life-sheaths constitute our physical body; these five principles constitute the very essence of spirituality. Develop the spirit of unity. Never think that you belong to a particular state or country and thereby give rise to differences. Do not identify yourself with vyashti tattwa (individual principle). Instead, identify yourself with samashti tattwa (societal principle) and cultivate unity. Consider truth, righteousness, peace, love and nonviolence as your life-breath and uphold the sanctity of the name human (manava). Never give scope for differences of opinion, even in trivial matters. If any differences were to arise, each should be prepared to forgive the other. All are children of God; all are brothers and sisters. Understand this truth and conduct yourself accordingly.

31.03.2012

Every human being has the evil tendencies of lust (kama), anger (krodha) and greed (lobha) in them. The great epics, Ramayana, Bhagavata, and Mahabharata, teach good lessons to control these enemies. Ravana, who had mastered all the sixty-four branches of knowledge and was a great scholar and a mighty warrior, lost his life and caused the ruination of his entire clan because of lust. It is not enough if you merely read Ramayana; you should grasp its real significance. In the Mahabharata, Duryodhana personified greed. He refused to share the kingdom with the Pandavas and denied them their rightful share. Due to this quality, he perished along with his entire clan. These illustrations echo the need for the eradication of the feelings of lust, anger and greed. Pandavas emerged victorious because they practiced all the human values of Truth, Love, Right Conduct, Non-Violence and Peace. If you follow these values, success will follow automatically.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Thought for the Day

(March 2012)

1.03.2012
All the joy you crave for is within you. You suffer like someone who has vast riches in the iron chest, but has no idea where the key is! The flames of anger, pride, hatred, envy, etc. are more devastating than normal fire. They arise in the mind stealthily and in spurts ever demanding more and more to feed upon. Fire is called as 'anala' meaning 'Not Enough'. You dread fire when it leaps at a distance. What is to be said then of the fire that is inside your very self? How to douse these dangerous flames? There are proven extinguishers tested by experience and guaranteed by sages, and these are - Truth, Right Conduct, Peace and Love (Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi and Prema). Examine within you which qualities and habits you must discard and the ones you must retain. Only those tendencies and attitudes that remind you of the Divine into which you must merge, should be retained and developed.

2.03.2012
You must endeavour to please the Guru and win his favour by obeying his teachings and serving him lovingly. No matter where they live, those lives that are untouched by spiritual practices, noble qualities and serene environment imply that they do not even possess elementary gratitude to the Guru. They may chant slogans like Krishnarpanam (dedicating it to God) but their acts reveal only deha-arpanam (dedication to the body)! Modify your conduct to win your Guru's grace; then, wisdom and bliss is yours. Instead, if you are disobedient and critical through egoism and want of faith, you cannot be blessed by the vision of the Truth. As the cow takes to her calf, so the Guru will draw the Sishya (disciple) to himself and grant him the milk of grace and bliss. The sishya (disciple) ought to be of sterling character; then, just as a clean piece of iron gets attracted by the magnet, he will automatically receive the blessings of the Guru.

ever-present God. Worldly friends and enemies change with the passage of time, but sath is the true and eternal friend. This friend, God, is always with you, in you, around you, above you, below you and protecting you just as the eyelid protects the eye. Truth is God. Love is God. Dharma (righteousness) is God. When you worship God by following these principles, He will manifest Himself immediately. Love God wholeheartedly. Make friends with Him. You can achieve anything if you have God as your friend.

29.03.2012
You may repeat like a parrot certain phrases like "Everything is the Lord's," "I am but a puppet; He pulls the strings and I dance as He wills," "Nothing is mine; I am just carrying out His will" and so on. But what do you usually do? When a praiseworthy act is done, you claim it to be your own; you shout from platforms till your throats get dry that you won by your own effort, honour, fame, status and standards, authority and position, property and possessions, and attainments and achievements. But when a blameworthy act is done, or when it comes to confessing your share in earning ill fame and defeat, or evil and wrong, you conveniently transfer the responsibility to the Lord, saying, "I am but an instrument in His hands, He is the master, I am but a tool." People swing from "I" to "He" like the pendulum of the clock. This very common habit, which is a fashion today, is sheer deceit; its hollow spiritual sham. Mind, word and act - all three must be filled with the belief that all is His play. That is the genuine path.

30.03.2012
The term Hindu signifies 'H: Humility, I: Individuality, N: Nationality, D: Divinity, U: Unity'. These are verily our five life-breaths (pranas). Just as five elements, five senses, and five

help you have rendered to others and the harm others have done to you. If you remember the help you have rendered, you will always expect something in return. Remembrance of the harm done to you by others generates in you a sense of revenge. You should remember only the help you received from others. The one with these sacred qualities is an ideal human being. Love is God, love is Nature, love is life and love is the true human value. Bereft of love, one is equivalent to a corpse. Love even the worst of your enemies. Lead a life filled with love. Then you will experience joy, peace and security in your heart.

27.03.2012

It is a human frailty to separate things as good and evil. And to impute this to God is sacrilege. It might sometimes appear that the Lord too has that weakness, but it is a passing phase, a cloud that hides His glory, not a blemish that adheres to Him. Though gunas (various qualities) emanate from the Lord, He is unaffected by them just like fire is unaffected by the smoke which arises from it or the sky is unaffected by the clouds that form and move about in it. All are attached to Him like beads but He is free and unattached. Consider this example - the cloth is based on yarn, in fact it is dependent on yarn; but yarn does not depend on the cloth, it is unaffected and unattached to the cloth. Yarn is Brahman (Divinity) while the cloth is Prakruthi (the Universe of manifold variety).

28.03.2012

Your enemies are not outside. Your bad thoughts are your worst enemies and thoughts based on Truth are your best friends. But today, people do not befriend the thoughts based on Truth, which are essentially divine. Practise to make friendship with Sath, the eternal Truth. Sath means Being, the

3.03.2012

The frog caught and held in the mouth of a cobra, unaware of its fate, flicks at the snake's tongue as if it were a fly to eat. So too, you seek joy and earn pain, hunt for pleasure and bag grief. You attach yourself to the body that decays, and let go of God. Thousands of wise men have advised about this a million times. However their words have not fallen on the soft soil of the heart and have not been watered by the tears of contrition. From now on, let your heart with clean consciousness, be a lamp. Pour into it the oil of Namasmarana (chanting of the Divine Name). Place the wick of Self-Control and keep it in position, so that the gusts of joy and grief do not scotch the flame. Light it with noble thoughts like Aham Brahmasmi (I am God). Then, you will not only have Light, but also become a source of Light.

4.03.2012

Krishna fostered what was really beneficial to Arjuna; He paid full consideration to what will really promote the reputation, the Atma-ananda (bliss) and the Dharma (Right Conduct) of Arjuna. He tended and fended Arjuna as the very breath of His own life; He watched over Arjuna as one watches over the eye or the heart, and thus transformed him by teaching him about holy things. Krishna loved Arjuna beyond compare; that is the nature of a genuine Guru. Arjuna too was no ordinary being; he bowed in humility to Krishna and carried out sincerely the assignments from Him. Whatever the crisis, he stuck to Krishna's command and word; he wore the comradeship with the Lord as the armour that will save him from all harm, as the very body in which he dwelt, as something which he must foster, strengthen and guard. This is how Guru and Sishya (disciple) should be bound together.

5.03.2012
The mind must become the servant of the intellect, not the slave of the senses. It must discriminate and detach itself from the body. Like the ripe tamarind fruit, which becomes loose inside the shell, it must be unattached to this shell or casement which is the body. Strike a green tamarind fruit with a stone and you cause harm to the pulp inside. But do this to a ripe fruit and what happens? It is the dry rind that falls off, nothing affects the pulp or the seed. The ripe aspirant does not feel the blow of fate or fortune. It is the unripe man, who is wounded by every blow. So too, your ignorance must fall off through your own efforts. It will not come to you as a gift or miracle. Truth, Bliss and Peace that is won by your own struggle with untruth and injustice will be the lasting treasure for you.

6.03.2012
Sincere repentance is enough to transmute sin into sanctity. The Lord graciously accepts contrition and pours His blessings. Did not the dacoit Rathnakara, who was engaged in acts of sin until the moment when wisdom dawned, become a saint through repentance? He became Sage Valmiki (the author of the epic Ramayana), is it not? His story is proof of the value of contrition. You may ask, is it enough to be free from the effects of sin alone? Should not the effects of punya (merit) be given up too? Yes, you should. Just as the roaring forest fire reduces to ashes everything in its way; so too the mighty conflagration of wisdom (Jnana) will consume and destroy all sin and all merit.

7.03.2012
The world is a structure raised on one strong pillar - ”I”. This “I” is dormant during your deep sleep and hence there is no

slave to the senses. There is no profit in being a horde of idlers and loungers, who shy from hard work, and accumulate fat, growing into monstrous shapes. Nor should one ignore the creator, allowing both intelligence and discrimination to go to waste, without an iota of gratitude to the giver of all the gifts which one consumes and enjoys! The Lord has declared that He is the Pourusha (vitality, adventure and aspiration) in human beings. However strong may be the force of the drag of one’s previous births, it must yield to the strength of adventure and achievement emanating from this Pourusha. Unaware of this potentiality, you are misled into cursing your fate and accepting the ‘inescapable’ effects of what you dread as ‘Prarabdha’ or effects of karma (past actions). Exercise Pourusha and let it be your life breath. Living is struggling, striving, achieving.

25.03.2012
In the Geeta Lord Krishna emphatically told Arjuna,”Many people anxious to offer uninterrupted worship to God, desire to go into the thick forest; this is an insane step. There is no need to seek the jungle as if I am only there. There is no place where I am not; there is no form which is not Mine. I am the five elements: earth, water, fire, air, ether! Where can you find a place devoid of one or other of these five? The fiery nature of fire is I Myself; I am life in all living beings. I am the strength of the strong, the strength that is free from greed and lust. To experience My presence and My glory, there is no special place, for I am everything, everywhere, ever.”

26.03.2012
People are bereft of gratitude, which is not right. One should be grateful for the help they have received from others as long as one is alive. There are two things you must forget: the

22.03.2012
Today, people's behaviour is not good because their thoughts are polluted. And because their thoughts and actions have become perverted, the country is passing through troubles and turmoil. People have filled their mind with thoughts of mundane, ephemeral, and transient things. These thoughts are negative in nature; only those based on Truth are positive. If the feelings and intentions behind your actions are good, the results will also be good. Sacred thoughts, good words, and noble deeds are the true human values. Thoughts are your permanent assets. As is the thought, so is the mind. If thoughts are good, assets will blossom into Divinity.

23.03.2012
You would have celebrated many Ugadi (New Year day) festivals in your life. Certain traditional practices go with every festival, such as having a sacred bath, wearing new clothes, cleaning the house and decorating it with buntings of green leaves. True greatness lies in purifying our thoughts, not merely the transient human body. The significance of a festival does not lie in wearing new clothes but in cultivating new and noble thoughts. The house should be decorated not merely with the buntings of green leaves, but with the buntings of love. Share your love with everyone you meet. Only then would you be celebrating the festival in its true spirit. In this New Year sanctify your thoughts with sacred and broad feelings. Develop divine love and foster peace in every country. Start the day by praying, "May the whole world be happy! " Then you will lead a blissful and peaceful life, full of enthusiasm.

24.03.2012
The purpose of human life is not to be consumers of food, to be a burden upon the earth, and be an animal that is a

world so far as you are concerned. Similarly before you were born, and after you die, there is no world of which you are conscious. To acquire and stay fixed in this Jnana (wisdom), you must pass through the preparatory schools of Karma (dedicated activity) and Upaasana (contemplation). Dedicated activity helps you cleanse the heart of egoistic impulses. Contemplation helps you to consistently focus attention on the Universal, the Absolute. Then jnaana emerges and stays within you for ever. Once you win that jnaana, you are the equal of the wisest, for there is nothing more to know.

8.03.2012
Earnest and steady faith (Sraddha) is essential to acquire Jnana. In addition you must also possess a deep yearning to imbibe the teachings of your Guru. Be very vigilant; do not yield to sloth or to company that is not congenial or encouraging. To escape such evil influences and to strengthen your mind, mastery over senses is required. But remember, want of faith or steadiness is not as destructive as the venom of doubt. Doubt is born out of ignorance (Ajnana); it penetrates into your heart and breeds there - it is the source of all disaster! Arise and engage yourself in your daily activities, giving up desire for its results and with complete faith. Then you will acquire wisdom and win liberation.

9.03.2012
Just close your eyes for five minutes and think of the profit your efforts have won for you. One wish always leads to another and this goes on like a never ending chain. Initially, you wish to marry, then you get a daughter or a son, after this you desire to finish their education, marriage and the list goes on and on. The joy one gets by fulfilment of any desire is imperfect, limited, temporary and pregnant with grief. The

secret to true happiness lies in vairaagya (detachment). The tongue has oil, fat and greasy substances rolling over it, but it is unaffected by these and does not become greasy. The mind too must be tamed to be unaffected by the experience of success and failure, gain and loss, well-being and illness. Practice surrendering at the feet of the Lord at all times; let His will prevail.

10.03.2012

Give up the idea that you are the doer and the beneficiary by dedicating both deed and fruit to God. Then no sin can affect you, for you are not the doer and the deed must certainly be holy. Like oil on the tongue and lotus leaf on water, the deed is with you, but of you. The joy derived from the external world opens the gateways of grief; it is fleeting. But you are eternal, the very source of bliss, Atma swarupa (embodiment of Divinity); that is your genuine nature. You are unrelated to these activities that are called deeds and their consequences which you now mistake as real. Hence, in whatever you do or hear or see, you must remain unaffected, innocent of listening or seeing. Always remember this: you are not the doer; you are just the witness, the see-er! Thus, you can confidently take up all tasks and firmly give up the fruit of your activities, dedicating them to the Lord.

11.03.2012

The devotee is the needle which is always drawn towards the magnet, God. But the needle should be near and clean enough. If you feel you haven't yet received His Grace, it is because the needle is not pure enough. You have not scraped off, by the processes of repentance, the mud, dust and rust called attachment. And by near, I do not mean physically near. I do not measure distance between you and Me in miles or metres.

20.03.2012

Divinity is one, and is the real basis for the Universe. Like the string for a garland and the foundation for a multi-storey building, Divinity penetrates and holds together everything and everyone; it is the foundation for the structure of the Universe. Only the flowers and buildings are visible to your eyes, not the string and the structure. Unless you invest time and effort to reason it out, they escape your attention. That does not mean they are non-existent! Never be misled by the aadheya (the contained, the thing held) into denying the Aadhaar (the basis, the container). For the Seen, there is an Unseen Basis. To grasp the Unseen, the best means is inquiry, and the right proof is experience. For those who have experienced, no description is needed.

21.03.2012

The mind has an innate tendency to merge in whatever it contacts; it craves for this merger and so, it is ever agitated and restless. But by constant practice and training, it can be directed towards the Pranava (Om, the Primordial Sound) and taught to be one with it. The mind is naturally drawn towards sound and hence, it is compared to a serpent. The snake has two crude qualities - one, its crooked gait and second, the tendency to bite all that comes in its way. Human beings too seek to hold and possess all that they set their eyes on; people too move about crookedly. But there is in the serpent one praiseworthy trait; however poisonous and deadly its nature might be, when the strains of the charmer's music are played, it spreads its hood and merges itself in the sweetness of that melody, forgetting everything else. Similarly, people too can, by practice, merge themselves into the bliss of Pranava.

Constantly ruminate on the indwelling God; it will promote in you love for all beings. You will then see only good in others and strive only to do good to others.

18.03.2012
Imagine you are walking at dusk when things are seen dimly and a rope lies on the path. Now each one who sees it has their own idea of what it is, though it is really just a length of rope. One steps across it, taking it to be a garland. Another thinks that it is a mark made by running water and treads on it. The third imagines it to be a vine, a creeper plucked from a tree that has fallen on the road. Some others are scared that it is a snake. Similarly, the one Divine without any change or transformation affecting It, manifests in the Universe with many names and forms, due to the dusk of maya (Illusion). Just as the dim light confuses people and provokes various feelings and reactions, maya disillusions people. The rope is ever the rope though it is the basis for all the variety.

19.03.2012
Following Dharma (virtuous conduct) purifies the mind and leads you to God. It creates a taste for the Name and the Form of God. For example, if you love the Name and Form of Lord Krishna, you will naturally respect and obey the command of Krishna which is found in the Bhagawat Gita. Have your chosen Divine Name on the tongue and the Form in your inner eye, then the demon called 'Unending Desire' will fly away from your mind, leaving joy and contentment within you. Do your daily duties with God in your heart as witness. Start now with the first step which is Naamasmarana (remembrance of the Name of the Lord, the Universal Indweller). This will naturally lead you on to progressive steps, until the goal is reached.

You may be physically very far, but mentally by My side. I am always with you, in you, beside you, ever; only you have to be aware of Me and make use of My Presence. Develop virtues, good habits and attitudes, and a noble character. With love in your heart, repeat God's name and adopt spiritual practices, then grace will start flowing onto you.

12.03.2012
Resolve to master the senses through meditation and follow it steadily, systematically and regularly, at a stated time and place, without changing them as the whim takes you. Do not alter as fancy dictates for that will bring about dire consequences. For those who eat too much and get exhausted with the task of assimilating it, those who eat less and suffer from exhaustion, those who sleep too much or too little, those who indulge in spiritual practices according to 'convenience' (that is to say, who do it for long hours one day because they have no other work, but do token meditation the next day, because they have lots of engagements), those who give free rein to the six inner enemies, those who do not confer joy on parents, and those who have little faith in the Lord installed in their hearts – for all these people spiritual practices will yield no fruit at all.

13.03.2012
Everyone is after happiness. The hunt for comfortable jobs and positions of influence, the founding of banks and business houses, the growth of bungalows – all this is evidence of the eagerness to live in happiness. But there is no real eagerness to live in peace. Happiness should not be confused with peace. No one rich, well placed, prosperous or powerful has peace. Peace cannot be found in passbooks or iron safes. You can investigate and verify this truth yourself. Peace cannot also be ensured by the piling of bombs and weapons. Mere terror

and counter-terror will not establish cordiality and harmony. Realize that the physical is subordinate to the spiritual. The secret to peace lies in service and love towards all beings. International peace cannot dawn until the minds are cleansed of hatred and terror; remove these two evil traits within each heart and plant therein love and service.

14.03.2012

In the Gita Arjuna asks Krishna, "Is the mind so easily controllable? Even an elephant cannot drag one as the mind does; it is the nursery of waywardness, and its defiance, determination and obstinacy are very powerful. The mind will never halt at one place. Taming the mind is like capturing the wind or bundling up water. How can anyone control the mind or begin any spiritual practice with such a mind?" Krishna broke into a smile on hearing these words and said, "Arjuna! You have described the mind and know its nature very well. But it is not an impossible task; the mind can certainly be mastered. By systematic practice (abhyasa) and by relentless inquiry (vichara) and detachment (vairagya) - the mind definitely can be conquered. There is no task that cannot be accomplished by steady practice. Place faith in the Lord and practice with the firm belief that you have the power and the grace - then all tasks will become easy."

15.03.2012

Many of you are drawn to God due to health problems or mental worry of some sort or the other. Know that these are mere baits by which you have been drawn closer to God, so that you may contact Him, receive His Grace and strengthen your faith in the Divine. Problems and worries are really to be welcomed as they teach you the lessons of humility and reverence. Today, the entire world faces many problems.

Many hesitate to believe that things will improve and that life for all will be happy and full of joy, that the Golden Age will ever recur. Be assured that Divinity will always be present to protect and establish righteousness, and avert the crisis upon humanity.

16.03.2012

In the present times, all things have gone up in value. Man alone has become cheap. Despite being endowed with the valuable gems of reason, discrimination and detachment, man has allowed them to slip away, and is facing the consequences with dire poverty of the spirit. He has become cheaper than animals because of the proliferation of anger, hatred and greed. People have forgotten their unity with all others, all beings and all worlds. The contemplation of unity of all beings alone can establish individual peace as well as peace in the society and in the world. All other efforts are like pouring sweet scented rose water on a heap of ash - its ineffective and foolish. It is mere ignorance that keeps you away from this task. Investigate the truth about yourself and the world. Make all efforts to build peace on this foundation of Atmajnana, the knowledge of the Atmic unity.

17.03.2012

The Vedas proclaim that all this is Brahmam (Divinity), one unitary uniform substance, appearing only to the faulty eye as many. You must assert Aham Brahmaasmi (I am Divine); you can then transmute yourself into 'sons of immortality' (Amrithasya Puthraah). Since you always say Aham dehaasmi (I am the body), the combination of five elements which will one day disintegrate back into those elements, you degrade yourself into Anruthasya Puthraah, that is, 'sons of Illusion'. It is this attitude that breeds grief and is the root of discontent.