is not isolated like a drop of oil on a leaf. Like water in water, milk in milk, our life must assimilate into society. Students must recognise this truth”, preached Pippalada.

Face difficulties with fortitude

Now, we must necessarily undergo difficulties in the course of human life. We must face troubles and stand up to censure and calumny. Only then can we progress and understand the Truth.

There was a gardener who nursed his master’s garden with great care, bringing water for each sapling in a pot from a distant well. With such dedication, he earned the love and respect of his master. One day he was weighed down by family problems. Putting the pot of water aside, he sat down dispiritedly. He tried hard but could not clamber out of depression. “What am I worth? Am I meant to be a gardener all my life? People everywhere are enjoying comforts and peace of mind. Why

not I? I am a pauper, a sinner.” He demeaned himself thus.

At this point, the pot spoke, “O Gardener! This frustration over a trifle is unworthy of you. Hard work yields rich rewards (*Kashte phalli*). Look at me. I started out as mud, trampled by everyone. Then a potter picked me up. He mixed me with water, crushed me, mounted me on a wheel, spun me around, hammered me, fashioned me into this shape, and roasted me in fire at length. That is not all. I had to endure endless pain from buyers who assessed my quality by knocking me with their fingers. Only after such hardship am I worthy of being carried on the *heads* of human beings today. Had I given up in despair, could I have earned this lofty state?

Whoever wishes to achieve success must similarly experience various trials. Happiness is not born out of happiness (*Na sukhaat labhyate sukham*). Conquering difficulties alone grants lasting peace. The body is given to undergo ordeals! Provided our attitude is correct, troubles serve only to enhance our courage and strength.

Truly, nothing compares to person’s inborn strength. Nevertheless, they moan, “How can I bear these difficulties?” No, you need not become weak and anxious. The strength to encounter troubles is within us. If not, how could we survive the countless worries of life? Your survival is proof of your strength!

You talk of hardship, but you pass the time, surviving all the while. So, within this time you are continuously conquering difficulties! The strength to be victorious is our very nature. But unable to harness it, we bend to sorrow. We must promote fearlessness ceaselessly. I teach mettle to children via the “Four Fs”.

Follow the master
Face the devil
Fight to the end
Finish the game

“The Master is your conscience, your heart. The four Fs are the story of our life. We must face life! If we wail, ‘sorrow, sorrow, sorrow,’ the burden will only increase. Troubles are exactly the time to build courage. Everything can be achieved with courage (*Dhairyam sarva saadhakam*). Problems of various kinds pursue us throughout life. Instead of dreading them, welcome them with boldness.” Pippalada instructed his students in this manner.

Children’s hearts are tender and impressionable, but with incorrect understanding, confusion arises! With confusion they lose their “fuse”! What follows is depression. Life itself becomes a disappointment if melancholy is allowed to grow. Everything is based on courage, a sense of adventure. Adhering unflinchingly

to truth, courage, and love, students must develop a steady mind and unwavering vision. Then you will experience the reward following hard work.

No one can attain peace without tribulations. If you prostrate to a sugar cane and pray, “O cane, please give me some sugar,” will it simply obey? You need to harvest it, crush it, heat the juice in fire, and process it. Only thus is sugar obtained. If you do not want to harm the sugarcane, if you simply rest it against a wall and repeat, “Sugar cane has sugar, sugar cane has sugar” — what good is that? It will shrivel, and its sweet juice will be wasted.

Our body is the sugar cane. Troubles are the process of refinement, which produces the sweet juice of Divinity within us. God is sweetness itself (*Raso Vai Sah*). This sweetness is the sustaining and guiding force of life. Hence, do not dwell on troubles. Overcome them with valour, a sense of adventure. Achieve the path of Truth.

Knowing, seeing, experiencing

Today we do not seek to understand before experiencing the world. We want to experience without enquiry.

The *Bhagavad Gita* speaks of three stages: knowing, seeing, experiencing (*jnaatum, drashtum, praveshtum*).

Knowing (*jnaatum*). Do not follow life blindly. If you want something, ask “How can I acquire it, where can I find it?” We have many varieties of sweet mangos in our area³. To taste its sweet juice, we need to ask, Where are these mangos available, when and how? Mangos are available only in the summer season. Where? In the market. How? By paying money. Such investigation is knowing. When you go to the market and see the mangos, it is seeing (*drashtum*). Yes, the sight of the luscious fruits is satisfying, indeed. In order to taste them, pay the money, and buy them. This is experiencing (*praveshtum*).

Knowing, seeing, experiencing. This is the journey from the birth of a desire to its fulfilment. You cannot fulfil your desire by merely wishing for it or even by seeing it. Acquire what you see, and digest what you acquire. This alone grants contentment.

Therefore, students, to gain proficiency in anything, you must approach one who is knowledgeable in the subject. Do not harbour ego, “I know everything. I do not need guidance.” What you know is negligible, but what you need to know is boundless. Even the greatest scientist has infinite gaps in their knowledge.

³ Andhra Pradesh is known for its mangos in the summer season.

When we know the Infinite, we attain true contentment. This is called “awareness”. What is “awareness”? If I ask, “What is this?”, you say, “piece of cloth”. This is only the partial truth. If you open it and examine, you can say it is a handkerchief. Such complete knowledge is “awareness”. Today we use words indiscriminately. We do not pause to think what words should be used when, where, and how.

Control your senses and mind

Therefore, to become adepts in any subject, first identify who is qualified to disseminate knowledge on it. *Prasnopanishad* is supremely important for students. It contains wisdom to dispel all the doubts that emerge in a student’s inquisitive mind.

How did the students of ancient India conduct themselves? Displaying humility and obedience, having conquered their senses and purified their minds, they abounded in renunciation and focused only on their goal. What is our goal today? It runs amuck, changing many times a day. One goal in the morning, another at noon, yet another in the evening! Time may change but your goal should not.

Students, you are celibates. That is why you are called “masters”. Who is a master? One who controls the senses. When we succumb to sensual allurements, we become “mistresses”. Control your senses, do not be pleasure seekers. Develop firmness of mind. In this manner, the students of ancient Indian sages (*rishis*) lived lives full of intense penance. The determination of those students was formidable, indeed. They used to offer everything to the Lord in devotion. The power of discrimination shone brightly in them.

Devotion, discrimination, and determination

Devotion, discrimination, and determination pave the way to Divinity. Today’s “devotion” is as invisible as “deep ocean”! Devotion is not limited to recitation of the Name or meditation. We must offer our lives to the realisation of our noblest aspirations —this is true devotion. The smallest act must be done with faith and dedication (*sraddha*). Do not relax till the objective is met. This is determination. “Duty is God, work is worship.” Whatever work you do, do it with sincerity — consider that as your devotion.

Next, discrimination. What discrimination do we have today? Discrimination to promote worldly joys, to defend our lapses. No, no. This is “selfish discrimination”, “individual discrimination”. We want “fundamental discrimination”. Truth is truth, for everyone. Your discrimination must be such that whoever discriminates must pronounce your actions faultless.

Today, this broad feeling is absent. It is harmful to use discrimination to support your personal opinions.

Perform “social discrimination,” and you will be worthy of everything. Otherwise, you are bound to suffer. “Individual freedom” is one, “fundamental law” is another. Suppose you take a long stick and wish to exercise with it. You can do so within the bounds of your property or on your rooftop; this is your individual freedom. If you stand on the main road and wave the stick around, you transgress “fundamental law”. The police will arrest you. You must allow for others’ freedom, which is as inviolable to them as your freedom is to you. To wave your stick on a road is not freedom.

The end of wisdom is freedom.

The end of culture is perfection.

The end of knowledge is love.

Today’s students fill and express their love with weaknesses. No, no. Love must be an energy composed of purity and resolution. When we let our “energy” sap, we become victims of “allergy”. Develop this “energy”, your mental strength. Guard your mental fortitude with care. Such are the exalted teachings of Sage Pippalada.

Right and responsibility

Students are the future saviours of India, the future leaders of the world. Imagine, what power and strength must the inheritors of such responsibility attain! Instead of becoming stalwarts, you clamour for “right, right”. What about responsibility? Discharge responsibilities, and your rights follow automatically. Right and responsibility are like two wheels of a cart, two wings of a bird.

Students, do not fight for rights. Acknowledge your duties. We are students! We have duties to parents, to society, to our country, to our human birth. Fulfil all these obligations.

The real and the shadow

These six students, who were curious about the purpose of life, put forth six questions. Sage Pippalada gave beautiful answers to each question. Pippalada’s answers are vital to today’s students, who are assailed by the negative influence of the *Kali Yuga* (the age we are now in). Students helplessly act as per the influences of time and situation, without anchoring themselves in the heart.

Your vision is outward. “Outlook, outlook” — we promote only extroverted tendencies. Cultivate inner vision. Inner-view will reveal the truth about the external world as well. “Outside is a reflection of the Inner Being.” This is the awareness we must all attain. This lends “balance” to our character.

Today's students are very clever but grossly lacking in virtue. They do not "skill" their intelligence in the right channels. Instead, they "kill" their knowledge. This upsets their "balance". To restore "balance", one must turn one's vision inward.

Here is a tree. It has fruits. It casts a shadow. If you climb the shadow tree, you will reach the shadows of the fruits, not the real fruits! We chase the shadow and attain fruits which are just as unreal. If you are intelligent, climb the real tree —then you simultaneously climb the shadow tree as well! And you attain both fruits. How? You get the real fruit, and your shadow gets the shadow fruit!

Therefore, the path worth following is that which grants both fruits —worldly and spiritual— without double effort. This is the path of the heart. Follow your conscience.

Students like these six aspirants are a dire necessity. Students are good, but those who set examples to them are at fault. The environment is impure. Not to worry — you can be victorious in the midst of impurity. Courage and faith are most essential. First, self-confidence, the foundation of life. On this base, we can build the walls of self-satisfaction. With strong walls of self-satisfaction, lay the roof of self-sacrifice. The end result is self-realisation.

The real Self

Confidence, satisfaction, sacrifice, and realization — all four terms— have the prefix "self". Who is the Self? Determine this fact. Why? Without the "self", there cannot be self-confidence, much less the other three results.

This "self" is nothing but the *Atma*. Everything in the world is matter, based on the *Atma*. The world is the living being, the Self is the life force. Self is changeless. "Selfish" alone hides its awareness. Therefore, "Fish is better than selfish"! We must not permit selfishness to sprout in our hearts.

Love lives by giving and forgiving,
self lives by getting and forgetting.
Love is selflessness, self is lovelessness.

Recognise the pure Self, not the individual self. Pipalada taught that the Self must be the centre of one's focus. Do not think, "I am Ramayya" or "I am Krishnayya." These are acquired names of bodies after birth. The *Atma* is neither acquired nor ever born.

I have told students on many occasions that there are two types of "self". What are they? The single-letter self, "I", and the three-letter self, "eye". "Eye" is the body, "I" is the *Atma*. The single-letter self is alone real (*Eka aksharam*). Truth is one, but seers express it in various ways (*Ekam sat vipraah bahudaa vadanti*).

Now, the letter "I" and the number "1" look identical. The straight line is called "I" in the alphabet and "1" in arithmetic.

$$1 + 1 + 1 + 1 = 4, \text{ but}$$

$$I + I + I + I = I!$$

The Self neither grows nor decays. If all of you add your "I", it is transformed into a united, strong I — the *Atma*. If I call out in this hall, "Where is Ramayya?", someone will raise his hand and say, "I". The same response for other names like Krishnayya, Ramamma, and so on. These are all distinct names and forms, but the answer from all of them is identical: "I". Therefore, "I" is everywhere.

Have faith that the *Atma* is omnipresent. We base our identity on names and forms as temporary as water bubbles. The changeless, indestructible, eternal truth is the *Atma*. Keeping the *Atma* as the basis, use the body, senses, and mind as tools to perform your duties.

Develop equanimity and desire happiness for all. Our happiness is included in others' happiness. Such expansive feelings must dominate the hearts of students. To develop large-heartedness, to become established in selflessness, *Prasnopanishad* has many grand ideals.

Serve with confidence

Starting tomorrow, we shall discuss subjects that are new, inspiring, and elevating. We shall continue tomorrow since some more items remain in today's function.

Today is a Sunday, and students have done "social work". In my view, it is not "social work" but "show work"! Not a single boy worked properly. They sat in groups under trees and whiled away time in idle talk. This is the social work of the *Kali* Age (the age we are in). No, no, this is not right. Whatever you do, do it for your sake, not for anyone else. Your conscience will tell you if you have executed the task with sincerity. Most students were sitting down in the lawns, pulling out weeds at leisure. Is this social work? Not at all.

Exert to improve your health, bliss, and comfort. Ensure that our environments are clean. Such work will benefit you and others as well. Do service that promotes convenience and health in society. Set ideals for society —this is also service. The girls worked very well! The boys alone were negligent. This is not right, *bangaru*⁴.

Look only to your conscience and do not care what others think. You take a bath daily. Would you desist from bathing if someone derided you for it? "No matter what anyone may say, my actions are correct!" Such courage and faith are essential. Today's youth lack in

⁴ Endearing term in Telugu, like "dear". Literally it means "gold".

these virtues. Service must be performed wholeheartedly. Only then will the result be most favourable.

Be heroes in action

You are all tired today. You participated in the music programme as well. Come back tomorrow with your hearts pure and attentive. Record these important instructions in your hearts, not in a tape recorder! What is recorded in your heart is like a photo-negative. You can print photos from a negative at any time. What is recorded on a tape, in contrast, is like a Polaroid picture—it cannot be duplicated.

Students! The words of elders, the advice of veterans must fill your hearts. When you are full of these ideals, they can be instantly made to surface as actions at the appropriate situations. With practice, you can achieve all the bliss you seek, face all troubles, and surmount them. With such an outlook, India can progress to any height of greatness.

Bharat (India) is the purest nation among all the countries of the world. Yes, all nations are good, but India is the land of sacrifice, of self-realisation, and of selfless actions (*thyaga-bhoomi*, *yoga-bhoomi*, and *karma-bhoomi*). Unfortunately, today Indians imitate foreign values and threaten to turn this land into a land of worldly pleasures (*bhoga-bhoomi*). No, no, we do not want pleasure (*bhoga*). Sacrifice (*thyaga*) and action (*karma*) alone are our goals.

You have a right only to action,
Not to the fruits thereof.
Do not be motivated by results of actions,
Nor should you be inactive.⁵

Karmanyeva adhikaaraste
Maa phaleshu kadaachana
Maa karma phala heturbhoo
Maa te sangostvakarmani

You have a right to perform action alone. The world of people is bound by action (*Karmaanubandheeni manushya loke*). We must be heroes in action, renunciants of the fruits of actions! In closing, I wish and bless that you set examples to the world.

[Swami sang “*Govinda Hare, Gopala Hare, He Gopi Gopa Bala*” in His Golden Voice]

May 26, 1991

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⁵ *Bhagavad Gita* (II:47)

7. Prasnopnishad – Answers to the Second and Third Students

Just as the reflection is not stuck to the mirror,
Just as lotus leaves are not wet by the water they
dwell in,

Sins cannot stick to a devotee.

Birth and death are an inseparable pair,
Like the two wheels of a chariot.
If one of them ceases to exist, so will Creation.
This is the secret of the Cosmos.

Students, Embodiments of Divine Love!

The One has become many (*Ekoham bahusyaam*). The will of God presiding over creation (Prajapati) created the pairs of basis and based (*moolam* and *sthooram*), inert and conscious (*jada* and *chaitanya*), life force and living being (*praana* and *praani*), matter and energy.

The interaction of these dualities resulted in the living and non-living universe. The foundation of the world is the union of the Sun and the Moon principles. The Sun represents life force (*prana*) and the Moon, the living being (*prani*). You saw yesterday that this wisdom was imparted by Sage Pippalada to Kabandhi, the son of Sage Katya. Kabandhi heard the sage's words attentively, appreciated the secrets of creation, and experienced bliss.

The cycle of birth and death

At this time, a disciple from the kingdom of Vidarbha, Bhargava by name, entered the hermitage. Bhargava saluted Sage Pippalada and asked, "Swami! Birth and death seem to be incurable diseases. All scriptures propagate that death follows birth and vice versa. Is existence nothing but this cycle of life and death? Is there no end to this cycle?"

Pippalada said, "My child! God is without beginning and end. The living and non-living world is transitory (*mithya*). Although there is truth (*sathya*) in this transient world (*mithya*), it is formless. Everything must perish one day.

The north and south journey

The Sun causes days, seasons, and years. They are cogs in the wheel of time. The path of the Sun is the basis for time. These divisions of time are as per Prajapati's (God, the Creator) will. Time is a form of Prajapati.

Time is divided into two halves: the north journey and the south journey (*uttarayana* and *dakshinayana*).

Ayana means journey. When the Sun travels toward the north, this period of time is called *uttarayana*¹. The Sun's southward trajectory occurs during *dakshinayana*. The north journey is characterised by brightness, peace, contentment, fearlessness, and purity. The south journey is a period of darkness, unrest, fear, and delusion.

Those who seek to travel during the south journey (*dakshinayana*) perform various rituals and acts of charity and embark in the 'southerly' direction. Their journey takes them to the Moon. The Moon represents matter. In other words, with impressions of worldly desires, you will attain only the material world, not God. As long as the results of your good deeds permit, you stay in the world called the lunar plane of existence (*chandra loka*). When that store of merit is exhausted, you return to this world. The scriptures say, Depletion of merit forces a return to the world of mortals (*Ksheene punye marthya lokam visanti*).

Take an example. The victor in a political election becomes a member of the legislative assembly for five years. As each year passes, he recedes further and further away from the assembly. His membership ceases after five years. Similarly, a person achieves the lunar plane of existence with good deeds but returns for rebirth in the physical world when the fruits of their merit are exhausted.

The one who travels during north journey (*uttarayana*) acquires attachment to Brahman, leading him to knowledge of Brahman. He reaches the solar plane of existence (*surya mandala*). This solar plane represents life-force (*prana*). One who merges into the life force does not take rebirth.

Therefore, child, only when your life force (*prana*) is merged into the universal life force do you escape from birth and death. As long as you have delusion (*bhrama*), you cannot attain God (*Brahma*). Cultivate the feeling of Brahman (*brahma bhava*) and reach the world of the Sun. The one who recognises Brahman becomes Brahman Himself (*Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati*). Thus, understand the link between north journey, south journey, and rebirth. Those who journey during south time (*dakshinayana*) have rebirth, while the north journey (*uttarayana*) leads to immortality.

¹ *Uttara* = North, *Dakshina* = South. Like most *Vedic* terms, *uttarayana* and *dakshinayana* have literal meanings (northern solstice and southern solstice), as well as higher, spiritual meanings.

Bright and dark fortnights

The five elements are like the five parts of the sun. We have twelve months. In each month, the sun enters a specific house. As the sun traces its path through these houses, its radiance changes and gives birth to the seven colours. Every month has two fortnights: the bright half and dark half (*sukla paksha* and *krishna paksha*). What are these bright and dark halves?

The moon is in front of the sun and catches the sun's aura, shining with 16 aspects (*kalas*). Meaning, due to its proximity to the sun (life force), the moon (living being) shines brightly with all its 16 aspects. This is called full moon (*poornima*).

During the new moon day, the moon merges into the sun and is unseen. The dark half (*krishna paksha*) is the period from full moon to new moon, when the moon's brightness wanes. From the new moon to the full moon, the brightness of the moon increases. This is the bright half (*sukla paksha*). The bright fortnight is the life force (*prana*), and the dark fortnight is the living being (*prani*). The combination of *prana* and *prani* is this divine world. All these are merely results of Prajapati's (the Creator's) will.

Living beings and life force

The One manifests as many (*Ekoham bahusyaam*). How? When you sow one seed in the earth, it becomes a gigantic tree with thousands of fruits, each of which contains innumerable seeds. These seeds give birth to many other trees, in turn. Thus, one seed becomes many trees. One life force (*prana*) has become countless living beings (*pranis*). Creation has no bounds.

In the very beginning, there were only *prani* and *prana*. Their union brought about the universe. The world has no beginning or end. Since people see diversity in this manifestation of God's will, they see it as finite. Creation, sustenance, and destruction are not solely God's will, but human effort also matters to a certain extent. Depending on a person's actions and thoughts, a person achieves the destination they decide for themselves, good or bad. People (*manava*) born of God (*Madhava*) has forgotten their Divinity. Thus, they become demons, behave like animals, and waste their innate potential.

Child! Death is inescapable. However, one has the capacity to prevent further rebirth. Take a seed of green gram. When sown, it becomes a plant with many fruits. But no one knows the seed's parents, its grandfather, great-grandfather, and so on. No one knows how long it has been born as a green gram seed. Thus, the beginning is beyond anyone's reach. But pop the seed into your mouth and chew —its life ends. The beginning is beyond us, but the end is in our control! Similarly, no

one can tell when humanity began its existence, in what manner. The end, however, is dependent on our spiritual effort (*sadhana*). When you journey during the north path (*uttarayana*), you become one with Brahman.

Students! A paddy seed is covered with husk. Till the husk remains, you can plant it and water it, and it germinates. This is: repeated birth and death (*punarapi jananam, punarapi maranam*). Remove the husk, and it becomes rice. Rice will never germinate in soil, no matter how much you try. This is: no more rebirths (*punarjanma na vidyate*). Paddy has rebirth, rice does not. Husk distinguishes paddy from rice. Husk represents desire. Desires compel you to take birth again and again. Without desires, you are free.

We spend our entire life on matter, matter, matter ... This is the moon (*chandra*). The "moon" in the *Upanishads* does not refer to the planetary body circling the Earth! From His mind emerged the moon and from His eyes, the sun² (*Chadramaa manaso jaatah, chaksho suryo ajaayatah*).

Rebirth is unavoidable as long as the mind harbours thoughts and counter thoughts (*sankalpas* and *vikalpas*). When you nullify both likes and dislikes in the awareness of Brahman (*brahma bhaavam*), you destroy the mind and conquer rebirth. Therefore, O Bhargava, do not fear that birth and death are grim finalities. There is a state beyond birth and death, and it is possible to attain it," were Pippalada's beautiful words.

Channels of the life force

Then the third disciple entered. He prostrated to the *guru*. "Swami, in each living being (*jivi*), what kind of life forces sustain and protect the life energy? Swami, who is the most exalted of all beings? What is the power that pervades the various limbs of a living being?", asked Asvalaayana, son of Asvala.

Pippalada replied, "Son! Wind, fire, water, and earth take birth from the ether. Their manifestations in the human body are speech, vision, hearing, and mind. These four faculties protect the living being. Of these, the Sun principle or life force (*prana*) is primary. Without the life force, the eyes cannot see, the ears cannot hear, the mouth cannot speak, and the mind cannot think. The life force is more important than any other part of the body. The body is the home for the life force, its dwelling place, its temple. The body is the temple, the Indweller is the eternal One (*Deho devaalayam prokto, jeevo Devo sanaatanah*). The life force is eternal. It takes shelter in the temporary body.

² From the *Purusha Suktam* – A prayer to Lord Narayana, the primordial personality of the Godhead.

The body contains thousands of *nadis*³. Do not consider the human body as ordinary. Truly, there are 720 million *nadis* in the human body. A life force by the name of *vyana* travels in these *nadis*. Without *vyana*, the *nadis* cannot function. There is another force, *udana*, that witnesses the good and bad done by a person and takes them to the corresponding destinations. Our state of existence depends on our actions. Thus, the scriptures advise us not to be elated in joy or depressed in sorrow but to follow the eternal principle of equanimity.

The five life forces

Difficulties are not caused by someone else. Joys are also not favours done to us by others. Due to weakness, you blame others for your grief and praise them for your joy, but both actions are baseless. For joy and sorrow, profit and loss, honour and dishonour, your thoughts and actions alone are responsible. Sin does not exist somewhere, waiting to grab you. God also does not reside in some secluded corner. Both God and sin dwell in your own body, in your actions. We attain heaven, hell, liberation, or any other after-death state based only on our *karmas*. The principle of *udana* decides this destination.

There are five types of life forces (*pranas*): *prana*, *apana*, *samana*, *udana*, and *vyana*. They reside in the body and in the five elements outside. The sun is composed of *prana*. From the earth emanates *apana*. From the sky or ether, *samana*. From the wind, *udana*. From fire, *vyana*. In each of the five elements, its corresponding life force is immanent. Clinging inseparably to the five life forces is the repercussions of the good and bad done by man.

You reap what you sow

The secrets of Creation are not easily explained by anyone. Every object has a shadow associated with it. The results of actions (*karmas*) follow the life force (*prana*) like a shadow. Wherever the life force ventures, actions follow. Results of actions are attached to your present body as well. When the life force leaves your

body and dons another one, the *karmic* shadows go to the new body instead of staying with the dead body.

Where does the life force go? After death, your the life force does not just acquire a random body. It attains the kind of body determined by your actions. We obtain a good rebirth only when we perform good actions and entertain good thoughts. Can you expect sweet mangos to emerge from bitter lemon seeds? People forget this truth.

“I will do this, I will attain that” —
Do not tire yourself in such planning.
Whatever seeds you have sown yesterday,
You will get the corresponding results today.
When your seeds do not fit the fruits you expect,
How can your ambitions be achieved?

All your actions are recorded, one by one,
Whether good or bad, without exception.
Brahma sends with you a heavy necklace —
The necklace of the results of past actions.

At birth, no necklace is seen around your neck.
There isn't a string of pearls adorning you,
Nor a gold chain,
Nor a set of diamonds shining brilliantly,
Nor an ornament of green emeralds.
But it is there: an unbreakable necklace
Put together the results of past actions.
Brahma sends with you a heavy necklace —
The necklace of the results of past actions.

Therefore, O people! Your joy and sorrows are repercussions of your own good and bad actions. First, recognise this truth. Then engage in good thoughts, words, and deeds to obtain a good life and after-life. We reap what we sow — no more, no less. Whatever you eat, you experience its belch! [laughter] When you eat a cucumber, is it possible to taste mango in your burp? God is not responsible for your joys or sorrows. God is merely a witness.

Devotion burns away results of past actions

Having said that, bear in mind: No matter how large the pile of your results of your bad actions (*karmas*), if you pray to God with genuine feeling emanating from the depth of your heart, all *karmas* disappear like snow on a summer day.

The reflection appears inside the mirror, but it is not stuck to the mirror. The lotus dwells in a lake, but its leaves are not wet by the water. Similarly, no *karmas*, however heinous or numerous, can trouble a person who has pure devotion. A small spark can consume mountains of cotton. The tiniest spark is enough. Therefore:

³ Channels of the life force in the astral body, like veins and arteries in the physical body. There are five “vital airs”, and English does not have names for them. Therefore, we use Sanskrit names. *Prana* is the general name for the life force, but it is also the name of one of the five vital airs. It is the “forward moving air”, which receives things coming into the body in the form of food, liquid, and air. *Apana* is the downward air, which goes out through the anus. *Samana* is the digestive air. *Udana* is the breath that moves upward from the throat. *Vyana* is diffused throughout the whole body.

You cry for wife, children, friends,
wealth, business, pleasures, name, and fame.
If you yearn for Krishna's Lotus Feet for a moment,
You can easily cross the terrible doors of death.

For the amount of time you spend on crying for wife, children, friends, and fame, if you set aside just a moment—a single moment—for heartfelt contemplation on the Lord, it is said that the terrible doors of hell can be transcended. How can we expect peace if we do not even dedicate a fraction of our time to meditate on God?

Dedicate actions to the Lord

Therefore, son, the life-force (*prana*) is most important. You need to follow a specific path. Merge your senses into your mind. Merge your mind into your *Atma*. In other words, whatever actions you perform, dedicate them to the *Atma*. Perform actions with the motivation to become dear to the Lord (*Sarva karma Bhagavat pretyartham*). Do not be inactive."

You can be a lawyer, doctor, banker, businessman. Whatever your vocation, work is transformed into worship with this pure outlook. Transform work into worship, offer it to the Lord. With work done in this manner, you will have no rebirth.

It is not enough to repeat "Offered to Krishna (*Krishnaarpanam*)," with your tongue. It must come from your heart! Dedication through mere words will produce mere verbal results! How? For example, if you tell Me, "Swami, please grace my home with a visit", my reply is, "Definitely, I will come." But if, in reality, you are not inviting Me, I'm not going to come! When you call me from the core of your heart, I will definitely come — with all My heart. As is your feeling, so is the result you experience (*Yat bhaavam tat bhavati*).

As is your desire, so is your feeling. As is your feeling, so is the result you experience. It is important that whatever you do, you do it with your heart. The heart is the junction of all energy channels (*nadis*) in the human body. When pious intentions emerge in the heart, the entire body is filled with enthusiasm and Divinity.

Everything originates in the heart. This is not the physical heart, but the spiritual heart. The way to overcome birth and death is to harness this heart through Love.

Thoughts: the root cause

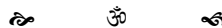
Thus, six students approached Pippalada with basic doubts that assail every human being. The great sage gave them detailed and satisfactory answers. The first question was put by Kabandhi, "What is the cause of Creation?" Thought is the cause of Creation. Pippalada

gave a simple analogy. "Son, what causes dreams? Some people think that indigestion causes dreams. Others say it is excess thoughts or weakness in the body. None of these are true. Truly, sleep alone causes dreams! One without sleep can never have dreams! Therefore, thought causes Creation. When thought is destroyed, Creation is no more. Then the sight (*drishti*) becomes the seer (*drashta*). Everything is perceived as One, full of Bliss." Pippalada taught his disciples to gradually limit thoughts and to control the mind.

Tomorrow we shall talk about the fourth disciple and the question he posed. The spiritual education (*bal vikas*) children of Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar are ready, waiting with costumes and make-up. They have prepared a beautiful dance-drama. For this reason I conclude with our discussion of the third disciple.

[Swami sang "Govinda Krishna Jai, Gopala Krishna Jai, Gopala Pala Bala Radha Krishna Jai!"]

27 May 1991



8 Prasnopanishad – Answers to the Fourth and Fifth Students

Remove the impurities of the mind, and
Fill your heart with supremely pure feelings.
The eye of wisdom will reveal to you that
The world is filled with the light of Brahman.

Why does a Self-Realised person need penance?
Of what need is spiritual effort to one who adheres
to Truth?

Does a guileless person need to do sacrifices and
rituals?

These words of Sai convey the path of truth.

Birth and death are natural, inevitable. Bhargava, who had recognised the mystery of birth and death, grasped the secrets of the north and south paths (*uttaraayana* and *dakshinaayana*), who knew the significance of the bright and dark fortnights, was filled with contentment and bliss upon listening to Pippalada's wisdom. He bowed to the sage in humility and expressed heartfelt gratitude.

Awareness during sleep

At this point, the fourth disciple, Souryaayani, the grandson of Surya, approached Pippalada. "Swami, when the countless beings of the world sleep, who sleeps in reality? Who is awake then? Who dreams? Who forgets the body and mind and gets immersed in the awareness in a blissful state? When a living being (*praani*) sleeps, how are they able to sustain the life force (*prana*)? Kindly impart these secrets to me and help me attain tranquility," he prayed.

Pippalada spoke, "Souryaayani! When the sun sets, it appears as if he withdraws his rays into himself. The next morning, he sends them forth again for the benefit of mankind. In the same way, the senses recede into the mind during sleep. That is why one cannot see, talk, hear, or taste while in slumber. The senses and their functions are dormant. However, the five life forces¹ (*pranas*) are awake as five fires within the body. For example, inhalation and exhalation, which are involuntary, are possible because of the life force called *samana* (the digestive air).

The individual soul (*jivi*) experiences the peace of sleep. Man relives past and present sights and experiences in dreams. Impressions from countless past births, which are unknown to the individual, also emanate from the consciousness during dreams. Therefore, the five

life forces (*pranas*) are awake during sleep. One creates oneself during dreams. One also creates others and the environment, and undergoes illusory experiences. The mind is the root cause. The mind alone is responsible for bondage and liberation (*Mana eva manushyaanaam karanam bandha mokshayo*). The mind is the reason for dreams and deep sleep.

The nature of pranava (Om)

When Pippalada had satisfied Souryaayani with such answers, the fifth student, Satyakaama, son of Sibi, came to the sage and said, "Swami! The scriptures assert that a person who is able to repeat the *pranava*² during the last breath attains the indestructible (*akshara*) state of immortality. Is this true? Is this possible?"

Pippalada said, "Son, Satyakaama, the whole cosmos is permeated with *pranava*. *Pranava* is the manifestation of God. The sounds of *a*, *u* and *m* constitute the *pranava*. The physical world (*bhoo loka*), the higher astral world (*bhuvan loka*), and the highest world (*sva loka*) — these three worlds are pervaded by *pranava*. The *Rig*, *Yajur*, and *Sama Vedas* are also contained within the *pranava*. These three *Vedas* sing their song through the medium of *Om*.

Note the triples. *Bhoo-Bhuvah-Suvah* are the three worlds. *Rig-Yajur-Sama* are the three *Vedas*. A-U-M are the three primary sounds (*maatras*). The *pranava* alone pervades the three worlds, the three *Vedas*. It is also said that the *pranava* is characterized by eight kinds of prosperity (*ashta aishvarya*).

God as sound, in living and non-living beings,
In light and speech,
Eternal happiness, transcendental principle,
Power of delusion, auspiciousness,
Prosperity, permanent awareness —
These are the characteristics of *Om*.

All sounds in this world are born from *Om* alone. Those who deem *Om* to be just a sound, those who do not go beyond its mechanical recitation, receive only worldly benefits from its repetition. But those who contemplate on the significance of *Om* while chanting it with concentration are eligible to live in the pleasure-filled world, lunar world (*chandra loka*) after death, so say the scriptures.

¹ *Prana, apana, samana, udana, and vyana* — see previous discourse.

² *Om*, the first sound of Creation.

Sun and moon principles

The lunar world (*chandra loka*) is not to be confused with the physical moon, which astronauts from America and Russia have set foot on! From His mind emerged the moon and from His eyes, the sun (*Chadramaa manaso jaatah, chakshoh sooryo ajaayata*³). When I speak of *chandra* (moon) and *surya* (sun) principles, students should not confuse them with the physical sun and moon.

The moon is a representation of the mind, meaning that with thoughts pertaining to the world, one attains the *chandra loka* — a plane of existence where mental delights are experienced. The sun represents the light of the eyes. When our vision (*drishti*) is merged with creation (*srishiti*), we perceive the truth of the scriptures. Therefore, the term scripture (*sastra*) does not refer only to certain books. The command (*saasana*) of the eyes is *sastra*, meaning that direct proof available through a clarified vision is the real scripture.

For direct proof (*pratyaksha pramana*)⁴, the sun is the basis. For proof by inference (*anumana pramana*), the mind or moon is the basis. For proof by sound (*abada pramana*), speech is the basis. Therefore, humanness is transformed into Divinity only when we have unity and purity in thought, word, and deed (*trikarana sudhi*).

Hiranyagarbha

God, as manifested in the outer, physical world, is called *Viswa*. God, as the inner presence in our mind, is called *Hiranyagarbha*. From where did this distinction between “inner” and “outer” arise? The mind principle is very pure. During times of agitation, when it contemplates on God, it is transformed into light (*prakaanti*). Therefore, there is peace in unrest, light in peace, supreme effulgence in light (*prasanti in asanti, prakanti in prasanti, parama jyoti in prakanti*), and this supreme effulgence is the *Atma* — so declare the *Vedas*.

So, the mind principle is called *Hiranyagarbha*. *Hiranya* is gold, *garbha* is womb. Meaning, *Hiranyagarbha* is He with a golden *lingam* in His body.

[At this point, Bhagavan materialised a golden *lingam* and held it aloft. There was clapping and excitement among devotees.]

This golden *lingam* is present in His body near the heart. The entire cosmos is contained within this golden *lingam*. America, Japan, Germany, France, England, India, Pakistan ... all are contained in this *lingam*! Why is *Hiranyagarbha* golden? Gold undergoes no change. It survives in the earth for any length of time. In the same way, the heart does not change, no matter how long the individual lives in this world. This is not the “physical heart” but the “spiritual heart,” which conceals infinite powers. Divinity in a person cannot be understood from a physical perspective.

The golden principle of *Hiranya* resides as twelve manifestations in the heart. These forms are called *Aditya Brahmas*. Composed of the Aditya Brahmas, the sun shines with a golden hue and traverses a path that takes twelve months to complete. Truly, there is no beginning or end to the sun’s motion, no sunrise and no sunset. When the sun comes above the horizon, we call it day. When it is hidden below the horizon, night. There are not two suns, one for day and another for night! Pippalada explained such subtleties to Satyakaama.

Vedic terms

For the spiritual aspirant, there are two paths: feeling (*bhaava*) and spiritual effort (*sadhana*)⁵. One who experiences the *Om (pranava)* with feeling cannot know their own Divinity. Even if self-realisation does dawn in that person, it is temporary, and the person lapses into ignorance again. One who enters into spiritual effort reaches the divine abode of the sun and, from there, enters into Brahman’s abode.

Who or what is Brahman? Do not imagine Brahman to be merely a four-headed God or some other being. The term *Brahma* means immense, measureless, expansive. To attain *Brahma* is to become vast in perception, like an ocean.

Science lacks this broad-mindedness. It strives to discern sub-atomic particles within the atom, smaller particles within these particles and so on. But spirituality is vaster than the vastest (*Mahato maheeyaan*). The nature of Brahman is vastness. The moon symbolises the mind. The sun represents the brightness of the eye. One who appreciates the significance of these terms in *Vedanta* alone can understand spirituality in its entirety.

For example, here is a *lingam*. What is this *lingam*? Is it present in the physical body? In *Vedanta* it is called *angushta maatram*, thumb-sized. We consider “heart” to mean the physical heart. No, no. The spiritual heart has a golden power — eternal, effulgent, all-encompassing. This power is called the *lingam*.

³ From the *Purusha Sooktam*, a prayer and description of Purusha, the Cosmic form of the Lord, i.e. Lord Narayana.

⁴ Ancient Indian logic outlines specific methods of arriving at the Truth (*pramaanaas*). *Pratyaksha*, *anumaana*, and *sabda* are the three main methods.

⁵ *Bhaava* and *sadhana* are explained in detail in Discourse 9.

One small example. Some of you have gone on pilgrimage to Badrinath, Kedarnath, and Amarnath⁶. Where do these places exist? They reside in your heart, through your recollections. Just close your eyes and think of Badrinath. The temple, the surrounding peaks, the Alakananda river—all are printed in your memory. Whatever you have seen and done is recorded in your heart, strengthened by recollection, meaning that the whole world dwells within you.

The spiritual heart

Whatever you see outside is a reflection of the inner being. Whatever you speak is the reflection of the “inner talk”. Whatever you do is a reflection of the “inner action”. Hence, to act upon what is within you is right conduct (*dharma*). To speak clearly and honestly of the matters in your heart is truth (*sathya*). To think about matters in your heart truthfully and clearly is peace (*santhi*). To “understand” your heart is *nonviolence*. To trust your heart completely is *love*. Hence, *sathya*, *dharma*, *santhi*, *prema*, and *ahimsa* are only facets of your heart.

Humanness means unity in thought, word, and deed. What is meant by *dharma*? To project your thoughts as words and to demonstrate your words in action is *dharma*. This is what is meant by: “The proper study of mankind is man.”

Today these three are not in unity. The heart, which is meant to be pure consciousness (*chinmaya*), is becoming muddy and dirty (*mrinmaya*). Why? Because of selfishness. In which direction must your selfishness be channeled? Toward *Hiranyagarbha*, which is divine, bright, ever new, eternal, and blissful. That means we must focus on that which is changeless. Everything around us is temporary and false. In this context, the *Bhagavad Gita* declares, The world is temporary (*Anityam ashaashvatam lokam*). Only the feeling emanating from the heart is true and permanent. Ideals practised with this heartfelt feeling take one to immortality.

Illusion

What is immortality? Consider a snake, which sheds its skin. The snake and its skin become separate, and the snake shines all the more. When you acquire Divinity, the gross (*mrinmaya*) and conscious (*chinmaya*) aspects become separate. The body is impermanent. The *Hiranya* principle is true. The blanket that hides awareness of the *Hiranya* principle is *maya*. Just as a snake is covered by its skin, *maya* envelops humanity. *Maya* is nothing but illusion. It does not exist as a separate being or power. It is your own delusion. When do we succumb to it? When spiritual wisdom (*jnana*) is absent.

You look at a rope and mistake it for a snake. Why? There is not enough light to see clearly. In other words, with a mixture of light and darkness, there arises delusion. When you shine a torch, you realise it is a rope. It was a rope even before you used the torch! It is a rope when you shone the torch. Before you used the torch, the snake did not leave and the rope did not arrive. The disappearance of the snake and the advent of the rope are both delusions. Reality alone is present, always. Coming and going of opposites is illusion.

Truth is one, seers elaborate on it in various ways (*Ekam at vipraah bahudaa vadanti*). The *Vedas* chant, Salutations to *Hiranyagarbha* (*Hiranyagarbhaaya Namah*). In your heart, in your stomach, there is a changeless, golden, permanent, true Divinity. This power emanating from the heart makes the eyes see, the ears hear, and the mouth speak.

Science and spirituality

But scientists do not trust in this unseen power. Why? Their vision is limited to that which is accessible to the senses. Today’s research becomes outdated tomorrow. Tomorrow’s research is always considered the truth! This cycle of old-new-old-new is misleading. Spirituality has no old, no new.

That is full, This is full.
From the full is born the full.
When the full is subtracted from the full,
What remains is the full alone.

Poornamadah poornamidam
Poornaat poornam udachyate
Poornasya poornam aadaaya
Poornam evaavasishyate

The investigations of science depend on human intellect. Spiritual research is based on the heart. The heart is related to “right”. Head has to do with “responsibility”. The head is like a Polaroid picture. The heart is like a photographic negative. Any number of copies can be printed with a negative but not with a Polaroid image. Therefore, people are infinitely more valuable than the machines they create.

Scientists believe in machines (*yantras*) while spiritualists believe in chants (*mantras*). Scientists follow science, “saint-ists” follow spirituality! The saint deals with the full circle, the scientist with a semi-circle. Spirituality ends where it begins, like a full circle. When half of a full circle is erased, the resulting ‘C’ shape is science. It begins somewhere and ends somewhere else, with a host of contradictions in between. In fact, there is no truth in science. Today’s truth is tomorrow’s falsehood. Spirituality has been true in the past, is true today, and will be true tomorrow and a million years hence.

⁶ Places of pilgrimage in the Himalaya mountains.

Spirituality emanates from the heart. But people forget their nature and waste life. People are exhilarated at their technological prowess; they are proud of the wealth they create and consider it their true property. No, no. "People are more important than all the wealth of the world".

People invented the computer. When one asks the computer, "It is raining now, what should I do?", it replies, "Carry an umbrella and take this route to go home". Did the computer think of the response on its own? Or was it inserted in advance by a person, only to be reproduced mechanically? The computer is nothing but "rubbish"!

We waste millions by relying excessively on computers. Man has a "natural brain". It is man's brain that is behind the computer's brain. Without relying on our real brain, we trust in the artificial brain of the computer.

When you pour seeds into the top of a hand-mill, flour emerges out of the bottom. The computer is no different. It ejects whatever is inserted. If it truly had answers, could it tell you the date of your death? It does not know the answer. Why? Humanity, its creator, does not know the answer! The computer knows what the scientist knows. It is the scientist's reflection. Today people do not trust themselves but rely on their creation, their reflection.

Speech, mind, life force, and Atma

Therefore, students, faith in yourself is very important. Develop self-confidence. There is nothing greater than the *Atma*. Speech, mind, and the life force (*prana*) together constitute the *Atma*. Of these three, the life force is most important. The life force has no end, although the body it dwells in must perish. It is present in all beings like a reflection in a mirror. When mind, speech, and the life force come together, the fourth, *Atma*, emerges.

You know that in chemistry, when you mix some substances together, a new compound is formed. Those who chew *paan* leaves know about the betel nut. The betel nut is brown, betel leaves are green, and the lime mixture added to it is white in colour. However, when the three of them are chewed together, the resulting colour is red. When man's mind, speech, and life force come together, the *Atma* is revealed. With the unity of these three, our life attains fulfilment.

Everything is contained within a person's heart. With this in mind, the *Vedas* address a person in the *sushumna* state (the state of an undisturbed, joyous mind) as *Hiranyagarbha*. In this state, unlimited bliss is experienced.

Take a worldly example. When you find a copper coin somewhere, you're happy, but not too elated. Even a piece of brass or silver fails to excite us. But if you find even a small piece of gold, you are exhilarated.

Gold gives joy. What is this gold? It is also found in mud. But mud is found everywhere, while gold in mud occurs rarely. Therefore, it is given greater value than mud. If gold occurred in abundance, nobody would value it. We find flesh, bones, muscles, and blood throughout our body. The heart is like valuable gold amidst the inert body matter. *Hiranyagarbha* is the heart, which bestows value, effulgence, and ideals to humanity.

Depth of Upanishads

Students! I know that *Prasnopanishad* is profound and abstruse, and I am putting you all through a lot of strain. We shall conclude our discussion today and use the remaining days to confer on issues that are integral to day-to-day living. Even great scholars and *pandits* find the *Upanishads* complex. You students are not familiar with Sanskrit terms used in the *Vedas*. You need to translate them into English. It is not surprising, then, that most of this material is beyond your grasp. You hold English (*Aangla bhaasha*) in high esteem, but not the language of the *Atma* (*Atma bhaasha*).

It is pointless for Swami to elaborate upon these priceless gems when the listeners cannot understand them. If you teach Standard X lessons to a boy of Standard I, can he possibly absorb anything? You will benefit more if you are taught lessons appropriate to your level. Starting tomorrow, we shall talk about education, the path of action (*karma yoga*), righteousness (*dharma*), duties and obligations (*kartavyam*) and various aspects of life in this world.

"Progress" in education

Keeping in view the atmosphere in the world, it is important to teach students about morality and ethics while equipping them with worldly knowledge. Progress in science has caused erosion in moral values. What good is technological progress without human values? Education claims to be making "progress, progress ..."

Morality and discipline remain relegated only to books.

Hearts stink of pollution.

Hands engage only in selfish actions.

This is the "progress" in today's education.

Those who impart education are derided.

The one who feeds is starved in recompense!

The one who helps is harmed in return!

This is the "progress" in today's education.

Is this “progress”? No, no, no!

Gratitude is our life-breath. When we receive favours from others, we must demonstrate gratitude to them, even life-long —meaning that you should love your parents and respect your teachers. Consider your fellow people as humans like you and develop appropriate relations with them. If you do not have such a sense of collective existence, what has education taught you? Tradition and values (*samskaaram*) need to be cultivated along with knowledge. We shall learn about *samskaaram* tomorrow.

28 May 1991

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9. Prasnopanishad – Answers to the Sixth Student

Peace is non-existent, truth is scarce.
Fear of weapons has mounted.
Selfishness is the cause of these harmful trends.
These words convey the truth.

Brahman (God) is truth, wisdom, and infinite (*Sathyam jnanam anantam Brahma*). Imperishable, Supreme Self, Supreme Principle, Knower of the Truth of Life (*Aksharam, Paramatma, Parathathwam, Kshetrajna*) — these terms are merely synonyms for the *Atma*. Names are based on place, time, and situation.

Every being aspires to be happy, to keep misery at bay. Although one desires joy and peace, why is one compelled to experience sorrow and difficulties? Sorrow, unrest, and fear are nothing but reflections of joy and peace. Without sorrow, joy has no value. If unrest did not exist, why would we yearn for peace? These dualities follow each other and are interdependent.

We spoke of *Om* yesterday. We say that the three sounds — *a u m* — represent the physical, astral, and solar worlds (*bhu-loka, bhuvvar-loka, and suvar-loka*). Also, the three *Vedas* — *Rig, Yajur, and Sama* — merely elaborate whatever is contained in *Om*.

Chanting, feeling, spiritual practice

To attain the *Om* (*pranava*) principle, namely, the unity of three — three *Vedas* and three worlds — three paths are available.

First, chanting or repeating the Name of the Lord (*namasmarana*). Second, feeling (*bhaavam*). Third, spiritual effort (*sadhana*).

By chanting the Name, you can experience pleasures of the physical world (*bhu-loka*), that is, worldly comforts and amenities. All worldly pleasures can be obtained through chanting the divine Name, but these are temporary and unreal.

Next, feeling. What is feeling? Feeling is: appreciating that a divine Power runs the world of living and non-living entities, making this conviction central to one's daily activities, and contemplating upon that Power. By treading the path of feeling, one reaches the region of the moon principle (*chandra loka*) — the realm of the mind where one enjoys peace and contentment. To trust that there is a basis (*mulam*) for the gross (*sthulam*) world is feeling (*bhaavam*).

Through repetition of the name of God, one acquires physical comforts. Through feeling (conviction that a divine Power runs the world), one acquires mental peace. But one remains dissatisfied with these two joys

and proceeds to the third stage, spiritual practice. Spiritual practice takes one to the realm of the sun (*suvar-loka*), meaning the *Atma* principle, characterized by the highest awareness and consciousness. It is the highest wisdom (*jnana*) born of divine vision. In this wisdom, which reveals the unity of everything, there is peace.

Bhu-loka and *bhuvvar-loka* pertain to the physical world, which is fleeing and unreal. *Bhu-loka* is gross (*sthulam*) while *bhuvvar-loka* is subtle (*sukshmam*). The body is gross, the mind is subtle. *Bhu-loka* and *bhuvvar-loka* relate to the body and the mind. *Suvar-loka* — the realm of the sun — is the domain of the *Atma*.

Through repetition of the Name, contemplation that a divine Power runs the world (*bhaavam*), and spiritual practice, these three planes of existence are attained. When these three paths are followed, one can reach a state beyond the three worlds, a state of supreme peace and bliss. This is the goal of human life. These were the answers given by Sage Pippalada to Satyakama.

The Divine Being and the sixteen attributes

Sukesha, son of Sage Bharadwaja, rose and prayed. “Swami!” All scriptures declare that there is a Divine Being, *Purushothama*, who is a reservoir of 16 attributes (*kalaas*). Who is this Being? What are the 16 attributes? Where are they found? Please appease my curiosity.”

Pippalada smiled. “Son, Sukesha! *Purushothama* is not limited to a secluded place. He is present as awareness in every being and experiences bliss in that form. He is Being, Awareness, Bliss (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*).”

Sat means one who is changeless, true, and permanent, to whom nothing can be added. *Chit* is one who recognizes complete awareness. The one who experiences *Sat* and *Chit* is the embodiment of bliss (*Ananda*).

Names and forms may vary, but Being and Awareness lead to the same goal. The right and left eye are distinct, no doubt. But when you open both of them, left and right merge in your vision. Similarly, the unity of Being and Awareness is Bliss. These three are present within every human being.

Sat-Chit-Ananda is one who possessing all 16 attributes (*kalaas*). Now, the scriptures have expounded on the 16 attributes in various ways, confusing the common person. The attributes are not meant to be earned by us but, instead, are natural to us.

Space (*akasa*) carries sound. Sound causes wind (*vayu*). Wind gives birth to fire (*agni*) and brightness,

through which water is made possible. The grosser aspect of water is itself earth. The five elements are space, air, fire, water, and earth.

The five life forces (*pranas*) in our body are in-breath, downward air, digestive air, upward air, and air diffused throughout the body (*prana, apana, samana, udana, and vyana*).

Together, the five elements and five life forces form ten concepts. The five organs of perception (*jnanendriyas*)—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin—bring the total to fifteen. The mind is the sixteenth. These 16 attributes shine in every human being.

Individualised and collective awareness

The human attributes (*kalaas*) are all-encompassing and full (*purnam*). The one who experiences these attributes in all their fullness, employs them to recognize the state of fullness, and attains that state qualifies for the title of *purusha* or *Purushothama*.¹

Who is *purusha*? It does not mean one who wears pants and a shirt, namely, a male! In the body, which is called *pura, purusha*, or self, is the consciousness, the awareness, the divine Power that pulsates from top to toe. The one who experiences this awareness is also *purusha*. The One who appears in everyone, or the collective consciousness throughout the cosmos, is the Supreme Lord of All, or *Purushothama*. In other words, the individualised awareness (soul) is *purusha*, while the collective awareness is *Purushothama*.

What must the soul (*purusha*) do to sanctify the time in the body? Sound, air, fire, water, and earth—the five elements—must be regarded as manifestations of God and used appropriately.

Sacred use of senses

God has bestowed on people the five organs of perception (*jnanandriyas*)². Sight is fire. It must be used in the proper manner—see good. Only then does this attribute of sight become a divine instrument.

Second is hearing. We must employ our ears to hear only words that encourage awareness of our pure, transcendental nature.

Third, the nose. Sweet fragrances do not just confer joy but are conducive to health as well. Bad odors lead to bad health and disturb mental peace. Good smells are God's manifestations in the air.

¹ *Purushothama* = *Purusha* + *Uthama*, where *Uthama* means "best among". In the *Vedas*, *Purusha* means *God*, but it is also the common term for *male* in Sanskrit and many Indian languages.

² Eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin.

Next, the skin. The sense of touch is very pure. It must not be used indiscriminately. To sanctify the sense of touch, our ancient sages left villages and towns, sought solitude in forests, and spent their time in silent meditation.

There is a divine power in our body called the power of awareness (*Chit Sakthi*). This power is like a current. With touch, currents in bodies are exchanged. It is very likely that in this process, our good qualities deplete and bad qualities increase! Therefore, it is advisable to touch only pious and great individuals, especially their feet, to ensure that our virtues flourish and our vices subside.

When you sit for mediation, ensure that you are not close to others, that you do not touch another's body. Sit alone, focus on your innate potential, express it in behavior, and mentally enjoy the Divine Power, which is within you and outside you. God (*Narayana*) is inside, outside, everywhere (*Antar bahischa thath sarva vyapya Narayan shiutah*).

When we cultivate friendships and attachments indiscriminately, our Divinity is drained day by day. Our ancient sages used the five elements and the five sense organs in sacred ways and transformed themselves into divine personages.

Swami told you yesterday: our body has 720 million nerves (*naadis*). The life force called *vyana* (air diffused throughout the body) pervades every nerve uniformly. This life force ensures health, joy, and enthusiasm.

Vyana manifests as a thousand-petaled lotus (*sahasraara padma*) in the crown of the head. When the *kundalini* energy journeys from the root (*muladhara*) chakra to this lotus in the crown of the head, the petals blossom. Then the *kundalini* glows and, with infinite effulgence, joins the thousand-petaled lotus.

People today, drained of this divine energy, are susceptible to all kinds of sorrow. Our sages were made of stronger material. They purified the root chakra, awakened the *kundalini* power, made it traverse the path to the thousand-petaled lotus, and redeemed the purpose of their birth. The five life forces must be utilized properly. Only then can we attain the state of Divinity (*Purusha*).

The Source is within

Thus, although one has the 16 attributes within oneself, one is unable to use them properly, unable to recognize one's Divinity.

When you have a wish-fulfilling cow (*kamadhenu*),
granting milk upon mere request,
Why buy an ordinary cow paying money?
When the wish-fulfilling tree is with you,
Why crave the wild weeds growing around your
house?

When you have a golden mountain shining with infinite brightness,
Why search for nuggets of silver and gold?

Although a person is the embodiment of Divinity, which expresses itself as 16 attributes, and the person contains these 16 attributes within themselves, the person does not recognize their divine significance and thereby performs actions that wreck peace of mind. Not only do people not attain the state of Godliness (*Purusha* or *Purushothama*), they slip downward into animal and demonic tendencies. Why? They do not use the 16 attributes in the right way.

Give up selfishness, sanctify the attributes

Yes, you may not be well-versed in *Vedas*, epics, and *Puranas*, but you put into practice the basic morals in daily life. You must speak the truth, and speak it sweetly. Speak words that instill joy in others. Never hurt others with words.

We know these teachings, but we fail to practice them! Why? Selfishness, selfishness. In the anxiety to realize one's selfish goals, one uses the 16 attributes in detrimental ways.

People are endowed with 16 attributes, which are full (*purna*). One who sanctifies these attributes and recognizes their divine significance qualifies to be called God (*Purushothama*). One who wastes the attributes is the lowest among people.

The answer to Sukesa's question was that God (*Purushothama*) is *not* a separate Being residing in a secret place. God is not in some other place (*desham*) but in your own body (*deham*)! Similarly, sin does not reside outside but in your ruinous actions. Actions alone turn us into *purushas*. *Purushothamas*, humans, demons, or animals. Actions can lead us to higher states but can also drag us into a hellish existence.

The nature of Avatars

The *Puranas* declare that one who has completely sanctified the 16 attributes is God (*Purushothama*). Therefore, only the *Avatars* can apply the 16 attributes with total, unalloyed selflessness. Whatever is done, seen, spoken, or thought by *Avatars* is absolutely selfless. No *Avatar* at any time has ever used His five organs of perception, five life forces, five elements, or mind for selfish ends. While conducting themselves as ordinary people, they have unmistakably displayed purity, truth, and eternal qualities through unselfish actions. People are blind to such subtle truths and thus unable to understand their own humanness.

The Invisible Awareness

Pippalada bestowed these grand teachings upon Sukesa. He instructed him to enquire into the unity of the gross (*sthulam*) and the subtle (*sukshmam*). The gross is perishable; the subtle, indestructible. The world is perishable; the *Atma*, imperishable. Life is perishable; God is imperishable. Only when you grasp the significance of these principles can you understand the 16 attributes (*kalaas*) in their fullness.

The entire cosmos, mobile and immobile, has emerged from the Indestructible Principle (*akshara*). This Indestructible Principle has given birth to this world, sustains it, and ultimately merges it into itself. The unity of the individual soul (*jiva*) and God (*Deva*) is indestructible (*akshara*). The combination of the temporary and the permanent is God.

The 16 attributes are sanctified when they are dedicated to the *Atma*. Let your vision not be restricted to the external, physical sight but proceed inward to the *Atma*. Foster the feeling that your physical sight is made possible only by the light of the *Atma*. Do not misconstrue your organs of action (*karmendriyas*) to be the source of awareness. Your ears are able to hear only because of the power of the *Atma*. The invisible cause is the power of the *Atma*, called *prajna*.

Our external vision beholds the world, called *Viswa*. The inner vision, the dream, and deep sleep states pertain to divine wisdom (*prajna*). This wisdom gives birth to effulgence (*tejas*). Whatever we do, see, think, and say, we must dedicate to the *Atma*. Then, the attributes will blossom to their full capacity. How? Rivers with distinct names and forms flow in their respective directions, but, ultimately, all rivers acquire the name, form, and qualities of the ocean.

Similarly, the five elements are distinct streams. So are the five life forces and the five organs of perception. Lastly, the mind is the most turbulent river of all! When all these streams are offered to the *Atma*, they merge into divine wisdom (*prajna*). They lose their individual names and forms and acquire the immaculate qualities of the *Atma*—formless, true, eternal, unsullied. Hence, to become God (*Purushothama*), we must just use the 16 attributes meaningfully.

(Swami concluded with the *bhajan*, “*Hari Bhajana Bina Sukha Shanti Nahin*”.)

28 May 1991

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10. Mundaka Upanishad and Brahma Vidya

To attain the state of the Supreme Lord of all (*Puru-shottama*), we must entertain pure feelings and engage in pure actions. Appreciate one truth, and you have understood everything. What is this truth? This is what Saunaka asked Sage Angirasa¹, “Swami! What is the concept that, knowing it, I will know everything? What is the sight that, having seen I, I will have seen everything? What magnificent experience is equal to experiencing everything? What is so divine, ever new?”

Angirasa replied, “Knowledge of the *Atma (Brahma Vidya)* alone is true. All other education is illusory.”

Art, music, literature, sculpture, botany, zoology, physics, chemistry—all pertain to the ephemeral world. Do these sciences grant us true knowledge (*vijnana*)? No, no. Enquire calmly. These subjects are meant only for earning a living. True education must cater to true knowledge, spiritual wisdom. Only knowledge of the *Atma* qualifies as true education by this criterion.

What is knowledge of the *Atma (Brahma Vidya)*? Worldly education deals with what is visible to the eye, audible to the ears, felt by the mind, and accessible to the senses. Knowledge of the *Atma* cannot be seen by the eyes, heard by the ears, comprehended by the mind, or felt by the heart. It reminds one of the *Atma* and takes one to its threshold. When can we claim to have understood such knowledge of the *Atma*? Only when we become one in whom the 16 times (*kalaas*) have blossomed fully (*shodasa-kalaa-pari-poorna*).

For this reason, God is described in the *Vedas* as: *Sathyam jnanam anantam Brahma*. *Sathyam* means changeless, beyond past, present, and future. *Jnanam* is the wisdom of non-duality (*advaita*). *Anantam* is unlimited, infinite. *Brahma* is vastness.

Angirasa

Who is Angirasa? We read our epics and consider characters like Angirasa to be sages, highly evolved personages. Our scriptures are not mere stories (*kathas*) but the essence of infinite wisdom designed to dispel our sorrow (*vyathas*). This essence, or *rasa*², is Angirasa.

Anga means limb. Angirasa is one who is a *shodasa-kalaa-paripoorna* and, therefore, guards and fosters

every limb of the body with the essence of the sixteen times (*kalaas*). How does *rasa* flow? It melts the sixteen *kalaas*, makes them flow toward the *Atma*, and reveals the Divinity immanent everywhere. Therefore, Angirasa is none other than the embodiment of wisdom (*prajna*) within us.

Prajnana is the power or witness that pervades the body, senses, mind, inner instrument, life force, our actions—everything. Therefore, the *Vedas* declare, *Prajnaanam Brahma*. Four fundamental affirmations are associated with the four *Vedas*:

1. That You Are: *Tat Tvam Asi*
2. Awareness is Brahman: *Prajnaanam Brahma*
3. I am *Atma*, I am Brahman: *Ayam Atma Brahma*
4. I am Brahman: *Aham Brahmaasmi*

These statements are pregnant with infinite power. People need not look outward or consult scriptures. All knowledge is within. Having forgotten the totality of knowledge, people seek it outside and encounter frustration. They have lost it in one place and search for it somewhere else! Search for the missing article wherever you lost it. Search within. Then you come face to face with your brilliant *prajna*.

Akshara = perishable + imperishable

All is contained within this word: *akshara*. The union of the temporary and permanent is *akshara*. *Akshara* = A + *kshara*. ‘A’ stands for *anantam*, *aprameya*, *apramaana* (infinite, beyond measure, beyond proof). This is the *Atma*—true, permanent. *Kshara* means temporary, false, illusory, perishable. *Kshara* is perishable, *A* is imperishable. The merger of the two is *Akshara*. *Akshara* is not a single word but two words. The fleeting world and the durable *Atma* are an inseparable pair. One cannot leave the other.

God and devotee

Similarly, the devotee and God are a pair. The devotee creates God, and God creates the devotee! We think God has created all beings. No, no. The devotee, by dint of spiritual effort, creates the God of their choice! This is the process of materialising God to appear in physical form (*sakshatkara*). The feelings of the devotee gain name and form as *sakshatkara*. *Sakshat* (physical) + *akaram* (form) is *sakshatkara*. Therefore, it is the devo-

¹ In the *Mundaka Upanishad*.

² *Rasa* means sweet juice or essence.

tee who creates God! And the devotee is created by God as well.

Devotees today are blind to their power and constantly ask, “Where is God, where is God?” What ignorance, what foolishness! Why search for God when He is everywhere? Your delusion tells you it is necessary to search for God. Truly, it is the other way around — God is in search of a real devotee! Why? Even a single genuine devotee is not to be found! Such power of enquiry is rare today. The saint Tyagaraja³ sang:

In the ant, in Brahma,
In Siva, Kesava, and other Gods,
Present as Love,
You, who lives up to Your manifold names, Rama,
Save me!

What does an ant do? When you mix two grains of sugar in a pile of sand, it discards the sand and hauls the grains of sugar. When an ant is able to discriminate so acutely, why are people so blunt in their intellect? God is smaller than the smallest, vaster than the vastest (*Anoraneeyaan mahato maheeyaan*). Understand this unity.

The common meaning given to the word *akshara* is *indestructible*. No, no. Decay and destruction are also an aspect of *akshara*. Theism (*astikatwam*) and atheism (*nastikatwam*) are related in a similar manner. How? *Nastika* (athiest) = *Na* + *astika* (theist). *Na* means no; *asti*, yes. The denial of ‘yes’ is atheism. *Nasti* = *Na* + *asti*. Without *asti*, how can the word *nasti* exist? Meaning, the concept of ‘yes’ or acceptance of God is present within denial, within atheism!

The bud of a flower does not exude fragrance. Only when it blossoms into a flower does it emit a smell. The fully blossomed flower is theism, the bud is atheism. Both are one. One is dormant, the other is awake. The flower of the heart has not yet blossomed in atheists. It is bound to bloom, sooner or later. However, not necessarily in this birth. If they die with narrow hearts, that is their misfortune.

All is One

Thus, there are no two substances in this world — all is One. Only One exists, but seers express it in many ways (*Ekam sat vipraah bahudaa vadanti*). When you know the divine sweetness (*rasa*) called *prajna*, you come to know everything. When you behold it, you have seen everything.

You are, in reality, offering everything to that *prajna*. There is a direct proof to illustrate this truth. A man

³ Great devotee of Lord Rama who composed many songs in Telugu. Also one of the pioneers and pillars of south Indian classical music.

promised God that he would conduct a special worship for Him at the temple if his task was completed successfully. His chosen deity was Lord Krishna. He offered flowers one by one as he repeated the 1008 names of Krishna — “*Kesavaaya Namah, Narayanaaya Namah, Madhavaaya Namah, Govindaaya Namah, Madhusudanaaya Namah,*” and so on. The names are different but all offerings are to one God. This is — *Ekam sat vipraah bahudaa vadanti*. There is only one, but you call it by different names. Foods are different, hunger is one. Flowers are different, worship is one. Births are different, the being is one. Focus on the unity underlying the diversity.

Three kinds of knowledge

The concepts taught by Sage Angirasa to Saunaka were also clarified to Sukesa by Sage Pippalada. Sukesa asked, “*Swami*, there are three kinds of knowledge in this world: *jnana*, *sujnana*, and *vijnana*. What is their inner significance and how are they related? Kindly shed light on this topic”.

Pippalada smiled, “Foolish fellow! There are no glaring differences between the three kinds of knowledge. One form pertains to the body (*jnana*), another emerges from the mind (*sujnaana*), and the third deals with the heart (*vijnana*).”

One small example. Here are a handkerchief, a microphone, a plate, a tumbler, and a table. They are visible and tangible objects. This is related to the physical world, to the body (is *jnana*).

Next, the mind. “I wish to embark on this task. Is this work beneficial to me, to others?” — when you ponder in this manner and seek to help others, this is *sujnaana*. When you seek to do good to others even in actions done for your personal benefit, such deeds are *sujnaana*.

Having experienced both *jnana* and *sujnaana*, when you do that which lends satisfaction to your conscience, when you ask, “What actions will make God happy?” — all actions that seek to please God are *vijnana*. There is no need to search for *vijnana* in some secret enclave. Please God, and the world will be pleased with you, automatically.

Once, a devotee prayed to the divine Mother, “Mother! You haven’t granted me Your Vision. Why am I distant from You? Why do You not look at me? If I do not mean anything to You, without Your kind glance on me, I will not be worth anything to anybody.

If I fail to become Your Own, O Mother,
I will be derided by the world as well, Mother!

Sri Krishna and Gandhari

Sri Krishna explained this point to Queen Gandhari beautifully. After the death of her hundred sons, the Kauravas, Sri Krishna went to Gandhari to assuage her grief. Poor Krishna went there only to console her. Gandhari, on the other hand, let anger and grief overwhelm her when she was informed of Krishna's approach. Grief leads to anger, which gives rise to hatred. Hatred causes jealousy. Gandhari, as you know, had taken upon herself a permanent blindfold, in deference to her husband's blindness. Her maidservants told her, "O Queen! Sri Krishna is here."

Quivering in grief, Gandhari blurted out, "Krishna! You are full of partiality. You are the meanest of hypocrites! The Pandavas and Kauravas are cousins, sons of brothers. How could you be so partial to the Pandavas, so hateful to my sons? Even this partiality is acceptable. But why didn't you save one son of mine, while all five Pandavas are alive today? Not even a single son to perform the funeral rituals for the others! Why didn't You let your divine Look fall on just ONE SON of mine?"

Krishna had a perpetual smile dancing on His lips. He was always happy, even when everyone around Him cried! He removed and granted grief as well! He turned paupers into millionaires, millionaires into paupers. Enquire —why would Krishna cause grief at one time and remove grief at another time? No, no. Each person experienced only the results of their destiny.

Realising that Gandhari could not understand His role, Krishna decided to enlighten her by quoting her personal experience. "Mother Gandhari! You know you had a hundred sons. But had you ever set eyes on them? How do you know you had a hundred sons? Only through the words of others. You haven't seen even one of them! How could your wicked sons, unworthy of their own mother's loving glances, ever become fit for God's kind looks?"

Do you see? Children who cannot obtain their mother's blessings remain distant from God's Grace. "When you do not see your children, how can you cultivate true love for them? Your sons were wicked, unfit for their own mother's love. They hated and envied the gentle Pandavas beyond limits. The Pandavas are righteous. Your sons heeded the words of no well-wisher. They grew in hatred day by day. They had no power of discrimination whatsoever. They were selfish to the brim. Selfishness led them to a pitiable plight.

Justice and fairness dictate that the kingdom belongs to the Pandavas. They appointed your husband, Dhritarashtra, only as an interim ruler. When the Pandavas, also your children, trusted your husband, is it right to cheat them?" In history, we do not know some truths, and, without factual knowledge, we are confused.

Unity of gross and subtle

Therefore, one who invokes God's kind glances upon himself can easily conquer the world. The one who distances himself from God is unworthy of respect from anyone. When you recognise God, you understand all the secrets of the world, because the world is nothing but a part of God.

Men today are fools who look at only one side of a coin. Look on both sides — only then will you know its true worth. One side is the world, the other is God. One is perishable (*kshara*), the other is permanent (*akshara*). One is the basis (*moolam*), the other is the based or the gross (*sthoolam*). Today, no one endeavours to discern the basis hidden behind the diversity. The basis is the key to all knowledge, to all acts of God.

Therefore, no one can demarcate God as such and such.

Based on ancient writings, we develop the duality of like and dislike. We must strive to go beyond attachment and hatred to understand their unity. For example, we listen to interpretations of scholars and presume that Krishna was an immoral man. Similarly, we believe Rama had certain traits. No, no. We should go beyond these interpretations, to the Truth. Both Rama and Krishna are based on a changeless Truth.

Transform Your Heart

Therefore, the cowherd maids (*gopikas*) said, "Krishna! We see You with our eyes. To what extent is sight reliable? As long as our eyes can see You. Therefore, this cannot be the truth. We must look at You with our hearts. But our hearts are like a moss-covered lake in which Your reflection is unclear.

"The centre of our eyes, the pupil, is dark. Your complexion is dark as well. Our heart, the lake of our mind (*manasa sarovaram*) is dark with impurities as well. The sky appears dark in the dark lakes of our hearts. For us to see You, there is no need to transform our dark eyes or Your dark form. But the "background", the dark sky can be changed to a white sky. When our hearts are made bright, your dark reflection will appear as clear as crystal. Change our hearts."

What is the inner significance? We do not need to change our bodies, or even our mind. When we transform our heart, which is related to the highest wisdom (*prajnana*), we achieve all. The mind's nature is to be impure! You may wash it forever, but stains will remain. Can you wash charcoal with milk and expect it to become white? Instead, the milk will become black! If you wash coal with soap, the soap turns black.

Students must think clearly. What was the original form of charcoal? Wood. When wood burns, it turns in-

to coal. However, coal is formed only when the burning is incomplete. To complete the process, put coal back into fire. Then it becomes ash, which is white. “Krishna, we are neither wood nor ash. We are midway, like black coal. Burn us in the fire of your Grace and grant us the whiteness of purity.”

You must recognize, “I have forgotten the beginning and the end. I am midway through the journey. That is why my mind is like black charcoal. Yes, I have lost my original status of wood, but I can still reach the final state of white ash. To achieve this end, the burning must be as intense as ever.”

We yield to difficulties and sorrow because we do not try to reach the end, because we remain satisfied with the dualities of this interim existence.

Yes, we must acquire physical amenities. Next, we must obtain mental peace. Finally, peace of the *Atma*. For this reason we repeat, “peace, peace peace (*shanti shanti shanti*)” three times. First, peace in the body. Recitation of the divine Name (*namasmarana*) is very important in this regard. For mental peace, a divine outlook (*Brahma bhaavam*) is essential. Finally, for peace of the heart and conscience, spiritual practice (*sadhana*) is the path. Journey from the body to the mind and then to the *Atma*.

[Swami concluded with the *bhajan* “*Hari Bhajana Bina Sukha Shanti Nahin*”.]

29 May 1991

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11. Taittiriya Upanishad

Social norms of behaviour have drowned in the
Ganga.
Contentment has disappeared from the minds of
people.
Morality, character, and human values are
shattered.
Men have lost their humanness.

Students!

Everyone needs food to survive. Food is the prime necessity of life. However, one cannot rest contented by merely filling one's stomach. Why? Food satisfies the body, not the mind. It does not make the heart blossom. To eat and laze around is not human nature. We must eat, then work. While working, we must ask ourselves three questions: "What am I doing? Why am I doing it? How am I doing it?" When one enquires into "what", "where", and "how", one can achieve victory in efforts and derive self-satisfaction.

As a person observes the world, they assimilate the good around them and try to put it into practice. They experience the joy and bliss emanating from good actions. They convey their bliss to others. This is the main teaching of *Taittiriya Upanishad*. This *Upanishad* asserts that the journey of life is to progress from food (*annam*) to bliss (*anandam*).

Sayings of Taittiriya Upanishad

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* belongs to the *Taittiriya* branch of the *Krishna Yajur Veda*¹. It is extremely ancient.

Every couplet of this *Upanishad* is a *mantra*. What is meant by the word *mantra*? We think that only invocations like the five-syllable "*Om Namah Shivaya*" or the eight-syllable "*Om Namo Narayanaya*" are *mantras*. No, no. Whatever is recalled again and again and made steady in one's mind is a *mantra* (*Manana traana sammilitam iti mantrah*). Every verse, every word of this *Upanishad* is a potent *mantra* because it has reverberated in human minds since time immemorial.

Speak the truth, follow righteousness (*Sathyam vada, dharma chara*).
God is Truth, Wisdom, and Infinite (*Sathyam jnanam anantam Brahma*).

Truth is One; sages describe it in various ways
(*Ekam sat vipraah bahudaa vadanti*).
The One is the Indweller in all beings (*Ekovasi sarva bhootaantaraatma*).
The One manifests as many (*Ekoham bahusyaam*).

These truths, in the form of brief aphorisms, are *mantras* known the world over, granting wisdom and delight to mankind. There is a secret in *Upanishads*: They can be interpreted in more than one way, based on the state of the interpreter. *Taittiriya Upanishad* propagates lessons that are indispensable to all —student, householder, hermit, and renunciant (*brahmachari, grihasta, vanaprastha, and sanyasi*). The teachings of this *Upanishad* are absolutely necessary for everyone, irrespective of age, status and other conditions.

The five fires

This text talks about the "five fires" (*panchaagnis*) —the fires of hunger, of indigestion from overeating, of craving for desires, of sorrow, and finally of suffering of terrible diseases, worries, and death (*udaraagni, mandaagni, kaamaagni, sokaagni, badabaagni*).

First, *udaraagni* —fire of the stomach². Yes, this word is long, but its meaning is simple! The longing for hunger is *udaraagni*.

*Mandaagni*³ is the suffering of indigestion arising from overeating.

*Kaamaagni*⁴ is the craving for desires, which assaults the mind endlessly.

Next, *sokaagni*⁵ —the fire of sorrow. What is this sorrow? It is not sorrow born out of unsatisfied worldly desires. The yearning for the divine Vision, permanent bliss, and merger with God gradually becomes a fire within, known as *sokaagni*.

The *Bhagavad Gita* is the scripture acknowledged and accepted by peoples of all countries and faith. Open it, and you find the first chapter called "*Arjuna Vishaada Yoga*". What was Arjuna's dejection (*vishaada*)? Was he gloomy about some worldly issue, about relatives and friends? If so, why was his despair given the noble title of *yoga*? No, no. His grief was not related to worldly joys, friends and relatives, money, power or fame. His dilemma was about his duty to God.

² *Udara* = Stomach, *Agni* = Fire.

³ *Manda* = Slow, sluggish, lazy, dumb.

⁴ *Kama* = desire

⁵ *Soka* = sorrow

¹ The *Yajur Veda* is divided into two: *Sukla* (bright) and *Krishna* (dark).

“Countless men will die in this war. With widespread destruction of males, *dharma* will diminish, castes will intermarry, and immorality will reign,” lamented Arjuna. His grief was a result of his adherence to God and duty and hence, qualified as *yoga*. Thus, *sokaagni* is not to pine for wealth, fame, or power but to yearn for God and *dharma*.

Finally, *badabaagni*. This is the suffering of terrible diseases, worries, and death.

These five fires affect only the body, not the *Atma*, which is a witness to the suffering caused by the fires. *Taittiriya Upanishad* teaches how to act as a witness to the five fires.

Four types of human beings

Another deep secret is ingrained in this text. There are four categories of people: divine, human, demonic, and animal. The first type is divine-human. God appears in human form (*Daivam maanusha roopena*). God is present in the heart. Therefore, filling the heart with divine feelings, performing all actions with the motive to please Him, believing that one’s reality is the same *Atma* present in others, being affectionate to all with love and compassion, offering one’s life to God —these are the characteristics of a divine-human.

The second type is human-person. A person is a combination of truth and *dharma* (*Sathya dharma bhavo martyah*). Keeping truth (*sathya*) and *dharma* in view, propagating truth and *dharma*, loving all with kindness and compassion, understanding the importance of human values, performing charity and good deeds, uniting thought-word-deed, executing one’s duty and responsibilities even as a householder, and seeking to demonstrate the divine potential of human life —these are the qualities of a human-person.

Next, the demon-person. Intoxicants identify a demon (*Suraapaanam bhavo daanavah*). Indulging in liquor, hurting others, acting out of selfishness, looking out for one’s own convenience and progress, devoid of kindness and love —such a person is classified as a demon-person by the *Upanishads*.

Finally, the animal-person. The one without discrimination is equal to an animal (*Jnaanena soonyah pasubhih samaanah*). What is animal nature? Considering sensual gratification as the aim of life, submerged in sensual pleasures from birth to death, spending time in eating and sleeping, and forgetting one’s human aspect is animal nature. The needs of food, sleep, and shelter are common to people and animals. Then what distinguishes people from animals? A person lacking in discrimination between the temporary and the permanent is no better than a beast. When does discrimination seem

unpalatable? When the heart is full of selfishness and self-interest.

Having acquired a human birth, the noblest path is to attain Divinity. If Divinity remains beyond one’s reach, acquiring human values and maintaining one’s stature as a human is a matter of blessedness also. But it is a gross violation of *dharma* to stoop down to demonic or animal levels. The world has no human values today because demon-people and animal-people have grown in population. Morality is absent. Even social etiquette is destroyed. People do not understand what is meant by society.

What is society (*sangham*)? Society is not just a collection of heads. That which promotes the awareness of unity in diversity is society. The *dharma* of society is to act with a unified motive and to collectively experience the fruits of actions. The significance of society is to teach people that true happiness is available to individuals only through the collective welfare. Without society, individuals cannot exist. Your joys are dependent on those of society. One who is blind to this truth pursues their selfish aims heedlessly.

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* elaborates beautifully on the five fires and four kinds of people. When students completed their education in *gurukulas*⁶, before entering the householder stage of life, they sat around the *guru* to listen to his final instructions on how to lead fulfilling lives. These instructions are collected in this *Upanishad*.

Worldly pleasure and ultimate pleasure

We can make life proceed in one of two directions: *preyas* or *sreyas*. *Preyas* is that which grants happiness immediately, meaning, pleasures of the senses. Such joys are not only just temporary but utterly unreal. The majority of people pursue the allure of *preyas*. Only a small fraction trusts in the permanent and true path of ultimate good (*sreyas*). Why? The fruits of *sreyas* take time to germinate. People do not relish the waiting period. They demand quick results.

Even desires are chosen based on convenience. Position, power, fame, and a comfortable life top the list of wants. Good wisdom, good character, and good virtues are not wished. Those on the *sreyo* path aspire for good character, good qualities, good knowledge, and good behaviour. To hanker after short-lived and immediate gains like fame, power, and money is a *preyo* quality.

⁶ Hermitage-schools of ancient India, where children from all backgrounds and social status lived as equals with the *guru*, imbibing spiritual and secular education.

True education teaches virtue

The *gurus* told their pupils, “Students! What is the aim of education? The aim of education is humility. Humility is the jewel of students. Character is your life.” Such instructions were grouped under the title of *siksha-valli*⁷. Students were instructed to keep *siksha-valli* in view throughout their lives and adhere to it. “Honour your mother and father as God (*Matru Devo bhavah, pitru Devo bhavah*.)” Under any circumstance, do not give up truth (*sathya*) or violate righteousness (*dharma*.)” With such divine instructions and education, the *gurus* filled the minds of students with total satisfaction and *dharma* and transformed them into divine personalities.

Unfortunately, today’s education serves only to turn humans into demons! It fosters guile and cleverness without instilling virtue. Instead of developing gratitude, education fills people with pride and makes them ingrates. No, no. This is contrary to the aims of true education. I told you the other day: What is the great “progress” achieved by modern-day education?

Harming those who help them,
 Destroying those who feed them,
 Making fun of those who teach them —
 This is the “progress” in today’s education.

Yes, all love to preach about morals and character, but they only repeat the words “morality” and “values” without practising them. These words are relegated only to books and scriptures.

Morality and discipline are relegated to books.
 Hearts stink of pollution.
 Hands engage only in selfish actions.
 This is the “progress” in today’s education.

Ancient tutelage was totally unlike current education. Speak the truth, follow righteousness (*Sathyam vada, dharmam vada*). Honour your parents. This is your first duty. Why? Only because the “reflection, reaction, and resound” of your actions will affect you later in life. Disrespect your father today and definitely, your son will deride you. If you cheat your friend, you will be betrayed tomorrow, without a doubt.

You are bound to experience the “reactions” of your actions. The respect you show to your parents today will be reflected in your children’s demeanour tomorrow. Hence, the joys and sorrows of the future are bundled into your present actions. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* reveals that the future is concealed as seeds in your present actions.

⁷ *Valli* means chapter. *Siksha* means learning or instruction, but it is also the science of proper articulation and pronunciation of *Vedic* texts.

Merge into universal consciousness

The Brahman principle is all-pervading. What is Brahman? It is the vast, expansive, all-encompassing awareness. This awareness is present in equal measure in every human being. The consciousness in the individual is narrow and limited, while the universal consciousness is boundless, infinite, and all-inclusive. We must tap the infinite awareness through our limited awareness. How?

You have air all around you, and you can fill air in a balloon. As long as the balloon is intact, there is a distinction between air inside and outside. How can you merge the two bodies of air? Inflate the balloon and make it bloat — till it bursts!

The narrow feelings of “I” and “mine” are like the limited air in the body. The One soul is the Indweller in all beings (*Ekaatma sarva bhotaantaraatma*). Develop this broad attitude to merge your awareness into the cosmic consciousness. Tell yourself repeatedly, “This and That is One, This and That is One”. Then you will find your heart expand to let your awareness become one with the Lord. Only then can the world become a place of peace and happiness.

Acquire practical knowledge with determination

We do not find education that fosters virtues. We are proficient only in “bookish knowledge”, which cannot do good to anyone. We need “practical knowledge”. Determination is essential for practical knowledge. The know-how of students is 99% “superficial knowledge”. They spend all their time merging books with their head (*Pustakam mastakam, pustakam mastakam*)⁸. What good can the nation possibly experience from such cramming? You must ask, “What actions will help me as well as society?” When ancient students were ready to depart from the *gurukulas* and enter into family life, the sages filled their hearts with such expansive feelings.

“Sons, troubles and difficulties are an inseparable part of life. Remain steady without fear or agitation. Never give up Truth, even in the most strenuous conditions. Do not forget your *dharma*. Follow these instructions and you will feel your conscience exuding contentment, which is a treasure.” Satisfy your conscience. Today, students do not even know what ‘conscience’ is! Therefore, satisfying it is a remote possibility. The conscience is the witness.

The four F’s are:

Follow the Master
 Face the devil

⁸ *Pustakam* = book, *Mastakam* = head

Fight to the end
Finish the game

“Follow the Master” means to follow your conscience. “Face the devil, fight to the end, finish the game” describes the journey of life. Such truths are not seen in modern education. Knowledge of the *Atma* (*Atma Vidya*) alone is true education. Every other branch of information is cultivated only to earn a living. Yes, such study is necessary, but we must cultivate Knowledge of the *Atma* as well.

Yes, life can be enjoyed with the body, senses, food, and sleep. But the mind, intellect, and *Atma* go beyond physical existence. Satisfying them is more important. People are content with food for the body, sleep for the eyes, and a house full of children. This is shallow thinking. Mental satisfaction is important. Contentment to the mind is possible only through the spiritual path. The ultimate good (*sreyas*) transcends human existence.

Students! Recognize the path that will foster your human values. If a person cannot love their own mother, spouse, and fellow humans, how can they hope to love God? It is impossible! First, expand your love to your family and fellow humans. Love is not something that emerges and subsides in short bursts. The love that decreases at any time is not love at all. True love grows and grows. “Love is God, Live in Love.”

Taittiriya Upanishad explains the essence of living through succinct and pertinent instructions. Some parts of this *Upanishad* are absolutely essential to students. Since we have a program following this discourse, we shall talk about these matters later.

Knowledge of the Atma is the basis

Students! Worldly education is not your goal. Any number of sciences devoid of human qualities are rubbish. There is no education greater than the knowledge of human qualities and true humanness.

What is the use of all your education?
Who can change the destiny written on your forehead?
As soon as wrong ideas enter your mind,
Your intelligence becomes dead like a rock.

Yes, worldly education and research are necessary. However, the basis of all knowledge must be pursued — that is the *Atma* principle. That is the basis (*moolam*) while all this is gross (*sthoolam*). Can the gross, physical manifestation exist without the basis?

Here is a table and a tumbler on it. The table stands on the Earth. The Earth is the basis (*moolam*), the table and tumbler are the gross (*sthoolam*). We neglect the basis (*adhaaram*) and hold on to the based (*adheyam*). This is why we suffer.

Cultivate the basis (*adhaaram*). All can be known when one is armed with the knowledge of the *Atma* (*Atma Vidya*). This is unity in diversity. This is the teaching of the *Upanishads*. In modern education, no chance is given to the propagation of the *Upanishads*, *Brahma Sutras*, *Vedas*, epics, and *Puranas*. The complete potential and value of human beings is contained in these scriptures. Leaving such valuable “diamonds” aside, we run after pieces of charcoal!

We must acquire “diamonds”. How? When we destroy the mind that pursues worldly matters, the state of “die mind” is “diamond”. Therefore, we must restrict the movement of the mind into mundane matters.

Highly educated people in the world are equipped with complex degrees and elevated positions. To what end? They dedicate their lives to the acquisition of facts. They feed the same stomach day after day, wash the same face! If they are asked the chief aim of life, they are confused. “We can earn a lot of money, deposit it in the bank, even send it overseas.” When their time arrives, they close their eyes and all these possessions disappear forever. What can you buy with money? Earn the wealth of *jnana*. Earn the lofty state of Divinity.

The wealth of spiritual knowledge (*jnana*) can never diminish or be destroyed. Worldly education depletes. You study day and night to master secular knowledge. You collect useless facts in our head. First you transfer everything from the book into your head. In the examination, you transfer everything back from your head to the paper — and come home with an empty head! What is the use? If you are asked to answer the same question one week after the exam, you cannot! No, no. This is not education but only memorisation for the immediate purpose of earning a degree. The world can never benefit from such study. It will help you fill your stomach and earn for your family. But to the world, such studies are totally useless.

Students must desire the welfare of the world. Today, selfishness rules their minds, making them agitate society. They have no trust or respect for the *guru*, no love for parents, no concern for society. How can they call themselves humans? First, pursue education that instills human qualities. Even animals observe limits, but humanity has “no reason, no season”. What universities do animals attend? What degrees do they possess? What positions of authority do they command? None. Still, they acquire morality to the extent possible.

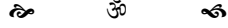
Students must develop human values. Science is soaring in progress, beyond the skies. But senses are descending downward. Is this progress? No, no, no, no! The senses must be controlled. People have travelled millions of miles into space, but not even half an inch into their hearts! Introspect, dive deep into your heart.

Realise that your soul is an eternal witness. Then human qualities will emanate within you.

Students! Devotion is not limited to *bhajans* and worship. The heart must be expanded. Peace and forbearance must be strengthened. Treat love as your life-breath and nurture it with equal care. Life without love is a “living death”. Love is all-important.

(Swami concluded with “*Prema Mudita Mana Se Kaho, Rama Rama Ram*”.)

30 May 1991



12. The Three Forms of God – Viraat, Hiranyagarbha and Avyaakruta

Having studied *Brahma Vidya*¹,
There are many who preach at length.
But we cannot find even a single hero who
practises.
Sai's words are the Truth.

Students! Embodiments of Love!

We become eligible for Knowledge of *Atma* (*Brahma Vidya*) only when we understand the relation between Brahma and humanity in the cosmic cycle of creation and destruction. "Brahma" means the vast, infinite principle. The element of sound (*akasa*) emanated from this infinite expanse of Brahma. From sound emerged air (*vayu*), fire (*tejas*) from air, wind from fire, earth (*prithvi*) from wind, oceans from earth, food from oceans, and finally, humans from food. Ponder this sequential cycle and you will arrive at the truth that humanity has emerged from the infinite Brahma.

Divine Bliss, *Brahmanandam*, is composed of two words: Brahma + *anandam* (bliss). Brahma and bliss are separate. Man journeys from food (*annam*) to bliss (*anandam*). Man's aim is bliss alone. When this bliss joins with Brahma, it acquires the form of *Brahmanandam*. So, it is possible for us to understand the close association between Brahma and humanity. Such Knowledge of Brahma (*Brahma Vidya*) is available through Brahma alone. People, however, disregard the divine principle and trust only the world. Thus, people blind themselves to the universal Brahma.

Afflicted with attachment, fear, and anger, the ordinary person is far from Divine Bliss. Bliss can dawn with the conquest of attachment, fear, and anger, but only to a certain extent. Why? Renouncing attachment, fear, and anger is not sufficient. Love for God must be cultivated as well. But even that is not enough! You must become close to God's love for you. Finally, even proximity to God's Love is inadequate. You must place total reliance on the all-encompassing Transcendental Principle (*parathathwa*). Then it is possible for you to become Divine.

The *Siksha-valli*² imparted by *gurus* to their students in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* sheds light on the path leading to *Brahmanandam*. Do not consider *Brahma Vidya* to be beyond human understanding. *Brahma Vidya* consists of simple spiritual practices like the practice of

truth in daily life and the blossoming of character. One must accumulate the wealth of spiritual practices with patience.

The *Upanishads* elaborate on the principle of Brahma through three names: *Viraat*, *Hiranyagarbha*, and *Avyaakruta*. These three forms relate to gross (*sthulam*), subtle (*sukshmam*), and cause (*karanam*) and to the three states of waking, dream, and deep sleep.

Viraat

The *Atma* principle that personifies the waking state is *Viraat*. *Viraat* is that form of the *Atma* that dons a physical body, lives a long life, and embodies the waking state. He assumes various forms and is known by various names. That is, He demonstrates that the movable and immovable world is really His manifestation, as also the five elements. From the ant to Brahma, everything is His form.

He is called *Viraat* because He has reached the state of asserting, All is My Form (*Sarvam Visva Swarupam*). The entire visible universe is a form of *Viraat*, without exception, without any distinction of "this" or "that". Therefore, *Viraat* is the principle that manifests as the external, gross, visible world and demonstrates ideals to the world.

Viraat has two other names: *Vaiswanara* and *Vairajasuta*. *Vaiswanara* is He who appears as the "I" consciousness in each individual. From the king to a farmer, from a beggar to a millionaire, from a child to an old person, male or female —everyone uses the word "I" to identify oneself. Individuality is present in everyone. The one who asserts "I" in every being in *Vaiswanara*.

The third name is *Vairajasuta*. *Viraat*, *Vaiswanara* and *Vairajasuta* are three names of the same Being. *Vairajasuta* is one who exists in a mysterious form. He exists in everyone but is undetected. He performs all actions but behaves as if He does not. He experiences everything but does not reveal it.

Hiranyagarbha

The second form of Brahma is *Hiranyagarbha*: the basis, the source of all wisdom. All knowledge —worldly, ethical, *dharmic*, spiritual, scientific— has emanated from *Hiranyagarbha*. Therefore, He is also called the Sun of Knowledge (*Jnana Bhaskara*). When the Sun rises, He appears golden (*Hiranya*) and colours the world with a golden hue.

¹ Knowledge of the *Atma* (Self)

² *Valli* means chapter. *Siksha* means learning or instruction, but it is also the science of proper articulation and pronunciation of *Vedic* texts.

Creation emerged from Hiranyagarbha, which is oval in shape, a golden egg, like the one I materialised a few days ago. The mouth was the first to emerge from this shape. From the mouth, sound. Then, the nose, through which air began flowing. Eyes came next, with fire emanating through them. Ears arrived next. Therefore, Hiranyagarbha is the origin of the human form.

All beings evolved from Hiranyagarbha, who also bestowed insightful wisdom, the ability to distinguish right from wrong, and intuitive wisdom (*vijnana*, *su-jnana* and *prajnana*) to them to facilitate discrimination between the temporary and the permanent. What should be attained, what is not worth pursuing? What deeds should be done, what should not? What is the chief form of wisdom achievable by man? What path makes human life well spent? What is the purpose of life? Hiranyagarbha granted wisdom to man to clarify such issues.

Hiranyagarbha, like Viraat, has two other names: Sutraatmaka and Praana. Just as a thread (*sutra*) passes through a necklace of gems, Sutraatmaka is the principle that underlies all beings and brings bliss to them. This unifying thread-like principle is also called *Brahma Sutra*.

The thread called God is present in equal measure in all humans without distinction, promoting unity of mankind —this is the principle of Hiranyagarbha. Hiranyagarbha assumes a subtle (*sukshmam*) form during the dream state —the form of the *Atma*. This means that Hiranyagarbha is one who is awake during the dream state.

Viraat creates everything in the waking state. Hiranyagarbha creates everything in the dream state by mere willing. Every object is created by will alone. Whatever is seen in dreams is created by Hiranyagarbha.

Avyakruta

The third form of Brahman is *Avyakruta*. He is absolutely formless. He exists in the causal body and enjoys the state of deep sleep. He has no limbs but does all actions. He travels to distant places. He has no eyes but sees everything. He has no ears but listens to everything. He performs every act in Creation, but possesses no form.

Avyakruta also has two more names: Antaraatma and Iswara. (Notice that the three forms of Brahman — Viraat, Hiranyagarbha, and Avyakruta— have, in turn, three names each.) What is the significance of these names?

Antaraatma motivates and influences everything from Himself. Every motive, urge, inspiration comes from the Antaraatma. This is “inner voice” (*antar-*

vaani). All sounds that man produces also emerge from Antaraatma.

Next, Iswara. Who is Iswara? Yes, He is the embodiment of all forms of prosperity (*sakala aisvarya swarupa*). In addition, He bestows results of actions. He has the power of action with which He assesses good and bad actions and grants corresponding results. He is also called the Destroyer (*Laya Kaaraka*).

Iswara bestows prosperity (*aisvarya*). What is prosperity? Both good and bad are prosperity! Since Iswara represents all forms of prosperity, He judges people’s actions and grants the corresponding wealth.

Reflection of the Inner Being

The *Upanishads* are not meaningless texts. They are not restricted to *yogis* or *rishis*. No, don’t entertain such misconceptions.

Why are students utterly incapable of grasping the sacred *Upanishads*? When proper interpretations are not provided, when their methods of application in daily life are not enumerated, students naturally lose interest. Science, which progresses day to day, is nothing but a part of the *Upanishads*. The *Upanishads* are the end of the *Vedas*. For this reason they are also called *Vedanta*³. They are full of spiritual wisdom (*jnana*), which you must acquire.

The worldly and physical branches of knowledge are limited in scope. Mental peace, happiness, and bliss of the *Atma* are available only through contemplation on the *Upanishads*. Viraat, Hiranyagarbha, and Avyakruta do not exist in a special place somewhere. Every person is the form of these three forms. Our narrow intellects are unable to grasp such infinite concepts.

The body multiplied by infinity is Viraat.

The mind multiplied by infinity is Hiranyagarbha.

Life multiplied by infinity is Avyakruta.

These three also correspond to the gross (*sthula*), subtle (*sukshmam*) and causal (*karana*) bodies. All three forms are conjoined within man. Hiranyagarbha is in our mind. Viraat is in our very form. The five elements are present not just in creation, but in our bodies alone —as sound, touch, taste, sight and smell.

The reflection of the body (*deham*) is the external world (*desam*). “Outside is a reflection of the Inner Being.” The body is the world, creation (*prakriti*). Inhalation and exhalation are the form of air (*vayu*), one of the five elements.

When we move about and enter into action, fire (*agni*) emerges. Consider a small example. When we

³ *Veda + Anta* (end) = the conclusions of the *Vedas*.

exercise, the body generates heat. Or why go that far? Rub your palms and heat is produced.

Next, water. Our entire body is water. For example, running produces sweat.

The body is the embodiment of the five elements. Hence, it is the form of Viraat. All powers are present in the human body. What is not found inside a person cannot be found outside. However, a person's focus is extroverted, so they believe that external powers do not reside within. Whatever one sees outside is also present within.

Time, task, cause, duty

With attachment, hatred, and fear, we forget our true nature. Take an example. You fall asleep. You are your own witness during sleep. In the dream, you board a train, journey through stations, meet other passengers. From where did this train emerge? Your mind alone. The stations and passengers? Also creations of your mind. You created everything, even yourself, in the dream state. This is the nature of Hiranyagarbha.

We see everything in the waking state. We are influenced by place, time, and situation. But in the dream state, we are beyond these conditions. Enquire into the difference between the waking and dream states. You heard that Swami will give a discourse here at 4pm. You started your journey from the city at 3:30. How did you start? In a car. You reached at 4pm. Why did you come here? To participate in the programme. Why? To listen to Swami. Time (*kala*) is 3:30pm. The task (*karma*) is your journey by car. The cause (*karana*) is to hear Swami's words. The duty (*kartavyam*) is also listening to Swami. The four conditions of time, task, cause, and duty are present in the waking state.

In the dream state, you travelled from here to Delhi. When did you start? "No time". How did you travel? "No *karma*". Why did you travel? "No cause". What is your duty there? Again, nothing. The dream state is characterised by the absence of time, task, cause, and duty.

Viraat is composed of time, task, cause, and duty (*kala*, *karma*, *karana*, and *kartavyam*). Hiranyagarbha transcends these limitations. Who experiences the waking and dream states? The entity experiencing the waking state is not different from the one in the dream state. The states are three —waking, dream, and deep sleep— but the individual is one. We are led astray by the four conditions because we differentiate between these states.

Everything is composed of time, cause, and duty. The body itself is also bound by time and duty. To sanctify the body, perform pure actions and use time mean-

ingly. The world of people is bound by actions (*Karmaanubandheeni Manushya Loke*.) No one can survive even for a moment without performing action.

What is action (*karma*)? Is it only through hands and feet? No, no. Everything is *karma*. One example. When you ask, "What is he doing?", you might get the reply, "He's not doing anything". So, what is he doing without doing anything? Sleeping! Sleeping is also action! Or, he is just sitting without doing anything. Sitting down is also action. With subtler enquiry, inhalation and exhalation are seen as action. Blood circulates in the body and the heart pulsates —without effort on our part. All this is action (*karma*). Some action is voluntary while other action takes place involuntary.

Adi-bhauthikam, adi-atmikam, adi-daivikam⁴

You sleep, quarrel, grieve, smile —whatever you do, inhalation and exhalation do not wait for you. They do their job ceaselessly. Does one make a conscious effort to breathe? Does one make the heart beat by will? No. Whatever your mental state, the heart does its job. This is called divine Power (*adi-daivikam*).

Adi-bhauthikam is related to the body. *Adi-atmikam* is related to the mind. Finally, *Adi-daivikam* is divine Power. This trinity of *Adi-bhauthikam*, *Adi-atmikam*, and *Adi-daivikam* correspond to Viraat, Hiranyagarbha and Avyaakruta. Experiencing different states in different times, these three perform different actions and are known by distinct names.

Significance of the Sun Principle

The sages recognised the inner significance and secrets of these principles by renouncing everything and striving to obtain the Bliss of the *Atma*. Unfortunately, we do not understand the meaning of *Vedic* names, so we make fun of them.

The *Vedas* say, "From His mind came the moon and from His eyes the sun (*Chandramaa Manaso Jaatah, Chakshoh Sooryo Ajaayata*⁵). What is meant by the moon? Today we think, we have traveled to the moon and found no God there! We deride the *Vedas*. When the *Vedas* say *moon*, it is not the planetary body orbiting the earth. The mind principle existing in our heart is the moon.

What is the sun? The brightness and fire (*tejas*) of the sun exists in our eyes. This *tejas* enables us to discern the one God in diversity. No one can demarcate

⁴ These words are difficult to translate into English. *Adi-bhauthika* pertains to the physical or material world; the fine spiritual aspect of material objects. *Adi-atmika* pertains to the individual soul; *Adi-daivika*, to Divinity.

⁵ From the *Purusha Suktam* – Prayer to Lord Narayana

the power or influence of this *tejas*. The eye, half an inch in size, is able to see stars millions of miles away! If the power of the eye was from the physical sun of the solar system, then how could the eye perceive anything beyond the sun?

What is the relation between the sun and the eyes? Sight is made possible by these ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ principles coming together. Either one on its own is useless. Both are necessary.

For example, can you see anything in a dark house? If you close your eyes in daylight, again, nothing is seen. Light is necessary, and your eyes are necessary. The glow of the sun and the fire of your eyes join together to create the world. Meaning, Creation (*srishti*) has emerged from your sight (*drishti*). Without vision, there is no Creation. Truly, there are no defects in creation but only in your sight. So, purify your vision.

The *Upanishads* taught this point beautifully by asserting that your eyes (*netras*) are true scriptures (*sastras*). Your sight itself is Creation. You must recognise the unity of these dualities. Concepts beyond the ken of science are easily understood through the *Upanishads*. Man’s scientific knowledge is the size of an atom, but he thinks it is infinite —and develops ego. Spirituality, however, asserts that the infinite Cosmos is contained within the atom! Divinity exists within the atom and it engulfs the entire Cosmos (*Anoraneeyaan mahato maheeyaan*).

Atom and cosmos

A seed becomes a tree. Where did this gigantic tree emerge from? From the minute seed. The humble seed hides branches, leaves, fruits, and flowers within itself. When do they manifest from the seed? When the seed loses its shape and form, its grander qualities come into existence. In other words, the seed destroys its own form, or, renounces its ego. Only then it does it acquire a new form —of the tree. If it stuck to its old form, how could it comprehend the magnificence of its new identity? More seeds are brought forth by the tree.

The infinite exists in the atom and, the atom in the infinite (*Anoraneeyaan mahato maheeyaan*). Enquire into the infinite and the atom —they are the same! The shapes and sizes vary but the material is one. This is the main significance of the *Upanishads*.

Practice

Every *Upanishad* reveals and clarifies a secret of Creation. People understand and interpret them as per their level of intellect. This is based on their physical efforts (*abhyasa*). This leads to colouring of pure and complete concepts as per their narrow outlooks. When a meat eater goes to a forest and spies a bird on a tree, he

tells himself, “If I could catch it, what a tasty meal it would make!” His vision sees only its flesh. When a poet sees the same bird, he appreciates its colours and soft feathers, describing them in beautiful words. The bird is the same, but the sights of people are different.

So, how did our sight and outlook become distorted? Through practice (*abhyasa*) with worldly intentions. The good in us must be strengthened with practice as well. Hence,

Wisdom is better than practice,
Meditation is better than wisdom,
Renouncing fruits of actions is the best,
For it bestows infinite peace.⁶

*Sreyo hi jnanam abhayaasaat
Jnaanaat dhyaanam vishishyate
Dhyaanaat karma phala tyaagam
Tyaagaat shantir anantaram*

For everything, practice is essential. An infant must practise walking, eating, and talking. Walking, talking, reading, writing —all require practice. Nothing can be accomplished without practice. Likewise, teachings of the *Upanishads* reveal their Truth when practised.

Attachment, fear, and anger

The Bliss of the *Atma* (*Brahmaanandam*) cannot be bought from outside. Contemplation on your true nature is bliss. Man thinks, “There is an object separate from me. When I acquire it, I will be happy, blissful.” This delusion is the root cause of attachment (*raga*).

From attachment comes fear. How? “Will I get what I want or not? Even if I obtain it, will I be able to retain it forever? will I be able to safeguard it?” This is fear. Fear eventually turns into its contorted form, anger. Hence, attachment, fear, and anger follow in sequence. Without attachment, the other two cannot exist.

What is attachment? Desire. Today, desires are beyond limits. People lose their bearings with excessive desire. “Who am I? How should I live?” —all questions are forgotten. People even forget human qualities and become demons. They have no gratitude. Worse, they harms others.

Human values

First, recognise your human nature. The world abounds in cruel and frightening acts. Today one is ready to harm one’s own mother if she stands in the way of one’s desires! No, no. All desires can be attained by a person who is established in human values. Even if your desires are satisfied at the expense of human values, how can you possibly be happy?

⁶ *Bhagavad Gita* (XII: 12)

People alternate, between joy and grief by following endless desires. But if a person themselves did not exist, what are happiness and sorrow worth? Huge mansions, overflowing bank balances, and a family —to what end are these? Without human values, all are tasteless.

Students! First and foremost, strive to live like a human being. Acquire honour and reputation in society. You may die, but your ideals and fame remain immortal. Become exemplary students.

How can you acquire a good name? Character is the root cause of repute or disrepute. Purify your behaviour. The praise of others is not necessary. Please your own heart, your conscience. Without such introverted balance, you betray yourself. Do not be a thief to yourself! Rather, become the “master” who arrests the thieves within.

Importance of Upanishads

Students, be “masters” and “slaves”. Control your senses and bear troubles and adversities with fortitude. The mind must be fed on a diet of courage and valour. The “glucose injection” and “calcium injection” of courage and valour are available only through the *Upanishads*!

The essence of the *Upanishads* is contained in that very word: *upa* (near) + *ni* (down) + *shad* (sit). When you are near something, its benefits become accessible to you.

A small example. When you sit near an air conditioner, its cool air caresses your body. In cold places, you install heaters. You experience comfortable warmth in proximity to the heater. “*Upanishad*” means to go near and sit down. Meaning, when you are near God, your vices disappear and God’s immaculate purity enters you.

We disregard the *Upanishads* as abstract poems, stories and couplets written by sages. Students! You read mindless novels with so much faith and devotion! Shouldn’t you spend at least some time on the *Upanishads* and try to grasp their significance? I know that most of you, when returning to your homes in trains, become so absorbed in cheap novels that you are oblivious to the different stations along the way, to your fellow-passengers, to time itself!

The harmful effect of the Kali Era (the age we are in) has brought upon us television and videos. During holidays, our students eat in front of the video. They cannot stop movies even during meals! As you watch movies, vulgar thoughts enter your food. Food has an influence on your intellect, which decides how close you are to God.

Yes, you may watch pure and inspiring films —that is no mistake. But why disregard the sublimely pure and enlightening *Upanishads*? Reading scriptures is a headache, you say! But you lose track of time while reading impure stories. This is the impact of the Kali Age.

Students! Do not be like ordinary students. From time to time, seek good company and delve into the *Upanishads*, *Gita*, *Itihasas*⁷, *Bible*, *Quran*, and other texts. Pure feelings are scarce in you because you do not read such texts. This is especially important for women.

Responsibility of mothers

Women should read scriptures and contemplate on pure, inspiring scenes in their minds. Today’s women watch 3-4 movies a day during pregnancy. Not surprisingly, the children born to them are “cinema children” [laughter]. Indian history has glaring examples to illustrate this point.

When Subhadra⁸ was carrying Abhimanyu, Arjuna talked to her at length about the *Padma Vyuha*. Subhadra was hardly interested, but the unborn Abhimanyu absorbed his father’s words.

Take another example. When Queen Leelavati was pregnant, Sage Narada instructed her about Lord Narayana. Her child, Prahlada⁹, absorbed Narada’s words.

The child in the womb is very susceptible to thoughts and impressions prevailing in the atmosphere outside, especially in the mother. The mother and the child are inextricably bound —one body, one stream of blood, one source of food. Thus, women must strive to their utmost to see only pure sights, think pure thoughts, and hear pure words.

Swami wants to emphasise to girls another reason why children are spoilt. With progress in technology, machines have replaced people in many tasks. Women today can perform household duties without much exertion. An automatic cooker produces everything —rice, vegetables, *sambar*— simultaneously, with minimum effort. Becoming lazy as a result, mothers neglect even their children.

After the child is born, they return to their career or other work. The child is entrusted to a servant-girl. The child develops a bond of love with the servant-girl! He

⁷ Epics of ancient India — *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Bhagavatam*.

⁸ In the epic *Mahabharata*. Arjuna was married to Subhadra, the sister of Lord Krishna. Their son was Abhimanyu. *Padma Vyuha* (Lotus Formation) is an impregnable army formation.

⁹ A great devotee who was saved by the *Narasimha* (Man-Lion) *Avatar*

follows her directions and grows up lacking in a heart-to-heart relation with the mother.

The touch of the mother, her smiles, her words — these are absolutely essential for the child! In ancient India, the mother herself fed the child, bathed it, clothed it, put it to sleep, and always kept it near her. The constant sight (*darshanam*), touch (*sparshanam*), and words (*sambhaashanam*) of the mother formed an armour within which the child grew up, strong and confident.

Modern women believe that their responsibility ends at bearing the child. Up-bringing is the duty of the servant-girl or the nurse, they say. The nanny takes the child to a beach or a public park. They travel in the car — the driver, the servant-girl, and the child. The child is compelled to listen to the uncouth words exchanged by the driver and the servant-girl. Naturally, the child develops such language and traits and behaves like an uncivil servant.

Ultimately, the child cries when the nanny dies but not when the child's own mother passes away! [laughter] Devoid of a bond with the mother, how could the child feel grief? The harmful effect of the Kali Era separates even mother and child!

The practices of Indian Culture are pure and consequential. Do not look down upon our traditions as awkward. The girls in this assembly, who are future mothers, should pay careful attention to Swami's words and rear their children to be exemplary.

In ancient India, there was a woman called Madaalasa. She imparted the divine nature of human birth to her child even when he was an infant. As she rocked his cradle, she sang,

*In the cradle of Om,
Spreading the mattress of 'Thath Thwam Asi',
Laying the child called Awareness carefully,
May those in the seven worlds¹⁰ bless you.*

This song means: "O son, don't be afraid of the world. Cultivate divine feelings. Attain Divinity". She blessed her son with such inspiring lullabies. Mothers today are quite different. "My son must obtain a good job, high position, go overseas, and earn a fortune."

There is a Telugu folk song in this context.

[Mother to child]
*Your uncle has harvested crop from his field.
Go ask him for your share, my son.*
[The uncle to the child]

You weren't present when the crop was planted or harvested.

How can you be eligible for a share?

[The child to his uncle]

Aren't you my mother's brother?

That gives me a right!

Let us go to the court for a judgement.

Imagine, such a young boy had already begun a war!

[The court makes judgement – to the uncle]

Yes, give the lad his share.

In addition, give him your daughter's hand in marriage!

This is modern up-bringing! Soon after birth, they talk of marriage! "We'll get our child married into a rich family or to such-and-such person, for a comfortable life." Such are the aspirations of mothers today. This is very wrong. Children are exposed to calculating mentalities.

Our ancient Indian tradition is to begin teaching the alphabet at the age of five. We begin with the letters *o, na, ma, si, va, ya, ha*. As the child repeats these sounds over and over again, the syllables coalesce to form: *Om Namah Sivaya*. See, education began with the divine Name on one's lips! How sacred are these practices!

Today children are made to repeat "Baa Baa Black Sheep". Meaningless words! [laughter] When kids go astray, it is only the parents' fault.

The tree grows upright only when the sapling is planted straight. Even one bend in the sapling is enough to skew the tree. Therefore, parents — especially mothers — must make the necessary effort and dedication to ensure sterling characters in their children. For all such ideals, we must ponder over the *Upanishads* to the extent possible. The *Upanishads* do not elaborate on anything secret, anything external to us. It is all within us! All purity, powers, and virtues reside in the human, not outside. Strive for divine purity in your hearts.

[Swami concluded with "Hari Bhajana Bina Sukha Shanti Nahin".]

31 May 1991

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¹⁰ According to Vedic cosmology, there are a total of 14 worlds, 7 "heavenly", one Earth, and 6 "hellish". The "7 worlds" above us are characterised by the path of the Sun, or Awareness of the *Atma*.

13. Spiritual Discipline (Sadhana)

Fear of sin has disappeared.
Wicked actions have become commonplace.
Devotion to Lord Vishnu is absent.
The world is a den of indescribably cruel acts.
Lord Vishnu is the refuge of sages and saints.
His Name alone can grant peace, O man
His Name alone can grant peace, O man
His Name alone can grant peace, O man.

"I have read texts, mastered all sciences" —
Why pride yourself so on useless learning?
If you cannot join your palms and express devotion
to God,
Aren't all your studies a complete waste, O man?

To fill the tiny stomach, you undergo troubles,
You acquire a million forms of knowledge.
But such education does not grant lasting peace.
Why suffer so, having taken a human birth?
If only you meditate on the Lord,
Won't He show you the way?

Students!

To attain Divinity, to sanctify their body, time, and life, people perform countless good actions and makes various efforts. Despite ceaseless spiritual practice (*sadhana*), people are unable to achieve the purity they desire. Why? They do not recognise what spiritual practice means, its results, its goal. First recognise what spiritual practice means, and you can achieve your objective (*sadhya*). One wastes one's entire life by not grasping the true significance of the nine-fold path¹.

The meaning of spiritual practice (sadhana)

What is meant by spiritual practice? Recitation of the Name, meditation, devotional singing *yoga*, good deeds —do these constitute spiritual practice? Not at all.

To transform bad into good is true spiritual practice. To turn sorrow into happiness is spiritual practice.

Without grief, there is no joy. Good also cannot exist without bad. The world is an eternal battlefield where these duals struggle against each other. Difficulties and peace are inextricably intertwined. One is the beginning,

the other is the end. No one can separate them. Can the beginning exist without an end or vice versa? Only God is beyond beginning and end; everything worldly is compelled to start somewhere and end somewhere.

Sorrow is not pushed upon us by someone else. Bad thoughts and misery are not thrust into our heads from outside. Bad and sorrow occur naturally. Even the most sacred object slips down to a detestable state without spiritual practice. However priceless it may be, its value diminishes without spiritual practice, without refinement.

Suppose you find a raw diamond. Its value soars when you cut and polish it. Gold ore is mingled with soil and rock. After purification, it becomes precious. Spiritual practice transforms small into big, mean into lofty. No one is educated, knowledgeable, or virtuous at birth. Knowledge or character are obtained only by the dint of effort over several years.

Face troubles to attain Divinity

In the world, the good takes birth from the bad. Without the bad, the good cannot exist. For example, when you nurture a desire, there is an accompanying dissatisfaction, which prods you to seek the desire. One's life is a series of desires (*asaa*) and disappointments (*niraasa*). Life is likes (*sankalpas*) and dislikes (*vikalpas*), union (*samyoga*) and separation (*viyoga*).

When our sages were asked about the nature of the world, they described it as a vast ocean of union and separation. While swimming in this ocean, we encounter the gems of troubles and sorrows. Only when we face obstacles can we attain a divine state. If you are frightened at every step, if you do not proceed forward, life is wasted. Life is full of hurdles. Sorrow and troubles alone lend value to life.

Worthwhile results are obtained only through difficulties (*Kashte phali*). In this world, everything can be attained through spiritual practice (*Sadhanamuna panulu samakooru dharalona*). Spiritual practice (*sadhana*) means transforming bad into good, sorrow into joy. The mind is crucial in this regard.

The mind is the root

One fails to appreciate the power and capacities of the mind. The mind is the root cause of all joys and sorrows. The divine power latent in the mind is beyond description. The nature of the mind is beyond words. It can go anywhere in an instant or stop in an instant. One

¹ Nine types of devotion: *Sravanam* (listening to the glories of the Lord), *Kirtanam* (singing), *Vishnu Smaranam* (remembrance), *Pada Sevanam* (saluting the Feet), *Vandanam* (adoration), *Archanam* (worship), *Dasyam* (service), *Sakhyam* (friendship), *Atma Nivedanam* (total surrender).

is bound to the world by (*Karma karmaanubandhene manushya loke*). The world is bound by the mind (*Manomoolam Idam Jagat*).

We know that the food we eat becomes nourishment for the body. No, no. It is not the food that gives nourishment but only the mind! If the mind is not enthusiastic and joyous during meals, food can even prove poisonous! The mind alone lends Divinity to human nature. Whatever we see, speak, think or do, we must make sacred. Without the mind's prompting, we cannot even put a foot forward. People foolishly gloat over physical prowess, intelligence, riches, and power, but they do not enquire into the demon of ego, which misleads them.

You have heard the words of blessing, "May you live a hundred years (*Satamaanam bhavati satayuh*)."² But it is common to see people dying well before the century mark. You may be told you will live a hundred years, but don't believe it! You cannot tell when and where death will come—in childhood, youth, or old age, in water, on land, or in the sky.

If no one can decide the time of death, what is the significance of a 100-year lifespan? The *Vedas* use this number, so it cannot be superficial. A hundred years is the truth! How? Every person truly has a lifespan of a century. Pride, envy, and immorality are knives that slice away at life. Adherence to good thoughts, words, and deeds undoubtedly grants a century of life. This is the inner significance of the longevity enjoyed by our ancient sages.

Students, foster true and honest intentions without interruption. Let devotion and surrender flourish. Today, right conduct and belief in God are fast declining. How can humanity ever realise the truth in the ancient blessing "May you live a hundred years" with such behaviour?

Love God, fear sin

Develop self-confidence. One who doesn't trust himself cannot trust anyone else. A person is God Himself. But just as a blind man cannot see the sun, the egoistic man cannot see the *Atma*. Ego veils one's sight—ego must be renounced. All our degrees, riches, fame, and power are "passing clouds". People dedicate half their lives to the accumulation of money. Do they use even a fraction of that time in spiritual pursuits? Do they perform sacred service activities? The body has been given to serve others (*Paropakaara artham idam sareeram*.) Why are people unable to recognise this truth?

A person is a puppet in the hands of selfishness. Whatever one loves, one loves not for the sake of the object but for one's own sake. When one loves a person, that is for one's selfish sake as well. When you go deep

into intentions, only selfishness is found. Making selfishness as the foundation, one forgets the infinite *Atma*.

First and foremost, if selfishness is curbed, one can easily avoid bad traits and behaviour.

Fear of Sin	<i>Paapa bheeti</i>
Love for God	<i>Daiva preeti</i>
Morality in Society	<i>Sangha neeti</i>

These three precepts must be adored as the *Trimurtis*². Without fear of sin, people will not hesitate to do the most heinous act.

Sinning by losing fear of sin,
Adopting a path devoid of love for God—
This destroys human qualities.
This is the cause of uproar in the world.

India is full of agitation because there is no fear of sin, no love for God. Students! You are the hope of the future. Develop pure and sacred feelings. Understand that the body is given to serve the nation and be helpful to your fellow men. I hope that you cultivate such expansive hearts.

Help Ever, Hurt Never

Sage Vyasa wrote the 18 *Puranas*. What is their message?

The eighteen *Puranas* of Vyasa teach two instructions:
To help others is merit, to harm others is sin.

Ashtaadasa puraanesu Vyasasya vachanadyavam Paropakaara punyaaya paapaaya parapeedanam

"Help Ever, Hurt Never." Establish these words in your hearts. Do not hurt others, no matter what the situation. To the extent possible, see that you are not hurt by others, either. With "self" taken care of, you can begin to "help". Meaning, when you ensure security for yourself, you can proceed upon the pure path of service. Understand the importance of both "self" and "help".

Students! The world is afflicted with many problems, which seem only to worsen with time. What should be trusted and what should not be trusted? What must you do, what must you not do? Such power of discrimination—between the right and the wrong, between the temporary and the permanent—is beyond today's human being.

People rely on the most unreal and unreliable. They discard the trustworthy. Why? Selfishness is the reason. Recognise the workings of your mind. A person is called *manishi*³. One with a mind (*manas*) is *manishi*.

² The Trinity of Gods: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva

³ Telugu word for "man"

People create the world of their experiences with their minds. What is the mind? Only a bundle of thoughts. What are thoughts? They are actions of day-to-day life.

Therefore, the progress or decline of the world is dependent on the intentions and actions of individuals. The world is not inherently evil. In fact, evil does not exist in the world! The world does not have any sorrow! All sorrow and evil is created by us alone. We invite misery by entertaining bad desires.

Maintain a pure mind all the time. As soon as you find amoral intentions surfacing, contemplate on God to nullify their effect. Do not recollect degraded feelings repeatedly and strengthen them, the way you grow plants with water and fertilizer!

Develop equal-mindedness

We have two kinds of plants: fruit plants and thorny plants. How must they be cultivated? When you plant the fruit tree in the centre and thorny bushes all around, you automatically nurture the fruits and ensure their safety. Meaning, even thorns are useful! The beneficial use of both fruits and thorns depends on us.

The world has heat and cold, like people have joys and sorrows. Do we not dress according to the seasons? What is our summer apparel? It is of very thin fabric. When we visit a hill-station, cold predominates. We cannot change the weather but we wear thick clothes. We adjust to the weather and remain happy in all conditions.

Similarly, during tough times, first accept the situation and then make efforts to get rid of the sorrow. Think of peace and joy when anguish dominates. Think of the bliss that follows difficulties. Develop such equal-mindedness, such wisdom to recognise what is temporary and what is permanent. Instead, if you want to have no difficulties in your life, is that ever possible?

It is impossible to live without bad experiences. Grasp the significance of both good and bad experiences and cultivate the right attitude in each situation. Such “understanding” and “adjustment” are most essential for students. Students have only “misunderstanding” but no “understanding”! They try to “adjust” externally with this flawed attitude. This causes bad reactions in them. First cultivate “understanding”. Then, “adjustment” is easy, effortless.

The all-pervading “I”

We should recognise the unity that exists in mankind. Go ask a beggar, “Who are you?” He replies, “Sir, I am so-and-so.” Go to a rich man and pose the same question; He introduces himself likewise. Ladies also give the same reply as do gentlemen.

If you approach man who is sad and ask him, “Why are you sad? Who are you?”, he answers, “I am so-and-so, and for such-and-such reason, I am sad”. He also uses “I” to identify himself.

All human beings, without exception, use the word “I” to identify themselves. What is this “I”? It is the *Atma* principle, which exists within everyone in equal measure. A certain person may have love, another may not. One might be peaceful, another might not. One might be truthful, another might not. But “I” is within everyone! All this is pervaded by God (*Isaavaasyam Idam Sarvam*).

The *Vedas* advise you to arrive at the *Atma* by the process of negation. Assert “Not this, not this (*neti, neti*)” to everything that is not the *Atma*, and you are left face-to-face with God. To enquire into the “I” principle is exactly this process. The “I” in me exists in you, in him, in everyone. With such unity in view, there is no scope for discord. Whoever you hurt, you hurt yourself. When you slander others, you fling mud at yourself!

Adi Sankara and the Lord

This is the significance of an important incident in the life of Adi Sankarcharya. Adi Sankara went to Kasi (Benares) with his disciples. As he was walking along, a person of low caste approached him. Adi Sankara exclaimed, “Keep your distance!” The man replied, “Who do you want to stay away? My body? The body is inert. Does one piece of inert matter have the authority to command another? Both are gross. Or, do you want my *Atma* to be away from you? The *Atma* is in you and in me. How can you ask it be distant when it is all-pervading?”

In this manner, the stranger clearly disjoined the body and *Atma* principles. Adi Sankara realised that one with such a clarified intellect, one who had realised the *Atma*, was none other than the Lord Himself, and he fell at His Feet. Then Lord Siva appeared to him in full glory and spoke words of blessing, “Child! I assumed this form only to rid you of your narrow mentality, to grant you true wisdom.”

Spiritual practice from the heart

God always assumes forms to rid people of their bad qualities and unhealthy behaviour. But no one can tell in what form, when, where, and how He will appear! We must not give scope to bad feelings but constantly strengthen pure intentions to the extent possible. This is true spiritual practice (*sadhana*). Instead, if you endlessly repeat the Name of God while fostering vices, what good is such repetition? This is only “artificial repetition”! Real repetition of the name and meditation must be from the heart!

A man sits for meditation, immobile, like a statue. People get the impression that he is absorbed in the Self. But let a mosquito land on him and he reacts instantly! What is he meditating upon? On God, or on the mosquito?! If he was truly contemplating on God, he would not have felt the mosquito on his body.

Today repetition of the Name, meditation, *yoga*, sacrifice are all artificial. Not surprisingly, the results are also artificial. As is your feeling, so is the result (*Yat bhaavam tat bhavati*). If you eat a cucumber, will you belch the taste of mango? God is never partial. They are favours done to you by yourself, your destiny written by yourself.

Therefore, do not criticise God. You alone determine your joys and sorrows. It is absolutely essential that you fix this truth in your mind.

Meaningful days

Students! During the past twelve days, you have blissfully heard discourses on the *Atma* principle, on eternal joy, and you have pondered on the right way to act in worldly and spiritual life. Such sacred days are real days, meaningful days. I have said on many occasions:

The day when true devotees gather
And remember God with music,
The day when you assuage the grief of the poor
And treat them as your brothers with love,
The day when you contemplate on God and
Feed your servants with tasty food,
The day when great persons come into our midst
And regale us with stories of the Lord —
Such days are real days.

These four types of days alone are meaningful and well-spent days (*dinam*). All other days are days of death (*tat-dinam*)! When you look after the comfort of others and make efforts to bring peace and joy to them, those are real days. I bless you with the wish that you fill your life with such sacred days and transform it into a glorious, divine life.

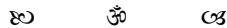
For the time we have spent together, tomorrow is the last day. However, I do not say that it is the last day for our vows, penance, and sacrifice. There is no such thing as conclusion to the sacred pledges we have taken during this fortnight. This is an endless, lifelong penance. What is penance? Discharging duties is penance. Avoiding duties leads to darkness (*thamas*) instead of penance (*tapas*).

Your duty is your penance
Your duty is your spiritual practice (*sadhana*)
Your duty is your sacrifice
Your duty is your destination

Therefore, students! Consider the welfare of others as your foremost duty throughout life. I hope that you sublimate your selfishness into selflessness and lead exemplary lives.

(Swami sang “*Bhava Bhaya Harana, Vandita Charana*” in His Golden Voice.)

1 June 1991



14. Dharma and Indian Spirituality

In the most sacred land of *Bharat*,
Patience is the greatest virtue.
Among all disciplines, the shining jewel of
Truth is the highest penance.
The sweet feeling pervading our land
Is the mother's love.
Honour is more important than life itself.

But these ideals of India have been destroyed by
The adoption of foreign values.
Unbridled freedom is a dangerous sword.
Alas! What has happened to India?
As an elephant is unaware of its own strength,
Such is the state of our countrymen today.

Performing charity and sacrifices ceaselessly,
Acquiring knowledge and power,
Harnessing crops, ruling over lands —
Such actions are merely for filling the stomach.

Why suffer in so many ways?
Don't worms, birds and beasts live for the stomach
as well?
Knowing that satisfaction can be got without world-
ly joys,
If man does not strive to reach the goal,
He is only inferior to other living beings.
How can he be superior?

Students!

The essence of all sciences and education is Indian culture and spirituality. Every country is proficient in its own ways, in its particular branches of knowledge. Morality, ethics, truth, sacrifice, and forbearance are present in all these types of education.

True Indian (*Bharatiya*) education comprises five limbs: behaviour (*aachaaram*), culture (*saampradayaam*), religion (*matam*), art (*kala*), and knowledge. Such all-encompassing education has been forgotten today. The true measure of education is righteousness. When righteousness flourishes, true education will follow. The welfare and security of the country rests on *dharma* and education.

The Ramayana and the Mahabharata

The exalted sages Vyasa and Valmiki crystallised the Lord into words and conveyed it to posterity as epics. The texts they authored are very ancient. For this

reason, the epics are called *Puraanas*¹. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* propagate faultless behaviour not just to Indians but to the entire world.

Indian culture has ensured peace and stability for the world since time immemorial. The divine *mantra*, the guiding light of the noble Aryan culture, has always been good wishes for everyone, even for those we do not know: May all the worlds be happy (*Lokaah Samas-taah Sukhino Bhavantu*). Without yielding to the conditions of place, time, and situation, Indian culture has sought the underlying unity in the apparent diversity by renouncing the narrow feelings of “I” and “mine”.

Duryodhana² had great physical strength, intellect, valour, power and wealth —all forms of prosperity. What is the significance in Vyasa treating Duryodhana and Dussasana with scorn and instead, giving the highest value to Dharmaja³? It is because our sages considered *dharma* above everything. They recognized that the cosmos exists only on the power of *dharma*, that all beneficial acts emerge from *dharma*.

The *Ramayana*, teaching lofty ideals of morality to the whole world, is dearer than life to every home in India. How must brothers behave with each other? How must children conduct themselves with parents and obey their wishes? What tolerance and self-control must exist in a husband-wife relationship? All such questions are beautifully answered in the *Ramayana*. This epic demonstrates the fame and prosperity of a family in which brothers are united, where love pervades.

Sage Valmiki composed the *Ramayana*. Ravana was a king with all possible achievements to his credit. He never lacked in pleasure, comfort, or victories. He had no equal. He was an adept in the sixty-four types of knowledge. His city, Lanka, rivaled Heaven itself in opulence. But Valmiki paid no respect to Ravana and instead heaped adoration upon Rama —who renounced kingship to walk barefoot in forests, wore bark and leaves, and lead a life of austerity despite his royalty. Why? Because every action of Rama was *dharma*. Every word He uttered was truth (*sathya*). Valmiki, therefore, asserted, Rama is the embodiment of *dharma* (*Ramo Vighrahaan Dharmah*).

¹From the Sanskrit word *puraatana*, which means “ancient”

²Wicked protagonist of the epic *Mahabharata*

³The righteous Pandava prince in the same epic

Dharma is paramount

Our sages gave no weight to money, fame, pleasures, power, physical or intellectual prowess but only to *dharma*. Why? To them, *dharma* alone is the life-force of the world. Four goals (*purusharthas*) of human life are prescribed by the scriptures: righteousness, wealth, desire, and liberation (*dharma, artha, kama, and moksha*). The first is *dharma*. Wealth and desire come after *dharma*. Meaning: unless wealth and desire are experienced in accordance with *dharma*, they cause grief. Earn wealth with *dharma*. Entertain only *dharmaic* desires. Only thus can we attain liberation. This is the lesson of the four goals.

Unfortunately, Indians have renounced the foundation of *dharma*, which is the like the feet supporting the structure of human life. They have chopped off the head of liberation. They live with the headless and footless body of wealth and desire! Thus, India has lost Her splendour of righteousness. We must take a pledge to restore *dharma*, to foster education promoting *dharma*, to revive the glory of India.

The first stanza of the *Bhagavad Gita* begins, *Dharma kshetre kurukshetre* (Field of *dharma*, field of battle). Many want to know the essence of the *Gita*. Scholars give various answers — *karma yoga, bhakthi yoga, jnana yoga*, and so on. If we want to visualise someone, the head and feet are most important! The first word of the first stanza of the *Gita* is *Dharma*. The last verse of the *Gita* is:

Wherever there is Krishna, the Lord of *Yoga*,
Wherever there is Partha⁴, the archer,
There are prosperity, success, expansion,
And firm morality —that is my conviction.

Yatra Yogeshvarah Krishno
Yatra Partho Dhanurdharah
Tatra Sreer Vijayo Bhootir-
Dhruvaa Neetir Matir Mama

The last word of the last verse of the last chapter is *mama* (my). Joining the first and last words, we get: *mama dharma*, or my duty! This is the message of the *Gita*. Recognise your own *dharma* and perform it. A householder should fulfill their responsibilities, likewise, a hermit, a renunciant, and a student should act as per their stage in life. Each has their *dharma*, which cannot be exchanged.

Manu's code of right action

For everything, the basis is *Manu Dharma* (*Manu's Code of Right Action*). You may search the whole

⁴ Another name for Arjuna. Means “son of Pritha”, Pritha being Kunti.

world, but an exposition of *dharma* surpassing *Manu Dharma* does not exist. Once upon a time, a German scholar called Nietzsche wrote a book on will power. Fortunately for him, he stumbled upon *Manu Dharma* during this process. The bliss he derived by delving into it was indescribable. He stopped writing his book. “What I attempt to write is candlelight compared to the blazing Sun of *Manu Dharma* shining in the sky of Indian intellect,” he felt. He asserted that no book could equal *Manu Dharma*.

When such sacred texts, scriptures, and epics exist at home, why do Indians follow foreign ways? Although we possess sacred and invaluable traditions, we are attracted by external allurements. There is a proverb in Telugu: Despite a delicious five-course meal at home, stale lentils in the neighbour's house are more appealing! *Intilo vanta chesina pancha bhaksha paravaanamum kante, prakkintilo paachipoyina pappu chaala ruchi*).

We have incomparable teachings in our country. How foolish it is to pursue tasteless education elsewhere! Yes, every country has its own expertise, systems of logic and philosophy (*pramaanaas*), and system of education. Surely, no one should criticise others. As per the time, place, and situation, unique *dharma*s, ways of living, and regulations have become important in each part of the world. But recognise that all systems of logic and philosophy are only for the purification of the mind. And in this regard, Indian culture sets towering ideals for human welfare here and hereafter.

It is not enough to learn bookish knowledge by heart and forget about the welfare of mankind. Demonstrate your learning in action. Only then will knowledge lead to bliss. Without practice, all studies are useless. Even a million forms of knowledge devoid of virtue are worthless and unproductive.

Character is paramount! For this reason, Indians have always stressed character, character, character. No science from any part of the world has the right to criticise Indian philosophy and *Vedanta*⁵. Science is such that today's truths are dismissed by tomorrow's experiments. How can science, which changes day to day, have the authority to comment about Indian spirituality and *Nyaya Shastra*, which elaborate on true and eternal principles? Analyse all the logical and philosophical systems of the world —from Kant to Spencer. They are mere drizzles in comparison to the torrential downpours of nonduality, qualified non-duality, and duality (*advaita, visishtha-advaita*, and *dwaita* expounded by the *Vedas*).

⁵ Literally, “the end of *Vedas*”. The section of the *Vedas* dealing with *advaita* (non-dual) philosophy, primarily, the *Upanishads*.

Conquer body consciousness

Even today's scientific achievements are nothing compared to the feats of Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha in the *Kritha Yuga* (first in a cycle of four eras; we are in the fourth). Hiranyakasipu brought the five elements under his control and investigated the realms of earth, sky, and water. He gloated over his supremacy over the physical world. This pride blinded him to such an extent that he tortured his own son!

What was the fruit of all his investigations? Only ego, which made him forget himself and blurred even ordinary human feelings. Such a man is ready to destroy anyone who stands in the way of his ambitions, even his own family! Finally, only his son could teach him the truth.

Prahlada, Hiranyakasipu's son, was dear to Lord Hari. Hiranyakasipu hated Hari. They could not co-exist. In the same way, it appears that science and spirituality cannot co-exist today! But sooner or later, spirituality is bound to open the eyes of science.

Hiranyakasipu asked Prahlada, "Where is your Hari?"

Prahlada replied, "Don't fall into doubt that He is here but not there. He is everywhere."

"Is He in this pillar, then?" thundered Hiranya.

"Yes," said Prahlada, bowing down.

When Hiranyakasipu broke the pillar, divine Power emerged from within. What is the meaning? As long as one identifies with the body, one is far away from God. The day one renounces body-consciousness and cultivates love for God, one comes face to face with Divinity. Hiranyakasipu broke the pillar of body-consciousness and Divinity emerged from inside.

Therefore, physical science is definitely necessary. But why develop pride on account of such studies? Be humble. There is much you need to understand. Students! You are future leaders. The nation's progress depends on your actions. When you are good, the country will be safe. When you go astray, the country will go to ruin.

Students learn a tinge of English—the size of a mustard seed—and develop a huge ego, the size of a pumpkin! This is harmful. There is a lot for you to teach the world, but not by giving "tons" of speeches. Practise an "ounce"—that is enough. Teach by example. Therefore, Indian culture is the essence of all scriptures, the goal of all education, and the road to a divine life.

Name and form

Everything in the cosmos has two concepts: name and form. Nothing in the world can exist without name and form. Name is sound. Sound contains the whole creation. Sound is speech. Speech emerges from feeling, and feelings are based on desires. Desires are fruits of ignorance, which, in turn, is born in Divinity. So, there is an intimate relation between speech and Divinity. Without sound, without speech, no truth can be recognised. People did not create sound. In fact, all creation, including humanity, emerged from sound.

Since antiquity, every sound has its own meaning. These meanings have not been allotted by scientists! Here is a plate. A goldsmith might have made it, but he did not name it. It is called "plate" since the beginning of time. This is a tumbler. Its unique form is the reason for its existence. Therefore, the form is the proof of the name, and the name is the proof of the form. They are inextricably intertwined.

Every word has its form. "Sorrow" is a word. The troubles we undergo are the form associated with this word. Another word is "joy". Our experience of happiness is the form of joy. We are all inside a "hall". This concrete building itself is its evidence, its form. In this manner, every word has a corresponding form. But modern scientists pay no attention to this truth.

Consider a dictionary. It has numerous words. People implicitly believe in all the meanings provided by the dictionary. The same dictionary also has the word "God"! If the word exists, it must have a form, should it not? If the word "God" had no form, how could it be included in the dictionary? Why do you believe everything else and reject this one word? This indicates your personal bias, not the universal Truth.

Name and form—only these two exist. *Vedanta* teaches that we must attain the Form of God by repeating His Name. It is difficult to attain the goal based solely on the form. Why? For example, suppose you want to identify a man wearing a certain shirt, a certain pants, and of a certain height. It is difficult, if not impossible, to find him among the thousands assembled here. However, if you know his name and announce it over the microphone, the person will rise and approach you—even in a crowd of a hundred thousand!

It is easy to attain the form with the name. Contemplation on the Name is the means to swim across the ocean of birth and death (*Smarane taranopaayam*).

Dharma—the identifying quality

Students! Indian culture and spirituality is pregnant with incredible potency. What cannot be found here is non-existent. Unfortunately, you are not persistent in

practising the precepts of our culture. Therefore, its power slips through your grasp. Dive deep and practise the teachings—you will attain bliss without a doubt.

Indian culture and spirituality is full of *dharma*. *Dharma* is the guiding light, our life-breath. What is *dharma*? That which bears its own qualities is *dharma* (*Dharayathe ithi dharmah*). This statement is not elaborate enough. In every object, there is a life force, an identifying quality. Consider fire. What does fire bear? Fire bears heat and light. We can identify fire only when it has heat and light. Without these qualities, it may be charcoal but not fire! So what is the *dharma* of fire? Heat and light. Take ice. What is its nature? You may say it is white in colour. But fully burned coal is white also! Ice is cold. Next, take sugar. What is the *dharma* of sugar? Sweetness. Without sweetness, it could be salt!

The *dharma* of fire is heat and light. The *dharma* of ice is cold. The *dharma* of sugar is sweetness. In the same way, what is the *dharma* of humanity? It is sacrifice born out of truth and morality. How must it be practised and demonstrated? Through unity and purity in thought, word, and deed (*trikarana suddhi*). Human qualities flourish when the thoughts you entertain, the words you speak, and the deeds you do are in harmony.

Without such unity, *dharma* is absent, education has lost its value, and the prosperity of the nation is in jeopardy. There is no security or justice.

Dishonest money cannot last

Everything is based on money, money, money. Money has undermined morality. The wealth earned by trodding upon morality is no more valuable than mud! Such wealth cannot endure or grant happiness. Does hoarded money give you happiness? No, no. Bees gather honey from numerous flowers and store them in a hive. The beekeeper kills the bees with smoke or hot water and confiscates the honey. Similarly, wealth earned through unrighteous means slips through our grasp.

There are four thieves after your money. The first is the government. On some pretext or other, they tax you or raid your house. The second thief is fire. Accidents of fire consume money earned through unrighteous means. The third is burglars. The moment you become wealthy, you invite the attention of burglars. The burglar makes intricate plans to lighten your burden of treasure! The fourth is disease. When unjust wealth is destined to be lost, disease appears in the body. The miser who is reluctant to bestow a single coin to a beggar willingly donates millions to doctors who promise health. Unrighteous wealth leaks away in one of these ways.

Devotion protects the world

Students! Future saviours of India! Keep these truths in mind and stay away from dishonesty. Follow justice and honesty. Let your chariot be equipped with the wheels of truth and morality. Revive *dharma*. Only then will India become as glorious as in the past. The stream of truth and *dharma* born in *Bharat* (India) and propagated from here is immune to depletion.

For everything, devotion (*bhakti*) is the basis. Nothing can be achieved without devotion. Students! Money, tanks, bombs, or governments do not protect the world, only God's Grace does. It is essential for you to aspire for the welfare of the world and pray to God for it. To quell the storms in the world, God's Grace is the only way. The strength and capacities of today's students will determine peace and security in the future.

Untruth, injustice, and cruelty are rampant in India, the birthplace of spirituality. At such a time, the natural tendencies of truth, love, and righteousness must be used as weapons by students because only these are capable of fixing the situation. Such students must arise at every place in India.

Prahlada changed his father. Similarly, all of you should transform your parents, if necessary, and set examples with your conduct. Follow Prahlada—he was of your age. His teachers inculcated only demonic ideals. But Prahlada transformed even his *gurus*.

The *gurus* went to Hiranyakasipu and pleaded, “O King! Your son has immeasurable power. When your men torture him, he only smiles bewitchingly and calls on Narayana. There is no trace of anger or fear on his face.”

Can an ordinary boy face such tortures fearlessly? But Prahlada was not ordinary. Even when thrown into fire, he continued to repeat Narayana's name in bliss! When submerged in the ocean, he repeated the Name. He forgot the body (*deham*) and focused only on the Indweller (*dehi*). Even one such son is sufficient.

Cultivate virtues in youth

Hence, students must adhere to truth while living in this world of scientific and technological advancements. Anil Kumar explained earlier that education is not merely familiarity with books. Just as lightning is immanent in rain-bearing clouds, wisdom (*jnana*) must underlie education (*vidya*). When the dark clouds of vices veil the sky of our hearts, the lightning of Divine contemplation must be used to restore radiance.

Our heart is the sky. Our feelings are clouds. The mind is the moon. The intellect is the sun. Thick, dark clouds cover this sky, especially in adolescence. The mind and the intellect are hidden. These clouds are

“passing clouds”. Be patient —your enthusiasm and virtues will grow and shine forth. Then you will be able to visualise your true nature.

Cultivate peace. Students get agitated in an instant. Passion is responsible for agitations across the country. It is typical at your age. But do not accept it as natural. Youth is the time to develop your divine capacities and to control your senses. Is it possible to control your senses if you wait till old age?

Some say, "Why bother with meditation now? I will focus on my job and family. After retirement, I'll sit on my bed and repeat 'Rama, Rama' at leisure." There is really nothing called retirement. After retirement, they take-up another job to get “re-tired”! They do not relinquish the desire for money till the last breath. When will they ever find time for spirituality?

When agents of death pull at your noose and hurry you,
When relatives take your body outside and give up hope⁶,
When your wife and children cry with grief,
Is it possible to bring Hari's Name to your lips?

Can you hope to chant, "Hari, Hari" on your death-bed? It is impossible! Impossible! Cultivate the habit from this tender age. “Start early, drive slowly, reach safely.” If you don't replenish your water tanks in the rainy season, what can you enjoy during the summer? Fill the tanks of your hearts with Divinity now. Then you can taste the fruits in old age, like “pension”. Make efforts for spiritual progress. No matter who says what, follow spirituality with worldly education.

Balance worldly and spiritual pursuits

Can a bicycle travel on one wheel? Can a bird fly with one wing? Therefore, it is said, “Alchemy to grant joys now, spiritual education for joys hereafter (*Ihamu nosagimpa hemataaraka vidya, paramu nosagimpa Brahma vidya*). Meaning, lead life on the dual support of worldly and spiritual education.

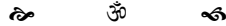
Students! Don't waste all your time on worldly concerns. Use some time for contemplation on the principle that transcends physical existence. When such students abound in the world, India will regain its lost glory and laughter of pure joy will resound everywhere. God's Power alone protects the individual, the country, and the world. No other power has this capacity. Cultivate Divine Power.

Divine Power does not grow within you, nor is it obtained from outside. It is natural to you. It is your true state. Hence, the *Vedas* proclaim, “The One exists in all beings (*Ekovasi sarva bhoota antaraatma*).” First, get rid of your ego and develop humility. Listen peacefully and patiently to the words of elders, reflect upon them, and put them into practice. Do not allow ego to sprout because ego blinds.

Students! Of all the teachings you have heard during the past fourteen days, I hope you put at least a fraction into practice. With blessings, I bring My discourse to a close.

[Swami concluded with “*Hari Bhajana Bina Sukha Shanti Nahin*”.]

2 June 1991



⁶It is customary in some parts of India to lay a dying person's body on the floor or outside the house.