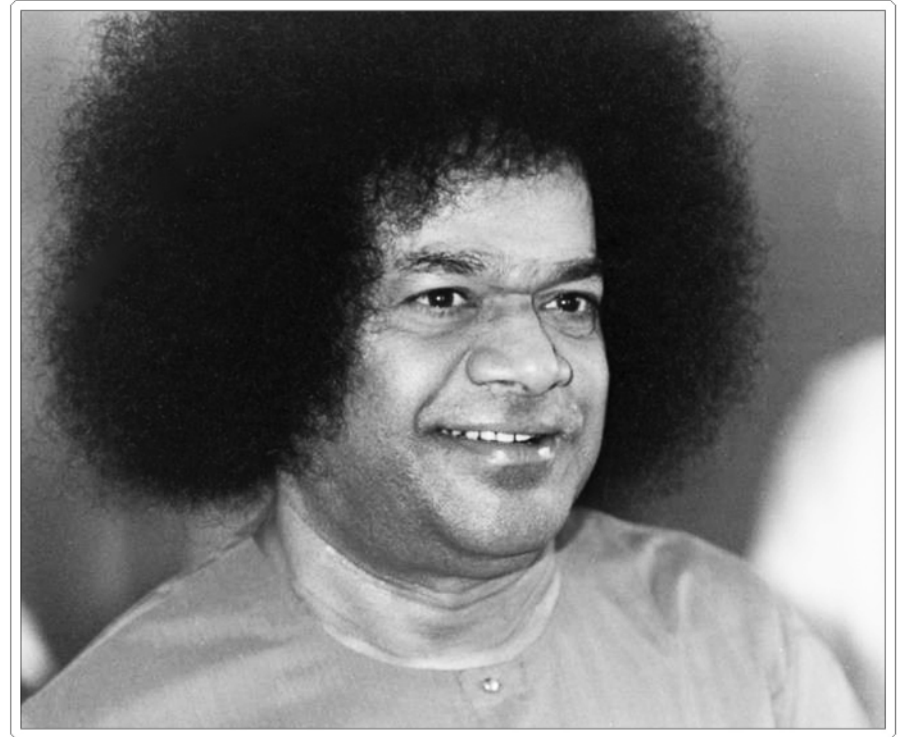


enrich your emotions and ennoble your actions. But you have lost your way; you are caught in a morass and are confused by mirages and dreams which you take as real; you run after false colours and cheap substitutes. Remember that everything is subordinated to that supreme task. The body should be fed and kept free from disease. Why? So that it may be fit for spiritual discipline. Spiritual discipline for what? For the realisation of the truth about oneself. The subtle is the basis for the gross; the Divine is the basis for the Human.

31.01.2013

God draws the individual towards Himself. It is the nature of both to have this mutual affinity; they are just like the iron and magnet. But if the iron is rusty, covered with layers of dirt, the magnet is unable to attract. Remove the impurities, then you will shine forth in your real nature and the Lord will draw you unto Him. Spiritual practices (Sadhana) should result in inner as well as external cleanliness. You do not feel refreshed if you wear unwashed clothes after your bath. Nor do you feel clean if you wear washed clothes, but skip taking bath. Hence, both are needed – the baahya (external) and the bhaava (internal). Trials and tribulations are the means by which this cleansing is done. They are like the dietary and other restrictions prescribed to supplement the effect of the drug of *Namasmarana* (remembrance of God).

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



Thought for the Day

(January 2013)

1.01.2013

Today we bid farewell to the year gone by and welcome the new year. We pray that the new spring should confer on all beings longevity, health and goodness. Pleasant experiences and unpleasant memories of the previous year that linger in the mind, contain many good lessons. When one reviews the past year within oneself, one can realise how much time was spent selfishly and how much in service. It is not good to keep quiet when there are people around in the society facing hardships. If need be, you should give up japa and sadhana (Spiritual practices), and uplift such people through service and sacrifice. You should feel that Jana Seva is Janaardhana Seva (service to people is service to God). Those who seek the joy of liberation should burn selfishness in the fire of jnana (spiritual wisdom).

2.01.2013

God will not be attracted by learning, wealth or material possessions. God is drawn only by devotion. Take to Him, any troubles you have – He will accept all of them and fill you with joy. God loves every devotee. He accepts you for who you are. He is aware of all the difficult situations, trials and tribulations you go through and your devotion to Him, which gives you so much happiness. However, this devotion alone is not enough. What is needed is the regulation of that Divine Love, in the form of virtue and service. Do not criticise others, rather criticize yourself. Have the Name of the Lord on your tongue and the Form of the Lord before your eye. If you shape yourself this way, the place where you live will be the holiest of all. Let all your activities be directed only towards this purification in your hearts. I bless each and every one of you with success, in this noble effort!

28.01.2013

You are the Formless (Niraakaaram) come in the form of Man (Naraakaaram), the Infinite, come in the role of the finite, the Formless Infinite appearing as the formful infinitesimal, the Absolute pretending to be the Relative, the Atma behaving as the body, the Metaphysical masquerading as the merely physical. The Universal Self is the basis of all being. The sky was there before houses were built under it; it penetrated and pervaded them for some time; then, the houses crumbled and became heaps and mounds; but, the sky was not affected at all. So too, the Atma pervades the body and subsists even when the body is reduced to dust.

29.01.2013

The proprietor of a coffee house goes to the nearby druggist for a pill to ward off his headache, but when the druggist gets a headache he goes to the coffee house for a cup of coffee, which he thinks will cure him. Tastes differ according to temperament and the character one has earned by generations of activity in this world. The Jnani (wiseman) says, ‘Sarvam Brahma mayam’ (Everything is Divinity); another, a yogi, says all is energy; a third, who is a devotee, says all is the play of the Lord. Each proclaims based on one’s taste and progress in the spiritual path. Do not hurry to ridicule anyone, for all of you are pilgrims, walking along the same road.

30.01.2013

You have come into the world to realise yourselves. You come fully equipped with all the instruments needed for that endeavour - *viveka*, *vairaagya* and *vichakshana* (discrimination, non-attachment and skill); and the urge to enlarge your love,

26.01.2013

The Lord's Grace is like rain - pure water, falling equally and consistently everywhere. However, the same rainwater's taste gets changed according to the soil through which it flows, and the container which holds it. So also, the Lord's words are sweet to some, bitter to others. The Lord's ways are mysterious. You do not know the real reasons behind the actions of the Lord. You cannot understand the motives of another man who like you has intentions, likes and dislikes. But yet, how easily you decide the motives of One who is far above your level! How glibly you talk and judge something that is as strange to you, as atmosphere is to a fish! All you must remember is that God is your eternal companion and watchman – Live with this steady faith in Him, adore Him, and seek His ever comforting creative presence always.

27.01.2013

Live with the consuming conviction that you are the Divine Self (Atma). This is the hard core eternal truth. The Atma it is, that sees through your eyes, hears through your ears, works through your fingers and moves through your feet. This true 'you' will not be elated by praise or deflated by blame. If someone carps at you, reason out thus within yourself: "Is he or she casting aspersions on my body? Well, why should I be worried then? Or are the abuses being addressed to the Atma? Nothing can affect its purity, or tarnish its glory. So remain calm and unperturbed." You may ask, what happens then to the strings of abuse? Like the letter sent by post and refused by the addressee, it returns to the sender

3.01.2013

So long as the consequence of Karma persists, you are bound to be born again and again to finish the consumption thereof. The slate of Karma has to be wiped clean so that your account of birth and death can be settled and closed with no balance. The Name of the Lord can light the spark of love within you to ignite the fire of Spiritual Wisdom, which will guide your mind towards this goal. Just as two branches of a tree, when grated one against another for some time generates enough heat to set the tree on fire, so too, continuous and sincere repetition of the names of the Lord will light the spark of wisdom within you. The holy Bhagavad Geetha says, Jnanagni dagdha karmanam - 'The flames of wisdom reduce to ashes the effects of all activities'; they do not affect one anymore just like a rope that has been reduced to ash can bind no more.

4.01.2013

Each heart is a Dharmakshethra (a warfield of righteousness), where there is a constant battle between the forces of good and evil. Why, the whole world is a Dharmakshethra. Hence it is very essential that every single child and mother, each and every one of you be devoted to Dharma (righteousness). The holy Bhagavad Gita begins with the word, 'Dharmakshethrae' and in the final chapter appears the phrase "Sarva Dharman Parithyajya", meaning 'give up all Dharma'. The significance of this is that through Dharma, you have to transcend Dharma. What is needed is the steadfast practice of righteousness. Scholarship and wealth are often burdens, they are indeed a handicap. Practice alone counts in spiritual matters.

5.01.2013

A little unpaid debt will soon assume huge proportions through high rates of interest; a karma (action) however trite, done with intention to benefit by the fruit thereof will involve future births in order to eat the fruit. The scriptures recommend one to wipe off all outstanding balances of Karma through three clear steps: First, the execution of actions righteously, with the right mental attitude (Karma-Jijnasa). Then comes the observance of moral codes for the upkeep of society and the discharge of one's duties and obligations (Dharma-Jijnasa). Finally, chanting the name of the Lord (Namasmarana) and considering it as one's primary spiritual practice (Brahma-Jijnasa). Take any name of the Lord that pleases you – the cleansing value, curative value and the sweetness is exactly the same. Namasmarana will make you stick to the thought of God.

6.01.2013

A hermit once met the Goddess of Cholera on the road, returning from a village where she had thinned the population. He asked her how many she had taken into her lap. She replied, "Only ten." But, truly speaking, the casualties were a hundred. She explained, "I killed only ten; the rest died out of fear!" Man is Aathmaswarupa (Self-embodied), that is, Abhayaswaruupa (Fearlessness-embodied). If only you know your real nature, you will give no room for weakness or cowardice. This is the main aim of culture - to cultivate mental calm and courage; to make everyone feel kinship with everyone else. You are born with the cry 'koham' (who am I?), on your lips; when you depart, you must have the declaration 'Soham' (I am He), on your smiling face.

24.01.2013

Often, in your ignorance, you feel small, you feel miserable, you feel that the wicked, greedy and cruel people are all happier than you and unjustifiably so. You are hurt and feel that it is unjust that you, who are so truthful, so loving, so virtuous, should suffer. Just ponder over this. Are they as happy as you imagine and is your condition, as bad as you portray it to be? Investigate for a minute, and you will know the truth yourself. External appearances are often like painted pots of poison. The hearts of people not adhering to Right Conduct know no peace – they are probably as miserable as you, if not more. Believe that Righteousness will never play false; it will ensure greater joy than can be gained through all other means.

25.01.2013

Once, Krishna and Arjuna were walking together, along a beautiful path. Seeing a bird in the sky, Krishna asked Arjuna, "Is that a dove?" Arjuna replied instantly, "Yes, it is a dove." A few seconds later, Krishna asked, "Arjuna, is that bird an eagle?" Arjuna responded, "Yes Krishna, it is an eagle." A few seconds later, Krishna asked, "Arjuna, this does not look like an eagle – it looks like a crow to me. Is it not?" Arjuna replied, "Yes Krishna, it is a crow beyond doubt!" Krishna laughed and chided him for agreeing with whatever suggestions He gave. Arjuna responded, "Krishna, for me, your words are far more trustworthy than the evidence of my eyes. When you say something, you have the power to make it so – be it a crow, dove or eagle. Hence, if you said it is a crow, it must be so!" Implicit Faith is the secret to spiritual success. Always remember that the Lord loves, not the devotee but the devotion.

22.01.2013

One may know the 700 verses of the Bhagavad Gita by heart, but trust Me, the time that was spent in learning by rote and reciting it, is all a waste, if one does not resolutely act upon even a single verse. It is not the resolution that matters; it is resoluteness. Resolution is just a string of words. In fact, that learning might even be a handicap as that skill can affect the head and make one swell with pride. The price of sugarcane is fixed according to the sugar content in it. You evaluate oranges in proportion to the juice they contain, is it not? So too, one is worthy of honour in proportion to the knowledge of the Self acquired. This knowledge alone can confer steadiness, strength and real happiness.

23.01.2013

When I sang the bhajan ‘Manasa Bhajare...’ I called on all those suffering in the endless round of birth and death to worship the feet of the Guru, the Guru that was announcing Himself, Who had come again for taking upon Himself the burden of those who find refuge in Him. That was the very first message of Mine to humanity! I said, ‘worship in your mind’. I do not need your flowers and fruits that you purchase for a small price. They are not genuinely yours. Give Me something that is yours, something which is clean, fragrant with the perfume of virtue and innocence, washed in tears of repentance. Garlands, fruits, etc. are an exhibition of your devotion. Some can afford it, the poor feel sorry that they cannot. Install the Lord in your heart and offer Him the fruits of your actions and the flowers of your innermost thoughts and feelings. That is the worship and expression of devotion God likes the most!

7.01.2013

Today you are like a mouse caught inside a Mridanga (Indian percussion instrument). When the player beats on the right, the mouse runs to the left – if the left is beaten, it runs in terror to the right. So too, you are running between God and World, reluctant to stick to God and at the same time, retreating from the denials and disappointments of worldly activity temporarily. Namasmara (Remembrance of the Lord’s Name) will make you stick to God persistently. A lost child, regains joy only when it finds its mother – so too you will attain joy only when you find God within you and merge in Him. The ocean drop that rose as vapour, joins the congregation called cloud, falls on earth, flows along the ravines, and at last reaches the ocean. Reach likewise the ocean you have lost.

8.01.2013

Great sages of the past, filled with immense sympathy for their fellowmen, laid down rules, regulations, limits and directions for daily life and conduct, so that one’s hand and brain, instincts and impulses may not turn against another, but may turn towards the ideals of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love. They declared that every action must be weighed in the balance and approved only if it cleanses the emotions and passions; it has to be cast aside if it curdles or fouls them. Bhaavashuddhi (purification of mental disposition) should be the fruit of every action. The worship of idols, rituals, vows and fasts, festivals and holy days - all these are designed to tame the wildness and train one to tread the straight path to self-realisation.

9.01.2013

You have immense capacities latent in you, waiting to be tapped and used. You have many talents that have to be brought to light. You feel the urge to love all beings, and to share your joy and grief with fellow beings; to know more and satisfy the curiosity of your intellect, to peep behind the awe and wonder that Nature arouses in you. You are able to gather information about all kinds of things from all comers of the world, but you are unaware of what happens in the comers of your own mind. You know who is who among all the rest, but you do not know the answer to the simple question, "Who am I?" Without knowing this, people go about rashly judging, labelling and even libelling others! Each one has to ask oneself and seek out the clue to this enigma of one's reality.

10.01.2013

Be eager and earnest to know more and more about the art of unperturbed happy living. One can advance only step by step and there is the danger of slipping down two steps when you climb one. What matters is the determination to climb, the resistance with which the tendency to slide is met, the yearning to rise, to progress, to conquer the lower impulses and instincts. If you have that, the hidden spring of power will surge up within you; the Grace of the Lord will smoothen your path. Keep the ideal before you; march on. Only those with ideals are respected and remembered with gratitude, for posterity

11.01.2013

Take failures and victory coolly. To do the latter is a very difficult mental exercise. In a running race, the losers, when running neck to neck, prompt the winners to run faster. They inspire the grit, to put in that extra pace which brings victory

20.01.2013

The silence you maintain in temples and devotional congregation must be carried over to wherever you go. It must be taken as an exercise in the control of the senses. Senses always are exterior oriented. The tongue should not talk evil. The eyes should not look out for evil. The ears should not seek evil. The presence of God in every being makes everyone holy. Thinking low of others amounts to thinking low of God. You must always cultivate the feeling that God is the Father and everyone around you are brothers and sisters. This brotherhood is more real and binding than the blood brotherhood, for here the paternal property for which you struggle can be shared without the share of the other being diminished in any way. Poornasya Poornamaadaaya Poomamevaavasishyate - When the Full is subtracted from the Full, what is left is still Full!

21.01.2013

Install a radio receiver, select the wavelength of the station you propose to listen to, and tune it correctly to that wavelength. You will then hear the radio program loud and clear, is it not? Your ear will tell you the accuracy with which you have tuned. Akin to this, you must enter into a course of spiritual discipline. Choose any mantra or incantation of the Lord that pleases you. Meditate on it and repeat it continuously with accurate care and steady attention; tune in to the Voice of God within you. Do not pay heed to the obstacles that come in the way, in the form of satire and criticism that people around you give freely. They may be experts only on short-lived trivialities of social life or sensual pleasure. Persist on your practices - your own experience will tell you the validity and value of this experiment!

reduced by the systems in your body to a congenial temperature of 98.4 degrees, you must keep the forces of your elemental passions in check and bring it down to tolerable levels, for congenial living.

18.01.2013

Take the ups and downs of life as natural. They are incidental to the world of compounds and components. When an empty plantain leaf is kept, it tends to move up in the wind and fly. But, when you serve dishes on it, the food and the leaf will remain unshaken. So too, fill your mind and heart with the virtues of faith, steady discipline, devotion, detachment and equanimity - these are items of the spiritual menu. Then you will not sink with every blow. When you have attained true wisdom, you will find that good fortune should not be gloated over, nor bad fortune grieved over. A hero treats both with equal unconcern. Pain and Gain are breezes and storms that cannot affect the depths of the ocean of bliss in the heart of a true devotee.

19.01.2013

Unaware of your Divine Status, you revel in low company, you toil and sweat as the slave of mean passions, which drag you into disgrace. Be the royal heir that you really are! Be like the lotus, which though born in the slush at the bottom of the lake, through its sheer will-power, rises above the waters, to see the Sun and be inspired by its rays. The lotus discards contact with water, though it is born and bred in that element. So too, you should avoid being attached to the elemental passions! How long are you to sit content with the minor role of a clown or a clout? Have you no ambition? Why smother your genuine talents under a self-imposed mask? Quit the zero roles today and take on the role of the Hero and shine! This is your right!

to the winners. Hence, winners must actually be thankful to the losers for their victory. Those who did not win, I ask you not to lose your self-confidence. Never attach too much value to victory and defeat. All of you are born for far greater things than winning mundane races and competitions. Your destiny does not depend upon a game or an examination – it depends more upon your character, your will power and the grace of God.

12.01.2013

Every being needs love, every being inhales and exhales Love. Love is the very breath of life; each and every one of you are embodiments of Love. Love knows no fear, and so, love needs no falsehood to support it. It is only fear, that makes people warp the face of truth, to make it pleasant for those whom they fear. Love seeks no reward, love is its own reward. Even a small trace of greed for gain (vishaya vasana) degrades love into a bargain over the counter. Love removes all egoism; the self is transcended, forgotten and superseded when there is love. When such pure Love is directed towards the Lord, it is called *Bhakthi* (Devotion).

13.01.2013

To observe a very small particle, you need a microscope; to see a remote object clearly, you need a telescope. These are yantras or instruments. The instruments that help you visualise the Core that has such contradictory attributes of being minuter than the minutest and more magnificent than the most magnificent, are called Mantras - formulae that save you when you meditate on them. They are also called Tantras (ceremonies and rites) when their practical application has to be emphasised. Faith

in the efficacy of these Mantras, in the utility of the procedure prescribed, and in the existence of the Core - all of these are essential for success in the great adventure of acquiring the ultimate knowledge; just as faith in the efficacy of the instrument, in the correctness of the procedure, and in the existence of the material one is seeking to know more about, are essential for the scientist.

14.01.2013

Spend your time in the contemplation of the bounty and beauty of Nature spread out before you on earth and sky - green expanses of the crops, cool breezes that waft contentment and joy, the panorama of coloured clouds, the music of the birds and so on. Sing the glory of the Lord as you walk along the path, amidst the fields, the banks and the waterways. Do not talk hatefully in the midst of all this evidence of love; do not get angry, in these placid surroundings; do not disturb the sky with your shouts and curses. Do not pollute the air with vengeful boasts. A seedling needs water and manure to grow and yield rich harvest. The tiny sapling of spiritual yearning for liberation also needs you to do these - set right your habits, purify your conduct and cleanse your behaviour.

15.01.2013

Everyone has to achieve moksha (liberation), whether one is striving for it now or not. It is the inevitable end to the struggle, the goal to which all are proceeding. But, please do not be afraid of reaching the goal of liberation. Well, how do you prepare yourself for the stage? The answer is in that very word Moksha, itself. It is self-explanatory. 'Mo' indicates Moha, that is delusion or being deluded by attractive but transitory

trash; and ksha stands for kshaya, disappearance or decline. In other words, to attain liberation one must keep the flights of your mind away from these deluding attractions, and focus on the straight path towards liberation.

16.01.2013

Pure love alone can carry out successfully projects of service and welfare. Love creates sympathy; Love will show the way where hatred creates complexities. When a toddler is learning to walk, love will place no obstacles on the path. On the other hand, it will encourage, welcoming each forward step and overlooking each fall. Unfortunately, many a beneficial ventures are laid barren because of harsh criticism and wanton disparagements. Noble works must be executed with lots of love. True devotion alone can transform people's hearts and lead them in the path of Truth and Right Conduct. Any trace of greed for gain degrades love. That is why a child is all love as it has no attachment to the goods of the world.

17.01.2013

Desire makes one crave for sabdha (sounds), sparsha (touch), rupa (form), rasa (taste), gandha (smell) - the qualities of the five Elements that constitute the body. One is prompted by the element of Space present within to seek sweet sounds that satisfy the ear; by the element of Air within, to run after smooth and soft things that yield pleasure to the skin, by the element of Fire to pursue things that are beautiful and appealing to the eye; the Water element makes one crave for food and drink that are tasty to the tongue, and the element of Earth urges one to cater to the nose, by trying to enjoy pleasant smells. Just as the high temperatures from the Sun is controlled, modulated and