

32. Who Is Sathya Sai Baba?

Giving the appearance of a strange person, having a basket-like hair on his head, showing no signs which indicate any particular religion or sect, with no specific mark on his face indicative of any particular caste, he appears quickly in a moment and vanishes equally quickly, then suddenly comes into your presence, wearing a robe that comes right down to his feet and sometimes covers the feet and sometimes does not cover the feet. Inherent beauty and attractiveness are obvious in his playing and singing. These are the aspects of Shiva Sakthi that are contained in him. Neither his hair nor any particular mark on his body nor the kind of robes that he wears give any clue to his divinity. All these signs point to the young Sathya Sai as he appears in his external form. He always smiles. In him, you will find the aspects of Shiva and Sakthi.

How is it possible for anyone to understand the secret of Sathya Sai whose form answers this description?

Students, boys and girls!

During the last several days taking the aspect of the goddess of learning and speech—namely Saraswathi and names like Bharatha and Prajapati—we have understood their significance. It has been said that many people from time immemorial have been desirous of knowing what God is and what, if any, are his attributes. What are his special powers and strengths? This is the kind of enquiry that has been going on for many millennia.

There are replies to these questions. *Maharishis* in ancient days, did *thapas* and got answers to these questions. They realised that the self-effulgent Lord is very much present within their ownself in the form of *Prajna*. They also realised that what they seek to know in the external world is present within themselves in each individual in the form of *Prajnana*. By using one's external vision one can certainly realise this divinity to a limited extent. But, by using one's inner vision, one can realise Him as the very essence of *Atma*. This is what they understood and taught people.

The two words that are used in this connection are *charma* and *sarma*. These have been mentioned

before and you have known the essential difference between these two words. *Sarma* stands for *Ananda* the inner bliss whereas *Charma* is an outer cover, that is skin which covers the human body. This has been created to protect the inner organs of the human body. It is, however, not meant to hide the human nature. The individual who realises or recognises that the human body is an implement intended to realise the inner aspect of *sarma* or bliss is on the right path.

We have already learnt the methods by which we can experience this bliss and happiness. Mere knowledge of how to acquire this bliss is not going to bring it to you. It is only when you are able to put such knowledge into practice that you will be able to enjoy the real bliss. If you want to find precious stones, you will have to look for them in the midst of dust and rubble in the earth. If you search for the precious stones on the surface of the earth, you are not going to find them. This body is equivalent to dust and in this body alone can you find the Lord. Man's duty is to make such an attempt by which he will find the jewel of the divine aspect in this human body.

Today, man's efforts are like taking a golden vessel studded with precious stones and using it to cook

some daily food. The human body containing the divine jewel of *atma thathwa* is being used to fulfil one's base desires. Will there be a fool who will take a golden plough to till a fertile land and finally put useless plants in it? Will there be a fool who will go round the city begging for food when tasty food is available in his own house? In the same manner while sacred peace and happiness are present in your own heart, is there any meaning in your going in search of them everywhere else except turning inwards into your own heart? It is foolishness to look for *Paramatma* elsewhere. While we regard God as omnipresent, in practice, we are looking for Him everywhere except within our own heart.

The *Puranas* described *Paramatma* in ever so many ways and having such and such attributes. All these descriptions arise from their own internal feelings and the picture of God that they have created for themselves. There are very few people who can describe the real nature of the Lord. While the Lord is present in everything and is responsible for everything, it is not possible for anyone to understand the full significance of the Lord. Everything is God and every aspect of creation is a facet of God. While stating and saying that God is present

everywhere but looking for Him in some specific places is not correct. It is meaningless.

All these statements by different people depend on their own ideas, their strengths and weaknesses, their likes and dislikes. Depending on their whims and fancies, they have been giving various descriptions of the Lord. What is perceived by them in the world and what constitutes their own daily experience form the basis for their description of *Paramatma*. However, it is not possible for any of them to give a correct description of the Lord. In fact, those who had really experienced the glory of the Lord cannot and will not undertake to give a description to others. For one who did not overcome his own weaknesses, his desires and qualities, to describe God as having such and such form is not correct. Such descriptions are hollow. When an individual is himself subservient to *gunas*, how is he going to recognise the Lord who is above *gunas* and give a description of Him? Thus, when such an individual describes God, it is not based on his own experiences but, what he has read in the books written by others.

The ocean is very deep, vast and infinite. From this ocean, an individual can draw water to the extent of the

size of the pot which he carries and nothing more. Each person is bound by certain limitations. They will be able to grasp only a particular aspect of the Lord and they think that that particular aspect represents the total picture of the divine.

How can the infinite nature of Divinity be confined to a limited space? The devotees of Vishnu proclaim that Lord Vishnu is the greatest of all. The devotees of Shiva proclaim that the aspect of Shiva is the greatest. The devotees of Ganapati say that Ganapati is the greatest of all deities. The devotees of Sarada vouchsafe that she represents the best aspect of God. The devotees of Allah proclaim that he is the greatest and the mightiest. Still some others say that all are the same. How can anyone say who among the different forms of Divinity is the greatest? What could be the true picture?

I wish to quote a nice example in this context. Seven blind people approached a big elephant. One of them went near the elephant and touched its leg. Based on his own experience, he described that the elephant is like a big pillar. Another person touched the ear of the elephant and described the elephant as one big fan. A third person touched the tail of the elephant and

concluded that the elephant is like a thick rope. Another person touched the stomach of the elephant and decided that the elephant is like a big wall. In this manner, each of the blind men touched and felt a particular part of the elephant and came to his own conclusion. Each one concluded that the particular part of the elephant which he touched is the total form of the elephant. They have been describing correctly and completely the particular part of the elephant which each one touched, but a single part can never represent the totality of the elephant. It is the combination of all these parts that can be called an elephant.

In this way, when people try to understand the universal religion, people are getting hold of some particular aspect and they are thinking that what they have got hold of is the total religion. The universal religion is really the totality of all these aspects of different people. It is the common harmonised content of all different religions of the universe. In all these components, the same kind of healthy blood must flow. It is true to say that *prema* or love is the blood that is flowing through all the religions of the world. There is only one religion and that is the religion of love. This love flows as a stream through all the religions and this

is the essence of all the religions. Without recognising this essential stream of love that is contained in all the religions and by paying attention to only the external form and ritual, people have been quarrelling with each other about the greatness of their own religion. Those who aim at only the external form, cannot comprehend the full truth.

In the same manner, with regard to the nature of Sai as well, different people formulate different opinions based only on the external appearances. They do not make any attempt to recognise the fundamental truth, the unchanging permanent qualities of truth that are in Sathya Sai. All powers are under the control of Sai. Unfortunately many educated people who call themselves *yogis*, *mahayogis*, *pundits* and people who have all kinds of qualifications talk only of the miracles that I perform. They do not make an attempt to recognise the power and the true nature of Sai. Today many people who are educated and who are proud of the kind of education they possess come here but they do not realise the truth that is present here. They spend their time only in talking about their knowledge of the *Upanishads*, *Vedas* and *Sastras*. They do not realise that the very basis of all that they talk about is present here. They do not make an

attempt to realise this truth. Many people attach great importance to their own knowledge and are anxious to exhibit their knowledge. Such people do not realise that they are right in a place which is the very basis of knowledge and that they should try and get the *darshan* of this basis rather than make an exhibition of their own knowledge.

When one looks at people with such an attitude, it becomes clear that they do not have any experience of true divinity and that what they have acquired is only acquaintance with several books. They do not have any knowledge of things that really matter. It is not possible for anyone to recognise the true aspect of God. From ancient time to the present times, although God appeared right amidst the people, it has not been possible for them to realise and appreciate the true nature of God. The reason for this is that they are deluded.

There is no limitation to my power. There is no reason to limit or confine my power and my grace to any one place. Infinite powers and grace are present in my hands. To state these things with regard to myself becomes necessary sometimes. There is no use telling people who refuse to know. For people who know, there is no need to tell them. But for people who know and yet

do not know, it becomes necessary to present what I call my visiting card. Therefore, if today I have undertaken to tell you about myself, it is with a view to present you with my visiting card and not for any other purpose which you may be having in your mind.

In the whole of our spiritual history, we find that only Lord Krishna had proclaimed his own divinity clearly in this manner. Even in the *Avatar* of Krishna, there was some apparent setback and there were some difficulties at certain times. But this is nothing unusual. It is only a put-up appearance and it is part and parcel of the divine aspect. Such setbacks are made to appear in order that people know that an attempt has been made, but became futile.

During the time of the Krishna Avatar, many kings enquired him as to why while he was present, the dreadful war of Mahabharatha should take place and why he should not try and prevent the war through peace negotiations. To this Krishna replied that he did make an effort, but it had not succeeded. This should not be interpreted as a failure for Krishna. Actually this is according to a plan which Krishna himself conceived. He wanted the world to see and know that he had made all possible efforts but the wicked Kauravas would not

heed his advice. This way the people would also be convinced that efforts had been made but the Kauravas were wicked and so did not listen to Krishna. Thus, he conducted negotiations and showed to the people that the Kauravas were wicked and were not interested in having peace.

Depending on the nature of the country, upon the people and the environment it becomes necessary for God to enact such situations and pretend to do certain things. In this *Avatar* of Sai, there is no room for such deceptions and there is no place for such setbacks at all. What I have taken as a *sankalpa* will surely be fructified; but, I need not take on a *sankalpa* if I do not wish to. My own thoughts, *sankalpas* and ideas depend on how the devotees conduct themselves. My grace is available in full measure for the benefit of all the devotees. Since I move about like an ordinary individual talking and playing with you, many people do not understand my true nature. In this context, even people with great strength of mind cannot recognise the true nature of this Sai and the difference between the outward appearance and the real internal aspect. My objective is to establish unity in mankind and to reveal to them the aspect of divinity which is Brahman, the only goal which one

should look for. It is also my duty to make you realise the kind of relationship that should exist between man and man and that divinity is present and latent in all human beings. Persons are not going to become great merely by reciting *Vedas* and making speeches in a very flamboyant manner. Simply because I do not do such things, I am not going to become small. I have the capacity to solve the most intricate of problems but simply because I pretend not to have this capacity and talk as if I cannot solve the problem, it is very foolish for people to think that I am just a man of miracles and no more.

The miracles that I perform are the kind of feeling which an elephant has when a mosquito lands on its body. These miracles have an insignificant place in my totality. Sometimes I feel like laughing at the ignorance of people when they attach importance to my miracles. People talk of only such small things and forget the much bigger aspect in me. The most sacred quality in me is *prema*. This *prema* is immeasurable. However much a person may try, he cannot get a measure of the extent of my *prema*. It is immeasurable and unrealisable. Only such people who have recognised the existence of such *prema* in me can get some idea of who and what I am.

Students!

Realise and understand fully well that the only royal path to reach God is the path of *prema*. You will be able to taste this sweet honey of *prema* only at the lotus feet of the Lord. Such honey is available in the Lotus and it is not as if honey is applied to the feet of the Lord. When we refer to the word lotus, we must realise another significant meaning of the word. A lotus has its origin in the muddy waters and is born in the mud. Yet it does not assimilate in itself either the mud or the water. If there is no water, the lotus cannot survive even for a moment. The interesting thing is that even though it survives only in the presence of water, it does not allow water to get into it.

On the same analogy, human life is born in something comparable to mud, and grows in the material world which may be compared to water. Having been born out of mud and living in water and yet keep uncontaminated by the mud and water is the nature of the feet of the Lord. That is the reason why all the different limbs of the Lord are referred to as Lotus—such as the Lotus feet, the Lotus eyes and so on.

Thus, whatever *Paramatma* does is without attachment and He is not affected by it. He is always

clean and pure. His vision is always pure and His mind never tainted. A vision which is pure and a mind which is unwavering are the characteristics of the Lord. It is common experience that if one holds anything greasy in one's palm, the palm also becomes greasy and one has to wash it with a soap or shampoo. But remember that the tongue never attracts this greasiness even when it is used to eat the greasy material. Since the tongue does not attract greasiness, it is always considered to be pure. Such a tongue has to be used to utter only sacred words like Govinda, Madhava and so on. The tongue alone is entitled to utter these sacred words because all other organs let the grease stick to them.

It is customary for women in India to apply collyrium to their eyelids to beautify them. While applying this collyrium, no one allows it to stick to the eye ball. Just as the eyeball will not take the collyrium, our *Sastras* have told us that our vision should always be perfectly clear and should never entertain dark ideas. Another meaning for the word *Jnana* is vision. The *Sruthi* has taught us that the realisation of the aspect of non-duality is itself a vision. When we use the word vision, we imply that it is only the eyes that can see because no other organ in the body has the capacity to see. It is in

this context that we understand that our vision itself is the *Jnana Drishti*. In addition to this, our vision has also been teaching another lesson. If any individual comes and stands in front of us, we can also see our own image in his eyes and he can see his image in our eyes. In this process, we note that to enable him to see his image, the eye is being used as the reflecting mirror. In the same manner, if we want to have a vision of the Lord, we will have to use the eye of wisdom as the reflecting surface. When we want to see the worldly objects, we open our eyes and see very well. If we are not able to see, we use glasses to help.

If, however, we go to a temple to have the vision of the Lord, we close our eyes and offer a *namaskar*. What is the significance of this? You go to the temple, want to see God and then you close your eyes. You should examine the meaning of this. The physical eye is of no use in your attempts to get a vision of the Lord and you will have to use your wisdom eye or the *Jnana Nethra*. Closing your eyes implies that you understand that the physical eyes are not appropriate for seeing the Lord. It follows that all that you see with your physical eyes is untrue and only those who can use the eye of wisdom can get a true picture of Divinity.

In the court of Janaka, there used to be a practice by which he invited great scholars and conversed with them. The kind of conversations that were permitted in the court of Janaka were of three kinds. The first type is the argument or exchange of words. The second type is *Jalpa*, and the third is *Tarka* or logic. The first kind signifies the fact that the individual pays complete attention to what he wants to say and he can adopt any method to present his view point. The second method, *Jalpa* consists of using a *Sastra* or quoting from scripture and establishing one's view point with the help of such quotation. The third method, *Tarka* consists of using intense logic by quoting from the *Vedas* to confirm his ideas. This method is one of deep analysis and logically establishes what one wants to by quoting authority from the *Vedas*.

In this manner, arrangements were made to have three kinds of presentation in Janaka's court. Many reputed scholars used to enter the court. People who had several titles to indicate their expertise used to participate and were wearing *Rudraksha* symbolic of their scholarship. Among them was one scholar by name Ashtavakra, who was very young and ambitious. When he was trying to enter the court to participate in the

deliberations, the elderly scholars thought that it was not befitting of them to argue with this young Ashtavakra. Such an attitude indicates intellectual arrogance and pride of scholarship. They tried to prevent his participation in many ways. But Ashtavakra was very stubborn and after praying to King Janaka, he was allowed to enter the court.

As soon as Ashtavakra entered the court, all the *Pundits* who looked at him laughed loudly. In return, Ashtavakra also laughed more loudly. The *pundits* were rather surprised because they thought that there was a valid reason for their laughing, but they did not see any valid reason for Ashtavakra laughing. Ashtavakra was stopped by one of the *Pundits* and was asked to state the reason for his laughter. One of the *Pundits* said that anyone who sees the crooked body of Ashtavakra cannot refrain from laughing. Then Ashtavakra offered to tell the reason for his laughter if they wished to listen to it. He said that he had come to the court of Janaka to participate in the function when he heard that several scholars would be present, but he was forced to laugh when he found that King Janaka had mistaken such *charmakaras* to be real *pundits* and scholars. Ashtavakra used the word *charmakaras* which denotes the community of cobblers and at this all the *pundits* were

enraged. Ashravaka said that he addressed them as cobblers because only cobblers can understand the nature of leather used for making footwear and they behaved like cobblers when they attached much importance to the skin covering the external body.

Pundits will be true *pundits* only if they are able to see inside the heart with their inner vision. On the other hand if people only look at the external form and give undue importance to it, they will belong to the same class of cobblers described by Ashtavakra. To always talk of the *vibhuthi* which I give or to talk of the things that I materialise and of the miracles that I perform is not correct. Even erudite people are not able to recognise my Divinity. Is this the result of their education? What value can we attach to their education when they are not able to see the inner and more important aspects but attach significance only to the other details?

Students!

You must not go that way. You must take a path by which you can see deep into my heart and experience the various divine aspects of mine. You must try to realise my omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence. Do not be led astray by people who always

talk of having got a locket or a watch or a ring from Me. These things are of little significance. If you can earn my grace, it is as good as getting the entire world. Do not talk of my miracles but talk of the *prema* which you can get from me by your conduct. This is what is most important and you must make an attempt to get it. When there is an invaluable diamond in me, you must try and acquire that. What is the meaning in your wanting to acquire smaller things? You must not go away from this invaluable treasure. You must be as close to it as possible. It is necessary for you to take it and treasure it. You may ask what the necessity is for us to earn such a thing as divine grace and *prema*. In this context, it will be helpful to know the kind of love which comes from the divinity present in me.

I would have given a protective talisman to a devotee and that individual would have worn it either on his neck or somewhere on his body. You do not have to constantly think of Swami. He will be with you and looking after you, even if you do not have such a protective talisman on your bodies. My grace is always available to all people. The purpose of this talisman, however, is that if the individual wearing it is

in some danger or difficulty, then the talisman will immediately bring to me in a flash the news and go back with my grace to him. This is the function which the talisman that I give performs. It constitutes a kind of link between the wearer and me in times of danger. Such material gifts have been protecting thousands of people.

To give a specific example, I can cite the case of a person who is right here now. In the month of April this year, he came with me to Bombay and took part in several programmes. However, on the last day he had to leave Bombay at midnight to go to a foreign country. He finished his work there and as he was preparing to return to India, he became ill and was unconscious. When he came to the Airport to board the flight, he did not have his ticket and the relevant papers with him. If one has to come from such a far off country, it would not be possible for one to do so even if one tried to get into the place stealthily and without a ticket. He was not conscious and he did not know himself. He searched everywhere but could not find his ticket and was in great trouble. At that time, the ring which he was wearing had brought the message to me in a flash. In one moment, the Airport Officer came and put him on the plane even without a ticket and he does not even know how he came to India.

There is another example of this kind in the case of a devotee from Calcutta who used to stay in London and who came to this Summer School a few days ago. When I intended to give him a ring, he said that as he never wore a ring in his life, he might be excused. I insisted that he should wear the ring which I gave him. He replied that he would wear the ring as it would give him Swami's grace. He wore the ring and went to London. When giving him the ring, I told him that whatever dangers he might be in, such dangers would be passed on to Swami and he would be saved. If one looks at the terrific speed with which the cars move in London, one would feel much safer in an aeroplane. It so happened that the car in which this devotee was travelling was hit by another car and his car was badly smashed up and the parts of the car were thrown helter-skelter on the road and the whole thing was broken to pieces. So far as the occupant who was the devotee wearing the ring I gave him is concerned, he did not know what happened as he was sitting nicely on the ground in the centre of the road in apparently good shape. While he was so sitting, another car came to take him away and he looked at the ring which I gave him and found that my photo in the ring was completely smashed

to pieces. By the time he reached home, he received a telegram from me. If a telegram has to go from Brindavan to Whitefield, it takes six or seven minutes at least, but within the few minutes the devotee took to reach his home in London from the place of the accident, the telegram was already waiting for him. The telegram said, "Be happy; I am with you. Do not worry about accident." He looked at the telegram and was very much moved. He immediately returned to India.

Why I am telling this to you young people sitting here is to make you realise that my nature is such that it relates to the heart. These external things and material gifts provide the link from heart to heart and they function when they are required to function. Such functioning and heart-to-heart experiences are happening not by ones or twos but by the thousands. In fact, such incidents are as many as there are hairs on my head. The purpose for which I have come is not to fulfil small desires or attend to the small incidents like what you have now heard about. There are great truths which I have to establish. There is a considerable change in human outlook which I have to bring about. No one can stop Me or deter Me from fulfilling the tasks for which I have come, namely the establishment of the one Eternal

Truth. You have a part to play in the fulfilment of the Sai mission which is ahead of us.

Establishment of *dharma* is the task to which we have to attend to immediately and I hope that you will all play your part, however small it may be, in fulfilling the Sai work. Since everything depends on truth, such truth is not something which has to yield to anyone. Untruth has to subordinate itself to almost everyone with whom it comes into contact. Truth will never be subservient to anyone. This form is the form of Sathya Sai who is the embodiment of truth. In the name Sai Baba the word *Sa* stands for divine and *Ayi* stands for mother and so Sai stands for Divine Mother. Baba means father. This name Sai Baba thus means divine mother and father. The words *Sambasiva* and Sai Baba mean the same thing. *Sa Amba Siva* means Divine father and mother and so does the word Sai Baba. Because there is the aspect of mother and father and because both are present, this form is rightly to be described as Shiva Sakthi Atma Swarupa. Like mother, I will be tender and soft and give you happiness and like father, I punish you, criticise you when needed and through these methods I take you to a higher level. Even your own mother and father, in the worldly sense, will sometimes become selfish and may

punish you in a manner which smacks of selfishness, but this divine mother and father in me have no selfishness of any kind in them. They are selfless and such punishment as I give is intended only to take you to a higher plane.

If a mother has two sons and if one of them is sick, she will give the sick son only bitter medicine while she may give the other son anything that he may ask for. The mother gives the sick son only bitter medicine. If she gives bitter medicine to one son and sweet to the other, it is not because the mother likes one more than the other. The mother realises that it is for the good of the sick child to take bitter medicine and so she gives him a bitter medicine; but it is not because she likes him less. If an individual who has good qualities comes close to me, I am sweet to him. On the other hand, I am harsh to one who has bad qualities; and I do not let him come close to me. It is not that I like one more than the other, but I give the medicine to cure the bad qualities where they are present.

Also, there are people who are believers and people who are non-believers. Believers are always prepared to enjoy the bliss of being near the divine. The

non-believers feel very much disturbed even at the mention of the name of God. Here we must examine the reason for the non-believers disliking the name of God. It is not as if they do not like God. This is a disease in them. In functions like marriages or in congregations like this, we serve sweets to all the guests. While we offer sweets to all, some persons say that they do not want them. It is not as if they do not like the sweets, but they reject them because they suffer from diabetes. Such people who do not want to go near God are like diabetic patients. They are suffering from a disease and if only that disease is cured, they will enjoy the sweet name of God as much as anyone else.

When one is suffering from malaria, anything that he eats will taste bitter to him. The bitter taste is not the quality of what he eats but arises from his sickness. After the malaria is cured, a sweet will taste sweet. In such a situation one should try to cure the disease where a disease exists rather than force the patient to take the sweet.

In my view, in this entire world, there is no one who is a non-believer. Truly, the individual has some selfish motive like his wanting to establish an organisation of his own. His attention is diverted to the fulfilment of such a task. Only one who cannot love

himself may be called an atheist or a non-believer, but in this world there is no one who does not love himself. There are many people who say, “I have no faith in God,” but they also say, “I have confidence in myself.” But he does not think who this self in him is. The self in him is the God. He keeps on saying, “My body, my eyes, my mind, my *Antahkarana*,” and so on; but who is this “I” who is claiming ownership? In so saying, you are not identifying yourself with the body. You are not the body. Therefore, mind, *buddhi*, *chitta* and all these things really belong to the “I” and are not the same “I.” Thus self-confidence is synonymous with faith in God. All persons who have faith in their own self must be called believers. They cannot be called non-believers. The divine Atma is shining in everybody as a self-effulgent flame in the form of *prajnana*. It is in this context that they have said *Prajnanam Brahma* or “The self is identical with Brahman.” Brahman is present in everyone in the form of *Prajnana* or divine wisdom.

There is no meaning in calling anyone as being devoid of God.

Pavitratma Swarupas, students!

Today I have talked at length and caused you some trouble. My discourses are coming to an end today.

However, the closeness between our hearts is such that it is not going to come to an end. Keep the essence of Sai in your heart. I wanted to convey to you some aspects of Sai which many people want to know although it is not possible for anyone to understand or fathom the depths of Sai’s divinity. This is the background of my wanting to talk about myself. I wished to convey to you some things which others cannot convey. From tomorrow, try to put all these into practice, enjoy the divine bliss and become one with divinity. Do not fill your head with mere information and knowledge. Fill your hearts with *prema*. I am hoping that you will thus fill your hearts with the essential content of my discourses and prepare yourself for meeting the future life.