28.02.2013

Everyone must make their exit someday - that moment should not be one of anguish; one must depart with a smile and a bow. In order to accomplish that, a lot of preparation is necessary. Leaving all that has been accomplished and accumulated during a long lifetime is a very hard task. So prepare for it from now, by discarding attachment to one thing after another. You see many things in your dreams, and you may even acquire power and position. When you awaken, you do not cry over the loss of those, even though they were very real and gave you real joy and satisfaction during your dream. You tell yourself, “It was just a dream” and move on with life! What prevents you from treating with similar nonchalance, all the possessions you gather during the waking state? Cultivate that attitude and depart with a smile, when the curtain is drawn!

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Thought for the Day

(February 2013)

1.02.2013

The Lord is a Mountain of Love. Any number of ants carrying away particles of sweetness cannot exhaust His plenty. He is an Ocean of Mercy without a limiting shore. And devotion is the easiest way to win His Grace and also to realize that He pervades everything; in fact, He is everything! Sharanagathi (total surrender) or leaving everything to His Will, is the highest form of devotion. Devotion and the attitude of surrender, which is its final fruit, will give you great courage to meet any emergency; such courage is what is called Renunciation. When Devotion is just emerging as a sapling, a fence is needed to protect the tender plant. That fence is religion and its rules, restrictions, directions and commands.

2.02.2013

You will all doubtlessly agree when I say that Divine Bliss is your greatest need. However, you cannot buy it from anywhere! It has to be earned the hard way, doing good deeds, moving in good company, desisting from evil and keeping the mind attached to the Glory of God. Good and bad cannot be kept together in the same place. The Sun once remarked that he had no enemies left and someone told him that there still was one – Darkness! Then, he sent his rays, the emissaries, to seek out the foe. But wherever they went, they only saw light and darkness was nowhere to be found. They returned and reported – there was no such thing as darkness upon the earth. So too, you must gain victory of good over bad within you by persisting vigorously in your spiritual practices.

26.02.2013

Keep your faith in the Lord undiminished. You can then safely move about in the world and no harm will come to you. When one loses one's way and strays into the wilderness, believing in the world, then the Avatars come to warn and guide. Your attitude must be like the village women, who carry pots of water in their heads, one over the other and keeping their balances even when talking and walking along a winding lane. They do not forget or ignore the burden or their goal and destination. They are always vigilant, conscious of the hardships on the way – the stones and the pits. It is the inner concentration that will pay you rich dividends!

27.02.2013

Do not be carried away by the cynicism of critics – that should serve only to encourage you. Examine the faults that may lie dormant in you and work sincerely to get rid of them. Do not merely give platform speeches on the excellence of qualities such as charity, service, sympathy, equality, secularism, etc. Descend from the platform and practise at least a few ideals sincerely. When your neighbour is in the throes of a serious illness, do not rest content with the idea that you are happily free. You are not free if even one is suffering or bound. Remember that the food you give to each living being reaches the Supreme Divine Himself, the service you do to any being, anywhere in the globe, fills the Lord with joy.

has poured into you nectar that grants immortality! Be grateful to the Lord for endowing you with powers of discrimination, detachment and evaluation.

24.02.2013

Make four resolutions about your life hereafter and live in joy. 1. Practise Purity - Desist from wicked thoughts, bad habits and mean activities that weaken your self-respect. 2. Do Service – Serve others, for they are the reflections of the same entity of which you yourself are another reflection. No one of you has any authenticity on your own, except with reference to your Creator, the Lord. 3. See Mutuality – Feel always the kinship with all creation. See the same current flowing through all objects in the Universe. 4. Live in Truth – Do not deceive yourself or others by distorting your experience.

25.02.2013

What do people know of the motives that prompt the Lord and His actions? Some found fault with Sage Narada for repeating the name of the Lord, always, without intermission. But until Sayujyam (merging in the Absolute), the name has to be used; the idea of separation will end only with mergence, not before that. Do not waver or doubt when once you are convinced. Seek to understand and satisfy yourself. After that, do not be misled. When the Sun is over your head there will be no shadow; similarly when faith is steady in your head it should not cast any shadow of doubt.

3.02.2013

A brahmin was once crossing a river bed, and some men were washing clothes. Finding a nice new silk shawl on his shoulder, they fell upon him in a group, shouting that it belonged to the palace and had been given to them to be washed, but had been stolen and not been traced. The poor brahmin screamed “Narayana, Narayana” when they rained blows on him. Immediately Lord Narayana rose from His seat, walked forward, stopped and returned to His seat! His surprised consort asked Him the reason for His strange behaviour. Lord Narayana said, “I wanted to help that poor brahmin who has fallen into a den of scoundrels, but he has started beating them blow for blow – My help is no longer needed!” Leaving everything to His will is truly the highest form of devotion and the easiest way to win His Grace.

4.02.2013

Spiritual discipline is more arduous than physical discipline. Imagine the tremendous amount of effort undergone by the lady who runs along a wire stretched across the ring underneath a circus tent. The gain is just a few rupees after all. The same steadfastness and systematic effort aimed at a higher reward can endow you with mental balance and you can maintain your equilibrium under the most adverse or the most testing circumstances. But for such spiritual achievements the intellect and other instruments of perception are more important than the limbs. The intellect is the key. Make the intellect the master of your mind and you will not fail. You will fail only when the senses establish mastery over the mind.

5.02.2013

There are three types of devotion: The Vihanga method, where like a bird swooping down upon the ripe fruit on the tree, the devotee is too impatient and by the very impatience one exhibits, loses the fruit, which falls from one's hold. The Markata method is akin to a monkey which grabs one fruit and then chooses another and tugs at that, giving way to unsteadiness as it is unable to decide which fruit it wants. So too, the devotee of this type hesitates and changes the goal much too often and thus loses all chances of success. The third and ideal type is the Pipeelika method, where like the ant, which slowly but steadily proceeds towards the sweetness, the devotee also moves directly, with undivided attention towards the Lord and wins His Grace.

6.02.2013

A child told its mother as it went to bed at night, "Mother, wake me up when I am hungry." The mother answered, "There is no need, your hunger will itself wake you up." So too, when the hunger for God arises, it will itself activate you to seek the fulfilment. God has endowed you with hunger and illness, and He provides the food and medicine. Your duty is to see that you get the right hunger and the right illness and use the appropriate food or drug! Man must be yoked to the world and broken; that is the training which will teach that the world is unreal. When you touch fire and get the sensation of burning, you withdraw your hand instantly. Unless you touch it, you will be aware only of its light. It is light and heat both; just as this world is both true and false, that is to say, unreal.

22.02.2013

The greatest obstacle in the path of surrender is egoism (ahamkaram) and Attachment or Possessiveness (mamakaram). This is ingrained in your personality since ages and its tentacles go deeper and deeper with the experience of every succeeding life. It can be removed only by the twin detergents of discrimination and renunciation. Devotion is the water to wash away this dirt of ages, and the soap of japam, dhyaanam and yoga (repetition of God's name, meditation and communion) will help to remove it quicker and more effectively. Slow and steady progress will surely win the race in this one; quicker means of travel can spell disaster. Proceed step by step in your spiritual practices - placing one steady step before you take the next. Do not waver or slide back two paces with one step forward. Cultivate deep faith - that will make your progress steady!

23.02.2013

Have you not heard the story of the lion suffering from a wound in the foot? A slave who was fleeing through the forest saw it and when he approached it with sympathy, the lion put out its paw. He then slowly pulled out the thorn that had caused all that pain and left the place, only to be arrested later and taken to Rome. There, they decided to throw him into the amphitheatre and let loose upon him a lion that had been recently captured. It was, however, the same lion which the slave had saved and so, its gratitude did not allow it to harm its saviour. See, even animals exhibit gratitude, not only the pet animals, but even the wild ones like the lion. Express your gratitude to the Creator who

systematic process of Sadhana (spiritual efforts) that you will reach and stay fixed in the state of that Truth; until then, you are likely to identify yourself with this body and forget that the body which casts a shadow is itself a shadow. The first step in that Sadhana is the adherence to Dharma (righteousness) in every individual and social act. The Dharma which is followed in relation to the objective world will automatically lead on to Dharma in the spiritual field also; only you must stick to it through thick and thin. Steadfastness is needed in the path of Righteousness. That alone is the sign of true surrender.

21.02.2013

In the present, practice of devotion, worship and rituals are for the sake of better comforts and more luxury for the individuals themselves. Devotion has degenerated into a business deal. Often one prays, "Please give me this, I shall give You so much." If they feel one shrine promises more, the current shrine is given up. If even in the new shrine, one does not get quick returns, then they quickly look elsewhere to some 'other' God who gives more profit! Many people wander in this manner. Some also think, "If I stand amongst many others, God will not notice me. I must stand in a unique position and shout to attract His attention!" Do not behave foolishly! Hold fast to noble ideals. Do not try to bring down the Almighty to your limited vision. Rise up, strengthen your detachment and establish yourself in discrimination, then your goal is brought nearer.

7.02.2013

A lame man and a blind man became friends and they moved from one place to another, with the lame man riding on the shoulder of the blind. One day, the lame man saw a field of yellow cucumber and suggested to the blind man that they pick a few and eat their fill. The blind man asked, "Brother, have they fenced the crop?" The lame man said, "No!" The blind man said, "Then let us move on, you know there are sweet and bitter varieties – if these vegetables are left unguarded – they must be bitter!" The blind man, by his intellect, was able to discover that they were bitter even without tasting them. He used the intelligence to perceive the truth faster and clearer. Make the intellect the Master of your mind and you will not fail; you will fail only when the senses establish mastery over the mind. Clarify your intelligence through spiritual discipline.

8.02.2013

A renunciant couple were once proceeding through a thick jungle on a pilgrimage to an inaccessible shrine. The husband saw on the footpath a precious stone, shining brilliantly when the Sun's rays fell upon it from between the leaves. He hastily threw some sand over it with the movement of his foot, so that his wife may not be tempted to pick it up and become a slave to the tinsel. The wife saw the gesture and chided the husband for still retaining in his mind, a distinction between sand and gold. For her, both were the same. This habit of judging and labelling others is a prevalent practice today. What can you know of the inner working of another's mind?

9.02.2013

You are as distant from the Lord, as you think you are; as near Him, as you feel you are. The distance from Me to you is the same as the distance from you to Me, is it not? You complain that I am far from you, though you are approaching nearer and nearer. How can that be? I am as near you, as you are near to Me! Nearness to the Lord is won by Devotion, which cannot be steady until you get rid of the feelings of 'I' and 'Mine'. Look upon joy and grief as teachers of hard-work and balance. Grief is a friendly reminder, a good taskmaster, even a better teacher than joy. The Lord grants both protection and punishment – for, how can He be the Lord, if He does not insist on strict accounting and strict obedience?

10.02.2013

A person once told Dr. Johnson, the famous English thinker, that he could seldom get time to recite the Name of God, what with the hundreds of things he had to do from morning till nightfall and even far into the night. Dr. Johnson replied with another question. He asked how millions of people found space to live upon the face of the earth, which is two-thirds water and the rest is too full of mountains, deserts, forests, icy regions, river beds, marshes and similar impossible areas. The questioner said that man somehow struggled to find living space. So too, said Dr. Johnson, man must somehow find a few minutes a day for prayer to the Lord. Keep the Name and Form of your choice ever in your consciousness. The Name must be as constant as breathing. And for this, practice is essential.

is the destiny of one and all, irrespective of age, scholarship, caste, creed, gender or status. When walking along the road, you can watch your shadow, falling on mud, dirt, thorn, sand, wet or dry patches of land. Has anyone ever worried or is affected by the fate of their shadow? No! Everyone knows that the experience of shadow is not eternal and real. So too, you are but the shadow of the Absolute. Internalize this truth – this is the only remedy for all sorrow, travail and pain.

19.02.2013

Wavering and indecisiveness will affect you, if you want to practice Righteousness. If you are not stabilized in the Knowledge of the Self, you will not have a good sense of direction for your actions, nor will you achieve true victory. That is why the Geetha lays so much emphasis on the necessity to know both the kshethra (field or the body) and the kshethrajna (the Knower in the body). Know both, and then, you are entitled to the title, Amrithasya Puthraah: "Children of Immortality." Through devotion to God alone, this knowledge can be attained. Devotion also purifies your heart and elevates your inner feelings and gives you a broad, universal vision and brings to you the Grace of God. Plants cannot rise up to drink the life giving fluid from clouds, hence the clouds come down and pour as rain.

20.02.2013

You must be convinced that 'you' are but the shadow of the Absolute. Of course, it is only at the end of a long and

love. Love knows no particular reason for its manifestation. Divine Love is akin to the love of the river for the sea, the creeper for the tree, the spring for the cliff down which it flows. It is an unchanging loving attitude, a desirable bent of the mind, standing steady through joy and grief, ever sweet - in good times and bad!

17.02.2013

Never once in the Mahabharatha did Dhuryodhana observe the principles of righteousness towards the Pandava brothers; at last, he had to face the inevitable doom, when Bheema challenged him for the duel which was to lay him low. At that moment, Dhuryodhana, the author of the deceitful gambling game, the house of lac which was set on fire, the insult heaped on the honoured Queen, the slaughterer of Abhimanyu by a pack of ferocious foes who fell upon him - the dark designer of all these iniquities, took refuge in Dharma and started quoting texts. Dharma is not a handy excuse to escape the evil consequences of one's actions. Righteousness is not to be treated as a means of escape; it is a means of living.

18.02.2013

God is Supreme Energy (Mahashakthi) and the individual is Deluding Power (Mayashakthi). In this impermanent and ever transforming world, God is the only permanent and fixed entity. In order to realize Him, who is eternal and true, one has no option but to attach oneself to that Source and Sustenance, and offer Him loving devotion and dedicated service. This path

11.02.2013

All of you are under the sentence of imprisonment in the world of birth and death (samsara). When a prisoner is taken from one place to another, he is accompanied by two constables. So too, when you move from one prison (body) to another, the constables, egoism (ahamkaram) and attachment (mamakaram) accompany you. In the prison, you have to do the work you are ordered to, and do it well. You cannot argue that rewards are not distributed justly, and also you are not entitled to desist from your allotted task. If you do, your sentence will be extended or you will be transferred to another jail. On the other hand, if you quietly accept the sentence and go about your work without clamour or murmur, your term will be reduced, you may be released! Become aware of your sentence, adopt good attitude and earnestly practise the means to set yourself free!

12.02.2013

Detachment (vairagya) is a result of the Lord's Grace; it needs years of yearning and struggle. Meanwhile begin today with the first step, which is cleansing of your mind and cultivation of virtues. Even if you are unable to start or follow these, at least do not laugh at those who do and discourage them. Do not depend upon others for doing your work or have someone attend to your personal wants. Do them yourself – that is the mark of being truly self-reliant and free! Never accept anything free from anyone. You must pay it back, in service or work. Thus, you will make yourselves self-respecting individuals. Receiving a favour means getting bound to the giver. Grow in

self-respect and dignity. That is the best service you can do to yourself.

13.02.2013

The Lord has declared in the Geetha, "Mama maaya" or "My illusion". This implies that the world is His handiwork, His Divine sport & glory (leela & mahima). It is devised as a training ground, an inspiration for those who desire to see Him, Who is its Source, Director, & Master. Once you see the world as the stage for His play, then you will no longer be misled, nor distracted, nor deceived by any tricks or stage effects. From illusion, you must get interested in the Author, the Master. The play is real only as long as it lasts, when you are in the theatre. So too, the world is just a mirage! A mirage does not originate from rain. It will not reach any lake or sea. It was not there before the sunrise, nor will it be there after the sunset. It is just an intervening phenomenon, it is best left alone! So too, God truly is more real than the world, this is the essence of Indian scriptures.

14.02.2013

The Lord is everyone's Father, in whose property each and everyone can claim a share. In order to get it, you must reach a certain stature; achieve a certain standard of intelligence. The infirm and the idiotic are not fit recipients of a worldly property. God's property is His grace and love. So, to attain a share of His property, you must have devotion and discrimination. With these two, you are entitled to claim your share of Grace,

which is your right. Bring with you devotion and take from the Lord, spiritual strength. This is a transaction that pleases Him. Bring to Him all you have – your sorrow and grief, worries and anxieties and take from Him, joy and peace, courage and confidence!

15.02.2013

The mother spends more time tending the sick child; she asks the older children to look after themselves but feeds the infant with her own hands. That does not mean that she has no love towards the grown-ups. So too, do not think that because God does not ostensibly shower attention on a person, that he or she is not receiving God's Love and Grace. In God's view, there is no one senior or junior amongst devotees. Note this also - in this Avatar (Divine Incarnation), the wicked will not be destroyed; they will be corrected, reformed, educated and led back to the path from which they have strayed. The white-ant infested tree will not be cut; it will be saved.

16.02.2013

Devotion to God is not to be calculated on the basis of the institutions one has started or helped, the temples one has built or renovated, the donations one has given, nor does it depend on the number of times one has written or recited the Names of the Lord, or the time and energy one spent in the worship of Lord. These are not vital - they are not even secondary! Devotion is Divine Love, unsullied by any tinge of desire for the benefit that flows from it or the fruit or consequence of that