God is:
Nurturing the Spiritual Heart

A Spiritual Programme
Based on the Teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba

STAGE 3. THE SPIRITUAL HEART FLOWER TRUTH

God is: Nurturing The Spiritual Heart Programme

Sathya Sai Organisation International Organisation, Australia & PNG Publications

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Note on Source Material

This study guide 'God is: Nurturing the Spiritual Heart Programme' is a study guide largely from on-line discourses and quotes, from such sources as Sathya Sai Speaks, Vahinis and Summer Showers in Brindavan. This content is easily read from original sources by visiting the international website http:/www.sathyasai.org and by selecting Discourses-Writings.

The compiler has attempted to remain faithful to the presentation of the quotes as they occur in the on-line editions from which they come, except for minor changes made to facilitate readability and coherence. This compilation is a small selection drawn from the vast number of discourses available on-line.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SATHYA SAI BABA **5**

PREFACE **6**

THE RESOURCE MATERIAL **8**

OVERVIEW OF THE SPIRITUAL HEART FLOWER: TRUTH **9**

MODULE 1. TRUTH IS THE SPIRITUAL HEART **11**

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES 12

TRUTH WILL REVEAL ITSELF TO A HEART SATURATED WITH LOVE 13

GOD VISUALISED IN THE CAVITY OF THE HEART 15

TRUTH IS GOD 16

WHERE IS TRUTH? 18

BLISS IS TRUTH 1 20

BLISS IS TRUTH 2 22

THE INDWELLING LORD IS THE RESIDENT OF THE SPIRITUAL HEART 24

TRUTH IS GOD 26

THE FLOWER OF SATHYAM – A HEARTY GIFT 27

MODULE 2: THE ATMIC HEART IS 'I' **30**

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES 31

UNDERSTANDING TRUTH THROUGH THE HEART 32

THE SPIRITUAL HEART IS ENCASED IN THE BODY 34

THE SPIRITUAL HEART IS ALL PERVASIVE 36

WE CAN EXPERIENCE DIVINITY IN THE HEART 38

THE SPIRITUAL HEART IS THE ATMA (1) 40

THE SPIRITUAL HEART IS THE ATMA (2) 42

THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE IS IMPRINTED ON THE HUMAN HEART (1) 44

THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE IS IMPRINTED ON THE HUMAN HEART (2) 45

ONLY SACRED QUALITIES SHOULD EMERGE FROM THE HEART 47

MODULE 3: TRUTH AND SURRENDERING THE HEART **49**

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES 50

THE HEART ONLY GIVES EXPRESSION FOR TRUTH 51

GOD'S HEART EMBRACES ALL IN LOVE 53

TRUTH LIVES IN THE HEARTS OF DEVOTEES 55

TRUTH AND A STORY OF SURRENDER 59

TRUTH AND THE ALTAR OF THE HEART 61

YOU COME FROM THE SPIRITUAL HEART 64

Australian devotees donated original photographs of the ‘red heart’ of Australia.

Rare rain in the Australian desert brings with it a riotous birth of new life. This evokes the Grace of God on dry, dusty, hearts turned that turn to God with love and hope.

Photos are were taken Kings Canyon, Kathryn Gorge, Eastern Macdonald Ranges, Alice Springs and the Olgas in the Northern Territory.

This page, wildlife prints at Kings Canyon.

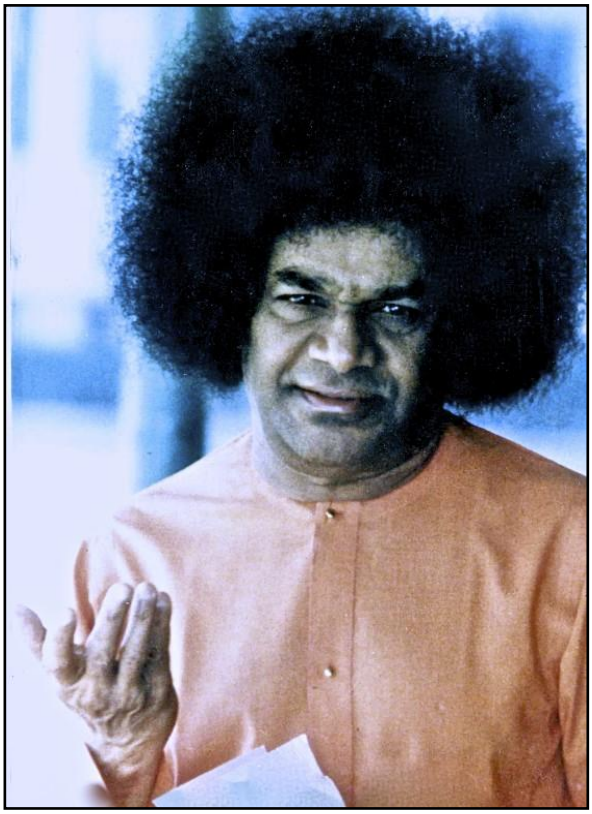
SATHYA SAI BABA

Sri Sathya Sai Baba is revered as a world spiritual teacher. He is also known as Sai Baba, Swami, Bhagavan, or simply as ***Baba*** to millions of people in the world. His followers come from all faiths and races and meet regularly for devotional singing, to study His teachings, and to engage in service activities in order to practice His message of Love and Peace to unite all mankind. He is transforming the world by re-establishing the eternal values of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Nonviolence in everyday living.

Sathya Sai Baba was born on November 23, 1926, in Puttaparthi, a remote village in the state of Andhra Pradesh in Southern India. At the age of fourteen, He announced that His name was Sathya Sai Baba and proclaimed His mission: ***to bring about the spiritual regeneration of humanity by demonstrating and teaching the highest principles of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Nonviolence.*** With that announcement, He left His childhood home and began His mission.

In 1950, 'Prasanthi Nilayam' (this means Abode of Peace) was built in Puttaparthi, his birthplace. This spiritual abode can accommodate and feed many thousands of devotees who come to see and hear Sathya Sai Baba. Under His care and guidance, Puttaparthi has evolved to have high quality schools, an accredited university, a spiritual museum, a well-equipped modern hospital and an airport.

Sathya Sai Baba left his mortal coil in April 2011 at the age of 85.[1]



[1] Source: An Introduction to the Sathya Sai Organisation of Australia and Papua New Guinea

PREFACE

On the spiritual path, Sathya Sai Baba teaches that we have two hearts: the physical and the spiritual hearts and, that each heart affects the health and wellbeing of the other. The physical heart beats within our body, while the spiritual heart beats within our soul.

We are aware of the importance of a good physical heart to the functioning of the body. We must eat and drink properly to maintain its health, but what of the spiritual heart? What food and drink must it have? It is known that stress adversely affects the physical heart; therefore it is necessary to find ways of replacing stress with inner peace to ensure our physical well-being. The spiritual heart is the repository of love, inner joy and peace. Therefore we need to be loving, joyful and peaceful within ourselves, no matter what is happening in our lives and no matter what kind of work we do - at home and/or in the world. When we have these qualities, we give the spiritual heart space to grow and to glow and our radiant heart affects and nourishes every part of our lives for the better - physical, mental and spiritual.

It is important to nurture and nourish the spiritual heart, to protect it from negative reaction, neglect and abuse. This requires inner strength and resolve to do right action. First, we need to believe in its existence, for it cannot be seen with the physical eyes. Then we need to develop the will power to tend to it, as much as one takes care of anything or anyone else in life. We need to treat our own spiritual heart with love, respect and reverence. Sai Baba says, the indwelling Lord lives within each of our hearts. It is therefore proper to ask our selves, "How am I treating God within?"

To have confidence in the Self, the indwelling Lord is the first step towards tending the spiritual heart, from which all else follows. Such an understanding will eventually give us freedom from suffering the effects of the inevitable ups and downs of life.

Sai Baba recommends the following integrated treatments for the spiritual heart, to make it healthy and strong:

1. We undertake spiritual practice such as meditation, devotional singing, chanting the Gayatri mantra, repeating the name of God etcetera, to purify the mind, to create a space through which Divinity within us can manifest.

2. We learn through study circles and workshops to develop self-awareness and to reflect upon the power and wisdom of the Omnipresent Divinity.

3. By serving others we learn that we are really serving our own spiritual heart, by giving it the fertilizer of 'Love in action'.

By coming together with a deep sense of unity and willingness to work and grow spiritually, our true and divine hearts will beat as one. Sai Baba's emblem, the *Sarva Dharma* Symbol signifies the five human values of Love, Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Nonviolence. As we work on the arteries of our spiritual heart, tending our inner spiritual health with the care and diligence of skilled surgeons, we will draw on study of the heart within each of these values to guide us like beacons on our journey. Through our diligent efforts, we will learn to *feel* our spiritual heart and how to act upon its promptings.

This book was developed as the Australian National Ladies Wing Programme 2011/2012. It is a universal programme that combines readings of Sathya Sai Baba with spiritual and devotional suggested activities, and thus all may enjoy it. The material herein is drawn from Sathya Sai Baba's discourses in Sathya Sai Speaks and other sources as noted. Many of the discourses in the modules overlap because the heart is bigger than just one category! Simply enjoy the journey of this programme from many different perspectives.

Suggested Activities and questions are intended as a guide only.

Christan Mackenzie, Compiler & Australian National Programme Coordinator, 2011/2012

THE RESOURCE MATERIAL

The resource material is drawn from a small selection of discourses by Sathya Sai Baba from the international website. See http://www.sathyasai.org. The stages of the five human values form the arteries of this programme: Love, Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Nonviolence. Suggestions for activities are made at the beginning of each module within each stage.

Stage 1. The Spiritual Heart Flower

Module 1. Petals of the Spiritual Heart; Module 2. The Heart Garden of God.

Stage 2. The Spiritual Heart Love

Module 1. God is Love in the Heart; Module 2. Continuous, Intense Love; Module 3. The Sweetness of Love; Module 4. Purifying and Offering the Spiritual Heart; Module 5. Connecting to God's Heart.

Stage 3: The Spiritual Heart Truth

Module 1. Truth is the Spiritual Heart; Module 2. The Atmic Heart is 'I'; Module 3. Truth and Surrendering the Heart.

Stage 4: The Spiritual Heart Righteousness

Module 1. The Heart Path of Dharma; Module 2. Purify the Heart Through Dharma; Module 3. Dharma as Duty.

Stage 5: God is: The Spiritual Heart Peace

Module 1. Peace in the World; Module 2. Inner Peace; Module 3. Peace in Silence and Stillness

Stage 6: The Spiritual Heart Nonviolence

Module 1. Practising Nonviolence; Module 2. Anger and the Importance of Self Control; Module 3. Transcending the Three Gunas; Module 4. Practising Forgiveness; Module 5. Repentance and Atonement.

OVERVIEW OF THE SPIRITUAL HEART FLOWER: TRUTH

What? Where? How?	Sai Answers
What is Truth, and why should I seek it?	Search for Truth is search for God, because Truth is God.
Why it is said, 'Truth is One', when there are so many obvious differences in creation?	Quoting Krishna talking with Arjuna: "I am the same in all but all are not the same in Me."
How does the Lord suffer the world when there is so much apparent difference everywhere?	The Lord sees all as equal. His Heart embraces all in Love.
To what may a pure heart be compared?	A fresh flower, devoid of impurities.
What is most important to experience Divinity?	There is an ocean of difference between *archana* (worship) and *arpitham* (total surrender). It is not *archana*, but it is *arpitham* that is most essential.
How can I experience Divinity, while I am here on earth?	The first thing we must do is to promote our faith in *Atma*, faith in one's own self, and then we must try and reach the fruit of liberation.
How does the Spiritual Heart relate to the Divine Spirit - the Atma?	Because the same basic entity exists in all beings, it is called *Atma*. It is also called *Brahman*. Another name for it is *Hridaya* (the Spiritual Heart). It is also called *Aham* ("I"). All these different names refer only to the *Atma*.
How do I experience this Heart, this Atma?	To develop firm love for anything, you have to get the conviction that "it is mine." Unless you acquire such a conviction regarding the *Atma*, you cannot become a *Sthithaprajna* (a man of steadfast wisdom).

What? Where? How?	Sai Answers
How did the universe come about?	The universe has originated from where the 'I' principle has originated, that is, the *Hridaya* (Spiritual Heart). The *Sruthis* declare that *Hridaya* is the origin of the 'I' principle. This 'I' is all-pervasive.
When will Truth reveal itself?	When the heart is saturated with Love.
Where do I come from?	You come from *Hridaya* (Spiritual Heart). It is this *Hridaya* that is your dwelling place.
How can I see this Spiritual Heart?	Beyond the senses is the *Hridaya* (the Spiritual Heart). The eternal *Hridaya* is encased within the perishable body. It is like keeping valuable jewels in a relatively cheap iron safe. Divinity is the valuable treasure kept in the iron safe of the body.
How do I understand the Supreme Being?	Through the heart.
How do I realise the Atma?	It is only when he adheres to Truth and Righteousness that he can realise the Atma. Worship of the Divine must stem from the heart. When devotion flows from the heart, the voice of the Divine can be experienced in silence - *Sabda Brahman* (sound of the Supreme Spirit).
How does the Spiritual Heart relate to the physical heart?	When we use the term *Hridaya*, we generally consider it as referring to the physical heart in the body. This is not correct. *Hridaya* has no physical limitations. *Hridaya* in the true sense of the word refers to that which is all pervading. Forgetting this omnipresent Spiritual Heart, we tend to regard the physical heart in the body as the true heart.
How do the mind and the heart work together?	When the mind is turned Godward the heart develops detachment. When the mind is turned towards the world, the heart develops attachment.

MODULE 1. TRUTH IS THE SPIRITUAL HEART

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES

Study Circle

What is Truth?
Is there anything that isn't Truth?
How does one experience Truth as Bliss?
How does one develop inner vision and see Atma in all forms?
How does the heart feel when it expresses Truth?
How is Truth to be spoken?

Meditation: Visualise the blissful Atma in all.

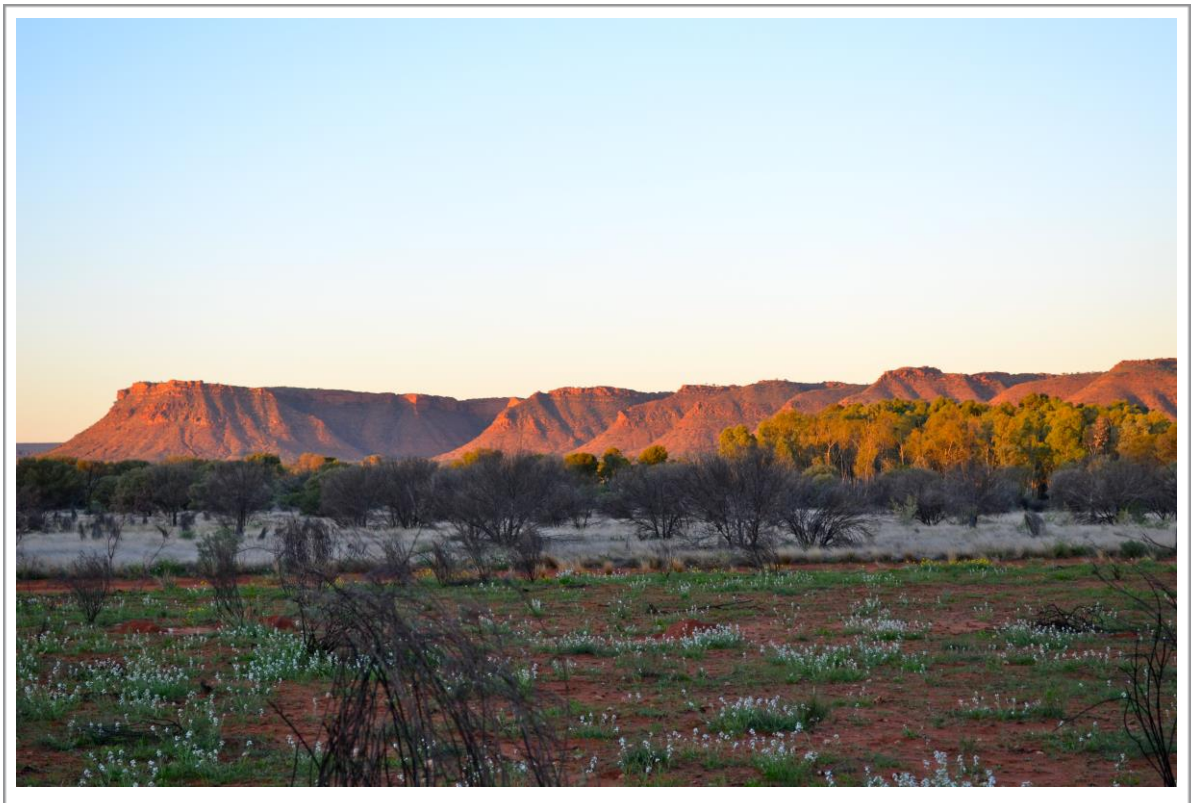
Combine the study circle/workshop with a musical programme.

Combine study of this module with doing selfless-service.

Personal Introspection

How do I live Truth on a daily basis?
How is Truth sometimes obscured in the mirror of the heart?
How do I polish that mirror so Truth is always clearly revealed?

TRUTH WILL REVEAL ITSELF TO A HEART SATURATED WITH LOVE



This is a splendid chance to fulfil your human existence.

The *ananda* (Bliss) that you hope to derive from kith and kin, from wealth and worldly fame, is but a pale shadow of the *ananda* that resides in the spring of your heart, where God dwells.

Try to contact that spring.
Go to the very source.
Be centred in the *Atma* or God within.
Few seek real *ananda.*
The many are led away by the *pseudo-ananda* of the senses, the intellect and the mind.
Real *ananda* springs only from Truth.
And, *Sathya* is the *Dharma* or duty of each to himself.
Seek Truth, serve Truth, be Truth.
Truth will reveal itself when the heart is saturated in Love.
Man's nature is fundamentally Truth.
His breath is fundamentally Love.
His blood is fundamentally Tolerance.

Falsehood, hatred and faction are characteristics of beastly or demonic natures.
They are acquired from society or ignorance or greed.
Today, man is shaped by the head, rather than the heart.
It is cleverness that is admired, that pays.
But, peace and joy emanate from the heart not the head.

The heart teaches compassion, awe, reverence, humility, equanimity, sympathy - qualities that bind men in love and turn them towards righteousness and the source and sustenance of the Universe, namely, God.

The pursuit of property and possessions cannot uplift the heart into the heights of Bliss.
You are contemporaries of the *Avatar* come to guard and guide.
You have the capacity to catch the message and canalise it into action and activity.
Make the utmost of this chance!

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 07/1970, Prasanthi Nilayam

GOD VISUALISED IN THE CAVITY OF THE HEART

When man is able to master the senses and direct them along more beneficent channels -
The eye sees God's footprints in stars and rose petals;
The ear hears God's voice in the throats of birds and peals of thunder.
The tongue tastes God's sweetness in all that appeals to it.
The nose discovers fragrance in everything that recalls the glory of God.
The sense of touch is content to clasp the hand of the forlorn and the distressed -
As the beloved children of God.
Then, man can visualise the God installed in the cavity of the heart;
That is the lesson the five-hooded Sesha (divine serpent) imparts!

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 16/02/1992, Prasanthi Nilayam

TRUTH IS GOD

Where is Truth?

It is all-pervasive.

It encompasses the entire creation.

Trikalabadhyam Sathyam (That which remains unchanged in the modes of perceived time - past, present, and future is Truth). Truth is the power that one gets by strictly adhering to *yama* (control of inner senses) and *niyama* (selflessness) and performing (*tapas*) penance. Such penance leads ultimately to the vision of God.

Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma (Brahman is the embodiment of Truth, wisdom and eternity).

Truth is wisdom.

Advaita Darshanam Jnanam (perception of non-duality is wisdom).

There is only one principle in this world, and that is Truth.

Wisdom is infinite.

It is not mere textual knowledge.

It has neither a beginning nor an end.

Only by following the path of Truth can one experience wisdom.
Truth is the essence of the Vedas.
In fact, Truth is the origin of the Vedas.

In this manner, if you enquire deeply, you will realise that Truth has a number of consistent interpretations.

Sages and saints of yore considered Truth as their very life-breath.
All types of wealth and comforts are present in Truth.
Hence, Truth is not an expression of worldly facts.

In ancient times, saints and sages renounced everything and did severe penance to know the nature of Truth. Truth is the very expression of Brahman.

A deep enquiry reveals that *Sath* is the fundamental basis of life.
Without *Sath, Chit* (awareness) cannot exist.
Sath is the positive power.
Chit takes *Sath* as the basis for its functioning and hence it is not the fundamental principle.
It is the complimentary negative in nature.
When *Sath*, the positive, combines with *Chit*, what results is *ananda* (bliss).
Sath can also be compared to sugar and *Chit* to water.
When you add sugar to water, you get syrup.
Likewise, *Sath* and *Chit* together give Bliss.

Where is God?
In what form does He exist?
Just as sugar is present in every drop of syrup,
God pervades the entire creation.
Sugar and syrup are inseparable.
The same can be said of milk and butter.
Similarly, God and the universe are inseparable.
Our ancient sages realised this truth by performing intense penance for several years.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 14/10/2002, Prasanthi Nilayam

WHERE IS TRUTH?

Once a congregation of sages was held to discuss the principle of Divinity. Some of them said that they could not have the vision of God in spite of performing intense penance and undertaking severe austerities. Then one of the sages, by name Sathya Swarupa, came forward and declared, *Vedahametham Purusham Mahantham Adityavarnam Thamasa Parasthath* (I know the Supreme Being who shines with the effulgence of the sun and who is beyond primordial darkness). He said Divinity couldn't be explained in words.

The sages questioned him, "Where did you see the Supreme Being? Did you see Him during the day or at night? Is it in the waking state or in *thuriya* (super consciousness) state or in meditation?"

They kept on questioning him in this manner.

Then Sathya Swarupa replied,
"Divinity transcends time and space.
It is not limited to any form.
It is ageless, it is beyond the duality of day and night."

Further, he said that he had perceived Truth through a process of revelation.

In the wakeful state, we see with our physical eyes.
Such physical eyes are not confined to human beings only.
Most living things like animals and birds and even worms and insects possess this faculty.
Physical eyes can see only physical objects.
Seeing physical objects is not a big feat.
The eyes of wisdom alone can reveal the subtle internal form.
Therefore, Divinity can be seen irrespective of place, time or condition.
Why wait?
Right now turn your attention inwards and concentrate on that Effulgent Being.

Saying thus, Sathya Swarupa placed his thumb on their foreheads, and at once they had the vision of the Supreme Being. They also started chanting *Vedahametham Purusham Mahantham*! They asserted to the assembly of saints, scholars, and common people that they also had the vision of that Effulgent Being, a being of the effulgence of the sun.

Such vision is not confined to special locations; it is available everywhere for the deserving person. That is why it is said, *Anoraneeyan mahato maheeyan* (*Brahman* is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest), and is omnipresent.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 14/10/2002, Prasanthi Nilayam

BLISS IS TRUTH 1

Bliss is Truth.

What is the nature of bliss?

The brilliant whiteness of this effulgence is the awareness of bliss.

The sages were taught in this manner by direct perception.

After all this happened, the sages enquired from the Person as to who he was.

Thamasa Parasthath (the one beyond darkness), he replied.

In this manner, Divinity pervades this physical universe and is aware of all that is, but it itself is not available for perception by anybody. This is the truth that we have to realise today.

Today, the world abounds with people with reputation of knowledge and academic excellence.

If you go into the real content of their knowledge, you will find nothing worthwhile.

They are not aware of their own reality.

They cannot see even their physical forms themselves except with the help of a mirror,

And even the reflection that is seen on the mirror is not true.

Everything that you see is only a reflection.

That is why the Person said, "*Adityavarnam thamasa parasthath.*"

That is, the brightness of the sun along with an enveloping darkness.

It is not possible to conceive of light without darkness.

This unity is to be understood.

Good and evil are complementary.

One cannot appreciate goodness without the existence of evil,

And evil cannot be judged but against a background of goodness.

Hence, it is not possible for you to comprehend my true form.

The sages were determined to comprehend this reality.

Then the Person said, "All that you see is my form."

Sahasra Seersha Purusha Sahasraksha Sahasra Pad (God has a thousand heads, eyes, and feet).

How can one visualise with ordinary eyes such a form that has myriad heads, hands, eyes, and feet?

Chaitanya (consciousness) exists in each of these forms, but you are not able to see it.

The *chaitanya* in all these forms is one and that is indivisible.

It is rather difficult to understand such spiritual matters.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 14/10/2002, Prasanthi Nilayam

BLISS IS TRUTH 2

To understand the principle of truth that is hidden in this objective world and visualise the blissful form of divinity is true spirituality. But few are making any effort in this direction.

People sit for meditation, close their eyes and start imagining a particular form.
But these forms are only reflections and not reality.
One should go beyond reflection, reaction, and resound and visualise the reality.
For example, now I am speaking to you.
Where does the sound emanate from?
You say it is from the mouth.
But in fact, the sound emanates from the navel.
That is reality.
Reflection, reaction, and resound are concealing the reality.
In order to visualise the reality, you should give up *dehabhimana* (body attachment),
And develop *Atmabhiman*a (yearning for the Self).

Today, people have no regard for Truth.
Many do not really mean what they speak.

They have something in their mind but say just the opposite.

They manipulate their words according to the person and situation.

Truth is that which does not change with time.

Truth is one, not two.

The Upanishads extolled the principle of Truth in many ways.

Truth cannot be described in words.

Bliss is its form.

When you close your eyes and start contemplating on Truth, you will experience inexpressible bliss. You will start smiling without your knowledge. When you are dual minded, you cannot experience such bliss.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 14/10/2002, Prasanthi Nilayam

THE INDWELLING LORD IS THE RESIDENT OF THE SPIRITUAL HEART

This is the inner meaning of the story of Prahlada.

"Where is God?" asked Hiranyakasipu.
Prahlada replied that God is omnipresent. "You can find Him wherever you seek Him."
Hiranyakasipu asked: "Is He in this pillar?"
"There is no place where He is not," said Prahlada.

Hiranyakasipu smote the pillar with his mace. Out came the Lord in the form of the Narasimha Avatar - half man, half lion. It is a combination of the human and the animal. All human beings today are cast in the same mould: a combination of animal and human nature.

Hiranyakasipu was a hater of Hari and hence the form of Lord Narasimha appeared dreadful to him. But Prahlada was a great devotee. Hence the Lord appeared to him as full of love. Although the form was the same, it inspired fear in one and love in another.

Wherefrom did Narasimha emerge?
From a pillar!

What does this pillar signify?

Our body itself is like a pillar.

When the body consciousness is shattered, the Divine emerges from it.

When the coconut shell is broken, the pure copra within it is seen.

As long as the coconut is not broken, you cannot get at the copra.

You must look at the *deha* (body) as the residence of the *Dehi* (Indwelling Spirit).

God does not reside at any distant place.

He is within your body He is the *Hridayavasi* (resident of your heart).

Krishna responded to Draupadi's call the moment she appealed to Him as the Indweller in her heart.

To reach the Lord in the shortest possible time, it is necessary to address an appeal to the right place.

Once Narada asked Vishnu which is the place to which he should address his appeal to get at the Lord soonest. The Lord said: "Wherever my devotees sing my praise, I am there."

The Lord dwells in our hearts.

They must be kept pure and holy.

Then the heart becomes heaven itself, filled with joy.

Heaven and hell are not elsewhere.

When you are happy, that is heaven.

When you are miserable, that is hell.

If you wish to experience joy, fill your mind with thoughts of God.

Where there is God, there is bliss.

This Divine bliss is described in many ways, but it is one and the same thing.

Likewise, God is called by different names according to the context and the role played by the Divine.

It is the one Supreme Who is worshipped in different names.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 17/03/1991, Prasanthi Nilayam

TRUTH IS GOD

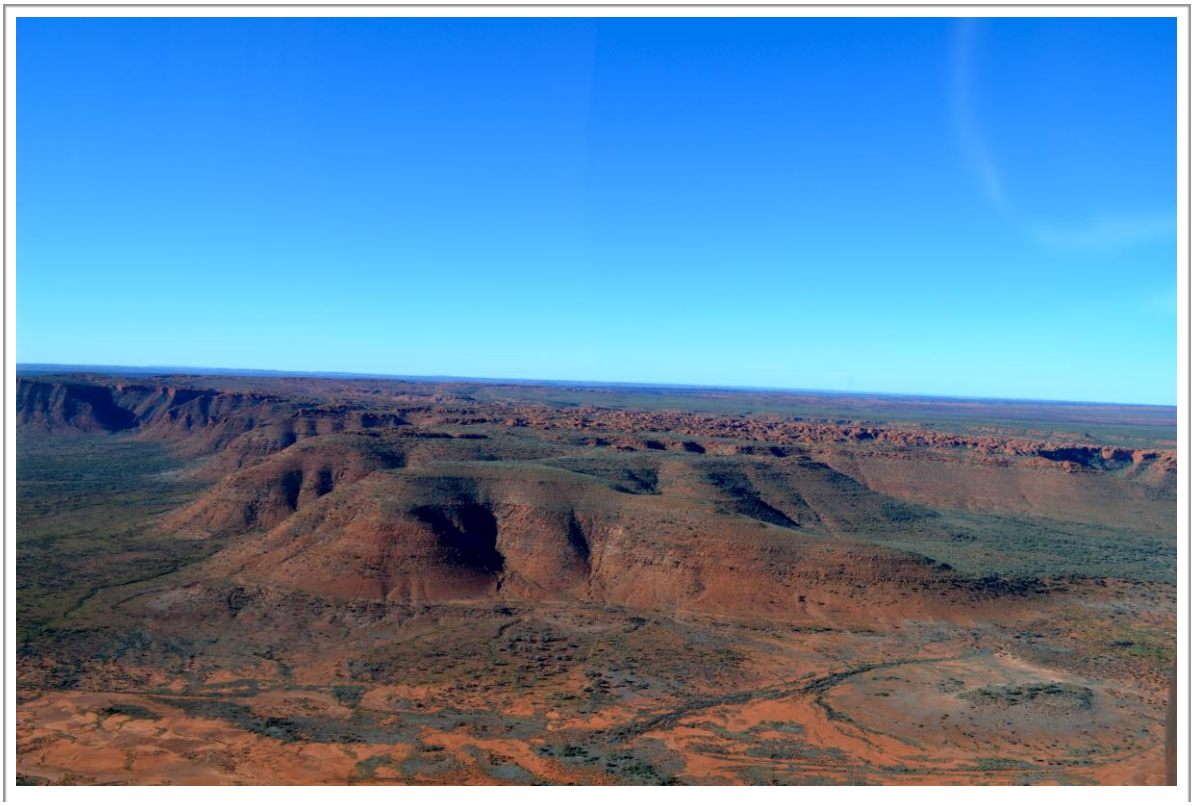
Search for Truth is search for God, because Truth is God.
So, worship Truth, follow Truth, and practice Truth.
People may deny God, but none can deny Truth.

You cannot fragment Truth by saying, this is Pakistani Truth, this is American Truth, this is Indian Truth, and so on. Truth is uniform for people of all nations and all religions in all periods of time.

Truth is one, so God is one.
But people worship God in different forms.
This is *bhranthi* (delusion).
As long as there is *bhranthi* in you, you cannot attain Brahma.
This *bhranthi* is the cause for all your sufferings.
So, first and foremost, give up *bhranthi*.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 28/09/1998, Prasanthi Nilayam

THE FLOWER OF SATHYAM – A HEARTY GIFT



Sathyam (Truth) has two facets:

1. Untouched by the flux of time, eternal, unblemished, as stable and pure as Brahman Itself (vide the Upanishad Declaration: "*Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma*")

2. *Sathyam* in practice, as elaborated in the Upanishads - *Sathyam vada*, (Speak Truth), that is to say, voicing the seen exactly as seen, the thought exactly as it formed, the deed exactly as done.

Who was it that laid down the guidelines for this practice of Truth? They were prescribed by the great grandfather of a long series of grandfathers, the Sage Manu, the ancestral lawgiver after whom 'man' is referred to as Manuja - (the child of Manu).

Truth is man's long-treasured heritage.
Truth sustains the world and protects mankind.
It is at the basis of justice and morality, peace and purity, faith and freedom.
It has to be revered and activated by man at all times and under all conditions.

The Gita advises us to adopt "inoffensive speech, which is truthful, pleasant and beneficial". In order to solve many problems that arise when one practises the *sadhana* (spiritual practice) of Truth, Manu directed man not to speak unpleasant truth or pleasant falsehood.

When it becomes necessary to reveal an unpleasant truth,
One has to soften and sweeten its impact by consciously charging it
With love, sympathy, and understanding.
"Help ever; hurt never" - that is the maxim.
Philosophy means the love for Truth, which leads to the understanding and awareness of Truth.

Today, it has become a superficial acquaintance, not a constant Vision of Truth, not a discipline to which one is devoted, nor a path along which progress is achieved. The various faculties of Science have also to be collated and coordinated, so that the scientific discipline might reveal the Truth. The Truth, when known, has also to be used beneficially. Newton lamented that his famous Laws were liable to be used for disastrous ends.

Instances abound in the history of Bharath of sages and rulers who sacrificed their lives in order to fulfil their plighted word.

Emperor Harischandra stuck to Truth in spite of travail and temptation. He refused to deny the word he had spoken, though he had to sell himself and his queen and son as bond slaves and reduce himself to the position of a watchman in a burial ground.

Lakshmana too stuck to his promise to accompany Rama during the years of his exile though he had to leave his mother and wife and palace behind.

Emperor Bali carried out his promise to Vamana though the Guru whom he revered predicted that he would be destroyed, if he stuck to Truth and gifted three foot-lengths of land to Vamana. So he won God's Grace, as Harischandra won it and both gathered immortal renown.

Attention to selfish interests will obstruct the path of Truth.
Note how those great persons honoured their promises and compare it with the fate of promises today.
Now, they appear, as if they are inscribed on water.
Students! You must free yourselves from this hypocrisy.
Your promises are sacred bonds.

The Vow of Truth should never be broken.
This and the adherence to selfless love have to be your ideals.

See how Nature adheres to Truth by God's command - the regularity of the seasons, the rule of law, the orderly orbital gyration. Man too has to learn this Truth and live accordingly, with the heart attuned to Truth and the Mind saturated with love.

Speech must be the flow of Truth.
Truth must be revered as one's very breath.
The Triple purity - speech free from the pollution of falsehood,
Mind free from the taint of passionate desire or hatred,
The body free from the poison of violence has to be attained by all.

Conflicts and factions, violence and upheavals are caused by the neglect of human values in daily life. Man becomes fit and functionally valid only when, along with scholarship and expert skills, he has imbibed these values. The person who is wedded to Truth and Love would need nothing more for peace and happiness. When Creation is witnessed through these values, it becomes a holy scripture, an inspiring lesson and guide.

Therefore I exhort you: "Let Truth and Love be the goals for all your efforts and studies."

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 05/12/1985, Prasanthi Nilayam

MODULE 2: THE ATMIC HEART IS ‘I’

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES

Study Circle

Where is the Spiritual Heart located?
How does one nurture faith in the Atma?
Who am 'I'?
Who is the 'I' in others?
What is the 'I' in relation to the Spiritual Heart?"
How does one develop consciousness of the Truth of Atma?
How does one stay in Truth at all times?

Meditation: Visualise the blissful Atma in all.

Combine the study circle/workshop with a musical programme.

Combine study of this module with doing selfless-service.

Personal Introspection

Am I making constant effort in self-inquiry?

Do I keep Atma foremost in my mind and heart, at all times?

What steps can I take do improve my practice of self-inquiry?

UNDERSTANDING TRUTH THROUGH THE HEART

Manifesting one's inner divinity does not mean producing something new.
Divinity is inherent in man. It is called *Swabhava* (one's true nature) - the *Atmic* nature.
It is the *Atma* that confers all powers on man.

Those who bemoan their weakness are not aware of their inherent potential, and are not putting it to the right usage. The first feeling that one has to get rid of is the identification of his physical form with his real self.

Those who ask, "Where is God?" do not realise that all they see in the cosmos is a manifestation of the Divine. That is why the scripture declares, *"Pashyannapi cha na pashyathi mudho"* (Even while seeing, the foolish one does not see).

Man is all the time seeing the universe around him and yet declares he has not seen God.
What is the form of the Cosmos?
Is it not Divine?
You are seeing the Divine in the form of the physical universe.
In the *Bhagavad Gita* this cosmic form of the Lord is described as *Viswa Virata Rupa*.

What is *Viswa*?[2]

It is the whole cosmos.

The *Viswa Virata Rupa*[3] is the collective form of everything in the universe.

No attempt is made to understand the inner meaning of such expressions as *Viswa Virata Rupa.*

The intellect is used to misinterpret words and create confusion.

What is needed is understanding through the heart.

Even a highly evolved person like Arjuna confessed to Krishna that the mind is ever wavering and fickle. Are the intellectuals of today, with all their degrees, greater than Arjuna? Not at all! Above all degrees and intellectual attainments, one needs the grace of God. Krishna recognised Arjuna as His devotee. That is the supreme accomplishment.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 01/01/1992, Prasanthi Nilayam

[2] Viswa: Totality, whole creation; also a name of the individual soul in the waking state.

[3] Virata-rupa: Universal Form, Supreme Being

THE SPIRITUAL HEART IS ENCASED IN THE BODY

Matter and Spirit may be regarded as two semicircles.

Scientists are only investigating matter and are ignoring the Spirit.

The two parts have been described in Vedantic parlance *as Prakruthi* and *Paramatma.*

The scientist is the one who enquires into the nature of *srishti* (creation).

The saint is one who seeks to know the Creator.

The scientist is preoccupied only with studying creation.

What about the Creator?

Once you understand the Creator, you can understand the whole of creation.

That was why Saint Thyagaraja said:

"Rama, if I have your *anugraha* (grace) all the *grahas* (planets) will be within my grasp."

Therefore, if you comprehend the Creator, you can easily know all about creation.

Creation (the phenomenal universe) is within the comprehension of the senses.

All that we hear, see and experience are within the purview of our senses.

We refer to all these things as ‘this,’ ‘this’ and ‘this’ *(Idam).*

But what is beyond the senses is referred to as "that."

"Poornam adah Poornam idam" (That is Full; This is Full).

The term ‘That’ refers to something distant.

From what is ‘That’ distant? From what is ‘this’ near?

We use the term ‘this’ to refer to things within the purview of the senses;

‘That’ refers to what is beyond the senses.

So, what is beyond the senses has been called *adhyatmic* (spiritual).

What is below the senses has been called *Bhutic* (elemental, constituted by the five elements).

We are simultaneously below the senses and above the senses.

Below the senses is the body.

Beyond the senses is the *Hridaya* (the Spiritual Heart).

The eternal *Hridaya* is encased within the perishable body.

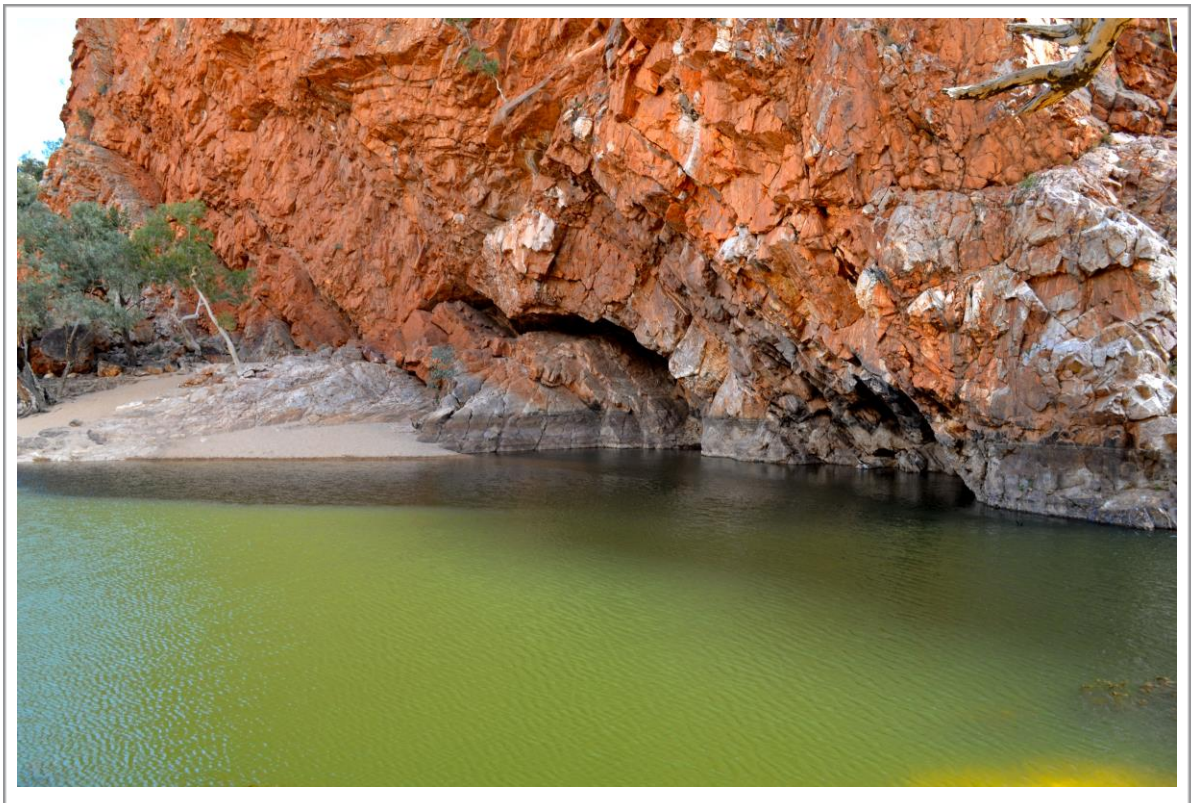
It is like keeping valuable jewels in a relatively cheap iron safe.

Divinity is the valuable treasure kept in the iron safe of the body.

This indicates our true form.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 25/12/1988, Prasanthi Nilayam

THE SPIRITUAL HEART IS ALL PERVASIVE



Eliminate selfishness, which is the cause of dualism and its brood of opposites, joy and sorrow, likes and dislikes, etc. The egoist cannot understand his own true nature, much less that of others. Hence, the first step is understanding one's own self.

Everyone refers to "I" but where is it located? And where from does it arise?
The ancient scriptures described the seat of *Ahamkaram* (ego) as *Hridayam* (the heart).
This may suggest that the "I" is somewhere in the body. But this is not correct.
Hridayam is all pervasive.
It is otherwise known as *Atma*.
Some consider that the *Atma* dwells in the heart.
This is also wrong.
Hridayam and Atma are one, and to view them as different entities is wrong.
If this is the case, it may be asked, why are people plunged into the darkness of ignorance?
It is because their vision does not extend beyond the *Atma.*
It does not go beyond the mind.
One who is unable to go beyond the mind cannot escape from the shroud of ignorance.
The way out of this condition is to realize that like the moon and the sun,
The mind derives its light from the *Atma,*

And when the vision is turned towards the *Atma* the mind fades away or ceases to shine.

It is necessary to realise that the *Atma* is all pervasive and cultivate a feeling of love for all.

The *Viswam* (Cosmos) is a projection of the *Vishnuswarupam* (the Divine).

There is no need to search in any particular place for the Divine who is omnipresent.

Formal religious observances or spiritual scholarship will not lead to God realisation.

It is not intellectual eminence that is required for the spiritual *sadhana.*

It is better to have a single person with a good and kind heart than a hundred vainglorious intellectuals.

We should train ourselves to become good men, who are fit to undertake worthy tasks.

If your minds are filled with hatred, envy and likes and dislikes, you are not qualified to embark on service activities. "Offer services and receive love." This is the recipe for experiencing Divinity.

But today service is not offered wholeheartedly. Few render service with love and hence few receive God's grace. Even their love is self-centred and is not all embracing. Our love should not be confined to our kith and kin. It must extend beyond the family to society as a whole, then to the nation at large, and finally embrace the whole world.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 19/11/1987, Prasanthi Nilayam

WE CAN EXPERIENCE DIVINITY IN THE HEART

There is no doubt whatsoever that even by remaining a part-and-parcel of this creation we can experience the divinity in our hearts.

If we get a tree, the fruits from the tree are important.
While the fruits on a tree are important,
In order to get such fruits we have to protect the tree, the leaves and the branches.
In a similar manner, the *Atma* is most important for us,
But we have to protect the body and the sensory organs, which help us to recognise the *Atma*.
In this tree of creation, what is it that we are looking for?
We are looking for the fruits of liberation or *moksha.*

In this tree, as well, there are so many branches and leaves, in the form of our relations and attachments. The leaves, which are the ideas, are present in a large number on the tree. Our thoughts and our desires are like the flowers that blossom on the tree. On the same tree is also the fruit of liberation or *moksha.* If we really want to get this fruit of *moksha,* we can do so, only if we protect the leaves and the branches as well. However, this is not enough!

While having the desire to reach the fruit which is visible on the tree,

What we have to do is to take care of the invisible roots of the tree,
And, we have to water these invisible roots.
These roots, which are invisible, can be compared with our faith and our belief in the *Atma*.
On the roots of faith in this *Atma* is based the entire tree with all its leaves and branches.
It is only when we undertake to water the roots and protect the tree,
Will we be able to get the fruit of *moksha?*
The sweet *rasa,* or the juice that can be extracted out of the fruit of *moksha,* is our character.
If this juice of character and the faith, which is the root of the tree, are not present,
Then the tree becomes useless.
If this faith does not exist in the form of roots,
If the character does not exist in the form of juice,
Then it is no longer a tree.
It is as bad as firewood.
The first thing we must do is to promote our faith in *Atma*, faith in one's own self,
And then we must try and reach the fruit of liberation.

Summer Showers in Brindavan 1977, pp. 63-64

THE SPIRITUAL HEART IS THE ATMA (1)

The significance of the use of the term "I" by everyone should be rightly understood.
Without the "I", the world will have no existence.
What is this "I" ("*nenu*" in Telugu)?
It is the basis (*Uniki*).
Because the same basic entity exists in all beings, it is called *Atma.*
It is also called *Brahman.*
Another name for it is *Hridaya* (the Spiritual Heart).
It is also called *Aham* ("I"). All these different names refer only to the *Atma.*

When we use the term *Hridaya*, we generally consider it as referring to the physical heart in the body. This is not correct. *Hridaya* has no physical limitations.

Hridaya in the true sense of the word refers to that which is all pervading.
Forgetting this omnipresent Spiritual Heart,
We tend to regard the physical heart in the body as the true heart.
This betokens a narrow mind.

In ordinary parlance we use the term *Aham* ("I") in every context.

This *Aham* is *Brahman.*

When you declare, "I am a householder," the first reference is to yourself as ‘I.’

Another says, "I am a *sanyasin."*

Here, again, the ‘I’ comes first.

Similarly in other references, the ‘I’ comes first and then the description follows.

When you separate the ‘I’ from the person who used it,

The ‘I’ alone remains distinct from the different individuals.

This shows that the ‘I’ is basic to everyone, whatever his status or form.

This ‘I’, present in everyone, is the *Atma,* which is omnipresent.

Because man forgets this basic truth, he is the victim of endless sorrows and doubts.

What we should love and cherish is the *Atma* and not the body.

Develop the unshakable conviction that the Divine is present in everyone. Then there will be no room for developing differences of any kind. Conflict and disorder will have no place. Likes and dislikes will go. Once you direct the mind towards the *Atma,* you have learnt the supreme *mantra: "Aham Brahmasmi"* (I am the *Brahman).* Whatever you do, eating or walking or seeing or speaking, do it with *the Atmic* consciousness.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 07/07/1990, Prasanthi Nilayam

THE SPIRITUAL HEART IS THE ATMA (2)

People have love for their parents, wife, children and other kinsfolk because of the relationships. But these relationships are essentially impermanent. In cultivating these ephemeral attachments, men are failing to love the *Atma,* which is ever present and is the source of lasting bliss.

If you have doubts regarding *Atma,* it is because you have no steadfast love for the Divine. To develop firm love for anything, you have to get the conviction that "it is mine." Unless you acquire such a conviction regarding the *Atma,* you cannot become a *Sthithaprajna* (a man of steadfast wisdom). You will not achieve real bliss. You cannot reach the permanent state of Self-Realisation.

There are two 'I's' in everyone:
The 'I' that is associated with the mind and the 'I' associated with the *Atma.*
Consciousness of the *Atma* is the real 'I'.
When this "I" is wrongly associated with the mind, it becomes *ahamkara* (the Ego).
When the "I" associated with the *Atma* experiences *Atmic* bliss,
It realises that the universal consciousness is One, though it may be called by different names.
When you eliminate *the anatma-bhava* in you (that is, the body consciousness),
You will have the *Atma-bhava* (consciousness of the Universal), within you.
Without this consciousness all *sadhanas* are of no avail.

The water vapour produced by the sun becomes a cloud and hides the sun itself.
Likewise, the thoughts arising in the mind conceal the *Atma.*
When the mind is eliminated the *Atma* alone remains.
For eliminating the mind and removing the delusions from it, desires have to be controlled.
But the *sadhaks* of today have not reduced their desires.
It must be realised that selfishness and self-centredness have to be got rid of.
Selfishness is the root cause of all the afflictions plaguing man.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 07/07/1990, Prasanthi Nilayam

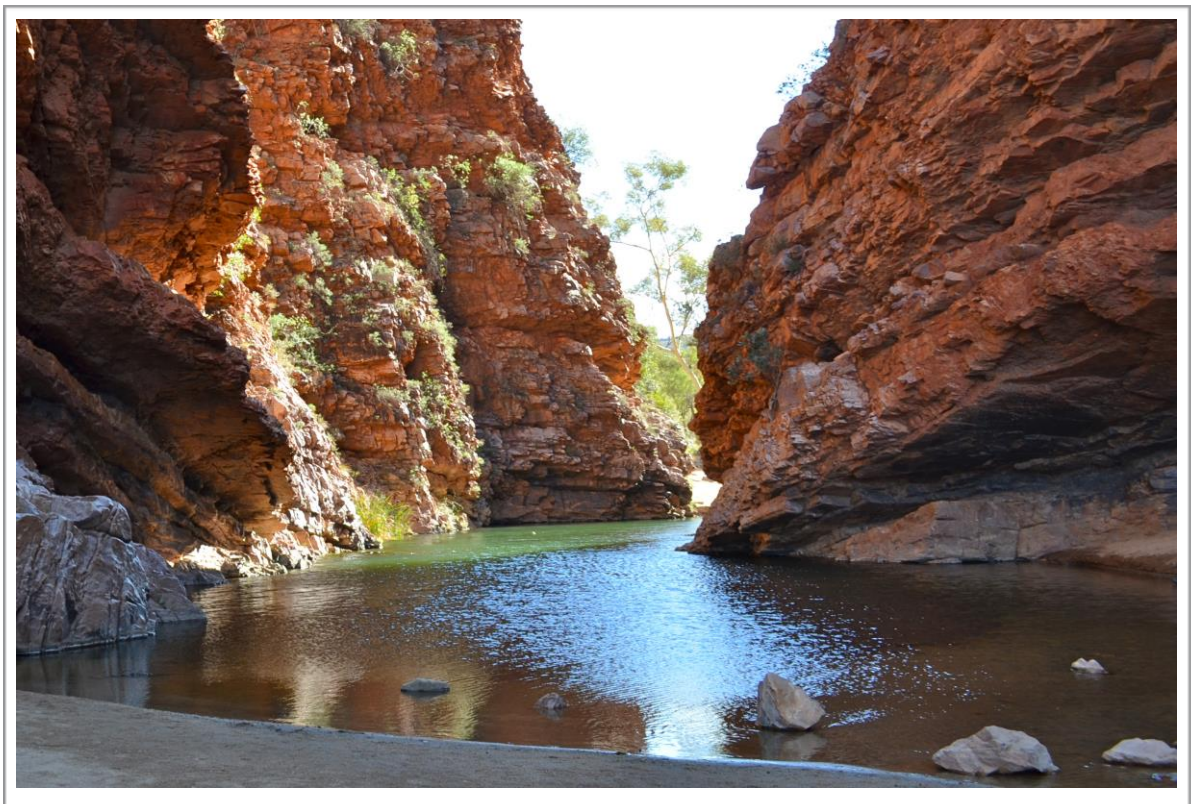
THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE IS IMPRINTED ON THE HUMAN HEART (1)

The human heart, which can be compared to a gramophone plate, contains in it all the traits of past lives. The reaction, resound, and reflection of all that you have seen, heard, and experienced are contained in it. The vast oceans, the mighty mountains, and all the different places that you visited are imprinted on your heart. In short, the entire universe is imprinted on the human heart.

It can be said that human being is *Viswaviratasswarupa* (Embodiment of Cosmic Principle). But man, not being able to realise this truth, considers himself low, and is affected by pleasure and pain, good and bad. Wherefrom has this universe originated? The *Sruthis* (the *Vedas*) have given a proper answer to this. The universe has originated from where the 'I' principle originated. That is, the *Hridaya* (Spiritual Heart). The *Sruthis* declare that *Hridaya* is the origin of the 'I' principle. This 'I' is all-pervasive. Everyone uses this letter 'I' while introducing themselves. There is no place or person without this 'I' principle. Even the birds and beasts have got this 'I' principle, though they are not able to express it. Wherever 'I' is, there is *Hridaya*. *Hridaya* is not limited to body alone. It is all-pervasive. 'I' is the name of the *Atma*. So, in everybody, the *Atma* is present in the form of 'I'. It is associated with *buddhi* (intellect).

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 28/09/1998, Prasanthi Nilayam

THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE IS IMPRINTED ON THE HUMAN HEART (2)



From an illiterate person to a scholar, everyone defines *buddhi* as the power to discriminate between the transient and the permanent. This is not the correct definition. People use it only in the worldly sense. In fact, *buddhi* has five aspects. They are: *sraddha, rutham, sathyam, yogam*, and *mahatthatwam*.

Sraddha has two powers: one is interest and the other is steadfastness.
Rutham refers to unity of thought, word, and deed.
Rutham expressed in the form of words becomes *Sathyam* (Truth).
Yogam refers to *Yoga chitta vritti nirodha* (controlling the aberrations of the mind).
The fifth aspect, *mahatthatwam*, is that which is sacred and divine.

When *buddhi* has all these five aspects, is it not an understatement to define *buddhi* as that which only discriminates between the transient and the permanent.

Today, many people talk of *manas* (mind) and *buddhi* (intellect) without understanding their true meaning. They think that the mind is only a combination of thoughts, but even the actions are associated with it. When the mind and the intellect unite, humanness reaches a state of freedom, which is referred to as *moksha* (liberation).

It is a mistake to undertake any spiritual practice to control the mind.

The nature of the mind is mysterious.

It is unsteady and associated with ego.

Who can control such a mind?

So, never try to control the mind.

Follow the intellect and then the mind naturally submits itself.

The master of the mind is the intellect.

The master of the intellect is the *Atma*.

The *Atma* has no master.

So, master the mind and be a mastermind.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 28/09/1998, Prasanthi Nilayam

ONLY SACRED QUALITIES SHOULD EMERGE FROM THE HEART

Atma symbolises *Hridaya* (Spiritual Heart). God dwells in *Hridaya*. *Hridaya* is the centre of Love and Peace. Only sacred qualities should emerge out of *Hridaya*. But instead, animal qualities like anger, hatred, and jealousy emerge, and you become a beast and not a human. Such a heart is a dwelling place for animals, not God. If you conduct yourself with peace, love, and compassion, you are God. The *Navaratri* worship was started in order to foster sacred qualities within us.

You would have heard the name of Dasaratha. Who is he? He is not the king of Ayodhya. Dasaratha refers to one who has control over the human body, which has five senses of perception and five senses of action. The master of these ten senses is Dasaratha. This body is a chariot, and Dasaratha is the master of this chariot.

Dasaratha had three wives. They signify *sathwic* (serene, pure), *rajasic* (passionate), and *thamasic* (dull, lethargic) qualities. He had four sons. They signify the four objectives of life: *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha*. What is the capital of Dasaratha's kingdom? Ayodhya, which means it is a place that no one can get into. It signifies *Hridaya*, which no wicked qualities can enter.

The entire universe is within you. The mountains may appear smooth from a distance, but once you go near, you will know the truth. It is the distance that lends enchantment. As long as you think

that Kailas, Vaikunta, and Swarga are at a distant place, you will be crazy about them. Actually, all of them are in your *Hridaya*. Your happiness is heaven and your misery is hell. The concept of heaven and hell was introduced in order to see that you do only good. Heaven and hell are not separate; they are in your mind.

What is the cause of misery?
Your own actions.

Buddha did penance for six long years. One day, he opened his eyes and said that he had caught hold of the thief. Who is the thief? It is the mind. He realised that mind was the root cause of all suffering. If you control your mind, you will never suffer.

Churchill said, "Man has conquered everything, but he has not conquered himself."

Man is trying to know everything without understanding his true Self.
Know yourself and then you will know everything.

This is what the Upanishads said: "Try to know and experience that by which everything is known and experienced." That is *Atmic* bliss, which is eternal and supreme. True happiness lies in union with God. If you are with the world, you will never get happiness.

The human heart can be compared to *Ksheera Sagara* (Ocean of Milk),
But today it has become *Kshara Sagara* (Ocean of Salinity).
Lord Vishnu dwells in the Ocean of Milk, which means that He resides in our heart.
But if we make our heart into a *Kshara Sagara*,
Then whales and sharks (bad qualities) will enter.
Human heart should be pure; only then can Lord Vishnu reside in it.
If you understand God, you will not search for Him outside.
God is within you, in you, above you, below you, around you.
There is no one nearer than God.
God is nearer than your physical mother.
So, worship God as your mother, who is the embodiment of Truth.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 25/09/1998, Prasanthi Nilayam

MODULE 3: TRUTH AND SURRENDERING THE HEART

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES

Study Circle

What is the meaning of surrendering the heart to God?

How can God be seen in all?

What is impartial love?

How does one stay centred and focussed on God?

How do we come to understand our own individual roles in the Divine Play?

How can the heart be expanded to be inclusive and loving of all?

Meditation: Visualise the blissful Atma in all.

Combine the study circle/workshop with a musical programme.

Combine study of this module with doing selfless-service.

Personal Introspection

Do I embrace all with Love?

Do I see God in all? How does it make me feel when I think like this?

Do I have feelings of partiality or preference for some things and people?

Do I feel that I am sitting near the impartial fire of Divine Love?

Do I always give my heart to God?

Am I always centred on God?

THE HEART ONLY GIVES EXPRESSION FOR TRUTH

The Gita clearly declares that only the *Hridaya-pushpa*, (Heart-Lotus), free from impurities, that grows in the *Manasa-sarovar,* the pellucid waters of the Mind, is worthy to be offered to God. That is the reason why Krishna told Arjuna, "My dear brother-in-law, whatever activity you are engaged in, whatever gift you give, whatever food you take, do it as a dedicated offering to Me. Do everything in the dedicatory spirit as a tribute to God, for only such acts reach Me. I have no special preference for any one Name. All Names are Mine. I know neither friend nor foe. I am the unaffected Witness. I reside with all who serve Me and derive joy from that service."

This raised some doubts in Arjuna's mind. He asked, "Krishna! You say that you do not make any distinction - that you have neither friend nor foe. How then does it happen that some are happy and others are unhappy, some are strong in body and mind, some are weak and sickly, some are poor and some rich? What is the reason behind all this? When you yourself are above any distinctions of such type, why can you not keep all in the same condition? Observing facts as they are, it is difficult to believe that you look upon all without any partiality."

Krishna laughed at this 'doubt' that worried Arjuna!

"I give expression only to Truth. I do not adjust My speech to your approval or disapproval. I am not elated when you approve, or depressed when you disapprove. I am the same in all. But all are not the same in Me. You have observed that during the cold months villagers sit around a fire at night. But only those who sit near the fire get refreshed by the warmth. Those squatting far away have also to put up with the darkness. If people stay afar and complain that they do not receive the warmth, and that they have to suffer darkness, can you ascribe it to the partiality of fire? It is meaningless to argue from this, that fire treats different people differently.

"The splendour of Divine Vision is akin to this. If you seek to earn it, you have to approach it and stay there. Everyone has equal right to do so and to feed the fire, so that it might illumine and warm even more. Fire is impartial. In deriving its benefit and in making it grow into greater and greater capacity, there are differences. I am Splendour; I have no partiality at all. To experience Me and derive Bliss from Me, all have equal chance, opportunity and authority. Distinctions and differences arise as a result of the faults of the *Sadhakas*. They are not blemishes in Me."

Did you notice the loving words of Krishna, the shower of His Grace? How true are His words!

Geeta Vahini, Chapter XX, pp 214-215

GOD'S HEART EMBRACES ALL IN LOVE

People do not understand the faults in themselves.
They seek faults in others.
If the Lord has faults, how can the world exist or survive?
The Lord sees all as equal.
His Heart embraces all in Love.
That is the reason why the world has at least this much of peace and prosperity.
The doctor may declare that the patient has no fever just to console the sick man,
But the thermometer cannot lie.
God knows and reacts to the inner feeling, not to the outer appearance.
He can never go wrong, nor can He be deceived.
The world considers only the outward appearance.
It is guided by that alone.
Wade in the river.
Then only can you know the depth of the water.
Eat, if you must know the taste.

When people pronounce judgements on the depth or the taste, without wading or tasting, how can their declarations be taken as true? If the Lord Himself was affected by partiality:

How could He award the Bliss of *Sayujya* (Unity in God) to the cowherd maids of Brindavan?
Would He have partaken of fruits partly eaten by Sabari?
Could Janaka have become a *Brahmajnani* (knower of Brahman)?
Could Nandanar have achieved the Grand Vision of the Lord?
Could Prahlada and Vibhishana have approached the Lord?
Would Hanuman have been accepted as the messenger of Rama?
Could Valmiki have written the great epic, *Ramayana*?
Do these indicate any partiality in the composition of the Lord?
Or do they prove that He has no such trait?
These are examples of the Lord's *Prema* (love), His uniform kindness to all.

"*Manmana bhava, madbhakatho, mad yajee, mam namaskuru,*" He has commanded. This command of the Lord means just this: Keep your mind steadily on Me, be devoted sincerely to Me, prostrate before Me offering all your thoughts, words and deeds to Me, love Me steadfastly. He has thus indicated that what He most desires in you are a 'pure mind' and 'untarnished love.'

Geeta Vahini, Chapter XX, pp 215-216

TRUTH LIVES IN THE HEARTS OF DEVOTEES

Once, during their exile, Dharmaja and Droupadi were walking through the forest when Droupadi saw a huge fruit on a tree. She wanted to have the fruit, since it could make a sumptuous meal for all of them. Responding to Droupadi's wish, Dharmaja brought the fruit down by shooting an arrow. He then tried to lift the fruit but could not because it was very heavy.

Meanwhile, Arjuna appeared on the scene and tried to lift the fruit. Dharmaja and Droupadi gave a helping hand. But the three of them together still could not lift the fruit. Meanwhile, Bhima, Nakula, and Sahadeva arrived on the spot.

Bhima made a sarcastic remark, "It is rather surprising that my younger brother Arjuna, who can lift the Gandiva, is unable to lift this small fruit. Perhaps the Gandiva is made of..."

He tried at first quite casually, using just one hand, but the fruit would not budge. He then became serious and used both his hands, but failed. All six then tried to heave the fruit, but still they could not succeed.

There is a story behind this unusual fruit.

In this forest there lived a *rishi* (sage) named Romarishi, meaning the one with long hair. His hair had spread all over the place. It was he who had nursed this tree, doing intense penance, to attain the fruit. This fruit was known as *Amrutaphala* and by eating it, one would be free from the cycle of birth and death forever. That was why Romarishi was keen on having it.

As the Pandavas were trying desperately to lift the fruit, the rishi felt the disturbance, as strands of his hair were being trodden and pulled. He realised that there was someone trying to steal the fruit, and he became very angry. His long sprawling hair then started extending in search of the Pandavas in order to tie them down.

Droupadi was frightened by the approaching coils of hair. She prayed, "Oh Krishna, You have been protecting us all along. You must come to our rescue once more. We have no refuge other than You."

In response to her prayer, Krishna appeared there, smiling as usual. He came up with a ruse that would save the Pandavas from the wrath of Romarishi. He said, "If you want to be saved, you have to implicitly obey My command."

Dharmaja said, "Krishna! Did we ever disobey Your command? We are prepared to do whatever You say."

Krishna said, "Dharmaja! There is not much time to lose now. You cannot remain here any longer. I will go to Romarishi's ashram at once. All of you come there after five minutes. Whatever will happen there, remain tight-lipped. Be careful and remain silent throughout."

In the meantime, Romarishi was furious with anger. He was about to curse the poachers. At that very moment Krishna entered the ashram of the rishi. Romarishi hastened to welcome Krishna. He fell at His Feet and said, "Lord, how lucky and fortunate am I to have You visit my humble abode!"

The Sage was bubbling with joy. Meanwhile, the Pandavas came to the hermitage in accordance with Krishna's Master-plan. Though Krishna was busy conversing with the sage, He pretended as though he just then noticed the arrival of the Pandavas. God's attention is always fixed on His devotees.

As soon as Krishna saw the Pandavas, instantly He started prostrating most reverentially before them one by one. He even fell at Droupadi's feet. The Pandavas were feeling very embarrassed, but remembering Krishna's command, they said nothing.

The *rishi* was stunned to see all this. He thought in himself, "Krishna is verily God, and He is prostrating before these people. These people must be even greater than Him."

So, following Krishna's example, he also fell at the feet of the Pandavas one by one. Having once prostrated, he could no longer curse them to whom salutation has been offered. The rishi's anger quickly vanished.

The *rishi* then asked Krishna, "Lord, what is all this mystery? There is none greater than You, and yet, You are prostrating before these humans! What is the inner significance of this?"

Krishna smiled and replied, "Oh noble one, I dwell in the hearts of My devotees. I am the captive of My devotees. These Pandavas have extraordinary devotion for Me. No matter what the circumstance, they never forget Me. I am under the control of such devotees!"

The sage realised the greatness of the Pandavas and said, "Please take this fruit; I don't need it."

Droupadi sliced the fruit and offered a piece to Krishna. Then Krishna said, "Are you not aware that I do not eat fruits?"

Not only then, even now, I do not eat fruits.

Then Droupadi prayed to Krishna to at least touch the fruit with His Divine Hands so that they could have it as *prasadam*. Women are endowed with such devotion. It is because of them that men take to the path of devotion. Moved by Krishna's love for His devotees, Romarishi was shedding tears of bliss. Krishna told the sage that his life had found fulfilment. He then placed His hand on the sage, who merged in Krishna.

Seeing this, the Pandavas too prayed for merger. They said, "Swami, we have no more desires. We have experienced everything in life. Please grant us liberation too."

Krishna said, "Your part in this drama of life is not yet over. You have many more things to achieve."

A drama consists of many scenes. An actor cannot ask the director to relieve him after the end of the first scene. He cannot leave till the whole play is over.

Krishna told the Pandavas, "There is a lot more to be achieved in this drama of life. You have to set an ideal to the world, and Dharma has to be established. How can you leave the world without accomplishing your assigned task? Every human is born to understand and experience Truth. What is the use of your human birth if you do not achieve this? Play your roles to perfection in this drama of life." Saying so, Krishna disappeared.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 14/10/2002, Prasanthi Nilayam

TRUTH AND A STORY OF SURRENDER

What is the meaning of *satsang* (good company)? *Sath* is the name of Divinity.
It is changeless in all the periods of time.
It is eternal and is present in you.
You have to understand this eternal principle.
In order to do so, you have to be in communion with *Sath*.
As *Punditji* has said in the morning, milk is very happy in the company of water.
The combination of water and milk can be termed *satsang*.
That is ideal friendship.
When the milk is boiled on a stove, the water gets evaporated.
The milk, unable to bear the separation from water, tries to jump into the fire.
The moment you sprinkle some water on the boiling milk, it gets pacified.
The milk is happy on being united with its friend.
The same relationship exists between *nara* (individual) and *Narayana* (God).
God is very happy when the individual joins His company.
But God feels very sad when the individual diverts his attention from Him,
And gets immersed in worldly pleasures.
Once the individual surrenders completely to God,
He is happy again.

Due to the effects of *Kali* age, the individual separates himself from God.
The individual may not feel sad,
But God feels sad because His friend, the individual, is parting ways with Him.
God is the only permanent friend in this world.
All the worldly friends can only say, "Hello, how are you?" and "Good-bye," nothing more.
God does not say, "Hello, How are you?" and "Goodbye."
As long as you are in His company you will be happy and He is also happy.
But when there is separation from His devotee, though he may not express it, He feels sad.
Why is the individual going along the wrong path?
Why is he forgetting Truth?
Why is he distancing himself from Divinity?
Why is he losing his purity?
Thinking so, God feels sad.
Even this is for the devotee's sake, not for His sake.
Whatever God says or does is for your own good.

Lakshmana is a superb example of the attitude of surrender. When Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana went to the forest and reached Chitrakoota mountain, Rama told Lakshmana to put up a hermitage in a place of his choice. Hearing these words, Lakshmana felt hurt and bent his head down with grief. Noting this, Sita asked Lakshmana, "Why are you perturbed, Lakshmana? Your brother did not speak anything harsh. Why do you feel so sad?"

Lakshmana said, "O Mother, have I ever had any choice of my own? The likes of Rama are mine. I have surrendered myself to Rama. The command of Rama is what I want to carry out. While so, how can I withstand the impact of Rama asking me to put up the hermitage at a place of my choice? Does it not amount to separation from Rama?"

That is the intensity of the feelings of a true devotee toward the Lord. Your thoughts should always be centred on God. The world is like a passing cloud. But the relation between you and God is permanent and eternal.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 11/10/1998, Prasanthi Nilayam

TRUTH AND THE ALTAR OF THE HEART

Vibhishana conducted himself with the utmost truthfulness, righteousness, and piety in Lanka. When Hanuman first landed in Lanka, he encountered Vibhishana at the Lankan palace.

He said to Hanuman, “Oh Hanuman! I am conducting myself carefully amongst these demons like a tongue amidst the teeth. How long can I live like this? When will I earn Lord Rama’s Grace? When will I enjoy the proximity of the Lord?”

Then Hanuman said to Vibhishana, “Oh Vibhishana, the good people in this world are harassed by the wicked demons who are like the sharp teeth that surround a tongue. But mark one thing. The tongue was born along with you, while the teeth came in the middle and will fall away in the middle. But the tongue which was born with you will last until your death.”

The tongue is a sacred organ.

It is virtuous too.

It is an embodiment of sweetness and truth though surrounded by the vile, the vicious and the wicked.

The teeth do not allow the tongue to come out but in times of necessity it comes out and helps.

When the lips run dry, the tongue comes out and moistens the lips.

There were many sages and *sadhakas* who were ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of Rama. Tulsidas was a great devotee of God who lived on the Chitrakoota mountain. Every day after his bath, he would offer holy water to a tree. One day, a spirit appeared in front of him and said, "Oh master, while you discourse on the *Ramayana*, there is a person, an old man, who comes here first and is the last one to leave. Tomorrow, you must cling to his feet and ask for a boon." The spirit told him this and disappeared.

On the next day, Tulsidas was busy preparing sandal paste and singing the name of Rama. After some time, the old Brahmin came there. Tulsidas began discoursing on the *Ramayana*. At the end of the discourse, everyone went away except the Brahmin. Tulsidas went to him and fell at his feet. The Brahmin asked Tulsidas what boon he wanted. Tulsidas replied, "I want to have the *darshan* of the beautiful form of Sri Rama."

The Brahmin then said, "You will have the *darshan* of Sri Rama in a few days."

Who was this Brahmin? It was none else than Hanuman. He would present himself wherever the glory of Rama is sung. Hanuman always passes into rapture while listening to the glory of Rama.

A few days later, a boy of tender age came to Tulsidas when he was preparing sandal paste for the Lord. He approached Tulsidas and said, "Oh grand sire, will you give some paste to me?"

Tulsidas readily agreed to do this favour for the boy. While he was giving the paste to the boy, the birds on the tree felt pity for Tulsidas, since he did not recognise that the boy was the same Lord Rama, for whom he had been pining for so many years. The Lord is everywhere.

Whether you are in the forest or in the desert,
Whether you are in town or village,
Whether you are on the mountain top or midstream,
The Lord helps the hapless ones.

Two days after this incident, the old man asked Tulsidas whether he had seen the Lord on the previous day. Tulsidas replied in the negative.

The old man said, "Who do you think came yesterday in the form of a boy to take sandal paste from you? All forms are His and all names are His. It is foolishness to worship Him in one form only. Ramachandra is the In-dweller of your heart. Your heart is the altar of God. Don't install anyone in the altar of your heart except the Lord. My son, you may give room to your kith and kin in any part of your house, but do not install them in the altar of your shrine. Kith and kin come in the middle and go away in the middle. Serve them, but do not give your heart to them. Fill your heart with compassion. A heart laden with compassion is the temple of the Lord. *Hrudh + daya* makes *hrudaya*." Hanuman taught this lesson to Tulsidas and disappeared.

Summer Showers in Brindavan, 1996, pp. 94-97

YOU COME FROM THE SPIRITUAL HEART

There is no need to search for God elsewhere.
He dwells in your heart.
That is why He is called *Hridayavasi* (indweller of the heart).
If someone were to ask you, "Where do you come from?"
You may say that you are coming from a hotel or from your house.
But actually you come from none of these places.
You come from *Hridaya*.
It is this *Hridaya* that is your dwelling place.
Then where is the question of coming and going?
Similarly, God neither comes nor goes.
He is present all over, all the time.
But in order to confer grace on a devotee, He may manifest Himself.

Just because God has appeared to a devotee in America does not mean that God has travelled all the way to America. He is present in America too. It is the devotion that makes God manifest Himself. Divinity neither comes nor goes. It is present everywhere. *"Viswam Vishnuswarupam," "Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*."

There is no place where there is no God.
All names and forms are His.
You should not have the feeling that God is the master and you are His servant.
The individual (*nara*) and the Divine (*Narayana*) are one.

You should take to the spiritual path in order to understand this principle of unity. Right from birth to death, if you are immersed in duality, when will you experience the bliss of non-duality?

A man with a dual mind is half blind.
So you should make every effort to experience oneness.

Sathya Sai Baba Discourse, 11/10/1998, Prasanthi Nilayam