happiness from happiness (Na sukhat labhyate Sukham). It is only through suffering can you derive happiness. To make your life happy, you must undertake selfless service. The ancient culture is most preserved in villages than in cities and towns. Hence, go to villages, find out their needs and alleviate their suffering. Hands that serve are always holier than lips that pray. (Divine Discourse 1 Jan 2004)

31.12.2015

These are the two chief enemies of every spiritual aspirant: Conceit (that you know everything) and Doubt (Is it or is it not). Simply decide to be firmly fixed in your reality. If that is pure, everything is pure. If that is true, everything is true. If you wear blue eyeglasses, you see only blue, even though Nature is resplendent with many colours. So too, if the world appears to you as full of differences, that is due only to the fault in you. If all appears as one love, that too is only your love. The feelings within you, is the cause in both situations. The question that may arise next is whether the Lord has faults, for He too identifies faults. The Lord only searches for goodness in a devotee, not faults and sins. Your assessment of the Lord is dependent on your feelings. The Lord showers grace on those endowed with righteousness, irrespective of race, wealth and gender. (Prema Vahini, Ch 46)

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Thought for the Day

(December 2015)

1.12.2015

The almanac might indicate that ten units of rain will fall, but even if you fold that news sheet ten times and squeeze, not a drop of rain can be extracted. Almanac's purpose is to give information about rain. Rain is in the clouds above. After learning from scriptures, if you immerse yourself in spiritual practice, then the world and its worries will not affect you. It is only when you are far from practice that you experience suffering and feel pain. As you approach the marketplace, you hear a huge indistinct uproar. But when you enter it, you can clearly distinguish each conversation. So too until the reality of the Supreme (Paramatma) is known to you, you are overpowered and stunned by the uproar of the world! But when you practice sincerely, everything becomes clear and the Divine reality awakens within you. Until then, you will be caught up in the meaningless noise of argumentation, disputation, and exhibitionist flamboyance. (Prema Vahini, Ch. 16)

2.12.2015

I have often said, "My Life is My Message". Avatars make such a proclamation only to demonstrate their Divinity. They are children among children, men among men, and women among women, so that they may respond to everyone's joy and sorrow, console them and infuse confidence and courage into their drooping hearts. Avatars appear among humans since birds, beasts, trees, etc. have not slid into unnatural ways. It is only human beings pursuing the mirage of worldly happiness and sensual pleasure, who have forgotten the task for which they came to earth. God assumes human form only to restore Dharma and lead you back into the path of virtue and

29.12.2015

Can a donkey carrying perfume or a bundle of sandalwood become an elephant? It can appreciate the weight but not the scent! The elephant pays no regard to the weight; it inhales the sweet scent, right? So too, the spiritual aspirant, or devotee will take in only the pure truth, the pure essence of good activities, of Godliness, and of the scriptures. On the other hand, one who goes on arguing for the sake of mere scholarship, learning, and disputation will know only the weight of logic, missing the scent of truth! Many in the world utilise their vast learning in disputations and believe they are superior; this is a great mistake. If they really were so learned, they would assume silence as the honourable course. For those in search of the essence, the burden is no consideration. If mere reason is employed, nothing worthwhile is gained. Love is the one big instrument for the constant remembrance of the Lord. Keeping that instrument safe and strong needs no other appliance than the scabbard of discrimination (viveka). (Prema Vahini, Ch 44)

30.12.2015

People today crave for material comforts and luxury (bhoga). From bhoga, you will only get rogha, diseases! Understand that money is of no help in developing good qualities. Sacrifice alone can develop noble qualities within you. Indeed through sacrifice (thyaga), you can get bliss and eternal joy (yoga). Many people shift to cities in pursuit of comfort and luxuries, and find themselves in multitude of difficulties and sorrow. This is their own making. In fact, city life defiles true culture in all possible ways and you can never obtain

punish you some day. Pleasure and pain are the products of your own making. The merit or sin you commit, follows you like a shadow always. Many today give sermons to others, without following their own advice. What value will your advice have? Whenever you read or listen to a noble thought, it is of no value to you, until you practice it assiduously. Help your fellow human beings atleast in a small measure. You will be helped in return, when you need it most. Never blame others for the difficulties you face. Never abuse anyone. Love all and treat everyone as your brothers and sisters. (Divine Discourse 1 Jan 2004)

28.12.2015

Look at the blossoms in the garden! When the gardener plucks the flowers, the buds exult that tomorrow is their turn to be gathered into the gardener's hands, and their faces are full of joy when they unfold in that hope. Do they feel any sadness? Do their faces droop? Are they any the less bright? No. The moment they know that the next day is their turn, they make themselves ready with great gusto and excitement. In the same way, you must be ready on the path of spiritual practice! Enthusiastically remember the name of the Lord every minute, without worrying and feeling sad that your turn is tomorrow or because someone died today. For people who transformed themselves into spiritual aspirants, their mind (manas) is Mathura, the birthplace of Lord Krishna), their heart is Dwaraka (Lord Krishna's playground), and their body is Kashi (holiest land of Lord Shiva). (Prema Vahini, Ch 43)

wisdom! Hence God is pleased with the rigorous adherence to Dharma. Practice righteousness, it will fill every moment of your life with bliss and the joy of self-realisation. God is everywhere. He is all-powerful. He sees everything. He resides in every heart and listens to every agony and prayer. Have faith in God. (Divine Discourse, Nov 1970)

3.12.2015

The Lord is attained only through supreme devotion (para-bhakthi). Supreme devotion can be acquired only through spiritual wisdom (jnana). Spiritual wisdom can be cultivated only through faith (sraddha), and faith comes only through love. So how is love to be cultivated? Through two methods: 1. Always consider the faults of others, however big, to be insignificant and negligible. Always consider your own faults, however insignificant and negligible, to be big, and feel sad and repentant. By these means, you avoid developing bigger faults and defects, and acquire the qualities of brotherliness and forbearance. 2. Whatever you do, with yourself or with others, do it remembering that God is omnipresent. He sees, hears and knows everything. Discriminate between the true and the false, and speak only the truth. Discriminate between right and wrong, and do only the right. Endeavour every moment to be aware of the omnipotence of God. (Prema Vahini, Ch 19)

4.12.2015

The individual 'I' believes it is limited; but that is an illusion. It is the same Universal Spirit, imagining itself to be limited. This awareness can come to you either through

a flash of intellectual analysis or a flash of Universal Love. The awareness is an act of identification which requires Love. Love is God; Love is the means and end. That is why there are no atheists for there is no being without love of some kind or other. And love of any kind, of any measure, is but a spark of Divinity. Love knows no fear, it promotes truth, it finds peace, it builds faith, and it promotes concord. To develop love, the easiest, highest and the most fruitful sacrifice is that of the ego. Crucify it and be free. Dedicate it to God, and be rich and happy beyond all your imagination. (Divine Discourse, Nov-1970)

5.12.2015

The body is the temple of the individual (jiva), so whatever happens in that temple is the concern of that individual. So too the world is the body of the Lord, and all that happens in it, good or bad, is His concern. From the observed fact of the relationship between the individual and the body, know the truth of the unobservable relationship of the Lord and creation. The relationship of the individual (jiva) and the Lord, the kinship between the two, can be grasped by everyone who acquires three chief instruments: (1) a mind unsullied by attachment and hatred, (2) a speech unsullied by falsehood and (3) a body unsullied by violence. Joy and peace do not reside in external objects; they are within you. But in your foolishness, you search for them outside yourself, in a world from which, today or tomorrow, you are bound to depart. Therefore, wake up now! Try to know the essence of the eternal truth. Try to experience the love that is God Himself. (Prema Vahini, Ch 19)

to the God within, in every thought, word and deed. The best way to resolve the confusions and conflicts that hamper moral, ethical, material, technological and spiritual progress is for man to live as fully as man ought to, and rise to the height of the Divine that is his Reality. (Divine Discourse 24 Dec 1980)

26.12.2015

Look at the fish! Living as it does perpetually in water, has it rid itself of its foul smell to any extent? No. Inclinations (vasanas) won't disappear as long as one's heart is full of the illusion of egotism, even if one is immersed in many heart-purifying spiritual disciplines. If you really want to get rid of the feeling of "I" and "mine", you must transform yourself and worship the Lord (Hari), without any likes and dislikes. Just as light and darkness can never coexist at the same place, love and hatred can't coexist in the same heart. You experience joy and misery through the ear. Therefore as a spiritual aspirant, avoid the cruel arrows of hard words. Instead use sweet, pleasant and soft words suffused with truth. Speaking softly by adding falsehood will bring you misery. You can recognise a true spiritual aspirant through their good qualities. (Prema Vahini, Ch 43)

27.12.2015

Develop the quality of love. Do not hate anyone. Develop the faith that whatever happens to you is good for you. Think that whenever you encounter any difficulty or suffering, you alone are responsible for it. On the other hand, if you insult anyone knowingly or unknowingly, that someone else may

24.12.2015

God is the Eternal Power, omnipotent and omniscient. He is the cause and consequence - the potter, the clay and the pot. Without God, there is no Universe. God willed and the Universe happened, as His play, a manifestation of His power. Human beings embody His Will, His power, His Wisdom. But, they are unaware of this glory as the cloud of ignorance veils the Truth. Hence God sends saints and prophets, and even appears as an Advent to unveil the Truth, and to awaken and liberate mankind. Two thousand years ago, when narrow pride and thick ignorance defiled mankind, Jesus came as the embodiment of love and compassion, and lived amongst people, holding forth the highest ideals of life. 'Christmas' truly means the 'Mass, held on the birthday of Christ'. It is a very sacred religious rite. To deal with it as a festival for drinking and dancing is very wrong. Spend Christmas in prayer. (Divine Discourse 24 Dec 1980)

25.12.2015

As you celebrate Christmas today, bring to your mind the teachings, advice and warnings that Jesus gave and decide to direct your daily life on that path. His words must be imprinted on your hearts and you must resolve to practise all that He taught. You must pay attention to the lessons he elaborated in the various stages of his life. 'I am the Messenger of God,' he declared, first. Yes. Each individual has to accept that role and live as examples of Divine Love and Charity. The Guru must act as the alarm-clock; he should awaken the sleeper to one's duty to oneself. "Uththishtha! jaagratha," as the Upanishads proclaim - "Arise! Awake." And bear witness

6.12.2015

The Lord descends now and then to uplift the downtrodden and to reestablish righteousness (dharma). Clearly grasp this truth. Many who read the Bhagavad Gita take it that the Lord incarnates when dharma is 'destroyed' and when the forces of unrighteousness (adharma) begin to prevail. This is incorrect; The Gita does not say nor is there any basis to draw the conclusion that dharma gets destroyed. The word used is 'diminish' (glaani); that is to say, when the indications are that dharma is in danger, "The Lord will come to protect dharma from harm." Lord Krishna did not say that He will come down to protect and preserve it after dharma has been destroyed! Of what use is a doctor after life has left? So too, the Lord will rush when the practice is declining or weakening. The protection of dharma is the task of the Lord, for dharma is the very breath of every soul (jivi). (Dharma Vahini, Ch 6)

7.12.2015

Everyone, be they learned or illiterate, should feel an overwhelming urge to know God. God has equal affection toward all His children, for to illumine is the nature of light. Utilising that illumination, some choose to read good books while others do their daily tasks, whatever they are! Similarly uttering God's name, one can progress in the realisation of God, another may choose to do wicked deeds! It all depends on how you choose to use the light. But the Lord's name is without blemish, always and forever. God's name must be recited and listened to. For some ailments medicines are prescribed for external application while for others, they are

to be consumed. But for this universal ailment of the cycle of birth and death (bhava-roga), the medicines prescribed are listening to spiritual discourses (sravana), singing God's name (kirtana), and the like. (Prema Vahini, Ch 21)

8.12.2015

In ancient times, people never gave up the practice of Dharma even when threatened with death at the point of the sword. Now without even the slightest pressure from others, people slide down and fall into unrighteousness (Adharma). Practicing Dharma is not an ordinary affair. The one who does not practice dharma is as bad as dead; one who practices it is of the divine nature. Presently there is an urgent need to turn people onto the dharmic path through the traditional methods of counselling with good advice, sharing with them the attractive consequences of following the path, threatening to dissociate from those who do not, and inflicting punishment as a last resort. You should derive the greatest possible benefit from dharma and while following it, avoid causing any injury to yourselves or others. You must spread the glory of dharma by making yourself a shining example of the peace and joy it gives. (Dharma Vahini, Ch 5)

9.12.2015

People have taught the eye, ear, and tongue the luxury of constant novelty. Now do the opposite. Turn your mind towards the good and examine every minute's activities. Each deed is a chisel stroke shaping the rock of human personality. A wrong stroke may disfigure the rock. Therefore even the

goal of merging with the absolute. Every bird needs two wings to fly; a cart needs two wheels to be pulled along. To journey towards the highest goal, you need both faith and steadfastness - spiritual learning (vidya) and penance (tapas). Bhagavad Gita states, Knowledge of the Self (Atma Vidya) is the holiest. Knowledge (Vidya) shows the way, and the penance (tapas) makes you reach the goal. Both are necessary to attain the Ultimate. (Divine Discourse, 24 Dec 1980)

23.12.2015

Embodiments of Divine Love! Wherever you may be, never give room for any differences. Everyone must get rid of all selfishness, self-interest and self-centeredness. Mutual regard (Mamatha), equipoise (Samatha) and forbearance (kshamatha) are basic qualities necessary for every human being. Hence develop love, forbearance and compassion. Realise that love is present in everyone. Get rid of all differences and adhere to your faith and traditions. Learn to live in love and harmony with all the members of your society. When differences of all kinds are given up, love will grow in you and you can have a direct vision of God. Without love, verbal prayers are of no avail. Divine love is the only unifier, motivator and harbinger of joy to everyone. God is love and God can be realised only through love. All saints and religions have emphasized the greatness of love, truth, sacrifice and unity. Therefore cultivate love. (Divine Discourse 24 Dec 1980)

21.12.2015

Follow at least one of the nine modes of devotion (Sravanam, kirtanam, etc.). It doesn't matter how wealthy or learned you are; God is concerned only with the sincerity and purity of your mind and heart and the wholeheartedness and genuine nature of your love. Valmiki was a hunter. Nandanar was of a low caste. Kuchela was a poor man. Dhruva and Prahlada were five-year-old lads. Sabari was a tribal woman, illiterate and uncivilized. But all of them won God's Grace in abundance, because of their wholehearted devotion, love and surrender. Follow Sabari's example, who always thought of Sri Rama and His happiness, and dedicated all her thoughts, words, and deeds to Him alone, such that her every action was transformed and sublimated into the highest penance (tapas). Meditation does not mean sitting idle in a particular posture, like posing for a photograph. Like Sabari's life, your life must become a continuous meditation wherever you are, and whatever you do. (Summer Showers 1990, Ch 16)

22.12.2015

What does it mean when you say God descends as an Avatar? God out of His love, affection and compassion, comes down to the level of a human being and arouses the Divine Consciousness in humankind. When God finds that many people are desperately searching outside of themselves for God, He makes you aware of God within yourself. God is in fact the core in everyone. This chance, to realize God within, has been granted to you as a reward for merit acquired by you in many previous lives, so as to reach the highest

tiniest of acts must be done with great care and devotion. For a drowning person, even a reed is some support. So too to a person struggling in the sea of inborn desires (samskara), a few kind words might be of great help. No good deed is a waste; every bad deed has its consequence. So strive to avoid the slightest trace of evil activity. Keep your eyes pure. Fill your ears with stories of Divine; don't allow them to listen to calumny. Use your tongue for uttering good, kind, and true words. Let it always remind you of God. Such constant effort will grant you victory. (Prema Vahini Ch 27)

10.12.2015

Just as the woman should consider one person and one person alone as her master and husband, the man too has to be faithful to one woman and one woman alone, as his mate, his wife. She has to consider the husband as Divine and worship him and minister to and follow his desires for the fulfilment of her duty of loyalty to the husband (pativrata); so too, man should honour his wife as the 'mistress of the home' and act in accordance with her wishes, for she is the Grihalakshmi (Goddess of prosperity of the home). Only then can he deserve the status of 'man'. Name and fame, honour and dishonour, vice and wickedness, good and bad are all equal and uniform to both men and women. There is no such thing as woman alone being bound and men being free; both are equally bound by the rules of dharma. Both will fall into adharma if they conduct themselves without due consideration of the attributes mentioned above. (Dharma Vahini, Ch 6)

11.12.2015

The net result of all this living and toiling is whatever comes to memory at the last moment of life. Therefore direct the entire current of life towards acquisition of the mental tendency (samskara) that you want to have during the last moment. The feeling that dominates the moment of death works with great force in the coming life. This truth must guide a person for the journey of this life too, for inborn desires are the wherewithal for this journey as well as for the journey after this. Therefore from tomorrow, always keep death, which is inevitable, before the eye of memory and engage yourself in the journey of life with good wishes for all, with strict adherence to truth, seeking always the company of the good, and with the mind always fixed on the Lord. Avoid evil deeds, hateful and harmful thoughts, and don't get attached to the world. If you live thus, your last moment will be pure, sweet, and blessed. (Prema Vahini, Ch 27)

12.12.2015

Have the Lord's name within and the practice of your duty (swadharma) without. Even while engaging in selfless service, let your mind repeat the Lord's Name. When rains pour on the mountain peaks and the water hurries down on all sides, no river emerges therefrom. However when the waters flow in a single direction, first a brook, then a stream, then a torrent, and finally a river is formed, and the rains reach the sea. Water that runs in one direction reaches the sea; water that flows in four directions soaks in and is lost. Mental tendencies (samskaras) are like this. Of what use

spiritual discipline (sadhana). In the early stages of spiritual discipline, the distinction between worshiper and worshiped is full, but as the spiritual discipline progresses, this feeling diminishes and, when attainment is reached, there is no distinction whatsoever. Irrespective of the object of worship one has grasped, loved and sought by spiritual discipline, one should have firm faith that the individual self (jivatma) is the supreme Lord (Paramatma). There is only one wish fit to be entertained by the aspirant: the realisation of the Lord (Iswara Sakshatkara). There is no room in the mind for any other wish. (Prema Vahini, Ch 39)

20.12.2015

Temple worship, company of sages, adoration of the Lord and recital of His name - these are external sources of light. Meditation, austerity and reflection (dhyana, tapas and manana) — these are sources of inner illumination. Devoid of both, how can you experience the vision of divine glory? Once Tulsidas Goswami declared, "Do you require light inside the house as well as outside? If yes, then place the lamp on the doorstep!" So too, if you desire to experience the illumination of peace (shanti) within you and also spread it out, then place the name of the Lord on the tongue, which is the doorstep of your personality! The lamp on the tongue will not flicker, fade, or be put out by any storm. It will confer peace on you as well as on all whom you meet - in fact, the entire world." Therefore, for your salvation, evoke the vision of the form with the Lord's name on your tongue. (Dharma Vahini, Ch 12)

song. It spreads love, without distinction and difference. It is service done as the duty of the individual. Be engaged in such noble actions (karmas). Revel uninterruptedly in the thought of the Lord. This is the royal road to the goal you have to reach. (Prema Vahini Ch 29)

18.12.2015

Lord of Death (Yama) is as omnipresent as Lord Siva! Yama is associated with the body (deha); He cannot affect the individual soul (jiva). Siva is associated with the individual soul, but He won't allow the body to subsist for any length of time. The body is the essential vehicle for the individual soul to understand its real nature. Still who knows when the body may become the target for the attention of Yama? The individual soul, burdened with this destructible body, must grasp the above-mentioned caution and be all-eager to merge in Siva! No single moment that is passed by can be turned back. People usually delay doing some things; yesterday's till today and today's till tomorrow. For the tasks of spiritual discipline, there is no yesterday and no tomorrow. This very moment is the moment! The minute that just elapsed is beyond your grasp; so too, the approaching minute is not yours! Only those who have this understanding engraved in their heart can merge in Siva. (Prema Vahini, Ch 40)

19.12.2015

The attitude of the worshiper and the worshiped is the seed of devotion (bhakthi). First, the worshiper's mind is attracted by the special qualities of the object of worship. The worshiper tries to acquire these special qualities. This is

are they if they merely come and go, this way today and that way tomorrow? The holy stream of good inborn desires must flow full and steady along the fields of holy thoughts and finally abide in the great ocean of bliss at the moment of death. (Prema Vahini, Ch 28)

13.12.2015

To fix your mind on God, activities must be controlled. To successfully control them, you should overcome the handicaps of the gunas - satwa, rajas, and tamas. When these forces of natural impulse predominate and try to direct along their channels, you must pray to God to negate their pull. That is the first duty of a good devotee. The rule of nature is that the morning is the period of pure (satwic) quality, the noon of passionate (rajasic) quality, and the evening hour of dusk of dull (tamasic) quality. At dawn, the mind is calm and clear when awakened from the comfort of sleep liberated from agitations and depressions. In that mental condition, meditation on the Lord is very fruitful. This is the purpose of morning prayers (pratah-sandhya). But, ignoring the significance, people do rituals in a blind mechanical way. From now on perform the dawn worship after realising its inner and deeper meaning. (Dharma Vahini, Ch 7)

14.12.2015

Twenty hammer strokes might not succeed in breaking a stone, but the twenty first might. Does this mean the first 20 blows were of no avail? No! Each stroke contributed its share to the final success which was the cumulative effect of all 21 strokes. So too, your mind is engaged in a struggle

with the internal and external world. Needless to say, you may not always succeed. You can attain everlasting bliss by immersing yourself in good works and saturating your mind with the love of God. Infuse every moment of life with that love. Then evil tendencies will not obstruct you. When your mind dwells with the Lord always, you will be drawn automatically only toward good deeds. The objective of all spiritual practices is to destroy the mind, and some day, one good deed will succeed in destroying it, just like the 21st stroke. Hence no good deed is a waste - every little act counts! (Prema Vahini, Ch 28)

15.12.2015

As your day progresses, as one enters the field of daily work and toil, you are infused with the passionate quality (rajoguna). Before you take your lunch, meditate on the Lord again and dedicate the work, and the fruit derived from it to the Lord Himself. Start eating only after this act of devotion and grateful remembrance. This is the meaning of the noon (maadhyannika) worship. By observing this ritual, passion is kept in check and is overpowered by the satwic nature. During the day, people are possessed by a third nature, tamas or dullness. When evening descends, one hurries home, eats one's fill, and is overpowered by sleep. But a duty still remains. To eat and sleep is the fate of idlers and drones. When the worst of the qualities, tamas threatens to rule, one must make a special effort to escape its coils by resorting to prayer in the company of those who extol the Lord, reading about the glory of God, the cultivation of good virtues, and

the purposeful nursing of good rules of conduct. This is the prescribed evening worship (sandhyavandana). (Dharma Vahini, Ch 7)

16.12.2015

While struggling in the spiritual field, take on the Lord Himself as your protector. To instill courage in the child, the mother persuades it to walk a few steps and turns about, but she will never allow it to fall. If the child falters and is about to lose balance, she hurries from behind and catches it before it falls. The Lord too has His eyes fixed on the individual (jivi). He has in His hand the string of the kite, which is humanity. Sometimes He may give it a pull or push to loosen the hold; but whatever He does, be confident and carefree, for He is holding that string. This faith will harden into an innate desire (samskara) and will fill you with the essence of love (prema-rasa). The string is the bond of love and grace. You are the kite, bound to the Lord. Earn auspicious merit so the bond of love and grace is firm and grows. (Prema Vahini Ch 29)

17.12.2015

The inborn desires and mental impressions (samskaras) make or mar the individual (jivi); they are the steps that take all individual souls to the goal. Samskaras make the individual wade through loss and grief. Only through good mental tendencies you can attain the Lord. So every individual has to be wholly engaged in good actions (sath-karmas). Good and noble action is authentic worship (puja). It is the best form of remembering the Lord. It is the highest devotional