

## Divine Love is True Religion

*At the time of birth, all human beings are pure and undefiled. It is only the environment and company that pollutes the human mind. Follow the dictates of your conscience. Love and equanimity are the birthrights of man.*

(Poem in Telugu)

At the time of birth, human heart is pure, selfless and steady. But with the passage of time, man loses his purity on account of his association with various individuals. Significance of Satsang  
The environment and company are mainly responsible for the good or bad in man. A piece of paper does not have any smell of its own. But if the same paper is used to pack Pakodas or dry fish or jasmine flowers, it produces the smell associated with them. The paper is without any smell of its own. It gets the smell of the article it is associated with. That is why it is said, "Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are." As is your company, so you become. So, you should always join good company. You can attain any exalted position with the help of good company. All men are good by birth, it is their bad company that wrecks them. Today man is not making any enquiry as to what is good and what is bad. Such an enquiry is very essential before making friendship with others. Adi Sankara declared:

*Satsangatwe Nissangatwam,  
Nissangatwe Nirmohatwam,  
Nirmohatwe Nischala Tattwam,  
Nischaltattwe Jeevanmukti*

(One attains detachment by good company, and by detachment one can get rid of delusion. Freedom from delusion confers the state of equanimity, and equanimity leads to liberation.)

Satsang (good company) helps you to attain sense control. 'Sat' is that which is permanent and eternal. In this world, everything is transitory. Only Divinity is permanent. Your feelings will become noble and pure only when you associate yourself with Divinity. First and foremost, recognise the fact that bad company is the root cause of man's downfall.

Man wants to accomplish many things in life, but is inhibited by the sense of fear lurking in his mind. It is only the association with God that can make man fearless. Every flower that blossoms does not become a fruit. Every fruit that a tree bears may not become ripe. But every ripened fruit is bound to fall down from the tree. The same can be said about human life too. Man develops desires and indulges in undesirable practices which ultimately lead to his downfall.

## Human Body is for Experiencing Divine Love

Man has invented wonderful machines, which can even take him to the moon, but the most wonderful and mysterious of all the machines is the human body itself, which is God's creation. God has gifted this wonderful machine to man not merely for eating, drinking and making merry. All these are common for animals also. This being the case, what is so unique about human birth? *Deho Devalaya Prokto, Jeevo Deva Sanathana* (body is the temple and the indweller is God). You may own a car, but it will be of use only if you know how to drive it. Otherwise, you

may expose yourself to grave danger. Likewise, you should know how to make proper use of your body.

Today man is deluded by attachment. He is unable to realise the sacredness of human body. He is putting it to gross misuse by indulging in worldly pleasures like birds and animals. Human body is gifted to experience truth and divine love, not to indulge in mean acts. Truth, righteousness, peace and love are divine qualities. Birds and animals have only love, but not the remaining three qualities. One having all these four qualities alone is a true human being. Man should make proper use of the body. Only then will his life find fulfillment.

### **One-pointed Devotion of Gopikas**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Of all the gifts of God, time and love are the most precious. Man has to make proper use of time in order to experience Divine love. But today man is wasting three-fourth of his time in mundane pursuits whether he is a Brahmachari (student), a Grihasta (householder), a Vanaprastha (recluse) or Sanyasi (renunciant). Then how can he expect to have noble thoughts? He is unable to undertake any sacred activity as his mind is clouded with ego. The Bhagavad Gita declares: "*Karmanyevadhipikarasthe Ma Phateshu Kadachana*" (man has right over action, but not on the fruits thereof.) So, perform all your activities without expecting any reward. Do not waste your time worrying over the fruits of your actions. This is what is meant by the saying, "Duty is God." Divinity will manifest once you perform your duty with sincerity.

It is a mistake to consider yourself a devotee if you undertake service activities expecting something in return. You have to render service with the feeling that God is present in all. Realise the truth, "*Isavasyam Idam Jagat*" (God pervades the entire universe). You may say that you have done rural service or served the flood victims. But these acts cannot be termed as service in its true sense if you have the feeling that you are serving others. Serve with the feeling that you are serving God, for God is in everybody.

Consider, for example, the sacred epic Bhagavatam, which speaks of the intense love and devotion of the Gopikas for Krishna. *Bhagavatam Chadivithe Bagavutam* in Telugu means 'If we study Bhagavatamu, we shall become good.' That is to say, Bhagavatam confers goodness on all. It contains the essence of all the Vedas. The five letters 'Bha,' 'Ga,' 'Va,' 'Ta,' 'Mu,' stand for Bhakti (devotion), Jnana (wisdom), Vairagya (renunciation), Tapas (penance) and Mukti (liberation) respectively. This sacred epic describes at length Gopikas' yearning for Krishna when He left Gokul for Mathura where He was fully involved in the affairs of the kingdom.

### **Be One with the Lord like Gopikas**

The Gopikas were unable to bear the pangs of separation from their dear Lord and were anxiously waiting for His return. The entire Gokul bore the look of a barren land. There was no dearth of food and comforts in Gokul, yet the Gopikas could not enjoy any of them as they thought life was not worth living without Krishna, whom they considered as their very life breath. They lost their health and happiness as they were unable to bear the pangs of separation from Him. Krishna, being aware of Gopikas' plight, summoned His friend Uddhava and asked him to proceed to Gokul to console the Gopikas and give His message to them. Uddhava was a great philosopher and Jnani (one of wisdom). He realised that Krishna was omnipresent. As per

the command of Krishna, he went to Gokul and conveyed Krishna's message to the Gopikas and Gopalas. He told them that they should not limit Krishna to a small physical frame thinking that He was present only in Mathura. He tried to explain to the Gopikas that Krishna is God Himself and that He is present everywhere; there is therefore no need for them to feel sorry that He is away.

Since the Gopikas had totally surrendered themselves to Krishna, they would not look at or talk to a stranger. So, they made a Bhramara (buzzing bee) as an intermediary and talked to Uddhava while addressing the bee. Having been used to worship Krishna's beautiful form, they could not readily think of Krishna as a formless entity. Making fun of Uddhava's preachings, they asked, "Do you practise what you preach? You are enjoying the proximity to our Lord Krishna, but are telling us to experience His attributeless and formless aspect. We don't want your preaching or philosophy. We are not interested in your formless, attributeless God. Bring our dear Krishna to us." They said, "Krishna has stolen our heart and soul. We have only one mind and that has gone with Him to Mathura; we do not have another to listen to what you are preaching."

The declaration of the Gopikas that they had only one mind made Uddhava recognise their one-pointed devotion. He realised that the pure, unsullied and eternal divine principle can be attained only through fixing the mind on God. The Gopikas lamented at their separation from Krishna and said, "We want to see nothing but Krishna's beautiful form; hear nothing, but the melodious music of His flute and experience nothing but His Divine Love. We have cried for Krishna so much that our eyes are swollen and there is not a drop of tear left in there. How can the ship of your message sail in the dry sands of our hearts! So, go back to the place you have come from. We are not interested in the formless aspect of Divinity. We want to see the enchanting form of our Lord." Hearing the words of the Gopikas, Uddhava realised that all his Jnana (wisdom) was worthless. He considered himself to be totally ignorant as he had underestimated the love and devotion of the Gopikas for Krishna.

He stopped preaching and tried to hand over Krishna's letter to the Gopikas, saying that it contained Krishna's message for them. He wanted them to read it. They refused to accept the letter, saying that they could not read it as they had no knowledge of Akshara (alphabet). But their minds were merged in the Akshara Swaroopa (immortal form) of Lord Krishna. Uddhava was a bit angry with the Gopikas, thinking that they had no respect for even Krishna's message. Then one of the Gopikas started explaining, "There is no point in accepting Krishna's letter as we, being illiterate, cannot read it. There may be one or two amongst us who can read. But we are afraid that our tears may drop on the letter and wash out the words written in it. There is another reason too. Our whole body is heated up on account of separation from Krishna. So, it is possible that the letter may get burnt to ashes if our hands were to touch it. You are unable to understand our plight."

They sent a message to Krishna addressing the bee, *"O bee, why don't you go back and tell Krishna that He should look at us at least once? Can you not tell Krishna to illumine our dark hearts with His resplendent form? Our life has become like a dried tree. Please tell Krishna to put some life into it?"* (Song in Telugu) Radhika prayed, "O Krishna, we are anyway going to die because of separation from You. Please allow us to be with You at least in Your next incarnation. *If You take the form of a tree, allow us to be the creepers that will twine around You.*

*If You assume the form of a flower, let us be the honeybees hovering over You. If You stand like Meru mountain, let us be like a waterfall flowing from it. If You become the mighty ocean, let us become the rivers ready to merge in it."* (Poem in Telugu) Thus, the Gopikas always craved for divine proximity. That is the sign of true devotion. True philosophy comprises of establishing a relationship between the individual and God. The Gopikas never gave scope for narrow feelings. They aspired for the intimate relationship with God.

The best way to love God is to love all and serve all. Have the firm conviction that God is present in everybody. There is no place where God does not exist. But you cannot see God as long as there is the sense of 'I' (ego) in you. The Gopikas had absolutely no sense of ego. Their 'I' had merged with Krishna. So long as there is ego in you, you will find only multiplicity. Once you realise that you and I are one, you will find unity everywhere, which is true and eternal.

### **Dedication of the Messengers of Sathya Sai**

The old students association of Anantapur Campus, the Messengers of Sathya Sai, is celebrating its Annual Day today. They are serving the society and spreading Swami's message in accordance with the sacred name of their association. You have listened to the report of their activities. Truly speaking, they have done much more than what has been mentioned in the report.

In fact, I instructed them to make the report as short as possible. Though their report is brief, they are doing remarkable service to the society. Not only here, but also in various other countries like Japan, Canada, America, Germany, etc., they are undertaking service activities, upholding the ideals of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. They are spending their earnings in service activities. When questioned by their parents, they reply, "Swami has given us free education and free medical care. We owe our wealth and health to Swami. So, all our earnings should be directed for the service of the society. We are not misusing even a naya paise." Thus, they are bringing about transformation even in their parents also.

You all know that there is a lady doctor, an eye specialist, by name Dr. Vansa in our General Hospital. She is a widow. Her daughter studied in our college and now she is living in Australia with her husband. She has brought about a transformation in her husband and as a result, he is also actively involved in various service activities. Both the husband and wife spend their earnings in the service of the society. They do not have children. Dr. Vansa prayed, to Me that her daughter be blessed with a child. Her daughter said that Swami was everything for her and she did not want to get tied up in family affairs by having children. She said that she considered all children as her own. She prayed that she should have the freedom to render service activities to her satisfaction. There are many women who have such noble desires, but among men, we hardly find anybody having such broad feelings.

Since ancient times, many noble women have taken birth in this sacred land of Bharat who have set an ideal to the world with their exemplary character and devotion. You might have heard of Savitri, who brought her dead husband back to life; Chandramati, who extinguished the wild fire in a trice demonstrating the power of truth; Sita, who came out of blazing fire unscathed, and Damayanti, who burnt a wicked hunter to ashes with the power of her chastity. All these noble

women have brought name and fame to Bharat. Not only Bharat, the whole world will progress because of women of character and nobility. So, never underestimate the capacity of women.

The 75th Birthday of this body is approaching. The Messengers of Sathya Sai have chalked out elaborate plans for the 75th Birthday and have already started executing them. They have purchased 1000 bags of rice for free distribution of food for 10 days to the devotees during the 75th Birthday celebrations. There are nearly 3000 members in their Organisation. Their faith is unwavering and their devotion for Swami is becoming stronger and stronger day by day. They are preparing to distribute 75,000 Saris. As they want all the Saris to be of the same design, they have already placed an order in this regard. Such devotion and sincerity are present more among women than men.

In fact, women symbolise Bhakti (devotion) and men stand for Jnana (wisdom). The one with devotion has the right to enter even the inner chambers of the Divine palace, whereas the one with wisdom has the access only to the audience hall of God. You may be aware that kings of yore would convene meetings in their royal audience hall where only men would assemble. Men had no entry into the Antahpur (inner chambers of the palace). Only the women who symbolise devotion have the access to the Antahpur of God. What is Antahpur? Antaratma (Indwelling Spirit) is the Antahpur. It is only the devotion, not the wisdom that leads to Antahpur. Most of the men who have assembled here today are here only because of the inspiration of women. Women are responsible for men to tread along the path of devotion. In My opinion, the Messengers of Sathya Sai should take the lead in spreading the divine message throughout the country. It is mainly by the effort of women that the country will make progress. Not only Bharat, the whole world should progress. The ancient culture of our country should be revived.

The heart of Uddhava, who was considered one of wisdom, was transformed on seeing the love and devotion of the Gopikas for Krishna. He approached Krishna with a prayer that he may be blessed with at least a fraction of their devotion. Gopikas said, they had only one mind and that was centred on Krishna. But men have many minds! This statement of the Gopikas is in itself the highest philosophy.

### **True Christmas Spirit in Prasanthi Nilayam**

If you look at the world with material view, you see variety. If you look at it with an understanding of Divinity, all of it will appear to be the form of God. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as are your feelings, so you become). Allah, Jesus, Zoroaster—all these are the names of the same Divinity. Today Christmas is mainly celebrated by the Christians, but do not make the mistake that it is only for the Christians. It is a holy and happy occasion to be celebrated by the entire mankind. Get rid of religious and philosophical differences and enlarge your Mata (religion) and Mati (mind). "There is only one God and He is the indweller of your heart. If you realise this truth, then the entire humanity becomes a single race. There is only one religion in the universe and that is Prema (divine love). The one without this principle of love in his heart is neither a Hindu nor a Christian nor a Muslim nor a Sikh. He is no better than a demon. Complete unity of all religions can be seen only in Prasanthi Nilayam. Imagine what a phenomenon it is that the Christians from 64 countries of the world have assembled here to celebrate Christmas. This principle of unity is the sign of true devotion. Swami reiterates that it is not a celebration for

the Christians only, but is a holy occasion for the entire humanity. It is the desire of Swami that such differences are completely eradicated.

There are several tasks ahead of the Messengers of Sathya Sai. Mere distribution of food, medicines and conducting Bal Vikas programmes is not enough. Of course, all these are necessary, but along with all these activities, spiritual teachings are, also essential. If the spiritual element of life is lost, life is a waste. Therefore, all of you ensure that spirituality is in the forefront of all your activities. These words are addressed not only to the ladies of the Messengers of Sathya Sai. Young men should also take up similar activities.

### **Women can transform the Whole World**

Women generally have less freedom than men. If only women had been given the level of freedom that is allowed for men, the shape of the society on the face of the earth would have been changed. They work under many constraints put by their husbands, fathers and children. In spite of severe pressures from all sides, they are advancing. On the other hand, men have hardly any such constraints. It is surprising why people with such freedom do not take to spiritual quest or social service. What is the use of your education if you do not utilise it for the service of the society? You might as well throw your books in fire

### **Accumulate Guna, not Dhana**

It is more important to accumulate Guna (virtues) than Dhana (wealth). Wealth is accumulated by so many persons. What do they take away with them when they leave this world? Nothing. Of course, one has to earn wealth. But, accumulation of wealth should be within limits. All your faculties should be at the disposal of the society. Only then will your country make progress. You know very well the kind of unrest that is prevalent all over the world today. Fear and terror haunt you wherever you go. It is the duty of the youth to set right this situation. First of all, you should serve your parents. Then look after your family. Serve your community. Then you should undertake the task of serving your country. But, do not hanker after the fruits of your efforts. The appropriate reward for all your actions will be granted to you by God. Service to the country itself becomes worship of God.

### *Students - Messengers of Sathya Sai!*

Swami is pleased with the services that you have performed so far. But; it is the desire of Swami that you should all perform much more. You know how a mother blesses you. It is necessary for you to act in such a way as to get your parents' blessings and approval. Tomorrow you may also become mothers. Serve your parents today, so that in turn your children may serve you in times of need. As you sow, so shall you reap.

The only worthwhile thing to acquire in this world is Divine love. This is the noblest acquisition which leads to bliss and immortality. Once you obtain this, all else in the world is yours for the asking. For this, you should first engage yourself in social work. The vain desire to obtain higher and higher educational qualifications should be moderated. You may earn as much wealth as you can, but use it for the welfare of the society. Contemplate on God with your total mind and heart. Only then can you attain the goal of your life.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Prem Mudita Manase Kaho...*"

—From Bhagavan's Christmas Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall on 25th December 1999

GURUDEV VANI

BHAGAVAN'S CONVOCATION ADDRESS

### **True Education Liberates**

*One may master all forms of knowledge,  
One may vanquish one's adversaries in debate,  
One may fight with valour and courage in the battlefield,  
One may be an emperor reigning over vast kingdoms,  
One may offer few cows and gold as an act of charity,  
One may count the countless stars in the sky,  
One may tell the names of innumerable living creatures on the earth,  
One may be an expert in eight forms of Yoga,  
One may reach even the moon,  
But can anyone control the body, mind and senses?  
Turn the vision inward  
And achieve the supreme state of equanimity of the mind.*

(Poem in Telugu)

*Embodiments of Love—Students, Boys and Girls!*

You can call yourself a student only when you know the significance of education. Education does not mean mere acquisition of bookish knowledge. There are many who are experts in bookish knowledge. Many have become educational wizards and scholars. What is the service these intellectuals are doing to the world? Having been born and brought up in the society, having acquired their knowledge from the society, what is it they have done for the society? What is the use of their scholarship and education, if they do not show their gratitude to the society?

### **Education is for serving the Society**

Sri Aurobindo once told the students of Calcutta University, "Students! Why do you acquire this knowledge? Is your learning only for your selfish ends? You have acquired all these skills at the expense of the society. If you do not repay your debt to your community by using your talent for the society, it is better you burn your books."

Today science has achieved great advancement. Many scientific and technological disciplines are taught to the students. Is this knowledge imparted by the society for the benefit of the society or for the name and fame of the students? Having become great intellectuals, is there any genuine transformation in them? Churchill once said, "Man has conquered all, but he has not conquered himself." Scientific education of today teaches one everything about the external world, leaving out the knowledge of the Self. The entire effort of man is now concentrated on knowing everything about the external world. All this is mere material and physical knowledge. The

learned man today knows all about the external world but nothing about his own reality. True relationship is that which you establish with your inner self. Everyone asks the question, "Who are you?" But nobody seems to be interested in putting the question to himself, "Who am I?" The answer to the first question is related to the physical aspect of your personality, while the second relates to the spiritual aspect. Human excellence will blossom only when the relationship and balance between the physical and the spiritual aspects is intimately established. Physical knowledge is negative, while the spiritual knowledge is positive. Humanness blossoms when the positive is blended with the negative. The purpose of education is to produce this happy blend of the physical and spiritual knowledge and help human excellence to blossom. Thus, the aim of education is total development of man.

### **Ancient vs. Modern System of Education**

Man should be transformed to become compassionate. Of what use is that education which does not melt the heart of the student to the plight of others? Modern secular education is making man hard-hearted. Just as you try hard to sharpen your intellect, you should broaden your heart also. If this fact is not realised, of what use is your intelligence and learning? With proper education, both the mind and heart should be transformed.

In this sacred land of Bharat, great sages have been making many changes and modifications in the education system since ancient times. Before the coming of foreigners, there were very few educational institutions in this country. Each of them specialised in one branch of knowledge or the other and helped the students to achieve excellence in that branch. Kashi (Benaras) University specialised in the study of grammar. Alankara Shastra (rhetoric) was the speciality in Kashmir University. Ujjaini University specialised in mathematics. Similarly, there was a small town known as Navadvipa where Nyaya (logic) was the speciality. Amaravati, the capital of the kingdom of Bharata (brother of Rama) specialised, apart from other sciences, in Ayurveda (medicine). Ayurveda was a speciality in the Takshashila (Taxila) University, also. One of the most famous universities of ancient India was Nalanda, which specialised in grammar, Nyaya, medicine and Yoga Shastra. Valabhi, Mithila and Vikramasila were other well known universities of ancient India. In all these universities, apart from the specific disciplines, general ethics and proper moral conduct in life were essential part of the curriculum.

Sathya (truth) and Dharma (righteousness) were the guiding principles for all students. Besides, vocational training for various trades like carpentry, pottery, black-smithy, etc., was given so that the pupils may be trained for life and may become capable of earning their livelihood in a righteous way. What is the point in learning subjects which are not useful in daily, life? Learning professional skills is therefore essential. Fine arts like music, dance, drama, etc., were also taught in these universities. Amaravati University included in its curriculum all these subjects and their branches. Careful investigation indicates that there were only nine or ten such universities in those days.

Today there are hundreds of universities. But what is the knowledge that is being imparted in all these institutions? What service do they render to the society? What evidence is there that they serve the interests of the society? With the growth of modern scientific and technological studies, the true aim of education, i.e., the knowledge of the Self, has declined. Vidya is termed Education. What is the root meaning of Education? The word is derived from the Latin root



educare. What does it mean? It means to bring out what is inside. What is it that has to be brought out? Every form of knowledge and capacity is latent in man. He is endowed with all types of potentialities—physical, mental, spiritual and ethical. The true aim of education is to make explicit the innate powers of man. These are of two types. One relates to the knowledge of external things, and the organ that manifests this power is the head (brain). The organ that enables one to bring out the inner knowledge is the heart. The former relates to physical existence while the latter to higher learning or living in its true sense. Life will become ideal only when both these types of knowledge are made to manifest in harmony. The knowledge emanating from the head, viz., reading, writing, etc., helps you to earn a living. All this is mere bookish knowledge. From Pustaka (books), it enters the Mastaka (head). It is only superficial knowledge, that which has gone into books from someone's head and back into another's head from the books (from Mastaka to Pustaka and Pustaka to Mastaka). Apart from this bookish knowledge, one must have general knowledge. Besides, one must attain knowledge of discrimination, which helps one to discriminate between good and bad and right and wrong. But above all, one should attain practical knowledge, which comes only after getting the knowledge of discrimination.

Due to his obsession with external knowledge, man today is immersed in self-interest and forgets his responsibilities to the society. When you engage yourself in the welfare of the society, your welfare is automatically ensured. There are hundreds of thousand wealthy and learned persons in the world. But they are all engaged in selfish activities. Do you find anyone who has put the interests of the society above self-interest? In fact, they confer prestigious awards and honours on those persons who are engaged in selfish pursuits and seek their own advancement. It is apparent that they do not know the real meaning of education. Persons with numerous degrees are thought to be highly educated. Such proliferation of degrees is mere quantitative attainment. But what we need is quality. One teaspoonful of cow's milk is better than barrels of donkey's milk.

That is why in olden days, each university specialised in one area of knowledge and imparted the knowledge of the highest quality to its students. The university in Kashi (Benaras) specialised in grammar in all its manifold aspects so that the acquired knowledge could become useful and practical in, day-to-day life. The Amarakosa—probably first of existing lexicons in Sanskrit—was a subject of study and even through this study of grammar the teachers of those days were preparing their students for Amaratwa (immortality). In these universities, each student was himself a great scholar. Who were the teachers? Often, the resident preceptor was himself the faculty and indeed the Vice Chancellor. The whole process of education was carried out independently without any interference or control by any government or other agency. Saraswati, the goddess of learning, was honoured and given complete freedom. The students received her boundless grace to attain high standards of excellence. Generally, the teachers did not take any salaries for teaching nor did the students pay any fees. There was no fixed timetable for the teaching; the preceptor taught as and when he was so inclined as the spirit moved him. He might wake up a student at night and impart knowledge. Irrespective of his own convenience, he would clarify the doubts of his students. And where were all these instructions carried on? The classes were held in natural environment on the banks of holy rivers, under shady trees or in temple verandahs in a pure and sacred atmosphere.

Today's education requires huge edifices. An enormous number and variety of equipments and implements are necessary, and huge effort, physical and monetary, is required for these. There were no such requirements of equipments or grand buildings those days. Even in the famous universities like Ujjaini and Takshashila, there were no large buildings or edifices like those of today. There is no comparison between the teachers and students of those days and those of present times. Today there are textbooks galore and numerous 'notes' thereon, but there are few that study. In the days of yore, there was no paper or ink. Teaching was carried out by oral communication from the teacher. The students were so receptive that they absorbed all instructions and retained them in their memory. Words emanating from the heart of the preceptor were imprinted on the hearts of the students. The students today cannot remember what they have studied just an hour earlier. Why are the students of today so short of memory? The students today have a wavering mind, which is the cause of their short memory and poor retentive power. Education in those days included the techniques of controlling the mind. Only when the mind is under control is it possible to absorb and retain the subject of study. That is why it is said *Manah Eva Manushyanam Karanam Bandhamokshayo* (the mind is responsible for both the bondage and liberation of man).

### **Education should Develop Sacred Qualities**

This eternal truth has been forgotten today. The practice of compassion and love is absent in daily life. Without these eternal values, of what use is your education? It is therefore necessary to include these ancient values in our modern education system. There is no harm in acquiring modern education and skills, but the blossoming of your heart is the fundamental education. A noble heart and a broad mind -are your basic requirements; do not stray into narrow-mindedness. You should expand your love. If you narrow it down to yourself, then it will become contraction love. Instead you should have expansion love: This is the principle taught by our ancient culture. Forgetting this valuable ancient tradition of Bharat, you are engaged in acquiring physical and material education. What is it you are going to achieve? You have to manifest all those ancient values in your life. These values are not something that can be acquired from outside; they are all in you. Your effort should be to make them manifest.

Modern scientists have dug deep into the earth and made explicit several potent capacities that are resident inside the earth. By such indiscriminate acts, they are disturbing the balance of the earth and exposing the world to great danger. This imbalance has grown to such an extent that it can cause threat to the very existence of the world. Today we almost worship science and technology. What is this science and technology that you are so proud about? All this knowledge is already within you. Proper enquiry and discrimination will reveal all these truths to you. Any student of elementary chemistry will say that water is formed by combining two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen. You know even how to synthesise them. But are you making enough effort to see that water is evenly distributed to all the members of the society? The welfare of the society should be constantly in your view. If all your knowledge and skill is employed for purely selfish purposes, what is the use? In Mumbai, some people are spending crores of rupees to convert sea water into potable water. Crores are being wasted in such futile efforts. By such methods, you may get a glass of drinking water at a cost of about five thousand rupees. This country is served by sacred rivers like the Ganga, the Yamuna, etc. What is needed is to pump up and distribute this water to the people who require it. This will require only a fraction of the cost of converting sea water into potable water. This kind of effort at

technology is like buying peanuts for a quarter of a rupee and paying half a rupee to carry it to your house. Such learning is not knowledge. It is sheer ignorance.

Ignorance is very close to knowledge, just as darkness is under a source of light. You imagine that technical knowledge has made rapid strides. You also believe that science has made great progress. But the fact is that side by side with the growth of physical knowledge, ignorance has also grown enormously. You are totally unmindful of this ignorance, and are continually spending four times the money and effort for fulfilling each one of your needs. This is the reason for Bharat's visible poverty.

Along with intellectual acumen, you must have the right virtues. Good behaviour, good intellect, commitment to truth, devotion, discipline, sense of duty—these are the six aims of education. Who is teaching all these today? We find that the students are heroes in bookish knowledge and zeroes in practice. This is not true education. You have to become heroes in practice as well. You are writing a large number of good books and giving discourses to spread the message of love and service. It is not enough if these are propagated, you should put into practice what you learn. Only then will you be blissful.

### **Education Leads to Bliss**

*Embodiments of Love—Students, Boys and Girls!*

Modern education does not fulfill the aim of life. You gather graduate and postgraduate degrees, but these are mere burdens on your minds. What comfort do you derive from these degrees? Nothing whatsoever! Penniless, illiterate persons go to sleep without a care in the world. But educated persons with many degrees to their credit, acquired at great cost, wander about hunting for a job, almost facing starvation. Education is not solely for the purpose of earning a living. It must lead you to experience bliss. Of what use is the job and the wealth if there is no happiness? Man is in constant search for wealth. As the earth revolves round the sun, man is going round money. Even a beggar can get money. Is that sort of income worth acquiring? Virtue is the wealth that you should go after. In the absence of virtue, wealth merely makes you bloat with pride and ostentatiousness, destroys your humanness and eclipses your human values. Studying to get a degree, getting a job, running a family—all these are worldly activities, emanating from the head. What is it that a learned person should bring out? He should manifest the qualities of compassion, love, forbearance, peace, kindness, etc., which come from the heart. But today there is no compassion, there is only fashion. It is very important to have compassion. You should respect and love all your fellowmen and serve your parents. Parents undergo many privations and difficulties to give you the facilities for acquiring good education.

### **Respect Your Parents**

You know how difficult it is to get good education these days. It is only in our university that you have the privilege of free education. Anywhere outside, it costs ten to twenty thousand rupees to put a child in the 1st Standard. For graduate courses, you know what is the monthly expense. Who bears this cost? Is it not your parents? Out of love for you, with your welfare, progress and future prosperity in mind, they undergo many difficulties, wear themselves out day after day so that you may achieve academic success. You are just not mindful of all this. Today you are a student. Tomorrow you may be a parent. Unless you respect your parents today, your

children will not respect you tomorrow. If you respect your friends and fellow students, they will also respect you.

*"What will happen to you when you become a decrepit old man, when your body becomes weak, legs stagger and vision fails and you are no better than a leather puppet, and an object of ridicule for the world?"*

(Poem in Telugu)

It is imperative for you to imbibe divine qualities. You should grow up as an intelligent, sensible and compassionate person with human qualities. Otherwise, you cannot achieve the purpose of human life. Instead, if you join evil company and take to all sorts of vices, you will dissipate all your acquired good education in worthless ways. Seek good company. *Tyaja Durjana Samsargam, Bhaja Sadhu Samagamam, Kuru Punyam Ahoratri* (abandon bad company, seek the company of good people, perform good actions day and night). This is the proper way. By evil association you also become evil. That is why it is said, "Tell me your company and I shall tell you what you are."

Make friends after proper enquiry. You must love all. Do not hate anybody. But you must keep in your heart good people only. Similarly, mere bookish learning is fruitless unless it is put to practical use. Craftsmen like carpenters, potters and blacksmiths were able to lead successful life in olden days. Today there is no connection between institutional education and practical vocation. Take the simple matter of washing clothes. Why can't you wash your own clothes? Such savings can be put to more sacred purposes like helping a needy person. Money should not be wasted. You should tread the path of purity, humility, divinity and set an example to the world. When people extol you as a student of Sathya Sai Institutions by your exemplary conduct, how much good reputation is earned not only by you but your Alma Mater also! Be sure to uphold your own dignity and respect. Only then can your parent institution have good reputation. Otherwise, it will become a case of empty pocket, bare face and shaven head! (A Telugu saying signifying total ruin)

Never mind whether your stomach is full or empty, but keep your parents and family happy. Speak gently and properly with them. That is why I say, "You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly." Nowadays, it is difficult to make out whether a student is talking to his own parents or some strangers, because his manner of talking to parents is so reprehensible. If the father is not very highly educated and approaches his son with an enquiry, "My boy, what are you doing?," mostly he is shrugged off with "Go away, don't bother me." Instead of this if you speak sweetly with humility, "Father, I am trying for a job," how pleased he will be! If you can't please your own parents, how on earth will you please the society?

What was the nature of convocation in olden days? After completing their studies, the pupils made appropriate offerings to the preceptor and prayed for his parting advice. Then the preceptor used to advise them, "My children, now you are ready to go back to your families. Support your parents, get married and lead a righteous life." What is the state of affairs today? When children get back home from the educational institutions, they do not treat their parents properly. But the parents still take care of their children putting up with all their misbehaviour. Modern students do not have even an iota of our culture. What a sacred tradition it is! *Loka Samasta Sukhino*

*Bhavantu* (May the entire world enjoy bliss) is the prayer that our culture enjoins us to utter each day.

There was an old man, who followed his rituals strictly and performed his prayers (Sandhya Vandanam) in the prescribed manner early in the morning and at sunset. He had a grandson who used to sit in the verandah doing his day's homework, dipping his pen in the ink bottle every time he wrote a few lines. As he was busy with his study, his grandfather came out and sat on a little stool and started chanting the Mantras, "Kesavaya Namah, Madhavaya Namah, Govindaya Namah," etc. Taking water from a little vessel, he sipped half a spoonful at a time with each Mantra as per the ritual.

The modern lad stopped his study and started watching his grandfather. He started thinking, what a foolish thing his grandfather was doing! If he wanted to drink water why did he not drink it all in one gulp straight from the vessel? He stopped his work and asked his grandfather, "Grandfather, why are you drinking water sip by sip? Why don't you drink it in one gulp from the vessel if you are thirsty?" The old man was an intelligent person and knew the modern mind. He said, "My boy, you do your work in your way, I shall do mine in my way." But modern lads have the habit of arguing with elders. So, the boy questioned his grandfather again. When pestered further by his grandson, the old man shot back, "You simpleton, you dip your pen in the ink-bottle every time you write a few words; why don't you just pour the bottle of ink over the paper and be done with it?" Then the boy realised his mistakes of arguing with his grandfather. The grandfather continued, "Dear boy, you have to dip the pen in ink to write every word. Only then will it be neat. When I chant a Mantra and take water it reaches the particular deity whose name is chanted. When you write a letter and write address correctly on the cover, it will reach the right person. Similarly, the Mantras are addressed to the respective deities. If you don't understand, you should keep quiet."

Instruction was given in an informal and interesting way in those days. Today's students neither know their own job, nor do they understand the work of others. This kind of general knowledge has to be acquired by direct experience, not from any institutional study. Hence, try seriously to understand the significance of your ancient culture.

### **Never Forget Your Cultural Values**

What is it that the present day scientists and technologists are doing? Have they any idea? They assert that all that is on the earth is for the use and exploitation by man. Indiscriminate mining of all kinds of minerals and ores is carried on for so-called benefit of mankind. The earth is spherical. Systematic removal of material from one side causes imbalance as the other side becomes heavy. It is the divine dispensation that maintains balance. This balance should not be disturbed. The loss of balance is the cause of earthquakes and other natural disasters. Man is not only causing imbalance on the earth, he is polluting the oceans with industrial and urban waste. Water pollution has reached a stage where people are forced to drink polluted water.

Science helps you to develop and sharpen your intellect. There are many scientists; many of you are also students of science. You must know that knowledge that comes from within is at the top level. At the second level is skill, at the third is balance and at the fourth is insight. Swami tells you to convert your knowledge into skill, not to kill it. When knowledge is killed, imbalance

ensues. Why is there such loss of balance in the world today? This is because you have killed your God-given knowledge instead of turning it into skill.

*Students!*

Past is past. Forget the past. Do not worry over the future as it is uncertain. Live in the present. The present is not just ordinary present—it is omnipresent. The future is the consequence of the present. The present is the consequence of the past. The tree of the past gives the seed of the present which grows into the tree of the future. Between the tree of the past and the tree of the future, the present is the seed, which is of utmost significance. It gets sustenance from Neeti (morality). Without Neeti, Manava Jati (human race) is bound to be ruined, and even its existence is impossible. Manava Jati (human race) is a balanced blend of truth, morality and sacrifice. But we are failing to recognise the sacredness of human nature. Amongst all beings, birth as a human being is the rarest (*Jantunam Narajanma Durlabharro.*) Loss of this humanness in man is the cause of chaotic conditions in the world.

I said the other day: "*Sathyam Bhruyat, Priyam Bhruyat, Na Bhruyat Sathyamapriyam*" (speak the truth, speak sweetly, do not speak unpalatable truth). This mode of living is true sacrifice. Who can assert that he is treading strictly this path? Some people make fun of the Brahmins when they chant Mantras. Each Mantra is potent, and all our ancient traditions are meaningful. A small example: There is a wedding going on. These days you have elaborately decorated Pandals or Shamianas. Those days they had no such elaborate external decoration. Just four posts were put up, covered over for shade with green leaves and branches and the people used to sit under the shade to carry out the rituals. Even now on holy days, we hang mango leaves on our doors and gates. It is not merely a sign of auspiciousness; it provides healthy environment too. The sudden influx of a large number of guests causes an increase in carbon dioxide. The green leaves help in reducing the carbon dioxide level and increase the oxygen in the place. Some people may ask why we should have green leaves; will the plastic leaves be not better? Can the plastic leaves and flowers absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen?

*Dear Students!*

You should try to understand the inner significance of your cultural heritage. Swami never says you should not have modern education. Why would Swami make such an inhibition? All that is said is that along with this worldly study, pursue also an enquiry into the principle of your Self (Atma Tattwa). This was the basis of the ancient education system.

You know, Krishna and Kuchela were taught in the forest. The friendship developed during that study was long lasting. Today there is no true friendship. If you have money in your pocket, there will be many who will be hailing you "hello, hello." If there is no money, then 'hello' becomes 'hollow'; all friends desert you. Is this friendship? True friendship is like a single life embodied in two bodies. Your effort should be to acquire friendship like this. While making friends, do not hate anybody. Do not harm anybody. Bhagavan wants that you should all acquire education of this kind, with broad-mindedness and purity and become a model for humanity. This is My benediction for you.

*Dear Students!*

So long as you are here, you are safe and secure. When you get back to your homes, you are assailed by various distractions like television, video, cinema, etc. All these pollute your hearts. The programmes on the television are very attractive, but you must realise that they are shown to you not for your gain, but for the gain of sponsors and advertisers: Only watch such programmes which are related to education, or those dedicated to moral values. TV has, in fact, become a disease of modern times. So, it is not TV but TB (tuberculosis). If there are no moral thoughts in you, what will happen when such programmes are watched? If you have leisure, take a walk. Don't sit in front of a TV set. You become so addicted that when someone intervenes, you lose your temper. Even the sound from the kitchen disturbs you, where your mother is busy making dinner for you. Why don't you get up to help her and make her happy? This is the main principle of our culture: Help ever, Hurt never.

Acquire big degrees, achieve fame. No harm. Go abroad, earn money and reputation; nothing wrong in that. But never forget your own culture. (Cheers) Don't criticise others' culture. Wherever you are, make your life an ideal for others. Speak pleasantly. Do good deeds. Then you will be a good person.

### **Goodness vs. Greatness**

Do not strive to acquire the status of a great man. Always strive to become a good man. Great men may do many evil deeds, but the acts of a good man stand out as ideals for others always. Ravana was a great man. Rama is the example par excellence of a good man. Both had mastered the same studies; but how different were their natures! Ravana, though endowed with extraordinary learning, was himself destroyed and was the cause of the destruction of his entire clan, because of one bad quality of desire. Hiranyakasipu, the master of all the five elements, was ruined by his evil quality of anger. Duryodhana was ruined by greed. He refused to give even five villages to the Pandavas.

All these persons not only destroyed themselves, they were the cause of the utter destruction of their entire clans. Even one evil trait is enough to cause ruin. Then imagine how much worse a fate one will be faced with if one has all the six evil qualities of lust, anger, greed, pride, envy and hatred? When you see an evil person, you will become aware of your own bad qualities. When you see a good man, your own goodness will come to your mind. Thus, your good or bad qualities have intimate common relationship with others. All men are bound together by their innate common qualities. It is necessary to unify all humanity. When such a unity is achieved, then the divinity immanent in human beings will manifest.

Do not make friends indiscriminately. Always enquire into the good and evil in your fellowmen and then choose your company. While helping, you need not discriminate. Help anybody in need. Earn a good name for your institution by your reputation as a good person. That alone will make Bhagavan happy. There are no fees for the various facilities in the Sathya Sai institutions. You have complete peace in the absence of all fees. (Cheers) In other places, there are fees of many kinds. Paying out fees here, fees there, fees for this and fees for that, where is the room for peace? You only go to pieces. Lead a peaceful life. Be good. Be a model for the society. This is the gift of Bhagavan to all of you today. Do not forget God. God is your very life. Keep God in your heart and serve the society. You are bound to succeed in all your endeavours. Bhagavan wishes all of you to lead lives full of bliss.

Today, Dr. Goldstein is the Chief Guest. Since he is a familiar figure here, do not take him for granted. He is no ordinary person. He does not lack wealth. Nor is he short of academic distinctions. He is quite well known. He is the Chairman of the American Medical Council. Very few here have all the qualities that he has. It is not for any of the material things like wealth, fame or health that he comes here. It is for the sake of the bliss he experiences here that he comes so frequently. When Bhagavan asked him, Goldstein replied that he found bliss here in Prasanthi Nilayam which was not there in America. (Cheers) You know he is a rich man. If he wanted his son to be married in grand style, he could have done it in America. His son was to be married to the daughter of a well-known film star who is also a rich person. But Goldstein does not bother about grandness and greatness, he is concerned only with goodness. The film star brought her daughter and Goldstein his son, and the marriage was performed in that little interview room of Bhagavan. The couple is happily living together.

His second son insisted that Swami perform his marriage too. For many years, Bhagavan delayed the decision. Finally, Swami asked Dr. Goldstein to bring his son here. Swami found a suitable bride for him from an ideal and well-to-do family. The marriage was again performed here. In olden days, girls used to cry a lot while leaving their parents' home after the marriage. Unlike modern girls, this girl also cried for Swami while departing from here. I told her not to cry and to come again with a child.

Both the sons of Goldstein are very good. Their goodness is in fact a consequence of their association with the Sai Organisation. Their wives are also very good.

Goldstein does everything according to the commands of Bhagavan. He is in charge of the Sai Organisations of several countries, including that of America. He is a good, devoted and disciplined worker. As a loyal member of the Sai Organisation, he has the three sacred qualities—duty, discipline and devotion.

Emulate him and follow these three qualities and become ideal models in your lives. Earn a good name. Make your parents happy, do not neglect them under any circumstances. If you disobey your parents, remember you may face the same fate when you become parents. Be good, see good and do good. This is the way to God.

(After Bhagavan's Divine Discourse, the entire congregation stood up to sing the National Anthem.)

***—From Bhagavan's Convocation Address in Sai Kulwant Hall on 22nd November 1999 on the occasion of XVIII Convocation of SSSIHL***

**CHRISTMAS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM**

**Christmas Celebrations with Unity and Love**



This Christmas became a unique event at Prasanthi Nilayam when devotees from 64 countries of the world celebrated Christmas in the Holy Presence of Bhagavan Baba in the spirit of unity and love. Delivering His Christmas Discourse, Bhagavan said, "There is only one religion in the world and that is Prema (divine love). The one without this principle of love in his heart is neither a Hindu nor a Christian nor a Muslim nor a Sikh. He is no better than a demon."

### **Christmas Carols by Overseas Devotees**

Christmas celebrations in Prasanthi Nilayam started on the afternoon of 24th December in Sai Kulwant Hall. For this purpose, the Hall was magnificently decorated in the traditional Christmas manner with golden, red and green colour velvet decorations. Appropriately enough, the entrance gate to the Sai Kulwant Hall had a large velvet cloth hanging with the writing, "*Sarva Dharma Priya Sai Deva*," meaning the Lord Sai who loves all religions. The twelve pillars of the Hall, where Beloved Swami walks across the Darshan lines had red velvet hangings with a Cross and angel in gold, representing the 12 apostles. Pine, shining gold and red fabric decorated the entire Hall with cherubs. A large statue of Joseph, Mary and the Baby Jesus, in His crib, was placed close to the chair of Swami.

The Christmas programme started at 3.45 p.m. on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1999 when Bhagavan ceremoniously lighted the sacred lamps. After chanting Omkar and welcome song in praise of Ganesha, the overseas devotees sang Christmas carols. The main choir of 400 Members sang with their hearts to the merriment of huge gathering of devotees, which filled the entire Sai Kulwant Hall. To name a few carols, they sang 'Dona Nobis Pacem,' 'Glory to God in the Highest,' and ended with joyful clapping to 'The Saints Come Marching in.' The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan and distribution of Prasadam.

### **Jesus and the Wizard of Love**

This excellent drama adapted from the book 'The Wizard of OZ' was presented by the World Bal Vikas children on the evening of 24<sup>th</sup> December 1,999 in the Poornachandra Auditorium in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. The opening scene begins on a Hillside overlooking the Sea of Galilee. Jesus is speaking about His message of love and compassion to a congregation of people, including five children—a Western, a Mexican, an Indian, a Chinese and an African. Jesus then exhorts the children to undertake the journey to the Emerald city, the home of His Father, the Wizard of Love.

As the children come to the home of the Wizard of Love, they are introduced to the Father of Jesus, who is none else but Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The Father tells the children that the qualities they are seeking—courage, compassion and discrimination - already exist deep within them. The children then ask Jesus to tell them the story of His mother, Maria. The play ends with the Nativity story unfolding. At the end, Bhagavan goes up the stage and blesses the children.

### **Divine Darshan on Christmas Morning**

Early Christmas morning, the carolers in procession with lighted candles walked through the Ashram, singing praise to Jesus. The small children led the choir into the Hall carrying lanterns, followed by more children dressed in beautiful angel costumes with golden wings.

The energy builds, the lights are twinkling, and then He appears in His Robe of White, sweet smiles, and eyes of radiant light. He gives us all His Darshan from the Mandir balcony, ever so slowly so all can see.

Later in the morning, Swami went round the Hall and blessed the devotees with His Darshan at 7.30 a.m. Thereafter, the Brass Band of the Institute enthralled the audience with some soul-stirring music. After this performance, at 8.10 a.m., the Institute and School students presented an excellent programme of carol singing. The glorious Christmas morning programme came to a close with the distribution of Prasadam and Arati to Bhagavan.

### **Annual Meet of Messengers of Sathya Sai**

The Annual Meeting of the Messengers of Sathya Sai was held on 25th December 1999 on the holy day of Christmas in Sai Kulwant Hall. Bhagavan Baba inaugurated the programme by lighting the sacred lamps at 3.00 p.m.

The President of the Association Miss K. P. Sai Leela welcomed all to the meeting and briefly mentioned about the service activities of the Members of the Association from India and abroad. The Secretary of the Messengers of Sathya Sai, Miss Rajeswari Patel, extended Christmas greetings to all the devotees on behalf of her Association and said that this Christmas was very special as it was the last Christmas of the millennium. Presenting the Annual Report of the Messengers of Sathya Sai for the year 1999, Miss Patel informed the devotees about the service activities and future programmes of the Association.

A student of Anantapur Campus also narrated her experiences of student life and told how her life had been transformed during her stay in the college hostel.

The last speaker of the afternoon, Mr. Arthur Hillcoat, emphasised the need to put Bhagavan Baba's teachings into practice. He reminded the devotees that we could make Swami happy only by living His teachings in our day-to-day life.

After this, Bhagavan Baba gave His Christmas Discourse (given separately), exhorting the devotees to follow Christ's teachings of love and service to mankind.

### **Drama by Messengers of Sathya Sai**

An excellent drama entitled, "There is only One Religion—the Religion of Love," was enacted by the Messengers of Sathya Sai in the Poornachandra Auditorium on the evening of 25<sup>th</sup> December 1999.

The play presented stories from different parts of the world including the famous story About Ben Adhem and Swami Vivekananda's epoch-making Address in the World Parliament of Religions to bring home the teachings of Bhagavan Baba that different religions are the paths that lead man to God and that service to man is service to God.

Superb acting of the cast and appropriate video support leave a lasting effect on the audience about Bhagavan Baba's message of love to mankind.

### **Cultural Programmes by Overseas Bal Vikas Children**

A drama entitled "Solon and Croesus" was presented by the children of Sai Spiritual Education of Greece in Poornachandra Auditorium on the evening of 28th December 1999. This drama was based on the life of one of the outstanding sages of Greece, viz., Solon. Solon's encounter with the fabulously rich King Croesus of Lydia was highlighted in this play to show that it was the practice of virtue that brought happiness to man and not the wealth which changed masters quickly.

At the end of the play, Bhagavan went up the stage and blessed the children. He also materialised a gold chain for the child who played the role of Solon. Arati was offered to Bhagavan at 8.00 p.m.

Earlier another drama by the overseas Bal Vikas children depicted the hazards of modern civilisation and underlined the need for judicious management of natural resources by man. With these two dramas, the Christmas celebrations in Prasanthi Nilayam came to a happy conclusion.

### **Christ Belongs to All**

*Great Teachers belong to the entire mankind. It is wrong to believe that Jesus belongs only to the Christians and that Christmas is a holy festival for the West only. Christ, Rama, Krishna—they are for all men everywhere. Various limbs and organs together form the body; various States and communities together form the world. The sustenance given by Divine Grace circulates in every part of the body, helping it to function in unison. Similarly, the sustenance of Love, endowed by Divine Grace, has to circulate in every State and community to make the world live in peace and happiness. If this truth is realised, there will never arise any idea of difference.*

**—Baba**

*Christmas is a holy and a happy occasion to be celebrated by the entire mankind.*

**—Baba**

## Acquire the Knowledge of Brahman

*Once you wake up from the sleep of Moha (attachment), you will understand that this Samsara (worldly life) is but a dream, and you are pure, unsullied and eternal Atman.*

(Sanskrit Sloka)

*You are neither the body, which is nothing but a conglomeration of flesh, blood and bones nor the mind, which is a combination of thoughts and vain desires. It is the delusion, born out of attachment, which takes you away from liberation. You are essentially Divine.*

(Telugu Poem)

### *Embodiments of Love!*

The youth of today are the future leaders of the nation and the architects of the new society. The future of a nation depends on its youth.. The strength of the youth lies in their spirit of patriotism. The primary duty of the youth is to render service to the society. The physical and mental strength of the youth is the foundation on which a nation is built.

### **Primary Duty of Man**

#### *Young Men and Women!*

This is not the time to relax. Do not waste time. Wake up from the slumber of selfishness and narrow mindedness and resolve to serve the nation. Perform all activities keeping the esteem and honour of the nation uppermost in your heart. Understand the mystery behind human birth. Every individual has a goal. It is unbecoming of the youth to forget divinity and the goal of life, and to waste time in physical and materialistic pursuits. The youth should express human qualities by cultivating noble character and by rendering service to the society. They should discharge their duties with sincerity and re-establish the ancient culture of Bharat by practising and propagating its pristine values. But modern youth are neglecting their duty to the nation. They are not giving priority to the progress and prosperity of the nation. First of all, they should understand that the well-being of the individual lies in the safety and security of the nation.

Understand the truth that in the myriad forms of life, human life is the most sacred. Lead your life in a way so as to uphold Dharma, not merely to eat and sleep like birds and animals. Birds and animals act according to their innate nature, but man is forgetting his responsibility of fostering righteousness. Modern youth are under the mistaken notion that education is meant for Udyoga (job). Udyoga without Yoga is futile. Contemplation on God is true Yoga and Udyoga. That is the primary duty of man. Without understanding this truth, some people take pride in their jobs. Ahamkara (ego) is the pest, which attacks the root of the tree of human life. Raga (attachment) and Dwesha (hatred) foster Ahamkara. The three together spell doom for human life. Man's life will shine forth brilliantly only when his mind is filled with divine love. The life of one who forgets God and gets immersed in selfish love is heading towards disaster. The one who has total faith in God and love for God will lead a life of joy and bliss. Therefore, man should make an effort to understand his innate divine power, which is truly immeasurable.

### **Annam Brahma**

Bharat is the source of the Vedas and the sacred rituals like Yajnas and Yagas. How is it that such a sacred land is passing through hard times? The people of yore considered Truth as God and sacrifice as true human quality. They adhered to them and experienced the bliss derived therefrom. But the modern students and the educated consider money as God and think that they can lead a happy life by holding positions of authority. This is not the true human quality. One should aspire for bliss, which can be experienced only by acquiring the knowledge of Brahman (Divinity). Brahman is that which is changeless in all the three periods of time. This eternal principle is referred to in the Vedas as Prajnanam (Constant Integrated Awareness), which is immutable and invariable.

From the principle of Brahman emerged Aakasa (ether). From Aakasa, Vayu (air) originated. From Vayu, Agni (fire) emerged. From Agni, Jala (water) emerged. From Jala came Prithvi (earth). From Prithvi, Oshadhi (vegetation) emerged. Oshadhis gave rise to Annam (food) and man is born out of food. Thus, you can see that man and Brahman are intimately related. On this basis, Lord Krishna declared: *Mamaivamsho Jeevaloke Jeevabhuta Sanathana* (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). Without the principle of Brahman, nothing can exist, be it ether, air, fire, water, earth, vegetation or food. And man cannot survive without food. On this basis, the Vedas declared: Annam Brahma (food is God). What is food? Does it constitute merely cereals and vegetables that we consume? No. The whole world is composed of food. One body is the food for the other body. That which is consumed is food and the one who consumes food is also food. Everything that exists in this world is food. Therefore, it is said, food is God. You offer food to God by chanting the Sloka, "*Brahmarpanam...*" before you partake of it. But where is Brahman? He is very much in you. That is why He responds to your prayer immediately from within: "*Aham Vaishvanaro Bhoothva...*" meaning, "I am in you in the form of Vaishwanara (digestive fire) digesting the food that you consume."

Sathyam (truth) forms the basis for food. What is Sathyam? It is that which creates food. Sathyam comprises three syllables—Sat, Ye, Yam, which stand for the individual (Diva), food (Annam) and the sun, respectively. Sunlight produces food, and food sustains the individual. So, Sathyam is the primordial principle and the basis for everything. Our ancients considered truth as their life and righteousness as their very breath. They considered human life as a combination of truth and righteousness. Therefore, truth is God. Man today has forgotten truth and he aspires only for food. He fails to understand that truth is the basis for food.

Brahma (Divinity) is the basis for everything. Who is Brahma? All pervasive Nature is Brahma. Brahma pervades the air, the sound, the water, the earth and the sky. The five elements are the manifestations of Brahma. That is why people worship earth as Bhudevi, water as Gangadevi, air as Vayudeva, etc. But they do not realise that the same Brahma permeates all the five elements. All the five elements are present in the human body. So, Divinity is not separate from man. Man is the very form of Brahma. He is the embodiment of Truth. He should make every effort to manifest his latent Divinity. That is true Sadhana. Brahma is not a four-faced god as shown in pictures. Brahma permeates the entire universe. So, every living being is the embodiment of God. Man should therefore recognise his innate divinity.

**Goal of Life is Divine Love**

Students participated in various sports and cultural activities and emerged victorious. But this should not inflate their ego with the mistaken notion that they are responsible for their victory. They should realise that it is the Divinity within that does all. Students, who had never sung earlier in their lives, also sang melodiously. Similarly, some of you participated in those games, which you had never played earlier and emerged victorious. How could you do that? In fact, everything is the reflection of the inner being. This proves that it is the Divinity within that brings forth the latent talents and skills. Brahman dwells in you. In what form do you see Him? You see Him in the Soham Mantra which is echoed in your each breath and proves the presence of Divinity within. Soham means 'That I am'. You repeat this Soham Mantra 21,600 times a day, which reminds you of your Divinity as many times. When the power of Divinity is present in you, why should you consider yourself weak and helpless? In fact, man is the embodiment of all powers and faculties.

You are under the false impression that knowledge is acquired through books. In fact, it is the manifestation of that which already exists within you. Nothing is possible without Divinity. There are flowers, thread and needle, but they cannot form a garland by themselves. There should be someone to string them together. Similarly, separate letters by themselves do not convey any meaning, unless there is someone to combine them into words. For example, G, O, D are three letters. When they are brought together, they form the word God and you get a meaningful word. You have curd and a churning rod, but can you get butter out of curd without churning? No. Likewise, the infinite power latent in the individual should be manifested through self effort. It is possible only when you fill your mind with love for God. It is evident that self effort and grace of God are essential in any human endeavour. The reason for all misery and grief is that your mind is not directed towards Divine love. You will lead a blissful life only when your mind is suffused with Divine love. Divine love is the ultimate goal of life.

Perform all actions with Divine feelings. Do your duties sincerely. Only then the Udyoga (job) that you do will be transformed into Yoga (spiritual practice) and work will be transformed into worship. But man lacks such noble feelings. He differentiates between his work and others' work without understanding the truth that the same Divinity exists in all. "*Sahasra Seersha Purusha Sahasraksha Sahasra Paad*" (the Supreme Being has thousands of heads, eyes and feet). The entire universe is His manifestation. Divinity exists in one and all, be it an Astika (theist) or a Nastika (atheist). There is God even in a Nastika. Na + Asti = Nasti. Asti stands for Divinity. This means Divinity is the basis even for Nastika.

### **Experiencing Brahmananda**

Man uses words without understanding their inner meaning. This is due to his ignorance. He gets immersed in worldly pleasures and says that he is experiencing *Brahmananda* (eternal bliss). Worldly pleasures are transient, whereas *Brahmananda* is eternal. The type of joy that man derives out of worldly comforts and conveniences is *Manavananda* (human joy). Hundred times more than *Manavananda* is *Indrananda*; hundred times more than *Indrananda* is *Devendrananda*. Hundred times more than *Devendrananda* is *Devananda*. Hundred times more than *Devananda* is *Brihaspathiananda*. Hundred times more than *Brihaspathiananda* is *Prajapathiananda*. Hundred times more than *Prajapathiananda* is *Brahmananda*. This is the true measure of *Brahmananda*. It is not that which comes and goes; it is with you permanently. But you have forgotten this blissful state. "*Brahmanandam Paramasukhadam...*" only *Brahmananda*

confers supreme joy. All the joys relating to body and mind are like passing clouds. They are related to waking state alone. But *Brahmananda* can be experienced in all the three states viz., Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupti (waking, dream and deep sleep states). It is changeless in all the three periods of time. Man aspires to be blissful always, but he is subjected to misery because of narrow feelings and unsacred thoughts. He can experience the eternal bliss only when he gives up narrow feelings and becomes broad-minded.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

You can experience the eternal bliss only through love. There is no bliss greater than love. Divinity is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. The Vedas declare: *Sathyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma* (Divinity is Truth, Wisdom and Eternity). This infinite wisdom is latent in man, but he fails to understand this truth. He has become weak-minded due to wrong food and bad habits. He is totally ensnared in his body attachment. All his thoughts, words and deeds are engulfed in body attachment. He should get rid of body attachment and develop attachment towards the Self to realise his innate divinity. Body is not permanent. It is bound to perish one day or the other. None can predict with any degree of certainty when one would leave one's mortal coil. This physical life is but a dream. So, do not develop undue attachment to the body. So long as you are alive, discharge your duties sincerely. Suffuse your thoughts, words and deeds with divine feelings. Then you will verily become God. Modern youth should recognise this fundamental truth.

#### **Imbibe the Spirit of Patriotism**

The youth should resolve to eradicate poverty, suffering and injustice from this country. This can be accomplished only by developing sacred thoughts, adhering to truth, righteousness and justice and realising that God is omnipresent.

#### *Students!*

You are the emancipators of Bharat. Take refuge in Divinity, serve the nation and resolve to script a golden chapter in the history of Bharat. That is the essence of true education. Do not take pride in the acquisition of bookish knowledge. Bookish knowledge only helps in eking out a livelihood. It will not confer total wisdom. Perform your activities with unflinching faith in God. Then you are bound to be successful. Do not therefore study just for the sake of acquiring degrees.

*In Spite of his education and intelligence, a foolish man will not know his true Self and a mean-minded person will not give up his wicked qualities. Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to total wisdom. What is the use of acquiring worldly education if it cannot lead you to immortality? Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal.*

(Telugu Poem)

That is true education. That is Brahma Jnana (knowledge of Divinity). There can be no greater bliss than realising the truth that God is everywhere. No doubt, worldly education is also essential, but it should be under a certain limit, otherwise, it will corrupt the mind. When you are thirsty, is it not foolish to desire for the whole of the river Ganga? A glass of water is enough to quench your thirst. Likewise, it is foolish to entertain excessive desires. Na Sreyo Niyamam Vina (virtue cannot be attained without discipline). Everything should be within a certain limit. Proper

discipline has to be maintained in eating, earning and spending. Only then will your life be blissful.

*Students!*

Sports and games are essential to keep your body and mind in good shape. There is no point in having a healthy body if it is not used in the service of the society. Likewise, all your intelligence will be a waste if it is not used to discriminate between good and bad. Before undertaking any activity, enquire whether it is good or bad.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Do not spend all your lifetime in acquiring degrees. All your physical, mental and spiritual powers come from God. God is the giver and also the receiver. He is the one who experiences and also the one who is experienced. Understand the truth that everything, be it good or bad, happens according to the Divine Will. Do not develop craze for acquiring degrees, going abroad and amassing wealth. The true wealth is within you. Never forsake your motherland. For the simple reason that your mother is not beautiful, can you forsake her and consider another lady who is beautiful as your mother? Preferring a foreign land to one's own motherland amounts to doing the same. *Janani Janma Bhoomishcha Swargadapi Gareeyasi* (the mother and the motherland are greater than even heaven). So, one should have love for one's motherland. Develop *Deshabhimanam* (spirit of patriotism), not *Dehabhimanam* (attachment to the body).

*The physical body, made of five elements, is weak and no one knows when it would perish. Though one hundred years of life span is prescribed, you cannot take it for granted. You may have to leave your body at any point of time—either in childhood or in youth or in old age, either in town or in forest or in deep sea. Understand that death is certain. Therefore, use your intellect to know your true nature while you are alive.*  
(Telugu Poem)

If you do not know the purpose of your birth, you will become a burden on mother earth. The purpose of human birth is to experience Divinity. Try to understand your true nature. Do not compare yourself with others. Follow your own conscience and enjoy bliss. Do not imitate others. Imitation is the quality of the weak minded. Suppose, you come to know that someone has found a wallet on the road while passing through a particular locality. If you go to the same locality expecting to find another wallet on the road, you may even lose your own wallet! In order to progress in the field of education, imitation is desirable to a certain extent, but in all other fields imitation is deplorable. Imitation is weakness, creation is divine. Let your thoughts be sacred and the result will also be sacred.

*Embodiments of Love!*

This Sports and Cultural Meet has given immense joy to one and all. Do not consider sports and games as merely an annual affair. Your life itself is a game. Each moment that you spend is a part of this game of life. Play this game in the true spirit and emerge victorious. Human life is highly valuable and noble. Do not squander it in mean activities. Life is a long journey, not a short cut. Don't waste time. Time waste is life waste. Undertake righteous actions. Render service to the society. Strive for the welfare of your fellowmen. The Puranas affirm *Paropakara Punyaya Papaya Parapeedanam* (one attains merit by serving others and commits sin by hurting them). So, Help ever, Hurt never. This is the essence of the Mahabharata. The Kauravas always



tried to hurt the Pandavas. Ultimately, not even one out of hundred brothers survived in the Kurukshetra war. Lord Krishna foretold this before the commencement of the war. He told Dharmaraja, "Do not give scope to worry. Follow your Dharma and do your duty sincerely. You will certainly emerge victorious." He infused courage and confidence in Arjuna, saying, "*Arise Dhananjaya! None can escape the destiny. Justice will prevail and selfishness will perish. This has been the case in every Yuga (Age). You will see for yourself that King Dhritarashtra, father of hundred sons, will not be left with even one son to perform his last rites.*" (Telugu Poem)

The Kauravas ruined themselves because they forgot God and reposed their faith in the world. I do not advise you to forsake the world, but do not get totally immersed in worldly life. Have faith in God. Respect your parents and make them happy. The Vedas say, *Matru Devo Bhava Pitru Devo Bhava* (revere the mother and father as God). Do not hurt their feelings. Perform all your activities as an offering to God. Then you will certainly emerge victorious in all your endeavours.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Students! You gave immense joy to thousands of people with your performance. However, pleasing the entire world without pleasing God is of no use. (cheers) Even if the whole world is opposed to you, so long as God is with you, you need not fear. When God is with you, the whole world will follow you. When God is pleased with you, the whole world will be pleased with you. Therefore, let all your efforts be towards pleasing God.

#### *Intense Devotion of Tirumalacharya*

Tirumalacharya, the author of Sri Sathya Sai Suprabhatam, used to live here. He had served in the royal court of Venkatagiri. He was a great scholar in Sanskrit and Sastras. He accompanied Bhagavan to Badarinath at the advanced age of ninety. Bhagavan asked him whether he was fit enough to undertake such an arduous journey. He affirmed that with Swami by his side, he would travel any length of journey without any discomfort. (Cheers) He said, "Sai Mata, if You forsake me, my entire existence is a waste. If You accept me as Yours, it is as if I have everything at my command." This was the state of Bhakti and surrender in which Tirumalacharya spent his life. He was constantly meditating on Sai Mata. He spent all his time in Swami's proximity, whether it was here or in Brindavan. His Bhakti was beyond measure. Consequently, his end was peaceful.

He very well knew that his end was approaching and one day expressed his feeling. On being questioned as to how he knew about it, he replied, "Swami is telling me from within." Saying so, he went for his bath, brought some water, washed Swami's feet and sipped a few drops of the sanctified water and said, "Swami, my life has found fulfillment. *Poornamada Poornamidam Poornat Poornamudachayte Poornasya Poornamadaya Poornameva Avashishyate* (The whole is all That. The whole is all this. The whole was born out of the whole. Taking the whole from the whole, what remains is also the whole). Physically, mentally and spiritually, I have attained this wholesomeness. Now the time has come for me to merge in You." Thereafter, he cast off his mortal coil and merged in Swami. There is no shortage of men filled with Bhakti of this kind in the world. It is only because of the presence of such devotees that the world is able to sustain itself.

## **Students should Bring Glory to their Institution**

*Students!*

Wherever you may go, never forget truth. The only form of gratitude that you can express towards this university is by adhering to truth. Earn a good name to the Institute through your good conduct. That is all I expect from you.

You know Swami sent a few students to Bangalore for training in horse riding and driving of go-karts. Lt. Gen. Mehta gave them all help and facilities. He arranged the horses and also the trainers. The trainers were astonished at the skill and dexterity displayed by the boys, who learnt the art of horse riding within a short span of time. They extolled the character of the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, saying they were knowledgeable, smart and intelligent. (Cheers) Such a good name is what Swami expects you to earn for yourself and the Institute.

There are a lot of people in the world who wear white dress, but they may have black hearts. Students of our Institute are pure both from inside and outside. Just as the dress they wear is white in colour, so also their minds are pure. That makes Swami very happy.

Swami is always near you, with you, in you and around you. You should all become men of character and propagate spiritual values. You know the state of the country now. There is strife, misery and turmoil everywhere. Strive to alleviate this misery. This is what Swami expects from you. Do not wait until the next sports event. Perform your daily activities with diligence and constantly contemplate on God. Sanctify your life with Divine love.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "Prem Muditha Manase Kaho.. . "

**—From Bhagavan's Sankranti Sandesh in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the morning of 14th January 2000**

*Water cleans the body, truth cleans the mind, knowledge cleans reasoning faculty, the individual is cleaned by the penance and discipline.*

**—Baba**

AVATAR VANI

BHAGAVAN'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE

## **Unity and Divinity in the New Year**

*People desire a pleasant time, a good position and a happy life. But none attempts to attain sagacity, wisdom and character. What else is to be conveyed to this assembly of learned people?*

(Telugu Poem)

*Embodiments of Love!*

It is a rare privilege to be born as a human being. Man is endowed with a gentle heart and sweet mind. He is gifted with precious time. But it is unfortunate that man is unable to recognise his true nature. One cannot be called a human being just because one has a human body. Man is, in

fact, the very form of the *Viraat Swaroopa* (the Cosmic Person). He is the repository of all powers that pervade the cosmos. But he is unable to recognise his own capabilities and does not make use of even a small fraction of them.

### **First Recognise Your own Value**

Today man is devoid of peace and happiness. Why is it so? How is it that man endowed with a precious and rare life, a soft heart, a sweet mind and valuable time is unable to enjoy the benefits of these valuable possessions and enjoy peace? Unaware of his innate potential and forgetting his true nature, man becomes narrow minded, selfish and suffers from lack of mental peace. In fact, he is being gobbled by the demon of selfishness.

Ancient man led a very peaceful and happy life. Restlessness of the mind was alien to him because he adhered to Sathya and Dharma. Why does man today lack peace of mind? What is it that contributes to the transformation of human heart? As is the fire, so is the smoke; as is the smoke, so is the cloud; as is the cloud, so is the rain; as is the rain, so is the crop; as is the crop, so is the food and as is the food, so is the mind. Even the habits of eating and drinking of men today are not proper.

What is the true ornament of man? Lotuses are the ornaments of lakes. Houses and building are the ornaments of villages and towns. The waves of the ocean are its ornaments. The moon beautifies the sky. Character is the true ornament of man. The loss of this ornament is the source of all his suffering and misery. Man does not realise the purpose for which he has been created by God. God's creation is endowed with several truths, mysteries and ideals. But man has forgotten these ideals. He is unable to appreciate the significance of his legacy. Of all the powers in the world, human power is the greatest. In fact, it is man who assesses the value of all the materials of the world. Who gives value to a diamond or, for that matter, to gold? Who attaches value to land? Is it not man? Man assigns value to everything in this world, but he is unable to recognise his own value. Then how can he ever understand the value of Divinity? First of all, man has to realise the value of human life. Only then will he be in a position to understand Divinity. God does not reside in paradise or Kailash. These are His temporary camping stations. The true dwelling place of God is the heart of man. You don't need to go in search of God. He is not in a foreign land. Similarly, sin does not exist in some foreign land; it is attached to your actions. Not being able to recognise your innate divinity is *Ajnana* (ignorance). You have to enquire into the reason for this ignorance. This is mainly because you follow *Pravritti Marga* (outward path) all your life under the influence of sense organs, which are projected outward. You are not making any effort to make inward journey (*Nivritti Marga*). All that you see, hear or think are outward 'acts'. In fact, everything that you do is outward. Thus, you are fully engrossed in the outward activities and are completely neglecting the inward path.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

You need to make an effort to understand the value of man. In fact, there is no Divinity other than that present in man. Thus, first it is necessary to understand man before you can even attempt to understand Divinity. In fact, there is no difference between man and Divinity. Man is God; God is man. There is only difference of perception. You see the world with a worldly view and do not recognise the Divinity that pervades it. You have to make an effort to change your vision from outward to inward to perceive this Divinity.

### **Wisdom Disperses Ignorance**

Here is a rose. From the worldly view it is just a flower. But, from the divine point of view it is the flower of the heart. Wherefrom do you have this capacity to perceive the shape and smell of a rose? It is from the Divine. Your inability to perceive the omnipresent Divinity is the main cause of all the pains and miseries you suffer in this world.

Madalasa imparted the knowledge of this basic truth to her children from their childhood. She told them, "My dear children, you are not this physical body. Do not mistake physical things for spiritual realities. Don't become a victim of delusion due to your attachment. This delusion gives you the mistaken impression of the physical reality. Just as the dream state disappears when you wake up from sleep, the delusion caused by Moha (attachment) disappears when you awaken into the state of Jnana (wisdom)." When do you get dreams? You attribute dreams to your food or your thoughts. But this is not true. Give up this attachment of Samsara (world) and wake up from the sleep of delusion. Moha makes you forget your true form. If there is no sleep at all, there is no dream possible. Therefore, sleep is the main cause of dreams. For the dream of Ajnana (ignorance), Avidya (lack of true knowledge) is the cause. Therefore, do not fall into the sleep of Avidya. Teaching this way, she transformed all her children into great Yogis.

Human birth has not been gifted to man merely to indulge in worldly pleasures. None of the worldly pleasures are capable of conferring true satisfaction. They only increase your desires more and more. Therefore, man should give up worldly desires and recognise the principle of divinity.

### **New Year Augurs Well for Humanity**

From the physical and worldly point of view, today marks the beginning of the year 2000. This is not a universal measure of time as it is restricted only to a particular calendar. Moreover, it applies only to Vyashti (individual) and not to Samashti (cosmos) because cosmos is beyond worldly time frame while individual is bound by time and space. Cosmos, in fact, is Divinity itself. The individual is Jiva while the cosmos is Deva (Divinity). From the point of view of Divinity, 2000 years form merely an infinitesimal speck. Several million years have gone by in the past. Hence, 2000 years carry little significance from this aspect. 2000 years have passed from the era of Jesus Christ. What about the hundreds of thousand years that have preceded the advent of Christ? Some of the names of months of English calendar are related to various Roman kings and Greek gods and goddesses. Periods of time have been named after humans, but the truth about human nature is being ignored.

Man is the very embodiment of Divinity. In the word Manava (man), the three letters stand for: 'Ma'—Ajnana (ignorance), 'Na'—without, 'Va'—to act. So, man is one who acts without ignorance. There is another way in which this word can be interpreted. 'Ma'—not, 'Nava'—new, i.e., man is not new. He is *Purathana* (ancient) and *Sanathana* (eternal). Man has been in existence for countless number of years.

Disputes about dates are meaningless. Every second is the birth of a new year. Seconds add up to minutes, minutes to hours, hours to days, days to months and months to years. Every second of your life is new. Thus, there is no particular sanctity about the beginning or ending of a year.

There are people who attribute special significance to this day and speculate on some extraordinary or awesome events to take place. The time or date is not the cause of your happiness or misery. Your own Karma (actions) in the past is the cause of both your happiness and misery. As is the seed, so are the plant and fruit; they cannot be different. Don't waste your mental energy in speculations of this or that happening. *"When you are born, there are no ornaments around your neck. There are no necklaces of pearls or diamonds nor are there any chains of gold, but there is an invisible necklace of the consequences of your past good and bad actions, counted one by one, have been strung together by Brahma, and this is the ornament around your neck."*

(Telugu Poem)

*Embodiments of Love!*

When actions performed by you are proper and pure, you will get good results only.

On the whole, the coming year would be good for all of you. Actually, today is the beginning of the year 2000 and the ending of the year 1999. The year 2000 will end on 31<sup>st</sup> December. So, the consequences of the past years will be unfolded during this period. This period is going to be generally beneficial for the people of this country as well as for the rest of the world. The first three months, January to March, may have some ups and downs. Why? For man on the earth, time relates to the motion of the planets around the sun. Some other subtle phenomena of non-material nature are also associated with this physical phenomena. Some changes in the subtle phenomena may take place in the first three months of the New Year and may carry with them some favourable as well as adverse consequences. But after March 2000, there will definitely be a better and stable period. But this does not mean that people should do nothing and merely wait for that period; effort from your side is not to be left under any circumstances.

### **Treasure Divine Gold in Your Heart**

Today human values are on the decline. There is no trace of love anywhere. Truth and righteousness are hard to find. In these conditions, how can peace manifest? If you give some gold to a goldsmith, you can get any ornament made as per your choice. *Hiranyagarbha* is another name for God. *Hiranya* means gold. If you place this divine gold in your heart, you can make any ornament of your choice like Santhi (peace), Sathya (truth) and Dharma (righteousness). Just as no ornaments can be made without gold, you cannot obtain Santhi, Sathya or Dharma without Divinity. *Hiranyagarbha* is immanent in everyone. This is why Swami calls everyone 'Bangaru' (gold). Only when you recognise this truth and have the firm conviction of immanence of God, will you obtain all kinds of benefits in your life. But you have forgotten the indwelling Divinity, and are running after external objects. It is impossible to have success in life in this way. Therefore, first of all, develop faith in God.

Since ancient times, Bharat has been disseminating the knowledge of Divinity to the rest of the world. The culture of Bharat is truly great. But, unfortunately, very few are recognising this fact. The students are also not trying to understand its significance and sanctity. Our culture is divine, pure and ever new. Its scriptures set great ideals for mankind. Take, for example, the story of the Mahabharata. The priority of the Pandavas was God first, world next and themselves last. On the other hand, the priority of the Kauravas was themselves first, world next and God last. As a consequence, not only did the Kauravas lose God, they lost their life also. God should be your

first priority. With such an attitude, no danger will touch you. With God in your mind and heart, serve your country.

### **Patriotism Leads to Divinity**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Your country and your body are not different from each other. Both are composed of the same five elements. They are inseparably interrelated and totally interdependent. They are like mirror images of each other. Try to recognise this truth. The youth of today are the leaders of the future. If the future is to be prosperous, the modern youth should perform their duties with firm faith in God. You are not separate from the country, but a part of it. Have the firm conviction that this country belongs to you. But, unfortunately, patriotism is a scarce virtue in the youth of today. "*One who does not say with pride, this is my motherland, this is my mother tongue, this is my religion can be compared to a living corpse.*" (Telugu Poem) Every person, whichever country he may belong to, should have patriotism firmly ingrained in his heart. Abdicating their duty towards their motherland, people go to other countries and become completely alienated. How can such people ever understand Divinity?

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

God is the basis of everything. He is omnipotent, omniscient and pervades all creation. "*Who can say only this is Brahman and that is not. The only eternal existent entity is Brahman. The rest is all evanescent.*" (Telugu Poem). Just as without cotton, there can be no cloth, similarly, there can be no world without God. Do not mistake this transient body (Deha) as real. It is the Indwelling Divinity (Dehi) that is the true reality. This Divinity is beyond birth and death; the one without any beginning, middle or end. This birthless, deathless God is the eternal witness of the entire cosmos. Recognise this truth.

You are celebrating this day as the beginning of the New Year 2000. Do not consider that the year 2000 is related only to the Christians. Do not have any such narrow distinctions. Humanity in the whole world is one. All men of all countries belong to one race, the race of humanity. Keep this truth firmly in your heart. You must recognise that human birth is a rare occurrence. Consider time as highly valuable. The heart must be soft and the mind must be sweet. Human mind which is supposed to be sweet has become highly poisonous today, because man is allowing it to indulge in sensual pleasures, which are like deadly poison. Do not poison your nectarine mind by associating it with the objects of your senses. By doing so, you are making your soft heart also hard like stone. Do not waste time. Time is the very form of God. Hence, it is said in the Vedas: *Kalaya Namah, Kala Kalaya Namah, Kala Darpa Damanaya Namah, Kalatheetaya Namah*. God is the master of time. He transcends time. Therefore, have firm faith in God and not in your body. The body is impermanent. It grows and declines with the passage of time.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

You are considering this day as very sacred. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (depending on the thoughts of your mind the consequences vary). In any event, the year 2000 is not bad in any sense. It will promote very high ideals and propagate divine principles. It will foster the principle of unity. In a very short time, all the people of the world are going to be united. Today you consider America, Russia, Japan, China, Pakistan, India as separate from each other. Very soon

there will be unity amongst all these countries. (Cheers) Even those whom you consider as your worst enemies are going to become your best friends. You should not hate anybody. You are all brothers and sisters. In a short, time, you are all going to witness "Brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God." With a pure heart, all of you should pray for this to happen at the earliest.

There are many people in the world in great distress. The people who have been recently hijacked were under a severe strain. Prayer is the only remedy for the alleviation of such misery. There is nothing in the world that cannot be achieved by prayer. Prayer melts the hardest of hearts. Pray wholeheartedly, "*Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu*" (May the whole world be happy!). Do not pray for the welfare of your family, friends and relatives alone. Such narrow minded prayers are futile. Your prayer should be for the welfare of all people in all the countries of the world.

### **Start a New Life with Ideals of Service and Love**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

The one principle that you have to uphold and develop is that of love. When love dominates, there is no room for hatred. If there is no feeling of love earlier, at least sow the seeds of love now. The Gopikas prayed to Krishna:

*"Oh Krishna, play your sweet flute and sow the seeds of Love in the desert of loveless hearts. Let the rain of love fall on earth and make the rivers of love flow."* (Telugu Poem)

You must sow the seed of love in loveless hearts. Water it with love. Let love flow in a flood and reach all. You should cultivate this pure, steady, unselfish love in this New Year. Modern man directs his love towards worldly objects and gets entangled in several complications. "Love lives by giving and forgiving, self lives by getting and forgetting." Selfish love is like the foul smell of fish. Cultivate selfless love. Love all. Let others feel and think as they like. Do not bother about that. There is no need to fear anyone. Make your love pure. Then the whole world will become pure.

Many people are worrying and speculating as to how the year 2000 will unfold. There will be no formidable difficulties. In this world all things, good and bad, come and go. World devoid of happiness and misery cannot exist. Nothing is bad for the world. Pleasure is an interval between two pains. How can you feel pleasure if you have never felt pain? These come and go like passing clouds. One should neither dread the one nor crave for the other. Meet all contingencies with love. Transform everything into love and suffuse your lives with love. Then there shall be peace and stability in the world.

Why do you repeat the word "Santhi" (peace) thrice? You pray that you may have peace at all the three levels—physical, mental and spiritual—for you are not one individual, but three—the one you think you are (physical body), the one others think you are (mental body) and the one you really are (Atma). All three aspects of your being must be in a state of peace. This can be achieved only through love. Swami Himself is the proof of this. Infinite love is Swami's only wealth. Who sent out invitations to this large congregation? Your love towards Swami and Swami's love towards all of you has attracted all of you here. Hence, convince yourself that everything can be achieved with love. The evil traits of hatred, jealousy and pride should be cast

aside. These are not human qualities, but animal traits. You are a human being. Love is the chief quality of man, truth is his basis and righteousness is his very life. The combination of all these ensures peace. If you possess all these, peace is your property by right.

Give up selfishness and work for the unity of your country. Pray for the welfare of all and lead an ideal life. Human life is not gifted to you to hanker after worldly objects. You have to set an ideal to the world. What is the ideal that you have to set? You must help all to your utmost capacity. The best way to love God is to love all and serve all. Adopting service and love as your ideals, you must start a new life from this moment—this is My blessing and benediction to you.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "Prem Mudita Manase Kaho... "

*—From Bhagavan's New Year Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall at Prasanthi Nilayam on 1st January 2000*

### **Divine Mystery**

What millennium are You coming from  
That Your robe smells of lotus?  
And what myth are You emanating from  
That a sip of Your celestial song quenches my thirst?

Like the snow,  
I melt,  
Facing the glory of Your sight.  
Sow Your smile  
On the sheaf of my sorrow  
And let grapes of happiness grow.

Between the manifestation of Your sight  
And my mind  
Something is growing slowly,  
Fluttering in green  
Up to the meaning of immortality.

—Simin Behroozi

*SSSIHL'S ANNUAL SPORTS AND CULTURAL MEET 2000*

### **A Spectacular Event worth Treasuring in Memory**

This year's Sports Meet of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning was preceded by another happy event, viz., the New Year celebrations on the 1st of January 2000.



## **Welcoming the New Millennium**

The year 2000 started on a happy note when devotees received Bhagavan Baba's blessings on the first day of the New Year and New Millennium in a grand function held in Prasanthi Nilayam.

There was great expectancy in the air when Bhagavan Baba came to the Sai Kulwant Hall on the morning of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2000 to bless the huge concourse of devotees on this auspicious day. As soon as Swami stepped into the Hall, the devotees welcomed Him with a thunderous applause. The devotees occupied every inch of the spacious Sai Kulwant Hall. Besides, many were standing outside to have a glimpse of Bhagavan. Swami graciously blessed all with His Divine Darshan in and outside the Hall. The New Year celebrations started with the Institute Band playing the- Vedic invocatory prayer and other famous tunes. Thereafter, the students made their musical offering to Bhagavan by singing songs in His praise as also to welcome the New Year.

Before the Divine Message of Bhagavan on this occasion, two speakers addressed the devotees. The first speaker, Prof. G. Venkataraman, an eminent scientist and former Vice Chancellor of SSSIHL, said that in spite of great advance made by science and technology in the previous century, problems of mankind had multiplied. Prof. Venkataraman congratulated the devotees on their rare good fortune of having the Creator Himself in their midst. Great devotees like Ramakrishna wore themselves out yearning for the Darshan of the Mother day in and day out, and here Mother Sai was giving Darshan to the entire mankind in the Sai Era every day. "If this is not Golden Age, then what is the Golden Age?" Prof. Venkataraman asked.

The second speaker, Sri S. V. Giri, Vice Chancellor, SSSIHL, said that the modern age was considered as the age of the integrated circuit. What mankind needed today was not integrated circuit, but internal harmony. It was with this objective in view that Bhagavan had emphasised the value of integral education in the SSSIHL.

After this, Bhagavan gave His New Year Message (printed separately). The programme came to a close at 9.15 a.m. with Mangalarati to Bhagavan and distribution of Prasadam.

## **A Saga of Perfection**

Aeons ago, Lord Krishna said in the Gita: "*Yoga Karmasu Kaushalam*" (perfection in action is Yoga). This perfection was demonstrated in practical form in the Annual Sports and Cultural Meet of SSSIHL held on 11<sup>th</sup> January in the Hill View Stadium, and the divine witness was the Lord Himself in His present incarnation of Bhagavan Baba. It was a unique show of skill, strength, adventure and dexterity by the divinely inspired students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.

Bhagavan came to the Hill View Stadium at 7.00 a.m. in a procession led by gorgeously bedecked elephant Sai Geeta, followed by Institute band, slow march squad and horse riders' squad in ceremonial dress. Unlike previous years, this year Bhagavan came in a glittering regal chariot, drawn by two horses. A student of Brindavan Campus was its coachman, while another of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus was the attendant, who held a golden umbrella over Bhagavan's head.

The programme began with an impressive March Past, after Bhagavan lit the sacred lamps to mark the beginning of the programme. Primary School students in colourful dresses led the March Past, in which students of all the three campuses of SSSIHL took part. At the rear of the March Past squads was the squad of athletes. The March Past squads paid their obeisance to Bhagavan when they came near Santhi Vedika.

After the March Past, Bhagavan ceremoniously inaugurated the Sports and Cultural Meet by hoisting the Institute Flag and lighting the Sports Torch, which was carried to the hilltop in a vehicle in the form of an elephant, where it lit the Sports Meet Urn. Bhagavan also released white pigeons and balloons in the sky. The participants were administered the oath of fair play before the actual start of the sports and cultural events.

### **Delectable Display of Skill and Dexterity**

Balance, skill, dexterity, courage and determination were the hallmarks of this year's Sports Meet. The students of Prasanthi Nilayam and Brindavan campuses gave a combined performance this year. The programme began with the students representing both the campuses offering their obeisance to Bhagavan in go-karts. The students showed perfect control over the go-karts and performed various daring feats like going crisscross and avoiding a head-on collision. After go-karts, a very thrilling event was presented when students flew a microlight aircraft to offer their 'Pranams' to Bhagavan from the sky. This was followed by a cultural show, which included Bhangra, Dandia and Zulu dances.

Students of both the campuses gave wonderful demonstration in many events which included motor bike stunts, balancing on huge wheels, trampoline somersaults, cricket drill, aerobics and gymnastics.

Equestrian events included in this year's Sports Meet added thrill and adventure to it. Two students steered their horses well clear of all the three obstacles. Both of them received trophies from Bhagavan for their performance. The programme ended with Beating the Retreat in which band groups of Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam, Brindavan Campus and Institute Brass Band took part. At the end of this grand show, Bhagavan went down the stage, blessed the students and posed for photographs with them.

### **Glimpses of World's Cultures**

The theme of the Anantapur Campus programme was unity in diversity. Their performance began with students carrying the flags of different countries.

Cultures of several parts of the world were brought alive to the Hill View Stadium by the students of Anantapur Campus when they presented beautiful dances from India, Japan, Russia, Africa and Europe.

The viewers held their breath when the students from the Anantapur Campus showed daredevil stunts on motor bikes. They made various formations like star formation, lotus formation and pyramids on bikes. They also jumped through a ring and performed acrobatics on bikes.

At the end of the programme, Bhagavan went down the stage, blessed the students and posed for photographs with them.

### **Sports Events for Staff**

Participation of the teachers and non-teaching staff was a new addition to this year's Sports Meet. These games were held in the afternoon of 11th January 2000. Bhagavan came to the Hill View Stadium at 2.00 p.m. in His car escorted by a squad of six horse riders in ceremonial dress. What followed after this was an hour of thrill and fun for one and all. The teachers and staff took part in several events like throw ball, obstacle race, football dribbling, fast walking, three-legged race, relay races, spotting the pot and tug of war. This spectacular fun-filled show came to a close at 2.50 p.m. Harmony, Rhythm and Colours The cultural and sports show by the Primary School children, which followed staff games, was a magnificent show of „harmony, rhythm and colours. As the show progressed, one could not but feel that some angels had descended on the Hill View Stadium at the command of the Sai Avatar and they were infusing the spirit of harmony and adventure in the hearts of these small children. The children showed excellent dexterity, skill and sense of rhythm in performing dances and rhythmic. They made some wonderful formations with fans, peacock feathers and balloons. But the colourful dance with the background of rainbow stole everybody's heart. The beautiful colours and drills of children were a real feast for the eyes. Obviously very much pleased with the performance, Bhagavan came down the stage to be photographed with children. This delectable show came to a happy conclusion with Mangalarati to Bhagavan.

### **Prize Distribution on Makara Sankranti**

On the holy day of Makara Sankranti, Bhagavan graciously gave prizes to the winners of the sports events. This year, the number of individual prizes was so large that the distribution of prizes had to be done in two sessions, in the morning as well as in the afternoon. In the morning, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall in a procession led by Primary School girls band, Institute Band and flag bearing squad of students. The programme commenced with Veda chanting by Primary School students dressed in ochre robes. Bhagavan ceremoniously inaugurated the programme by lighting the sacred lamps at 7.20 a.m.

Sai Kulwant Hall was magnificently decorated for this purpose. As a mark of auspiciousness, new harvest coconuts and sugarcane were tied to the gates of the Hall. Huge cut-outs and shining trophies added brilliance to the glittering Hall. In the beginning, Bhagavan gave trophies to all the institutions. Thereafter, individual prizes were given to the winners of the staff events and the winners of Prasanthi Nilayam and Brindavan Campuses. Bhagavan graciously announced special prizes for the Primary School teachers who worked day and night for several months and stitched all the dresses themselves for children for the sports events.

Speaking on this occasion, the Vice Chancellor, Sri S. V. Giri, expressed gratitude to the Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba, for His constant guidance and blessings. Referring to the spectacular performance of all sections of students and staff in this thrilling event, Sri Giri characterised the chief features of this event as team work, sacrifice, coordination and divine love, which brought about total harmony in all events.

Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan Baba, Sri Sandipan Chatterji, a member of the faculty of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus, made a brief speech. He said that Prasanthi sports were unique and unparalleled because they were not held in a spirit of competition, but with the sole purpose of pleasing Bhagavan. The wardens, the principals, the teachers and the students—all worked like one unit for the joy of their Chancellor and for His love. So, the main undercurrent of these games was love.

Thereafter, Bhagavan gave His Sankranti Sandesh (printed separately), which was followed by distribution of Prasadam. The morning programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.50 a.m.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall in a procession led by Anantapur students band. The programme began with Veda chanting by the students at 2.35 p.m. Before distributing prizes, Bhagavan graciously permitted Dr. Jayalakshmi Gopinath, Principal of the Anantapur Campus, to narrate her experiences of the early days of Prasanthi Nilayam. Dr. Gopinath then enthralled the audience with the divine pranks of Bhagavan on the sands of Chitravati. She also narrated in detail how Bhagavan in His divine play gave them Darshan of His ten incarnations at the hilltop near Chitravati. In the end, she advised the devotees to have complete faith in the Divinity of Bhagavan to earn His limitless grace.

After her speech, Bhagavan graciously distributed prizes and to the pleasant surprise of everyone, gave His nectarine discourse for the second time in a day. The programme of Makara Sankranti and prize distribution came to a happy conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.00 p.m.

## **Know Thyself**

—Judy Warner Scher

*He has let me understand that my goal orientation, need to prone myself, compulsiveness, and selfishness were all because of my personality's need to define myself by society's standards.*

The goal of human life is to realise that we are Divine. Most of us have to go through a lot of challenges to get to this point. Baba tells us that Life is a game, play it; Life is a dream, realise it. He also tells us that death is only shedding our bodies, like an overcoat. We are not the body, and need to find out who we really are. It is not enough to believe what He tells us intellectually; we must experience in order to know.

### **Experiencing to Know**

This is no easy job, because what we have to do is to rid ourselves of all concepts about life and who we are, and our limited way of thinking. Only then can we know boundless love and joy, which is our true nature. In order to be willing to rid ourselves of what we have learned, we must put aside our desires and self-image, give up our anger, greed, lust, pride, jealousy and attachments.

Swami tells us that, although Bhajans, meditation, repeating the name, and service are all important to do, as they are ways to help purify us; three quarters of our spiritual practice should be self-inquiry, asking "Who am I?" *Once you know yourself, nothing that can happen in the world will be able to touch you or cause you any anxiety. And once you understand yourself, you will be able to understand the world in all its fullness.*

Because of my love for Swami, I was involved for years in meditation, Bhajans, service and Namasmarana, mentally dedicating all to God. Two years ago, I got an inner prompting to stop working at the hospice, to "stay quiet and be wife." A few months later, I felt it was time to stop my volunteer work as a mediator. Even my Sadhana changed; I knew it was time for me to stop my formal morning meditation. This was difficult for me, because I have always been a very active and outgoing person. Now, I was no longer going to be doing service, meditating, and somehow even the Bhajans in our area were no longer done. However, I would continue with the Gayatri Mantra and some Namasmarana when needed. For almost a year, I kept worrying why I was no longer a productive person, why I was no longer doing service. Was I just being lazy?

I realised, the problem was that all my life I had defined myself by what I did, how well I was doing, how I was feeling, what I looked like, how intelligent I was, by things outside myself. This is how I understood who I was. When all my doing stopped, and life became quiet, I was faced with the real question: Who am I? This was quite terrifying, because I had always thought I knew who I was; doing sustained my ego and sense of self. Without doing, I felt empty and diminished. This insight made me understand why we are reluctant to give up the idea that we are the doers.

### **Watching Your Impurities**

After about a year, I finally began to relax into this new way of life. My mind stopped a lot of its busyness, and I found that throughout most of the day, I could be mindful and witness and, on occasion, just be. Then, after about a year of physical suffering, which has been one of the most difficult challenges of my life, for some inexplicable reason, I began to accept everything in my life, including my illness, as grace. I remember a few years prior to this, when I thanked Swami for all His good grace, His reply was, "All is grace."

Acceptance and witnessing have now become my Sadhana. However, I still had a small part of me that wondered if I were doing enough. Then, in January 1999, Swami called us in for an interview. I told Swami that the only spiritual practice I was doing was witnessing and accepting and asked Him, "Is there some other spiritual practice I should be doing?" He was quiet for a moment and then said, "Continue what you are doing." A few months prior to this, a friend of mine asked Him the same question, and He told her to do more work. This was a clear and blessed affirmation.

So, with a quieter mind, and less worldly involvement, it has become easier to watch and be present. When I can remain the witness and anger rises up, for instance, I just note it, and if an apology is needed, I do so. However, I don't need to identify myself as an angry person, because I no longer believe this personality is who I really am. I have come to realise that as I pay less attention to these impurities, they seem to fall away on their own. For this reason, I no longer

feel the need to actively rid myself of impurities, limited concepts, the ego or anything. I now see I only have to watch the drama and play my part to the best of my ability.

Recently, I awoke in the morning overcome with grief. My first tendency was to attach this to a recent loss in my life. However, I decided to just witness this and not build a story around this feeling. I noticed that within minutes the grief was gone. Later that day, I was overcome with a welling up of inner joy. Rather than wonder why I was feeling this or where it came from, I just watched, and it too moved on like a passing cloud. This experience was so vivid that it became clear that if I didn't attach to thoughts and feelings, they would not stay with me. If I attach to the story of losing my friend, I would suffer. If I let the story go, I would be beyond the level of personality where Divinity is ever present.

### **Detaching from the Personality**

Swami is a master at working on us so that, one day we will know we are divine. He works on each of us in a special way, as each and every one of us has his own path. While today, it is essential for me to witness, accept and lead a quiet life, tomorrow I may be called to formally meditate, sing Bhajans or serve in the community again. It is all His will, in His time.

I have been at His Feet for over 15 years, and the changes thus far have been a miracle. He has let me understand that my goal orientation, need to prove myself, compulsiveness, and selfishness were all because of my personality's need to define myself by society's standards. I have learned that confidence in the personality is not enough. I must have confidence in the God within. Swami says, "*Confidence in the Self is confidence in God.*"

Confidence in the big "S" Self is what I need to attain, and this has nothing to do with doing, but with being. If I am living in the future, or the past, if I am trying to control my life rather than accept what is, I cannot be in the present moment. Swami tells us, "*Being is lost in becoming.*"

Swami says, "*Once you know Divinity, you are the Divinity Itself.*" With more acceptance and detachment, knowing we are Divine becomes a possibility. When you become more surrendered and detached, you begin to notice there is no longer a need to judge yourself or others. You are no longer attracted to all the dramas around you, as they take you away from the inward path. Of course, you listen, should you be asked. You are compassionate, but that is all. You become less opinionated, because you realise that all is part of His play. Everything has its purpose, and it is no longer necessary to understand the reason. You become less selfish, because you realise you are just one of the actors on His stage. You may sometimes get drawn into the illusion of your personality, but you notice this happens for shorter and shorter periods of time. I know I still have far to go, and yet a part of me knows, there is nowhere to go and nothing to do. All are One. All are Divine.

Dear Lord, Embodiment of Love and Compassion, may all beings realise their divinity, the joy and love that is their true nature!

**He is Right Beside You**

*At first, God stands at a distance watching your efforts like the teacher who stands aside while the student writes the answer to his questions. When you shed your attachment to the material world and turn to doing good, God' comes encouragingly near. He is like the sun god who stands waiting outside the closed door, like a servant who keeps his place. He does not announce His presence or knock at the door. He simply waits. But when the master opens the door even a little, the sun rushes in at once and drives out the darkness. When you ask God for help, He is right beside you with hands held out to help you. All you need is the discrimination to pray to God, the wisdom to remember Him.*

**—Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

*Significance of Uttarayana Man's vision should not be confined solely to external objects and worldly things, which are transient and perishable. Man has been given this vision so that he may see the pure, sacred Divine Consciousness abiding in his heart. Uttarayana (northward movement of the sun) is the appropriate occasion for developing this inward vision. This is the royal road for the spiritual aspirant to realise the Supreme. It is, therefore, not enough to recognise the northward movement of the sun in this period. Every effort should be made to direct the vision towards the Indwelling Self.*

**—Baba**

*"The year 2000 will promote very high ideals and propagate divine principles. It will foster the principle of unity"*

## Sanctify Your Life by Chanting Gayatri Mantra

Dear Boys!

This is the most auspicious moment of your life. Human life can be compared to a four-storeyed mansion. The four storeys correspond to four stages of man's life, viz., Brahmacharya, Grihasta, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa (celibate, householder, recluse and renunciant). Today you are laying the foundation of the mansion of your life. The safety and security of the mansion is assured once you make the foundation strong and sturdy.

Gayatri—the Mother of the Vedas Man has four births. His first birth takes place from his mother's womb. He gets a second life when he is initiated into the Gayatri Mantra. His third birth occurs when he studies the Vedas. He becomes a Brahmin when he recognises the principle of Brahman. This is his fourth birth. One becomes a Brahmin not merely by birth, but by knowing the nature of Brahman. For this, chanting of Gayatri Mantra is very essential.

Man is the embodiment of all gods. In fact, the gross form of the food that man consumes refers to the principle of Brahma. On this basis, it is said, "Annam Brahma, Raso Vishnu" (food is Brahma and the essence is Vishnu). The subtle form of the food denotes the principle of Vishnu. The subtlest form symbolises the principle of Easwara. The gross part of the food strengthens the body. The subtle part of the food strengthens the mind and the subtlest part of the food purifies the speech. Therefore, food plays a vital role in strengthening and purifying the body, mind and speech.

Gayatri is *Sarvadevata Swarupini* and *Sarvamantra Swarupini* (embodiment of all gods and all Mantras). It is said, *Gayatri Chhandasam Matha*, meaning Gayatri is the mother of the Vedas. There is no need to chant any other Mantra if you chant the Gayatri Mantra. Gayatri has three names: Gayatri, Savitri and Saraswati. *Gayantham Trayate ithi Gayatri* (Gayatri protects the one who recites it). Gayatri is the master of the senses. Savitri is the presiding deity of the life principle. When Gayatri acts as the protector of life force, she is known as Savitri. You might have heard the story of Savitri, a woman of chastity, who brought her dead husband, Sathyavan, back to life with the power of her prayer. Savitri protects those who lead a life of Sathya (truth). This is the inner meaning. Saraswati is the presiding deity of speech. Man has to earn the grace of Gayatri, Savitri and Saraswati to sanctify his life.

First and foremost, man has to purify his speech. Only then will his life be safe and secure. If you slip and fall, the injury can be cured, but the injury caused by the slip of the tongue is incurable. It will make your life miserable. So, you should have control over your speech. Excessive talk will lead to untruth and unpleasantness. That is why the ancient saints and seers used to observe silence. You can uphold truth and attain fame only by talking less. Limited talk will confer happiness. Excessive talk will put you to grave dangers.

Gayatri, Savitri and Saraswati are latent in everybody. Bhur, Bhuvah and Suvah in the Gayatri Mantra refer to body (materialisation), life force (vibration) and soul (radiation). Bhur means Bhuloka (the earth), which is nothing but the combination of materials. This denotes the human body, which is also a combination of materials. Bhuvah refers to the life-force, which makes the



body vibrate. Suvah refer to Prajnana Shakti, which sustains the life force. This Prajnana Shakti is known as Constant Integrated Awareness. This is also termed as radiation. All the three, viz., materialisation, vibration and radiation are present in man. I tell you often, you are not one, but three—the one you think you are (physical body), the one others think you are (mental body) and the one you really are (Atma).

### **Heart should be Pure and Compassionate**

Human life is the combination of body, mind and Atma. Body is the basis for attaining wisdom. So, it should not be misused. One has to purify one's body and mind by undertaking sacred actions. The principle of Atma is always pure and unsullied. Human life is highly sacred. Janthunam Narajanma Durlabham (human birth is the rarest of all beings). *Sareeramadyam Khalu Dharma Sadhanam* (body indeed is the first medium for the pursuit of Dharma). Do not underestimate the potentialities of human body. In fact, human body is the basis for attaining the goal of life.

Work for the redemption of your life by chanting the Divine Name and undertaking sacred activities. You need not make any special effort to acquire the human values, viz., Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. They are with you right from your birth. But you have forgotten them, as you have not put them into practice. Instead of giving tons of speeches, it is better that you practise at least an ounce of what you have learnt. Today humanness is on the decline because man does not practise human values. Man is developing *Asalu* (desires), forgetting *Adarsalu* (ideals). His attachment to the body is becoming stronger, whereas his attachment to the spirit is on the decline. No doubt, attachment to the body is essential, but it is desirable only when it comes to performing actions.

You should give up Dehabhimanam (attachment to the body) and cultivate Deshabhimanam (spirit of patriotism). After Ravana was annihilated, Lakshmana prayed to Rama to rule over Lanka. He said, "Brother, it is not proper on our part to disturb Bharata, who is ruling over Ayodhya. Moreover, the kingdom of Lanka is more affluent and beautiful than Ayodhya. So, it is my humble prayer that you should become the king of Lanka." Vibhishana too fell at the feet of Rama, saying, "Swami, I surrender myself, my wealth and the kingdom at your Lotus Feet." But Rama was not carried away by the affluence of Lanka. He said, "*Janani Janma Bhoomtscha Swargadapi Gareeyasi* (the mother and the motherland are greater than even the heaven). I cannot leave my motherland even if it is not that affluent as Lanka." This shows the love and respect Rama had for His motherland.

Himachala (the Himalayas) forms the northern boundary of Bharat. 'Hima' means ice. It is white in colour and melts easily. Whiteness symbolises purity. 'Achala' means that which is steady. Your Hridaya (heart) should also be like Himachala, pure and steady. It should melt with compassion. Hri + Daya = Hridaya. Daya means compassion. God resides in your heart only when it is pure, steady and full of compassion. But today human heart has lost purity, compassion and steadiness due to limitless desires. Life is a long journey and your desires are the luggage. "Less luggage more comfort make travel a pleasure." The journey of life will become enjoyable only when you reduce the luggage of desires. The lesser the desires are, the happier you will be. The Gayatri Mantra teaches that you should offer everything to God. *Sarva Karma*

*Bhagavad Preethyartham* (perform all your actions to please God). Only then will you be free from all difficulties and hardships.

### **Spiritual Education is True Education**

The Vedas declare: "*Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava*" (revere the mother and the father as God). I keep telling the students very often that their blood, food, head and *Duddu* (money) are all the gifts of the mother. So, first and foremost, one should show gratitude to the mother. You should never forget your mother who gave you birth after carrying you in her womb for nine months and brought you up providing all care and comfort, unmindful of her own discomforts. The mother always has your well-being uppermost in her mind in whatever she says or does. You may be highly educated and your mother may be illiterate, but still you should have utmost regard for her. You should consider the teachings of your mother as the Veda itself.

Gayatri is the embodiment of the mother-principle. You should chant the Gayatri Mantra everyday, in the morning, noon and evening. These are referred to as *Prata Sandhya*, *Madhyahna Sandhya* and *Sayam Sandhya*. When your back is towards the sun, your shadow will be in front of you. It will fall behind you only when you stand facing the sun. Similarly, Maya (illusion), which is like your shadow, will overpower you when you turn your mind away from God. It can be overcome only when you turn your mind towards God.

Due to the impact of Kali Age and the advancement of modern education, man's intellect is getting perverted. There is no point in acquiring education bereft of character. Worldly education, which comprises mere bookish knowledge, can never help you to lead a divine life. No doubt, worldly education is essential, but along with worldly education, one should have spiritual education too. "*Adhyatma Vidya Vidyamam*," spiritual education is the true education. "*Nadinam Sagaro Gatih*" (rivers ultimately merge in the ocean). Worldly education is like rivers and rivulets, while spiritual education is like a mighty ocean. So, of all the forms of education, spiritual education is the highest and the noblest. Today even the highly educated parents are acting without any sense of discrimination. They discourage their children from worshipping God and participating in Bhajans. They tell them that they would have ample time to think of God after retirement. This is a grave mistake. "Start early, drive slowly, reach safely." One can remember God in old age only when one thinks of Him right from one's childhood.

### *Students!*

Childhood is the right age to contemplate on God. This is the golden age as it is a very sacred age. Do not misuse it. Some parents want their children to go abroad immediately after the completion of their graduation. What is there in foreign countries that is not available in Bharat? In fact, that which is not present in Bharat is not present anywhere else in the world. Most of the students who go abroad to pursue higher studies develop perverted minds and lose their character. I have myself seen that many students who went abroad lost their character. Only a few of them returned to Bharat with good character. People send their children abroad because they want them to become *Dhanavantutu* (wealthy), but not *Gunavantutu* (virtuous). Money may provide all the comforts and conveniences, but can it confer mental peace? No. Only spirituality can grant peace of mind.

Today people are crazy to go to foreign countries, whereas the foreigners themselves are coming to Bharat in search of peace of mind. They have all the material comforts, but lack peace of mind. They have money in abundance. Excessive money gives rise to arrogance, which in turn leads to all wicked qualities. So, one should not go abroad in search of wealth. One should remain in Bharat if one wants to cultivate noble character. Take Swami's own example. Thousands of devotees have been praying to Me to visit their respective countries. But till today I have not even entertained the thought of going abroad. What is the reason? Bharat is the centre of all Dharmas. It is the land of sacred rituals and sacrifice. Here is a small example. The train has an engine in the front and many compartments attached to it. You will find coal, fire and driver in the engine only, and not in other compartments. Bharat can be compared to the engine. (Cheers) In Bharat alone you find the sacred fire of Yajnas and Yagas. The other countries are like different compartments attached to the engine of Bharat. Some 'compartments' may get disjoined. What is the reason? They do not have proper 'link' with the 'engine'. The culture of Bharat is highly sacred. The Bharatiyas should be attached to their motherland; they should practise and propagate its sacred culture.

### **Upanayanam Necessary at Early Age**

Gayatri is known as Panchamukhi, meaning she has five faces. What are they? *Om* is the first face; *Bhur Bhuvah Suvah*, the second; *Tat Savitur Varenyam*, the third; *Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi*, the fourth; *Dhiyo Yo Na Prachodayat* is the fifth. Gayatri Mantra has three parts: praise, meditation and prayer. First, the Divine is praised, then it is meditated upon in reverence and lastly, prayer is offered to the Divine to dispel the darkness of ignorance and to awaken and strengthen the intellect. Dheemahi relates to the meditative aspect. Dhiyo Yo Na Prachodayat relates to the prayer. Chanting of the Gayatri Mantra purifies the mind and confers devotion, detachment and wisdom. Young men must necessarily chant the Gayatri Mantra. Today we find that they get initiated into the Gayatri Mantra at an advanced stage of their youth. Intellect will blossom and shine in all its splendour after initiation into the Gayatri Mantra. That is why it is essential that Upanayanam be done at the age of eight. One who is initiated into the Gayatri Mantra at an early age will become highly intelligent. Man's life will be sanctified by chanting this Mantra.

It is because man does not think of God with devotion and sincerity that fear and restlessness have become the order of the day. Chanting of Divine Name alone can make one fearless. God is referred to as Hiranyagarbha. Hiranya means gold. Only when you place this 'gold' in your heart, can you get the jewels of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema. Once God is installed in your heart, only divine feelings will originate from it. When sweet pudding is poured into a vessel with a number of holes, what comes out of the holes will also be sweet pudding. Likewise, when you fill your heart with Divinity, all your actions will become divine. But man lacks faith in Divinity. He has Swasa (breath), but no Vishvas (faith). Such a life is useless.

### **Evil Qualities are Gateways to Hell**

The youth should work for the progress of the country. They should always help their fellow-men. Sage Vyasa gave the essence of 18 Puranas thus: Paropakara Punyaya Papaya Parapeedanam (one attains merit by serving others and commits sin by hurting them). So, Help ever, Hurt never. This is the true devotion and surrender. Devotion does not mean offering

worship or doing Bhajans. They are all external activities. All these are futile if there is no inner purity. So, develop love.

Love is God, God is love. So, live in love. Love your parents. Serve them, obey their command and satisfy them. They have immense love for you. But, sometimes, they may try to put you on the wrong path unknowingly. In such a case, explain to them, what is right and what is wrong and convince them. If they want you to go abroad to earn more money, tell them that character is important, not money. If you explain to them in a proper way, there will certainly be a transformation in them.

*Boys!*

If you chant the Gayatri Mantra wholeheartedly, you will never face difficulties or hardships in life. Chant the Divine name incessantly. You know the story of Prahlada. His father Hiranyakasipu commanded him to stop chanting the name of Lord Narayana. Prahlada never argued with his father. He smilingly listened to all that his father said, but ultimately followed the dictates of his conscience. Huge elephants were let loose to trample him under their feet, poisonous snakes were set on him to bite. He was also pushed down from mountain cliffs, thrown into deep sea. But never did he give up chanting the Lord's name. As a result, the elephants, the poisonous snakes, the mountain cliffs and the mighty oceans transformed into 'Lord Narayana Himself. The Lord came to his rescue whenever he was put to danger. Likewise, if you have divine feelings in your heart, God will protect you, wherever you are. You should have unwavering faith in Him and chant His name with love.

Do not give scope to the evil qualities of desire, anger and greed. They are like gateways to hell. Ravana was highly educated and powerful. But he ruined his entire clan and kingdom as he became a victim of Kama (desire). Hiranyakasipu symbolised anger and ultimately ruined himself. Duryodhana was greed personified and he too suffered the same fate as that of Ravana and Hiranyakasipu. You may have immense knowledge, wealth and valour, but you are bound to suffer if you become a slave to anger, desire and greed. Do not take pride in your wealth, physical strength and education. Develop the strength of love. Love can transform even a foe into a friend. Only through love can your life be redeemed.

Some people may argue that it is foolish to believe in the existence of God whom you cannot see. But, in fact, you are seeing God all the time, because the entire universe is the form of God. Right from microcosm to macrocosm, all forms are His. The Vedas declare: *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God is present in all beings). You are unable to see Him because you see Nature from the physical point of view. Give up the worldly feeling and see Nature with divine feelings. Then God will certainly manifest before you. Just as fragrance is present in the flower, Divinity is latent in you. Flower can be seen by the naked eye, but can anyone see its fragrance? Mother loves the child. She has a form, but her love has no form. That love is God.

Gayatri Mantra is highly sacred. As Sastri Garu pointed out, Gayatri Mantra contains the essence of all the Mantras. Gayatri is the embodiment of all gods and goddesses. Just as a single thread runs through all the flowers in a garland, the same divine power exists in all the god forms. Understand this unity in diversity. One who has understood this unity will never be put to

suffering. Develop faith in God. Do not get carried away by what others say. Follow the dictates of your conscience.

*Dear Boys!*

Today is a sacred day. In fact, it is the foundation day of your life. Make this foundation strong and sturdy. Then the mansion of life raised on this foundation will also be strong and secure. This will give strength to the grand edifice of our nation. You should develop national and patriotic feelings. The spirit of nationalism is absent in the youth of today. This is due to the influence of those politicians who keep their self-interest above the interests of the nation. But, you should be ready to sacrifice even your life for the nation. This should be your ideal in life. If you develop such lofty ideals, you are sure to experience Divinity.

If you have the strong desire to see God, contemplate on Him with unwavering faith. Then you can certainly see Him. Never doubt His existence. He exists for those who believe in His existence and does not exist for those who deny His existence. He acts according to your feelings. So, develop faith in Him. Chanting the Gayatri Mantra three times in a day, i.e., morning, noon and evening, is not enough. You should chant this Mantra perpetually. Why should you stipulate a particular time period for chanting His name who is beyond time? *Sarvada Sarvakaleshu Sarvatra Harichintanam* (contemplate on the name of God at all places, at all times and under all circumstances).

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi.. . "

—*From Bhagavan's Upanayanam Upadesha in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2000*

AVATAR VANI

BHAGAVAN'S SANKRANTI SANDESH—II

### **Perform All Actions to Please God**

*The principle of Atma has neither birth nor death; it has neither beginning nor end; it is the eternal witness and all-pervasive; Atma is Brahman and Brahman is Atma.*

(Telugu Poem)

*The Lord of Puttaparthi will always protect you. He is the ocean of compassion. Holding your hand, He will take care of you. He will never forsake you. Recognise this truth.*

(Telugu Poem)

*Bharat is the holy land of the Vedas and the sacred rituals like Yajnas and Yagas. It is the motherland of many noble souls. It is the land of sacrifice that has taught to the world morality and code of conduct.*

(Telugu Poem)

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Bharat is the centre of truth, righteousness and morality. It is your great good fortune to have been born in this sacred land. This is the land of merit, penance and sacrifice (Tyaga). Such a Tyaga Bhumi (land of sacrifice) is being converted into a Bhoga Bhumi (land of pleasure). We do not need a Bhagya Bhumi (land of wealth) or a Bhoga Bhumi (land of pleasure). It should remain a Tyaga Bhumi. So, every citizen of Bharat should develop the spirit of sacrifice and work hard.

### **Spiritual Wealth of Bharat**

Bend the body, mend the senses and end the mind—this should be your endeavour. Live up to the reputation of Muddu Biddalu (dear children) of this motherland. Do not become Moddu Biddalu (foolish children) or Chedda Biddalu (bad children). Your motherland will feel proud of you only when you become noble and ideal. You may not hold any worldly qualifications, but you can take pride in the fact that you are the sons of this sacred land of Bharat. This in itself is the greatest qualification. Bharat is the land endowed with the wealth of spirituality, sacrifice and bliss. Born in this sacred land, every Bharatiya should resolve to foster spiritual values and spirit of sacrifice. Consider service as your duty. Service is God. Divinity can be experienced only through service.

On deep enquiry, you will know that you are in God, God is in you and you are God. Understand this truth and act accordingly. You should be able to say with conviction that you are a spark of the Divine. If someone were to question where is God, you should say with courage and conviction that God is everywhere.

*Never doubt the omnipresence of God or say that He is here and is not there. In fact, you can find Him wherever you search for Him.*

(Telugu Poem)

God does not exist for those who deny Him. He exists for those who believe in His existence. He says 'yes' for those who say 'yes', and 'no' for those who say 'no'. You may say 'yes' or 'no', but for Sai, everything is 'yes, yes, yes'. (Cheers) If someone were to tell you that God does not exist, teach him a lesson saying, "God may not exist for you but He does exist for me. You have no right to deny the existence of my God." With such courage and conviction, you should uphold your ancient culture. Being born as the children of this land of courage and valour, do not give scope for weakness of any kind. You are not weak; you have all the strength in you. Take a pledge to accomplish the task of restoring our ancient culture with courage and determination. God Himself has taken three pledges: (i) He will incarnate age after age for the establishment of Dharma (*Parithranaya Sadhunam Vinashayacha Dushkritam, Dharma Samsthapanarthaya Sambhavami Yuge Yuge*), (ii) He will take care of those who constantly contemplate on Him (*Ananya Chinthayanthomam Ye Jana Paryupasathe, Thesham Nithyabhiyukthanam Yogakshemam Vahamyaham*), (iii) He will grant liberation to those who surrender to Him completely (*Sarvadarman Parithyajya Mamekam Saranam Vraja, Aham Twa Sarvapapebhyo Mokshishyami Ma Sucha*). Likewise, you too should take three vows—that you will firmly believe in the existence of God, that you will experience Him and that you will become one with Him. Make every effort to fulfil these vows.

### **Happiness Results from Victory over Difficulties**

The year 2000 has commenced. Many have given a bad picture of what lies ahead in this year. But there is nothing bad in this world. Even that which appears to be bad is also good. So, never consider anything bad. How can evil enter God's creation? Everything happens according to God's Will. There is no scope for bad events when the Divine Will is always good and pure. How can you point out something as bad when Divinity pervades everything? Good and bad lie in your Drishti (vision), not in Srishti (creation).

You should have firm faith that whatever happens is good for you and face any eventuality with courage. Students having such courage and conviction are needed today. You all know that the people in the world are undergoing a lot of suffering. Human life will find fulfillment only when one acts with courage and conviction in the face of adversity. Never get disheartened and never retrace your steps. God has created you not to lead a selfish life. Uphold Dharma for the welfare of humanity, even at the cost of your life. After all, death occurs only once in a lifetime. Everything happens according to God's Will. Man who has been created by the Divine Will should sanctify his life by following the Divine command.

No matter what others say or do, have unflinching faith in God. Only the good face obstacles in their path. Whatever happens is for your own good. When a student fails in an examination, he does not give up effort. He works hard to attain success in the next examination. Similarly, never give up in the face of adversities in life. The pleasure is an interval between two pains. Vyasa said, *Na Sukhath Labhyathe Sukham* (happiness cannot be gained from happiness). Happiness results only when you overcome difficulties. Happiness has no value in the absence of difficulties, just as light has no value in the absence of darkness. Difficulties are part and parcel of human existence. So, take them in your stride.

Once Kunti prayed to Krishna to give her difficulties in life so that she could remember Him always. She said, "Krishna, when my husband, King Pandu was alive, hardly did I remember You because I was immersed in pleasures and comforts. After his death we were put to untold suffering, as a result of which we remembered You always. Now I realise the value of difficulties. They help me to remember You always. I am ready to face any hardship, but kindly ensure that my love for You never diminishes."

### **Be Equal-minded in Pleasure and Pain**

Forty-two years had passed after the Kurukshetra war. Arjuna was returning from Dwaraka. The entire clan of Yadavas was embroiled in squabble, as a result of which they all perished. Krishna too had left His mortal coil. Sighting Arjuna at a distance, Dharmaraja went up to Him and enquired about the well-being of Lord Krishna. With deep agony, Arjuna informed Dharmaraja that their friend, mentor and God, Lord Krishna was no more. On hearing this, Kunti collapsed and breathed her last on the lap of Dharmaraja. A grief-stricken Dharmaraja bemoaned, "Oh Mother! Have you gone in search of our dear Lord Krishna? It appears to be so. Life is meaningless without Krishna. All along we lived with Krishna, earned name and fame and emerged victorious in the war. All this was possible because He was on our side. There is no meaning in life after Him."

He summoned Bhima and asked him to make arrangements for mother Kunti's funeral. Arjuna was asked to make arrangements for the coronation of his grandson, while Nakula and Sahadeva were asked to make preparations for going to the forest for final journey. All the three activities—Kunti's funeral, coronation of Parikshit and the Pandavas' final journey were to take place on the same day. Only Dharmaraja, being the recipient of divine grace, could execute these diverse duties with equanimity.

After performing the last rites of their mother Kunti and crowning Parikshit, the Pandavas left Hastinapur for the forest. Draupadi who considered the five Pandavas as her five life-breaths also followed them. The Pandavas remained united both in pleasure and pain. Such unity is lacking today. Happiness and sorrow are like passing clouds. One should not be elated in times of pleasure or depressed in times of pain. One should remain equal-minded, unaffected by happiness or sorrow. This is the sign of true devotion.

Devotion does not mean performing Puja or undertaking rituals. Devotion stands for steady love for God. It also means implicit obedience and subservience to the Will of God. Lakshmana followed Rama to the forest as he considered Him to be his very life-breath. On reaching Chitrakoota mountain, Rama instructed Lakshmana to make a hut. When Lakshmana asked Him to show the location, Rama replied, "Erect it at a place of your choice." Hearing this Lakshmana was overcome with grief. He said, "What sin have I committed to hear such harsh words from You? Have I not surrendered to Your Will? Do I have likes and dislikes of my own?" Seeing Lakshmana's plight, Sita remarked, "Lakshmana, why are you so agitated? Rama neither beat you nor did he admonish you." Lakshmana replied, "Mother, I would have been happy if beaten or scolded by Him, but I cannot bear to hear that my likes and dislikes are separate from His. There is no greater sorrow than hearing such words from Lord Rama." This incident reveals the intensity of devotion and total surrender of Lakshmana.

Surrender implies that the individual will should become one with the Divine Will. Obey the Divine command implicitly without questioning. That is the sign of true devotion. Whatever God does is for your good. The Pandavas had to undergo innumerable hardships. Ultimately, victory was theirs as they obeyed God's command implicitly. Through devotion and sincerity you can achieve anything in life. Do not crave for Bhoga (pleasure); aspire for Yoga. Yoga means union with God. The Bhagavad Gita starts with the chapter Vishada Yoga. Arjuna's Vishada (sorrow) turned into Vijaya (success) on account of his association with Krishna. Before attaining success in any endeavour one has to face hardships. Pleasure and pain come together just as the bitter rind and the sweet juice coexist in an orange. You cannot enjoy the sweet juice of sugarcane unless it is crushed. Likewise, gold has to be put in fire, hammered and cut before it is made into a beautiful jewel. Similarly, humanness will shine only when one undergoes trials and tribulations.

### **Earn Divine Grace through Love**

Hiranyagarbha is another name of God. If you place this divine gold in your heart, you can make any ornament of your choice like truth, righteousness and peace. Just as no ornament can be made without gold, you cannot obtain the jewels of Sathya, Dharma and Santhi without Divinity. Hiranyagarbha is immanent in everyone. This is why Swami calls everyone 'Bangaru'. You say this prayer: *Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavanthu* (May the whole world be happy!). Develop love



for all in order to earn Divine grace. You cannot get even a handkerchief unless you pay for it. You are asking God for peace, happiness and liberation. But what are you giving to God in return? Offer your love to Him and receive His grace in the form of peace, happiness and liberation. Everybody has this right. But you have to give first to earn it. Only through love and service will you earn this right to ask. There is no other way.

I said this morning, Annam Brahma (food is God). In fact, human body is composed of five sheaths, viz., Annamaya Kosha, Pranamaya Kosha, Manomaya Kosha, Vijnanamaya Kosha and Anandamaya Kosha, each sheath being subtler than the other in that order. In order to attain liberation, one has to reach the subtlest of these sheaths, i.e., Anandamaya Kosha. The Ananda you experience after this is referred to as Brahmananda. Such bliss can be experienced only through Divine Love.

Chanting of the Divine Name of Sai Rama will destroy mountains of sin. I often tell you *Pibare Rama Rasam* (drink the nectar of Lord Rama's Name). Tulsidas prayed to Rama for the nectar of His love. When sugar and water are mixed, syrup is formed. Likewise, when your love becomes one with Divine Love, then it becomes nectar, the experience of which makes you immortal.

Do not hate anybody. Love all. Many of you feel bad, thinking that Swami does not speak to you. But, you do not enquire whether you are following Swami's teachings or not. I too follow certain rules and regulations. When I give you something, you should make proper use of it. Otherwise, what is the point in My giving? When I give you what you ask for, is it not your duty to do what I say? I feel it is better not to speak than to speak and lose the value of My words. Each word of Mine has immense value associated with it. I will fulfill your wish only when you obey My command. God does not have anger or hatred towards anybody. But, you have to face the consequences of your actions. As is the action, so is the reaction. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as is your feeling, so is the result).

If you are good, I will certainly yield to your request. Sometimes, I behave as if I am angry, only to put you on the right path. Without understanding this truth, you sometimes feel that Swami is ignoring you. What place have you given to Swami in your heart? To what extent are you putting His teachings into practice? I take all this into consideration. When a beggar asks for alms, the lady of the house gives him food. Sometimes she even forgoes her own share of food to serve the beggar. But if she finds the beggar throwing away the food, would she serve him the next time? No. Likewise, Swami too stops talking to you if you do not follow His teachings. I do not have any desire whatsoever. I do not need anything from anybody. I do not hate anybody. If you make proper use of what is already given, you will be given much more. Enquire whether your actions are in accordance with Swami's teachings. It is not easy to attain God. It is possible only when you get rid of evil qualities. When your heart is filled with negative thoughts, how can you expect God to fill it with His love and grace? First of all, cleanse your heart of all evil qualities. Only then can God fill your heart with His love and grace.

Students should develop good character along with acquisition of knowledge. Education without culture is useless. Just as the electric current flows when the positive and negative come together, likewise your life will be redeemed when education is coupled with culture. Students are good, but they do not know the right path. Some know what is good, but they do not follow because of

limitless desires. As worldly desires increase, naturally the desire for the Divine grace diminishes. Head can be filled with noble feelings only when it is empty. It is not possible to do the same if it is already stuffed with worldly desires. So, first and foremost, rid your head of all desires. I am giving you time for that and I am waiting to shower My grace on you. I will certainly fill your heart with Divine Love. I am always ready, ready, ready. Those who keep the vessel of their heart pure attain Me easily.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Human life is highly sacred and divine. It is gifted by God. Make proper use of it. Make your parents happy. How can you please Swami if you cannot please your parents? First and foremost, earn the love and grace of your parents. Only then will you be the recipients of Swami's love and grace.

### **Sports Meet Delighted Everyone**

#### *Students!*

The Sports Meet was most wonderful in all respects. I begin My discourse with a poem, which is like a plate full of delicious items and end it with a Bhajan, which is like a lid that covers these delicious items. The same can be said of our Sports Meet too. The programmes of the Institute students were like delicious dishes served on a plate. The Primary School children covered the 'plate' with the lid of love. (Cheers) As a result, this Sports Meet has left an indelible impression on the hearts of one and all. Make everybody happy. That will make Swami also happy. The Primary School children are highly virtuous. They are of tender age. They don't have in them even a trace of worldly desires.

I told you the story of Madalasa this morning. After putting her child in a cradle, she used to sing a lullaby revealing to the child its true identity and explaining the ephemeral nature of this world. She would tell the child, "My dear one, you are one of purity, wisdom and supreme bliss. Wake up from the sleep of Moha (attachment), then you will realise that the Samsara (world) is but a dream." She transformed her sons into renunciants. Seeing this, her husband got annoyed. "Who will take care of this kingdom if you send all the children to the forest?" She replied, "How long can one rule over a worldly kingdom? It is only for a temporary period. I am making my sons the emperors of Hridaya Samrajya (kingdom of the heart), which is true and eternal." There are many mothers like Madalasa, who impart sacred teachings to their children.

Every human being is essentially pure, divine and without attachment. But due to the impact of Kali Age, even young children are getting enamoured of worldly life. If you get caught in the web of worldly life, even God may not come to your rescue. Once you get carried away by the sleep of attachment, you will certainly get dreams of bad thoughts. If you have chosen the worldly path, enter the family life and be happy. Gradually develop detachment and devotion. Discharge your duty sincerely. Having chosen family life on your own, it is sheer ignorance on your part to blame God for your suffering.

People commit sin and consequently when they are confronted with difficulties, they blame God that He does not come to their rescue. There can be no greater ignorance than this. So, never commit sin. Divinity can be experienced in all the four Ashrams, namely, Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa. Do not blame God for your suffering. You have to reap the

consequences of your actions. God is the eternal witness. It is a great mistake to criticise God. Leave everything to His Will and perform all actions to please God (Sarva Karma Bhagavad Preethyartham). Then you can achieve anything in life.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi. . ."

—*From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall in Prasanthi Nilayam on the afternoon of 14th January 2000*

AVATAR VANI

DASARA DISCOURSES—II

### **Divine Energy Permeates the Entire Cosmos**

*In this world, if money is lost, one need not be worried about it, for one can earn it again.  
If a friend is lost, one can have another. If wife is lost, one can marry again.  
If one loses one's piece of land, one can purchase another.  
All these can be regained; but if body is lost, one cannot get it back.* (Sanskrit Sloka)

*Embodiments of Love,*

In Latin language, human body is associated with 'sacredness' and 'purity'. The Upanishads proclaim that the human life is extremely precious. Man is put to grief because he misuses his body not knowing its value and sacredness. You can understand the significance of the human body in your daily life only when you enquire into the mystery of God's creation. Human body inhales the life-supporting oxygen and exhales the poisonous carbon dioxide. It consumes delicious food and excretes the foul smelling faecal matter. Man should follow this principle of human body and should accept that which is sacred and give up all that is unsacred. Due to the impact of Kali Age, he is accepting everything bad and giving up all that is good. Unable to realise his innate divinity, man is taking to paths, which are contradictory to the principles of Sathya and Dharma.

### **Mystery of Divine Power**

Every flower that blossoms may not become fruit. Every fruit may not become ripe. Once a fruit is ripe, it falls down immediately. Similar is the case with human life too, but man fails to understand the temporal nature of the human body. He puts his most valuable body to misuse in pursuit of worldly pleasures. He feels proud of his education and achievements and wastes his precious time in the pursuit of material comforts. Time is the most important factor in human life. Days, months and years are respectively like secondhand, minute-hand and hour-hand of a clock. All the three hands are constantly on the move. No one knows when the hour of reckoning would arrive.

Magnetic energy pervades the entire universe. Green pasture attracts the cow. So, green grass is like a magnet for the cow. Similarly, the flower attracts the honeybee and the mother attracts the child. On enquiry, you will find that there is no place in the world where this power of attraction does not exist. Man is unable to understand the magnitude of this power and is taking it for granted. This power is present in everything in this universe, and it is the cause of attraction

between human beings, birds, animals and even insects. The universe cannot exist without magnetic power. For long, scientists laboured under the mistaken notion that this power was just a derivative of gross matter made up of atoms. Only of late have they realised that it is not so. This magnetic power is present in the human body from head to toe. You think that this is a natural physical power. But, behind this is the transcendental power (Atheetha Shakti) of the body. It is infinite and unseen. Our ancients came to the conclusion that energy pervaded everywhere and that the whole world was based on this energy. This is called Psychotronic power. It is also known as Bioplasmic energy. This energy is present in every cell and every vein of the human body, but it is beyond the comprehension of the human mind. That is why it is sometimes referred to as Ajnatha Shakti (power that cannot be known). Since time immemorial, man has been trying to investigate into the nature of this power without any success. Every breath of man is filled with this divine power.

Sita possessed this mysterious power in totality. It was this power that enabled her to lift the mighty Siva Dhanush (bow of Siva) with her little finger. Seeing this, king Janaka resolved to give his daughter in marriage only to one who had this power in equal measure. Sage Vishwamitra, who understood the intimate relationship between Divinity and transcendental power, took Lord Rama, the embodiment of Divinity, to Mithilapura and solemnised His marriage with Sita, who was the embodiment of Divine energy.

### **Attain Swami through Love**

Scientists often use two terms matter and energy. But truly speaking only energy exists. Whatever appears as matter also becomes energy in due course of time. None can describe the glory and grandeur of this transcendental power. "*Yatho Vacho Nivarthanthe Aprapya Manasa Saha*" (it is beyond the comprehension of the mind and cannot be described by words). It transcends the body, mind and intellect. Who has created this power? Under whose control does this power lie? Who can describe this power? Who can demonstrate this power and prove its existence? This divine power demonstrates the unity of everything in this world. When man understands this unity, there will be a sacred transformation in the world. Swami has been planning to bring about this transformation. It is impossible for you to know when, where and how this power will manifest itself. You may not feel interested in this power merely by hearing about its glory. You will understand only when you directly experience this superhuman divine power. Very soon you are going to witness it.

As the science is progressing, ignorance is also increasing. Truly speaking, science has not matured. It has become senseless. All the troubles and miseries in the modern world have their origin in the so-called development of science and technology. It is not technology but 'tricknology'. Do not become a slave to such technology. Uphold truth and righteousness. Cultivate love and experience divinity.

### *Students!*

Do not harbour any undesirable thoughts. Swami is always with you. He has been showering His love and grace on you. You too have immense love for Swami. Attain Swami through love. You cannot attain Swami through any other path but love.

### **Elders should Set an Ideal for Others**

Some of the elders sitting in the verandah indulge in idle talk; sometimes it is finding its way into the internet. Anyone found talking in the verandah should be sent out immediately, whosoever he may be. All those who give misleading information about what Swami tells them in the interview room should also be sent out. I will never call such people for interview again. Only those who observe silence are good people. Silence fosters purity. Therefore, observe silence at all times. It is a waste of time if you carry tales about others. What have you come here for? Vain gossip causes harm to many. So, refrain from indulging in it.

Swami has nothing to do with internet. You should also have no connection with it. Even if someone asks you about the news, do not encourage him. Scandal mongering is a disease of the tongue. Not only now, even in future also you should not indulge in it. This 'disease' has its roots in cities and is spreading like wild fire into villages polluting the village environment. Villages are the epitome of peace and love. Do not spoil the village atmosphere by imitating the city culture.

Bliss will prevail in the world only when you develop peace and love. Do not give scope for ill feelings and worthless talk. You can even tell the elders not to indulge in mean talk. Elderly people should behave in a manner that befits their status as elders in the society. They should prove themselves as elders in conduct and not merely in age. First and foremost, you should develop self respect. Self respect leads to self satisfaction, which will in turn lead to self realisation. It is a shame that people who come here for self realisation indulge in something contrary.

Our relationship is only heart to heart and love to love, nothing else. Swami is love personified. Swami gives importance to love and nothing else. Do not give any value to mean and meaningless talk. Past is past. Hereafter, receive the divine love and divine energy emanating from Me and experience the bliss derived therefrom.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan "Prema Muditha Manase Kaho... "

**—From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall on 15th October, 1999**

## **God—A Good-hearted Friend**

*Tapas is not giving up home and retiring to forest but it is a continuous process of giving up bad qualities, so that God's grace flows into our lives.*

~By Pal Dhall

I first heard about Baba in an aircraft on my way back from England via Pakistan. An Englishman sitting next to me on the plane noticed that I was a vegetarian and a teetotaler. He started a conversation, which to me appeared more and more bizarre. Amongst many strange stories, he gave me an account of Walter Cowan's revival from death. I gradually convinced myself that the man was crazy. I declared in no uncertain terms that this was impossible. I then added that I should know better since I was a surgeon and the head of an internationally

renowned medical research unit. "Death is irreversible," I said, "Once a person begins to decompose, there is no way to restore the corpse to life." I received the reply, "So, you believe there are limits to God's capacity?"

### **Introduction to Spirituality**

I had never thought about this issue until that moment. I was confused by his questions and I suspected his sanity. He talked about an Avatar on the earth. Very puzzled, I asked him, "Why should an Avatar come on the earth at this time? What is wrong?" He must now, in turn, have thought I was equally crazy and unaware. He made many disturbingly penetrating observations. He told me about Sai Baba and His miracles. But, I was not entirely sure of his sanity and with me he carried little credibility although we had spoken for many hours. As I was getting off in Karachi he took a plastic packet of some powdery material and with tears in his eyes pressed it on me saying, "This will bring you good luck" and then he added, "You owe it to yourself to go and see Baba in India." I remember saying to myself, "How crazy is this guy! He expects me to go chasing after some strange Guru in India!" I looked at him, suspicious that the packet he was offering might contain drugs. I was afraid that I might be caught with drugs by the Pakistan customs officials. Out of politeness, I reluctantly accepted it. Little did I know then that this 'chance meeting' was my introduction to genuine spirituality.

I was born and brought up in Kenya and educated in England. I had grown up with the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads. Through living in Western countries, I had become familiar with the writings of the Christian mystics. My marriage with Tehseen, a Muslim from Pakistan, had given me some knowledge of Sufi thinking. But, this knowledge had not prepared me for a direct experience of an Avatar. I had two parallel lives—an inner spiritual life and an external worldly life. My approach to spirituality had been to try to bring God within the realm of my understanding. But, now I know that He is neither measurable nor understandable with the human mind. He is beyond any known physical laws and nothing is impossible for Him.

Within a few weeks of my return, my wife and I embarked on an exciting journey of discovery. We found books about Baba and met devotees and heard more about Him. Both Tehseen, my wife, and I wondered why we had not heard of Him before. Many 'coincidences' and surprising experiences led us to make many trips to Puttaparthi, sometimes alone and sometimes with our children. Gradually, all our life became more and more focused on Baba.

### **Understanding Miracles**

For me the greatest challenge was to bring Him within the realm of my understanding as a scientist. But, this has been a hopeless task. Baba seems to arrange events in my life in such a way that I have to confront repeatedly the rigid programming of my rational and scientific mind. During interview I have seen Him create Vibhuti. On one occasion, He filled the cupped palms of a student with fresh, hot Laddu Bundi which poured out from His fingers. I was intrigued how all this was happening. On another occasion, He materialised a gold ring with the symbol of a cross on it. This He handed to me to pass around to others after my inspection. When the ring had done the full circle, He held it under my full view and blew on it. In an instant the cross changed to the symbol Om. He looked with a smile, straight into my eyes and said, "See, My workers are very fast." As a scientist I had the greatest difficulty comprehending what I had just witnessed.

Gradually, I have begun to understand that, in fact, miracles are happening every moment of our lives. Is it not a miracle that a plant can turn the soil into flower petals and fragrance? Is it not a miracle that the rice and Dal we eat turn into the crystal of our eye or into our blood and thoughts? But we become insensitive to the wonder and mystery of life and begin to take these 'miracles' for granted. We fail to note the beauty and the mystery in which we are immersed. The rocks, the grass, the air, the sunshine, the rain, the whole creation is full of magic and miracle, but we do not connect with it. Baba's miracles show us the way to connect with these miracles of creation in which we are immersed.

### **Divine Play and Manifestations**

We feel Baba's omnipresence most forcefully through His manifestations which occur in our homes thousands of miles away from Puttaparthi. In Darshan, I see Swami moving around pretending sometimes not even to understand what the devotee says to Him. I wonder how He plays with our limited minds and how we fail to comprehend the true measure of God. In the first major manifestation in our home, a number of pictures showed splashes of Vibhuti over several days. Prior to that when a little Vibhuti appeared on a plastic picture of Baba in our son's room we had wondered how it could remain stuck to such a smooth plastic surface. The 'coincidence' of Vibhuti or streaks of Amrita on what are significant days to us is especially intriguing. Such manifestation lends an air of specialness to different members of our family, e.g., streak of Vibhuti on Tehseen's birthday, a drop of Amrita when I was ill and unable to go to Bhajan on Diwali, Vibhuti in the form of love, heart in our daughter's wallet, Vibhuti in the shape of a smiling face on the roller skates given as a gift to our daughter, Shammah, on her birthday, a streak of Amrita from Krishna's flute when I started to learn to play the flute. There are 'occasions of His grace with no apparent reason—streak of Amrita from Baba's picture or Shirdi Sai's foot on odd occasions make our daily life very exciting and joyous.

### **Divine Saviour and Protector**

Baba has become divine protector for us. On one occasion, when Shammah was going for skiing for the first time I had a feeling she might hurt herself. That night I saw Baba in a dream. He conveyed to me that Shammah may have a mishap. In my dream I pleaded with Him until He agreed that He would do something about this. On the ski slopes on the first day, Shammah kept falling and calling on Swami for help. When that night she saw Swami in her dream she complained to Him that He had not been helping her. He said to her, "If you want help, Shammah, you have to call Me from your heart. Remember this tomorrow." I may add that at an interview on a previous occasion He had put a medallion on a chain He materialised around her neck and said, "Keep this always close to your heart." The next day, when Shammah was going downhill, she lost control. She did not know how to steer or stop. She was hurtling towards a tree at a steadily accelerating speed. She called on Swami in desperation from her heart. This time her cry for help was genuine. Suddenly, from nowhere appeared another skier who came towards her at great speed and knocked her over away from the tree. She rolled in the snow uninjured and avoided hitting into the tree. Later she could not find the skier—he had disappeared as mysteriously as he had appeared.

A couple of years ago when I was recovering from a disk operation, suddenly one morning a Tilakam of fresh sandal paste appeared spontaneously from the middle of my forehead to the

crown of my head. I did not understand the significance of this until a couple of days later when I fell and fractured both my elbows and wrists! Baba had given clear evidence of His protection two days before. I wonder what was in store for me but for His grace.

### **Craziness for God**

Sometimes Baba teaches us in surprising manner that He knows what is happening in our innermost thoughts. Almost two years ago when I returned from a visit to Prasanthi and attended Bhajans at our Sai Centre, I noticed a large spot of Vibhuti on Swami's forehead placed by a person who was fond of doing this. This practice is not acceptable in Australia as people from a variety of religions come to the Sai Centre. I felt agitated and could not concentrate on the Bhajans. But I was careful not to convey my disappointment to anyone.

The following Thursday we had Bhajans at our home. Imagine my astonishment when I went to get the picture from our own shrine room and found there fresh Vibhuti on the forehead of Swami! I felt I had been needlessly critical in my mind of my friend. I needed to become more tolerant of others' expressions of their devotion to Swami.

Baba says that the Divine Principle is present in and outside everything and that He can be experienced directly and indirectly. For me now God is not just a remote Being to be contacted through rituals. He is the Living Presence. He is simultaneously both in Puttaparthi and everywhere else. We may choose to relate to Him at a physical level. But this is, in a way, His play. We may also relate to Him at other levels, mental, emotional, spiritual and supernatural. I see that while He is beyond my rational understanding, He is also very much with me, within me and I am within Him. I now understand that prayers are means of linking myself with God and not for seeking favours. As Baba says, Tapas is not giving up home and retiring to forest but it is a continuous process of giving up bad qualities, so that God's grace flows into our lives. He is Suhrid—a good-hearted friend who is ever with us. Nothing is a coincidence or a matter of chance. Every event, happy or unhappy, is a part of the Divine Plan.

I consider myself very fortunate that I met this 'crazy' Englishman in the plane some 12 years ago. What would be my life like without Swami? I only wish I could meet once again this fellow traveller in the plane and tell him that I have also become crazy like him. As Swami says we are all crazy, some are crazy for money, some for worldly recognition and others for God. The best craziness is for God and those who are crazy for God are the fortunate ones.

### ***MASS UPANAYANAM AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM***

## **Laying a Strong Foundation of Life**

"Today you are laying the foundation of the mansion of your life. The safety and security of the mansion is assured once you make the foundation strong and sturdy," observed Bhagavan Baba while addressing the Vatus (young aspirants) after their Upanayanam (Sacred Thread Ceremony) on 10th February 2000. At an impressive function held in aesthetically decorated Sai Kulwant Hall, nearly 700 boys were initiated into the study of scriptures and chanting of Gayatri Mantra



in a solemn and sacred ceremony of mass Upanayanam in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba.

Preparations for this grand event were started weeks ahead, because of the large number of boys to be initiated at the same time. New Dhotis for the Vatus had to be procured and dyed in turmeric. Special metre-long sticks of the holy Ashwatha Tree had to be obtained to serve as Brahmadas (poles with a small saffron cloth tagged on them) for the Vatus. Required Puja materials had also to be procured and distributed to the Vatus in advance. Although this was a huge task, the meticulous planning and superb organisation of the entire event by the Institute staff and old students working in various Bhagavan's institutions at Prasanthi Nilayam made the function a grand success.

Swami personally distributed the turmeric dyed Dhotis and Puja materials to all the Vatus on the 9th evening in the " Sai Kulwant Hall. On the day of the function, i.e., 10th February 2000, Bhagavan Baba came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 6.45 a.m. The procession of Vatus along with their parents started from Kalyana Mandapam in Puttaparthi village at 6.45 a.m. It was led by gorgeously bedecked Sai Geeta and Veda chanting students. It was also accompanied by Nadaswaram music. Bhagavan was present in the Sai Kulwant Hall when this grand procession reached there. It was an ennobling and enchanting sight to see the boys dressed in the traditional yellow Dhotis, carrying the Brahmada and marching in solemn steps in disciplinary order and occupying their respective places in the Sai Kulwant Hall. All the while, the Vedic chants and Nadaswaram music continued, thereby charging the atmosphere with divine vibrations.

The programme of Upanayanam started with lighting of sacred lamps by Bhagavan at 7.00 a.m. The priests then started chanting sacred Mantras. The Chief Priest spoke about the significance of Upanayanam, which was the ceremony to usher in the boys to the first of the four stages of human life, Brahmacharya. This was the stage when the boy had to spend time as student to learn the knowledge of Self (Brahma Vidya). Swami mentioned in His discourse later that this was the second birth for the boy, which made him Dwija (twice born). He also advised the young aspirants to acquire spiritual education along with secular education because spiritual education was in fact true education.

The instructions given by the Chief Priest for carrying out the various rituals during the ceremony were translated into English for the benefit of those who could not follow Telugu. The ceremony commenced at 7.20 a.m. with the worship of Ganapati. After the Achamanam (sipping water with Mantras), the Vatus took the Sankalpa that they were doing this sacred ritual in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba in the holy land of Puttaparthi encircled by the River Chitravati. Then the Kankan (the bracelet of yellow thread) was tied round the right wrist of the Vatus by their fathers after offering Puja. This Raksha Bandhan [protective shield] had to be worn till the completion of the ritual.

Bhagavan sanctified the Sacred Threads by creating and sprinkling Vibhuti on them. As directed by Bhagavan, the Members of the Central Trust, the Vice Chancellor and other elders then distributed the Sacred Threads to the Vatus. After the ritualistic Puja was offered to the Sacred Thread, the Chief Priest administered the Mantra for wearing it. Proper directions were given as to how it had to be worn. When the Vatus received the Sacred Thread from their parents and put

them on as directed, amidst the chanting of Vedic Mantras, the entire congregation went into raptures at this joyous occasion. Swami then went round the entire length and breadth of the vast Hall sprinkling Akshata (sacred rice) on all the Vatus and their parents to shower His blessings on them. After the Upanayanam (Sacred Thread Ceremony), the fathers of the Vatus gave them Brahmopadesha and the Gayatri Mantra. The fathers whispered these Mantras into the right ear of the Vatus and they repeated them after their fathers.

It was a sight for gods to see and it appeared as though they had descended from their heavenly abode to witness this unique ceremony where the Gayatri Mantra was administered to those initiated with such piety and authentic rituals in the very presence of Bhagavan Baba.

After the main ceremony was thus over in the most sacred way, the Vatu had to seek alms as he was not supposed to earn for his living during student days. The mother gave the first Bhiksha (offering of rice) after which the father did the same. With this, the Upanayanam ceremony came to happy conclusion at 7.45 a. m. Then Bhagavan gave His Divine Discourse (printed separately) in which He explained the significance of Upanayanam and Gayatri Mantra and advised the Vatus to follow the path of spirituality to sanctify their lives.

It was a lifetime opportunity for those who participated in this sacred event, and surely it would be cherished by them for the rest of their lives. The Vatus were also given a small book "Sandhya Vandanam," which gave necessary instructions for the prayer to be recited daily in the prescribed manner.

After the Divine Discourse and Arati to Bhagavan, all the Vatus, their parents and relatives were offered a grand feast in the canteen.

- KSSR

#### ***MASS MARRIAGES AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM***

### **A Unique Marriage Festival**

Prasanthi Nilayam witnessed another glorious event during the 75<sup>th</sup> year of the Advent of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on 29th February 2000 soon after mass Upanayanam ceremony of 10th February. It was a unique marriage festival in which 86 couples were married in a simple and sacred ceremony. All arrangements for this function were made by the Messengers of Sathya Sai, the alumni of Sri Sathya Sai Women's College, Anantapur. One day before the function, i.e., 28th February 2000, Bhagavan distributed wedding Saris to brides and clothes to the bridegrooms, which they were to wear on the wedding day. Bhagavan also gave a watch to every one of them.

On the day of the function, i.e., 29<sup>th</sup> February 2000, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.00 a. m. Seating arrangements for the couples had already been made in the Hall and their places were earmarked before they came in a procession from Kalyana Mandapam in Puttaparthi village. At the head of the procession was Sai Geeta, the elephant caparisoned with artistic velvet costume in attractive designs. Behind Sai Geeta came the Veda chanting group of girls. Then

came the couples, their parents and relatives. As soon as they entered the Sai Kulwant Hall, volunteers led them to their allotted places and the whole congregation was seated in orderly rows.

The festive mood was set in by the rich decorations in the Sai Kulwant Hall and the joyous strains of the Nadaswaram music. After the couples took their seats, Bhagavan Baba went in between their rows to bless them.

The programme commenced with the lighting of sacred lamps by Bhagavan at 7.30 a.m. At the outset, the priest congratulated the participating couples for their great good fortune, for this was rarest of rare opportunity of getting married in the immediate Divine Presence of the Lord in the sacred precincts of His abode at Prasanthi Nilayam. The priest then instructed the couples to do Ganapati worship, Achamanam, Pranayama and other rituals. While the Puja was conducted in the prescribed manner according to Shastras, the Institute students continued the Veda chanting. After the Puja and other rituals, the couples were instructed to stand. Then the priest instructed the bridegrooms to tie the Mangalsutra around their bride's neck, which they did as instructed. This was also a present to the brides from the organisers. While the couples stood for this sacred ceremony, Bhagavan went round the rows and sprinkled Akshata (sacred rice) on all the couples to bless them. Thereafter, the couples were instructed to garland each other. When they did that, the musicians started joyous notes and the students chanted Veda Mantras. While the couples stood together after garlanding each other, Swami instructed the boys with cameras to take photographs of the couples. After the couples were seated, they were instructed to perform the ritual of pouring handfuls of rice on each other's head. With this, the joyous but simple wedding of 86 couples came to a happy conclusion.

At the end of the programme, Prasadam was distributed to all. The function came to a close at 8.45 a.m. with Mangalarati to Bhagavan.

## **Taming the Mind**

*The mind is just a pattern of desires, a composite of the warp and woof of plans and resolutions. It has immense potentiality to create manifold images and so is also called imagination. Imagination hides the truth. It fogs the intellect, perverts the vision, deviates the straight path of the aspirant. Desire creates a mirage where there was none before. Desire imposes beauty where there was none before; it clothes things with desirability. To escape from the clutches of desire, which gives birth to the brood of anger, hatred, malice, greed, envy, faction, falsehood, etc., one has to cleanse one's consciousness by prayer and good activity, selfless desireless activity. Service is the best Sadhana for eliminating the nefarious pull of the mind towards desires.*

*The mind flits quickly from one idea to another; it fondles for a moment and forsakes the next. You may manage to keep your mouth shut, but it is next to impossible to keep the mind shut. Mind is of that nature; it is woven so, out of the yarn of desire. Its characteristic is to flutter and flit, hither and thither, through the outlets of the senses, into the external world of colour, sound, taste, smell and touch. But it can be tamed and put to good use by man. If we keep it engaged in*

*good pursuits and good adventures, particularly in the contemplation of the Universal, the Absolute, the Eternal, that is to say, of God, then it will not go astray and will not land man in ruin; for God is the source of undying strength, of lasting joy, and the deepest wisdom.*

—Baba

### ***Worship Siva for Wisdom***

*Sivaratri is the day on which Siva takes the Linga Form for the benefit of seekers. Siva is worshipped as the Form for the acquisition of Jnana as the Vedas advise: Jnanam Maheshwarath Iccheth (pray to Siva for wisdom). So, do not treat this day lightly and reduce the disciplines prescribed by the sages for its celebration, such as fast, vigil and uninterrupted recital of the Name of God, into a routine ritual. Contemplate on the Atma Linga, which emanates from Siva, and be convinced that Siva is in every one of you. Let this vision illumine your Inner Consciousness.*

—Baba

*"Chanting of the Gayatri Mantra purifies the mind and confers devotion, detachment and wisdom."*

## Sheaths of the Self

### *Embodiments of Love!*

One who has recognised the truth that the same Atma exists in all experiences unity with God and enjoys Divine bliss, whether one is a renunciant or a householder, and whether one follows the path of action or not. The principle of Atma cannot be understood by merely studying the Vedas and sacred texts or listening to discourses. Just as a gigantic tree originates from a tiny seed, so also the entire universe has its origin in the principle of Atma.

### **The Concept of Pancha Koshas**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

You are verily the embodiments of bliss and happiness. Is it not sheer ignorance to search for bliss and happiness in the external world when they are very much present in you? True spiritual transformation lies in understanding one's own real nature.

Both the present and the former Vice Chancellor of our Institute have prayed to Me (in their speeches earlier) that I should explain in detail the concept of Pancha Koshas (five sheaths of the Self). The pure Atma is enveloped by five sheaths; and due to its association with these sheaths, it acquires their traits. The physical body is referred to as the Annamaya Kosha (food sheath). The Atma associated with gross body in its waking state: is called 'Vishwa' as it is endowed with Jnanindriyas and Karmindriyas (organs of perception and action). As this body is involved in various external activities, it is also known as Vyavaharika. Thus, the Vedas have given various names to this sheath which comprises the Sthula Sarira (gross body). The Pranamaya Kosha (life sheath), Manomaya Kosha (mind sheath) and Vijnanamaya Kosha (wisdom sheath) form the Sukshma Sarira (subtle body) as they are not visible to the naked eye. Mind in its subtle form is all-pervasive. That is why it is said, *Manomoolam Idam Jagat* (mind is the basis for the entire world). Anandamaya Kosha (bliss sheath) refers to the Karana Sarira (causal body). One should go beyond all the five sheaths in order to experience bliss. This state is known as Turiya, which is beyond Sushupti (deep sleep state). This refers to the Mahakarana Swaroopa (supreme causal aspect). This is the ultimate spiritual principle (Paramarthika). The bliss experienced in this state is true bliss. This bliss cannot be obtained through the senses, mind or intellect.

There are five types of Kleshas (obstacles), which come in the way of experiencing this bliss. They are: Avidya Klesha, Abhinava Klesha, Asthitha Klesha, Raga Klesha and Dwesha Klesha. Man is unable to have the vision of the Atma and experience Atmic bliss due to these five Kleshas. One who has excessive attachment to the body suffers from Avidya Klesha, which leads to various desires and diseases and makes one's life miserable. The Abhinava Klesha arises when one does not exercise control over one's mind. Man gives undue importance to the body and gets carried away by the vagaries of the mind and as a result is put to suffering. The Asthitha Klesha arises out of interest in worldly pleasures. The Raga Klesha results from attachment towards wealth and material objects. The Dwesha Klesha arises when one's expectations are frustrated and desires are not fulfilled.

Some devotees worship God expecting something in return. They are happy if their desires are fulfilled or else they will start hating even God. They do not enjoy the fortune on hand. On the contrary, they desire for something more which they do not deserve. As a result, they are

subjected to distress. Today even the relationship between mother and child, husband and wife and between one brother and another are marred by Dwesha.

The sheaths other than Anandamaya Kosha put man in bondage and subject him to Kleshas. In order to understand the principle of Paramarthika, one should get rid of the mind or at least have control over it and gradually give up body attachment.

*The body is made up of five elements and is bound to perish some time or the other. But the indweller has neither birth nor death. He does not have attachment or bondage. Truly speaking, the indweller is God Himself. (Telugu Poem)*

One cannot realise the indwelling divinity until and unless one gives up body attachment. Body attachment is an obstacle on the path of spirituality. Just as a gigantic tree is contained in a tiny seed, likewise the five Kleshas are ingrained in body attachment in the subtlest manner. Attachment to the body is the main cause for man's unhappiness, anxiety, misery and lack of peace. One should consider the body as an instrument and lead a life of truth keeping in view the indwelling divinity. First of all man should travel from the food sheath to the life sheath. Life sheath is referred to as vibration as it is responsible for the movement of the body. What is mind sheath? Mind is all-pervasive. Mind can travel any distance in a trice. Man has death but not the mind.

Mind will follow man life after life. What is wisdom sheath? It is not connected with material world. The material world is associated with reaction, resound and reflection. For example, you hit the table with your hand. Then the table also hits you in turn. As is the action, so is the reaction. This is the principle of Pratibhasika. That which is related to Pratibhasika is only worldly and secular knowledge. It cannot be termed as wisdom. True wisdom lies in understanding the constant integrated awareness. It leads to the changeless eternal bliss. This can be experienced only after transcending the five sheaths, viz., Annamaya (gross form), Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya (subtle form) and Anandamaya (causal form). Then you reach the state of Turiya (supreme causal state). That which is beyond the causal state is supreme causal state. In order to attain this state one should understand very clearly the nature of five sheaths.

### **Primordial Basis of the Universe**

The entire world has a primordial basis. Here is a silver plate and a silver tumbler. Silver is the basis for these. The name and form of the object can be changed, but silver remains the same. Likewise, all names and forms are bound to change, but the primordial basis remains changeless.

*The principle of Atma is ancient and eternal. It has neither birth nor death, neither beginning nor end. (Telugu Poem)*

It is the primordial basis for the body, the mind and the life principle. Divinity is the foundation of everything.

The water of the body becomes vapour due to sun's rays. The vapour in turn become clouds. The clouds come down in the form of rain flowing down as rivers and streams, which ultimately

merge into the ocean. *Nadinam Sagaro Gathi*. Just as the rivers, which originate from the ocean, ultimately become one with it, so also all the living beings and objects, which originate from Divinity, will ultimately merge into it. This in Vedantic parlance is called Mukti (liberation). The Bhagavata also says, it is but natural for all the living beings to go back to their place of origin. The individual soul has originated from Divinity and is bound to merge into it.

### *Embodiments of love!*

Spirituality does not mean a life of solitude. True spirituality lies in understanding the unity of the entire humanity, and giving up the sense of attachment and hatred. The principle of atma is the same in everyone. What is the form of atma? Sugar has a form, but can anyone describe the form of sweetness? Sweetness can only be experienced, it cannot be explained. Similar is the case with the atmic principle too. It is ancient, eternal, attributeless, formless, pure, unsullied and immortal. The sweets such as Mysore Pak Gulab Jamun, Burfi etc., may be in name and form, but sugar is the same in all. Likewise, names and forms are different, but the principle of atma is one and the same.

Today, man undertakes various spiritual practices such as Shravanam (listening), Kirtanam (singing), Vishnusmaranam (chanting), Padasevanam (serving the Lotus Feet), Vandanam (salutation), Archanam (worship), Dasyam (servitude), Sneham (friendship) and Atmanivedanam (self-surrender). But they provide only external and temporary satisfaction. It is futile to argue which spiritual practice is more beneficial. As long as one gets sleep, it hardly matters where one sleeps, be it in a choultry or a palace. Similarly, one should have purity of mind whatever may be the spiritual practice one undertakes. Once the mind is pure, one can achieve anything in life. In order to purify the mind, one should develop the principle of love. The light of love can never be extinguished. Once you develop the principle of love, you will transcend the three states of Vishwa, Tejas and Prajna and attain the ultimate bliss. The individual soul; in the waking state is known as Vishwa, as it is associated with, Karmandriyas and Jnanindriyas. In the dream state, it is called Tejas (the effulgent one), as it is associated with the effulgent principle of Antahkarana (inner instrument). In deep sleep state, it is known as Prajna. It is associated with the bliss sheath.

Amarasimha, an ancient scholar par excellence, composed many verses describing the principle of Divinity. But some people unable to understand his sacred nature put him through hardships. They branded Amarasimha as an atheist. He was put to a lot of suffering and all his books were set on fire. When his works were burning, Sankara intervened and retrieved Amarakosha. Amarakosha is like another Veda. It is an enchanting and thrilling book. It is utter foolishness to destroy such a sacred book. In fact people do not try to understand the teachings of the Vedas and sacred texts. That is why they have, forgotten their true Self.

### **Significance of Chanting Divine Name on Sivaratri**

The nights you experience on other days are ordinary nights. But Sivaratri is an auspicious night. How is it auspicious? It is auspicious when you spend your time in an auspicious way singing the glories of the Lord. The mind has sixteen aspects. The moon is the presiding deity of the mind. Of the sixteen aspects of the moon, fifteen are absent today. If you sing His glory throughout the night wholeheartedly, even the remaining one aspect can also be merged with the Divine. On this day, it is possible to get full control over the mind by contemplating on God. Hence it is considered as an auspicious night. Unfortunately, in this Kali Age, people observe the

vigil of Sivaratri by seeing cinema shows or playing cards all through the night. This cannot. Be called, Sivaratri: Every moment of the night should be devoted to the thoughts of God and chanting of His name wholeheartedly. The chanting should come from within. This is what is called the reflection of the inner being.

God has thousands of names. Of all those names, 'Satchitananda' is the most important and significant. 'Sat' stands for the changeless eternal principle and 'Chit' denotes total awareness. The former can be compared to sugar and the latter to water. When sugar and water are mixed, what results is syrup. Likewise, the combination of 'Sat' and 'Chit' results in Ananda. Fill your heart with love and chant the Divine name. Only then can you attain Divinity. Perform all your activities with love. Love should originate from the source, i.e., the heart and not by force. Today people chant the Divine name, not from source, but out of force. No benefit accrues from chanting the Divine name unless it is done wholeheartedly. Chant His name wholeheartedly at least for half a minute, that is enough. One tea spoonful of cow's milk is better than barrels of donkey's milk. God is interested in quality, not in quantity.

### **Secret of Remaining Ever Young**

*Students!*

You should understand that body is but an instrument and the Atma is the doer and the enjoyer. Give up body attachment. What are you studying for? You want to earn money and lead a happy life. But, are you getting happiness from your studies? No. After your studies, you want a lucrative job, then a promotion and so on and so forth. There is no end to your desires. Then how can you expect to be happy? True and permanent happiness cannot be attained in the physical world. It can be experienced only in the state of Turiya. Bliss is not present in physical worldly objects.

One day, Adi Sankara, along with his thirteen disciples was going to the river Ganga for a holy dip. He came across a Brahmin sitting under a tree and repeating Dukrunkarane, Dukrunkarane... Sankara asked him what he would gain by repeating the rudiments of grammar? The Brahmin replied that he would become a great scholar, join the royal court and earn money. Then Sankara questioned him as to how long the wealth would ensure him happiness. The Brahmin said, he could lead a happy life till his death. Then Sankara asked him, what would happen after death. The Brahmin replied that he did not know. Then Sankara sang the following verse.

*Bhaja Govindam Bhaja Govindam  
Govindam Bhaja Moodamathe  
Samprapthe Sannihithe Kale  
Nahi Nahi Rakshati Dukrunkarane.*

(Oh! foolish one, when the hour of death approaches rudiments of grammar will not come to your rescue. So, chant the name of God.) Only God's name will protect you in all periods of time and under all circumstances. Everything in this world is like a passing cloud. Only bliss and love are permanent. Love is God, God is love. So, live in love.

*Students!*



Youth is very sacred. Do not misuse it by indulging in limitless desires and building castles in the air. Pursue your education keeping God uppermost in your mind. Do not get entangled in unnecessary activities and bondages, which will cause restlessness. Today people are in search of peace. But peace cannot be found in the external world. You find only pieces! Peace is in you. You are the embodiment of peace, you are the embodiment of truth and you are the embodiment of love. So, first of all know thyself. Only then you can be blissful always. Modern students are acquiring various degrees. But, what is the use?

*In spite of his education and intelligence, a foolish man will not know his true self and a mean-minded person will not give up his wicked qualities. Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to total wisdom. What is the use of acquiring worldly education if it cannot lead you to immortality? Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal.*

(Telugu Poem)

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Love all, do not hate anybody. This is the teaching of our ancient culture. Sage Vyasa gave the essence of 18 Puranas in a few words: *Paropakara Punyaya Papaya Parapeedanam*. So, "Help ever, hurt never." It is enough if you put this into practice. Along with worldly education, spiritual education is also essential. It is said, "Adhyatma Vidya Vidyanam," spiritual education is true education. That alone can confer the knowledge of Brahman, which transcends dualities and the three attributes, namely, Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. Only God is permanent, everything else is temporary. Today people have faith in the world, but not in God. Do not take pride in your youth and physical beauty.

*"What will happen to you when you become a decrepit old man, when your body becomes weak, legs stagger and vision fails and you are no better than a leather puppet and the children laugh at you calling you an old monkey?"*

(Telugu Poem)

How long will the youth last? Just as the flash of lightning is followed by pitch darkness, likewise, youth is followed by old age. The flower that blossoms in the morning fades in the evening. Such is the nature of human body. Have control over your body and mind. Do not depend on others. Will your hunger be satiated if someone else partakes of food? No. Self-effort is very essential in order to progress on the path of spirituality.

If you want to remain young always, you should have control over your senses. Swami is the direct proof of this. (Cheers) My body is full of energy. There is absolutely no weakness whatsoever in Me. Even now I can run fast. Can anyone imagine that Swami is 75 years old? What is the secret behind this? Purity, patience and perseverance are mainly responsible for this. Swami's feelings are always pure and steady. Try to emulate Swami in this regard. You claim yourself to be Swami's devotees. Then is it not your duty to cultivate at least a fraction of Swami's purity? You do not have the patience to give a proper answer, if someone were to ask you for some information. But, I talk to thousands and yet remain peaceful and blissful always. I am engaged in multifarious activities. None can describe the job I do. I do the work of all departments. All departments belong to Me. But, I am never restless. I am always full of bliss. During the birthday celebrations, some devotees wish Me Happy Birthday. I tell them, "You do

not need to wish Me Happy Birthday, because I am always happy. Give happiness to those who are not happy." Happiness lies in union with God. If you have the firm conviction that God is in you, with you and around you, you will never face any hardship or misery in your life. People talk of worries and misery. But, I do not know what they are. They do not come near Me because of My purity. Only those with bad thoughts and bad character are affected by misery and worry. So:

*See no evil, see what is good is  
Hear no evil, hear what is good  
Talk no evil, talk what is good  
Think no evil, think what is good  
Do no evil, do what is good  
This is the way to God.*

When you are faced with difficulties, do not get disheartened. Consider that they are for your own good.

### **A Devotee's Firm Faith Earns Bhagavan's Grace**

You would have noticed Swami talking to a devotee on this platform- a few minutes back. His name is Narayana. He is from Chennai. Last week he developed heart problem. His son, who is a student of our college, telephoned his father asking him to come to Puttaparthi immediately. He came here and doctor who examined him told Me that the four valves of his heart were blocked and it was difficult to perform operation on him. Three doctors who have come from America examined him. In fact, they were surprised to find him alive with such a serious heart problem.

Narayana told them that he had no pain and he was very happy as Swami was with him always. (Cheers) But the doctors were not satisfied. They performed open heart surgery on him for five hours. Four bypasses were done. This operation was performed day before yesterday and today he has come to Mandir. In the normal course, after a bypass surgery, a patient has to be on the bed for at least ten days. But Narayana walked three hundred steps yesterday itself. Isn't this incredible? Today he has come here wearing pant and shirt, looking like a college boy. (Cheers) I told him his faith was responsible for this. Right from the beginning he has been, saying that Swami is with him and that He will take care of him. He feels that the heart problem which he had was good for him in the sense that it brought him to the abode of Swami. He said, our hospital was not just a hospital, but a temple of healing. His operation was performed day before yesterday. Yesterday the doctors served him idlis and today he has come to Mandir for Swami's Darshan. Is it possible in any other hospital? Ask any doctor, he will give an emphatic 'No' as an answer. Such is the nature of human body, but God can change even the nature of the body and grant a bright future. God can transform earth into sky and sky into earth, but you should have firm faith in Him. Today man has become blind, losing the eyes of faith. He does not have faith in himself, then how can he have faith in God? How can he, who does not know himself, know Divinity?

### **Develop Love for God**

First know yourself, and then you can easily understand Divinity. Have faith in God. There is nothing that God cannot do. One with proper eyesight can see even the small glow-worm. But a

blind man cannot see even the brightly shining sun. Likewise, one without the spiritual eye will find only darkness all around him. A spark of spiritual light is enough to see the entire cosmos.

The Age of Kali has become the Age of Kalaha (quarrels). There are quarrels and conflicts everywhere. Students should resolve to eradicate hatred and restlessness. On this holy day of Sivaratri, develop the principle of love more and more. I love everybody. Everybody loves Me. But sometimes students feel that Swami is not talking to them because He is angry with them. I am never angry with anybody. But in order to correct you, sometimes I may pretend to be angry. When one falls sick, one needs to be given medicine. Also one has to follow dietary regulations. Only then can sickness be cured. Similarly, to cure your 'diseases,' Swami gives you 'medicine' in His own inimitable way. In order to bring about transformation in you, sometimes I remain quiet and do not talk to you.

Do not breed hatred, greed and jealousy. You know what happened to Hiranyakasipu, Ravana and Duryodhana who developed hatred towards God. The Pandavas led a happy life as they had immense love for God. They were subjected to innumerable difficulties, yet their love for God did not diminish. So, develop love for God. The more you develop love, the more you experience happiness and the closer you go to ultimate bliss.

Bhagavan concluded the Discourse with the Bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho..."

**—From Bhagavan's Sivaratri Sandesh in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 4th  
March 2000**

*The moment you realise that you are not the body, and then at that very moment all the attachments and delusions will disappear.*

**—Baba**

**BHAGAVAN'S VALEDICTORY DISCOURSE**

**SECOND WORLD YOUTH CONFERENCE**

### **Hands in Society, Head in Forest**

*There is no teacher greater than one's own conscience. There is no preceptor greater than time. The world verily is the greatest text. God is the only true friend.*

(Telugu Poem)

*Young Men and Women, Future Citizens of the World!*

The future of the world, good or bad, depends on your conduct. The country will be safe, secure, peaceful and prosperous only when your conduct is good. What the world needs today is not affluence and material comforts, but men and women of noble character. The country is bound to suffer if the conduct of the young men and women is not on the right lines.

### **Three Main Principles of Spiritual Life**

A true human being is one who adheres to Sathya (truth), Dharma (righteousness) and Tyaga (sacrifice). Truth is Neeti (morality), righteousness is Reeti (procedure) and sacrifice leads to Khyati (fame). All these three constitute Manava Jati (human race). Wherefrom has human race originated?

*"The entire creation has originated from Truth and ultimately merges into Truth. There is no place where this unsullied Truth does not exist."*

(Telugu Poem)

It was on this basis that our ancient sages and seers said *Sathyam Bhruyat, Priyam Bhruyat, Na Bhruyat Sathyamapriyam* (speak truth, speak sweetly, do not speak unpalatable truth). *Sathyam Bhruyat* refers to moral value. Manava Jati (human race) cannot survive without Neeti (morality). Today the whole world is engulfed in troubles and turmoil on account of injustice, falsehood and unrighteousness. Only young men and women are capable of restoring the declining human values. When man upholds morality, only then can there be equality, freedom and brotherhood of man in the world. In order to uphold morality, one should adhere to truth. In fact, truth has to be practised in daily life. That is why it is said, *Sathyam Bhruyat*. This is the primary duty of man. *Priyam Bhruyat* (speak sweetly) refers to Dharmic value. On this basis, the Bhagavad Gita teaches: *Anudvegakaram tlakyam Sathyam Priya-hitham Cha Yat* (speak only truthful, pleasing, agreeable words which do not annoy others). *Na Bhruyat Sathyamapriyam* (do not speak the truth which is unpalatable) refers to spiritual value. One has to adhere to these principles to progress on the spiritual path.

### **Nature Teaches Sacrifice**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Himachala (the Himalayan Mountains) forms the northern boundary of India. What is the inner meaning of the word Himachala? Hima means ice, which stands for purity and peace. Achala means that which is steady. So, Himachala signifies purity, peace and steadiness. The perennial rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati symbolise the continuous blood circulation in the body. The great epics of Bharat, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata bring out the quintessence of human nature. One can be called a Bharatiya in the true sense of the term only when one puts into practice the ideals Bharat stands for. In the word Bharat, 'Bha' refers to Bhava (feeling), 'Ra' refers to Raga (tune) and 'Ta' connotes Tala (rhythm). Bharatiyas are those who worship God, harmonising the three—Bhava, Raga and Tala. 'Bha' also stands for effulgence. So, Bharatiyas are those who are in pursuit of divine effulgence. You should take pride in the fact that you are a Bharatiya. There is no greater qualification than this. (Cheers) Bharat is the country, which disseminated spiritual knowledge to the rest of the world. Bharatiyas always pray for the welfare of the entire world—*Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu* (May the whole world be happy!)

You are all one irrespective of the countries you belong to. Bulbs may vary, but the current is the same. Likewise, countries, bodies and feelings may vary, but the principle of Atma is one and the same in all. Therefore, give up all differences based on caste, religion and nationality and spread the message of unity. Nations are many, but earth is one. Jewels are many, but gold is one. Stars are many, but sky is one. Cows are many, but milk is one. Bodies are many, but breath is one. You can experience bliss only when you render service keeping in mind the unity of all beings.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

You are born in love; you should live in love and merge in love. As love is on the decline, there is confusion and restlessness in the world. Man should therefore develop love. The sun sustains the creation by giving light and life. Trees accept the poisonous carbon dioxide and give the life-supporting oxygen. Mother earth teaches a lesson in patience and sacrifice. All these elements help mankind without any expectation of reward. There is no greater example of selfless love than Nature. It is a shame that man, having been born and brought up in Nature, does not imbibe the ideals demonstrated by Nature and leads a life of selfishness and self interest. The youth should resolve to eliminate selfishness and self interest from the society.

Jesus declared, "All are one, My dear son, be alike to everyone." All are born of the same mother earth, breathe the same air and drink the same water. In such a case, why should there be differences at all? Eschew all differences and live in unity. Recognise the unity in diversity and act accordingly.

### **Man is born to serve others**

The youth should go to villages, serve the needy and undertake various rural development programmes. Do not think that you are doing a great service to others. In fact, all this is your duty as you are born to serve. So, spend your life in serving others. Do not crave for power and position. One who is not a Sevak (humble worker) cannot become a Nayak (leader). In fact, a true Sevak alone is a true Nayak. People are under the mistaken notion that Japa, Tapa and Dhyana constitute spiritual practice. They try to do meditation without knowing what it is! They feel that they are meditating on God not knowing who God really is! They mistake concentration for meditation. Concentration is associated with the senses, whereas meditation is beyond them. Meditation should not be confined to a particular time and place. It is a way of life, whatever is done with the spirit of love is meditation. Sitting in meditation for hours together without expressing love for fellow beings is no meditation at all. True spiritual practice lies in joining hands with the rest of the community and working for the progress of the society as a whole. Love is God, live in love. Heart bereft of love is like a barren land. Your love should not be worldly and selfish; it should be selfless divine love. All your actions should be suffused with love.

It is not possible to attain the supreme state of love instantly just as it is impossible for a newborn babe to attend degree classes. One has to gradually progress by undertaking spiritual practices. It is imperative to undertake these practices until one turns one's vision inward. Perform all activities with a spiritual outlook. There is no greater spiritual practice than adhering to the principles of truth and love. Truth and love are synonymous with God. Without these two, there is no point in undertaking spiritual practices.

### *Young Men and Women!*

Consider love and sacrifice as your very life breath. Control your senses. Sense control is essential for success in any spiritual practice. Humanity can rise to Divinity through sense control. When you get angry, remind yourself that anger is not a human quality; it is an animal quality. Anger is the quality of a dog. When you are angry, tell yourself, "I am not a dog, I am a man." Similarly, when your mind wavers, tell yourself repeatedly, "I am not a monkey, I am a

Man." Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa are the true human values. These values are the five life principles (Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana) of man. Losing any one of these values amounts to losing one's life principle itself. Each value is linked with others and cannot exist without them. Today man has become a living corpse as he has lost all these values. Develop faith in these values, uphold them and experience the bliss derived therefrom.

*Where there is faith, there is love,  
Where there is love, there is peace,  
Where there is peace, there is truth,  
Where there is truth, there is God,  
Where there is God, there is bliss.*

Today man aspires for bliss, for which faith is essential. Bliss cannot be attained easily. Bliss is Brahman, the eternal, pure, steady and non-dual principle. Man cannot attain this supreme bliss without giving up the evil qualities. Heart is the altar of God. Do not pollute it with evil thoughts and feelings.

### **Do Seva while Chanting Lord's Name**

Self-effort is very essential to achieve success in any human endeavour. Even small activities like picking up a flower or plucking a fruit from a tree require the cooperation and effort of various limbs of the body—eyes, hands, legs, etc. *Sareeramadyam Khalu Dharma Sadhanam*, body is gifted to undertake righteous actions and to set an ideal to the society, not for sleeping, eating, drinking and making merry. God has gifted man with all the powers, but man is unable to realise his innate potential.

Whenever you take up any activity, keep in mind the welfare of others too. Do not lead a life of selfishness. Think in terms of collective benefit, not individual benefit alone. Spiritual practices like Japa and Dhyana are often done with a selfish motive. Instead, it is better to chant the Lord's name and serve the society. This will confer benefit on the individual and also the society at large. This constitutes real Sadhana. Whomsoever you serve, serve with the feeling that you are serving God.

Buddha's heart was filled with compassion. The sight of a dead body, a sick person, an old decrepit person was enough for Buddha to get transformed and attain Nirvana. Though you come across innumerable dead bodies, old persons and sick individuals, it is a pity that there is no transformation in you whatsoever. Unfortunately, your heart has become as hard as a stone—indifferent to the sufferings of others. To attain Nirvana or liberation, one should identify oneself with others and make efforts to alleviate their sufferings.

The Vice Chancellor mentioned in his speech: "Bend the body, mend the senses, end the mind." Mind will be non-existent when the senses are controlled. Mind can be annihilated when noble thoughts are entertained. Today the world is in disarray because impure thoughts of man are leading him astray.

*"O man, enquire what great happiness you have acquired by forgetting God and spending all your education and energy limitlessly in eking out a livelihood right from dawn to dusk."*

(Telugu Poem)

Whatever you do, consider it as God's work. For example, the process of inhaling and exhaling is in itself a spiritual practice. The process of inhaling is associated with the sound 'So' (That) and exhaling, with the sound 'Ham' (I). 'Soham' means 'That I am'. 'So' symbolises Divinity and 'Ham' signifies Ahamkara (ego). So, 'Soham' drives home the lesson that you should take in only that which is good and discard that which is bad. This process of inhaling and exhaling repeats itself 21,600 times a day. It means your inner voice is reminding you 21,600 times a day that you are God. Unfortunately, you are not receptive to this message. It is to understand this reality that God has gifted you this body. Do not limit God to your shrine. God is your life breath.

### **God is the Eternal Witness**

Just as hands, eyes, ears, nose, etc., are limbs of the body, likewise, human beings are limbs of the society. Society is a limb of Nature and Nature is a limb of God. Therefore, you can infer that there is an intimate relationship between individual and God. When inanimate objects like telephones are connected, should there not be a connection between human beings and God? The former relationship is artificial in nature, whereas the latter is heart to heart. There are two types of telephone calls—one, which can be answered by anybody (number call) and the other, which needs to be answered by a specific person (particular person—P.P. call) for whom the call is intended. Your contact should be direct with God like the personal call, and not with all and sundry like the number call. If you make a personal call to God, then God will respond instantly. You cannot expect God to respond when you make a number call. Number call corresponds to negative thoughts. So, give up negative thoughts and develop positive feelings.

The body, mind, senses and intellect are all negative in nature. Only the conscience is positive. Just as the microphone is useless without the current, so also are the body, mind, senses and intellect without the conscience. The conscience that exists in everyone is one and the same, just as the current that flows through different bulbs is the same. All are one. So, do not hate, harm or criticise anybody. He is a noble one, who conducts himself without hurting others and not being troubled in the process himself. True spiritual practice lies in considering every work as God's work, not merely in doing Japa or Dhyana. God is all-pervasive. It is on this basis that the Bhagavad Gita declares: *Sarvata Pani Padam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvata Srutimalloke Sarvamavritya Thishthati* (with His hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, God permeates the entire universe). You can hoodwink anyone, but not God. He is always watching you. He is the eternal witness. He is present in you, just as the power of vision resides in your eye. Not even a blade of grass can move without His Will. It is foolishness to get carried away by the sense of doership. So, do not feel proud of your achievements. Develop the sacred feeling that God is the doer and the enjoyer too. Consider everything as God's Will.

Whatever happens to you, be it profit or loss, pain or pleasure, have the resolute faith that it is good for you. When a person suffering from malaria consults a doctor, he will be given the bitter quinine medicine. Unless he takes the bitter medicine, he cannot be cured of the fever. Likewise, have the firm conviction that difficulties and suffering are the ways and means by which God purifies you. There is a reason behind whatever God does. Without understanding the principle of cause and effect, people blame God for their suffering. Understand the truth that you yourself

are responsible for the pain or pleasure that befalls you. Do not feel sad if someone were to criticise you, because criticising others amounts to criticising one's self as the same Atma exists in all. You should develop this equanimity. Identify yourself with the Atma, not the body, which is temporary like a water bubble.

*Young Men and Women!*

All that I say is for your own good and to make you aware of the Divinity. All My teachings and actions carry a profound inner meaning. Our college students have white dress as their uniform. What is its inner significance? White colour symbolises purity. Similarly, when you see someone in ochre robes, it reminds you of renunciation. This is to convey the message that you should be pure and free from all attachments. Only then can you attain the Divine.

### **Keep the Mind Focused on God**

Modern youth have too many desires, which cause physical as well as mental strain. Desires are the luggage in the journey of life. "Less luggage more comfort makes travel a pleasure." Your destination is the abode of supreme peace, i.e., liberation. Why do you trouble yourself with 'heavy luggage,' when you are going to the abode of supreme peace? Be satisfied with the minimum requirement of food, clothing and shelter. *Bhikshannam Deharakshartham Vasthram Sheetha Nivaranam* (food is meant to sustain your body and clothing to protect you from cold). Modern youth are fascinated by fashion, and dress themselves gaudily. The youth, especially women, should not indulge in dressing fads. The dress you wear should be good and sober. Do not imitate the cinema culture. Imitation is animal nature and creation is Divine. (Cheers) Control of desires leads to sense control, which in turn leads to Divinity.

Sage Patanjali said, "*Yoga Chitta Vritti Nirodha*" (controlling the vagaries of the mind is Yoga). Allowing the senses to have their own way is Roga (disease). Today's man has become a Rogi (diseased one) because of lack of sense control. One should become a Yogi, not a Rogi. Yoga is attained not by Bhoga (worldly pleasures), but by Tyaga (sacrifice). Once you attain Yoga, you will never be afflicted with Roga. Yoga does not mean leading the life of a recluse in a forest. Some people mistake physical exercise like sitting cross-legged, standing on one leg, etc., for Yoga. True Yoga is Prema Yoga, i.e., to unify your love with the Divine. God does not want anything from you. He never insists on you to do meditation or Hatha Yoga. He only wants you to fill your heart with the principles of love and sacrifice. If you obey His commands with sincerity and devotion, He will take care of all your needs without your asking. The lives of Sabari and Jatayu bear ample testimony to this truth.

*"O mind, do not ask for anything.  
Ask, and it shall be delayed.  
Do not ask, and it shall be granted soon.  
Did He not shower His grace on  
Sabari, who never asked?  
Did He not perform the last rites  
of Jatayu and grant him liberation,  
without his asking?"*

(Telugu Song)



So, you do not need to ask God for anything. If you have purity of heart, He will Himself take care of you, just like a mother who attends to the needs of the child without its asking. Be like a child and the Divine Mother will take care of you. That is total surrender. Leave everything to the will of the mother. Do not ask for petty things lest you should lose her proximity. The one who asks for food will be directed to the kitchen, but the mother will feed the child herself who cannot ask. Only those with ego and those immersed in worldly life ask. But the one, who surrenders himself to the Will of the Divine Mother like a child, will lead a peaceful life.

You would have observed a dancer making rapid movements with her hands and legs while dancing, but her attention is always focused on the rhythm. Likewise, your mind should always be fixed on God while discharging your duties. You might have heard the story of Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi. She had a small child. When she was left with no other choice but to go to the battlefield, she tied the child to her back, took a sword and waged a fierce battle with her enemies, riding on horseback. But all the while, what was uppermost in her mind was the safety of her child. Similarly, you must necessarily discharge your worldly duties, but at the same time your mind should always be focused on God. This is the meaning of the maxim: "Hands in the society, head in the forest." You do not need to undertake any specific spiritual Sadhana. Whatever you do, do it as an offering to God.

### **Do not Waste Food, Money, Time, Energy**

In order to have sacred thoughts, give up the vices like smoking, consumption of non-vegetarian food and intoxicants. Do not waste food, money, time and energy. Eat as much as you can, but do not waste, because millions are suffering for want of food. Wasting food is a great sin. So, do not waste food. Food is God.

Similarly, do not waste money. Some students waste a lot of money eating in hotels, playing cards and indulging in gambling. Misuse of money is evil. Do your work yourself. Do not depend on others. Whenever you find time, wash your clothes yourself. Why do you give your clothes to a washerman when you can wash them yourself? You have no right to waste your father's money.

Time is God. Time wasted is life wasted. Do not waste time in the pursuit of worldly pleasures. Instead taste Divinity by chanting God's name.

Do not waste energy, for energy is God. Today students are wasting a lot of energy through unsacred vision, bad thoughts, bad hearing and excessive talk. Our body can be compared to a radio. When the radio is turned on continuously, the cells get discharged quickly. Likewise, if you indulge in excessive talk, you will be losing a lot of energy. That is why the ancient sages and seers used to observe silence. So, conserve energy by observing silence at least one day in a week. I often tell the students, talk less and work more. Only then the latent energy develops. This was the sole aim of sages and seers in undertaking various spiritual practices. Once the latent energy develops, your memory power as well as the power of concentration will increase. Some students are not able to perform well in the examinations because they are not able to concentrate even for a moment. They are constantly engaged in listening to radio, cricket commentary, etc., with the textbook in their hand! With such distractions, how can they concentrate and develop their memory?

### **Character is of Paramount Importance**

In olden days, education was imparted to students in the Gurukula. Students had to rely entirely on their memory power and concentration to acquire knowledge as there were no pens, pencils, paper, etc., to jot down what the teachers would teach. Their learning consisted of merely listening to the teachers, yet they could acquire high education. Though the modern students have access to paper, pens, etc., they fail to excel in studies as they lack concentration and memory power.

#### *Young Men and Women!*

You become divine once you safeguard your physical, mental and spiritual powers. Let your body be engaged in good actions, mind entertain noble thoughts and intellect merge with the Divine. The body, mind and intellect are merely instruments. Understand the principle that makes these instruments function. The modern system of education has become computer oriented. There is craze for computers everywhere. You are not a computer. You are a composer. (Cheers) After all, what does the computer do? It does whatever you program it to do. It cannot function of its own accord. God-gifted brain is the real computer. Make proper use of it. Unfortunately, modern man depends excessively on the machine to the exclusion of the God-gifted brain. The situation has deteriorated to such an extent that people depend on calculators even for simple calculations. You should be self-reliant.

Receive help from God only, none else. His work is only to help others. Emulate Him. "Help ever, Hurt never." Sage Vyasa said, *Paropakara Punyaya Papaya Parapeedanam* (helping others is merit, harming others is sin). This is the essence of all sacred texts. Do not breed misunderstanding and quarrels amongst yourselves. Unity is the greatest strength. Therefore, work in unison. "Where there is unity, there is purity. Where there is purity, there is Divinity." If you have purity of heart, God will certainly fulfill your wishes. There is nothing that you cannot accomplish with purity of heart. It is impossible to understand God. When you are unable to know your true Self, how can you know God? The other day, Uma Bharati mentioned that people come here to know God. It is a misconception. You do not need to come here to know God. First try to know yourself. None can ever comprehend Me.

Character is of paramount importance for the spiritual growth of an individual. Sage Kanva established an Ashram where many aspirants came to study the scriptures. Shakuntala was one of the inmates of the Ashram and grew up under the loving care of sage Kanva. One day, king Dushyanta happened to visit the Ashram of Kanva. There he met Shakuntala and married her. Bharata was born to the couple. Having been born and brought up in a palace, king Dushyanta was inclined towards worldly pleasures. On the other hand, his son Bharata, who was born and brought up in Kanva Ashram, was a repository of moral, spiritual and ethical values. Ashram education inculcates all noble values in man. Bharata became a paragon of all virtues because he received ideal education right from his childhood. On the other hand, Dushyanta had worldly and material wealth. He was a mighty emperor. What was the use of all that he possessed when he could not develop high character? This clearly demonstrates the difference between urban education and Ashram education. Urban education is associated with Shrama (hardship), whereas Ashram education is without any Shrama. There is nothing wrong in enrolling as students of colleges in towns, provided one keeps in mind the purpose of education. One should

not develop unnecessary contacts and get distracted from the designated path. Your character depends on the environment around you. In olden times, people felt:

*"If wealth is lost, nothing is lost,  
If health is lost, something is lost,  
If character is lost, everything is lost."*

On the contrary, modern youth feel that everything is lost if wealth is lost, and if character is lost, nothing is lost!

### **God is Your True Guru**

I think I am putting you to inconvenience by talking too much. I can speak to you for any length of time, but I never indulge in unnecessary talk. Remember that you are the future torchbearers of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation. (Cheers) The elders of the Organisation are aged and may be having their own constraints. The youth have to take the initiative to lead the Organisation from the front. Each State Organisation should have its own youth leader to take up major responsibilities. Ensure that you keep yourself distant from politics. Work for the welfare and progress of the society. That is the greatest Sadhana.

Let your behaviour be exemplary wherever you are. As long as you are in Prasanthi Nilayam, you lead a disciplined life. Continue to do the same even after you leave this place. Be always immersed in the Divine, not in deep wine. Only those who are immersed in the Divine are dear to Me and are My dear friends. If you want to be dear friends of Swami, conduct yourself in the divine manner. In such a case, you do not need to come here, I will come to you wherever you are. I am with you, in you, around you and behind you. I am not separate from you. I and you are one.

(Bhagavan sang two Bhajans - "Pibare Rama Rasam ..." and "Vahe Guru, Vahe Guru ..." and the devotees ecstatically joined Him in chorus.)

Vahe Guru means, there is only one Guru and He is God. He is the goal. Do not go hither and thither from one Guru to another. Under all circumstances, hold on to God steadfastly. God is your true Guru. You can call Him by any name. In the word Guru, 'Gu' stands for Gunateeta (the attributeless) and 'Ru' for Ruparahita (the formless). So, God who is formless and beyond attributes, alone is your true Guru. You have come here spending a lot of money and energy. Put into practice whatever you have learnt here. Once you return to your respective places, share the experiences and joy with your fellow youth. Only then the purpose of attending the conference will be served. Serve your fellowmen and sanctify your lives.

*"Neither by penance nor by undertaking pilgrimages nor by going through sacred texts can one cross the ocean of Samsara. It is only through service of the noble that one can redeem oneself."*  
(Sanskrit Sloka)

Serve without any expectation of reward. That is Nishkama Yoga. No benefit accrues to you if you expect reward for the service rendered in various villages. Do not boast that you have served in many villages. Work silently, God will definitely shower His grace on you. I am very happy

that you bore many inconveniences here with love and patience after having travelled long distances. You might not have had the food of your choice here. Never mind, what is important is good head, which can lead to God. You should eat to live, not live to eat.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Hoping that you will lead a happy and ideal life, I bless you all and bring My Discourse to a close.

**—From Bhagavan's Valedictory Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 21st November 1999 on the occasion of Sri Sathya Sai Second World Youth Conference**

### **The Spring of Love**

*Love is God, God is love. Where there is love, there God is certainly evident. Love more and more people, love them more and more intensely; transform love into service, transform service into worship; that is the highest Sadhana. There is no living being without the spark of love; even a madman loves something or somebody intensely. You must recognise this love as a reflection of the Embodiment of Prema (Prema swaroopa), of the God who is residing in your heart. Without that spring of love that bubbles in your heart, you will not be prompted to love at all. Recognise that spring, rely on it more and more, develop its possibilities, try to irrigate the whole world with it, discard all touch of the self from it, do not seek anything in return for it from those to whom you extend it. In your daily affairs, do not create factions or revel in hatred. See the good in others and the faults in yourself. Revere others as having God installed in them; revere yourself also as the embodiment of God. Make your heart pure so that He can reside therein.*

**—Baba**

### **Getting to the Core of Reality**

**—Deepa Awal**

*When we try to think of God, we get restless and the mind is unstable. Why do we do the things of the world with full concentration? Why? Because we are fully interested in them and with God we have doubts.*

The word darshan literally means the actual seeing of a holy person. It is a sacred moment when we behold someone who elevates our consciousness and gives us a glimpse of who we are. This year, we are celebrating Swami's 75th birthday. Since the age of 14, Swami has been talking to us, giving us Darshan, and walking amongst us in human form. We are truly privileged. In these 60 years, we should ask ourselves, what we have received. Any interaction is a two-way process—coming to fruition when both giver and receiver share an unconditional love. He has given us a great deal, but what have we been open to? A lot depends on our receptivity.

### **The Physical Dimension**

Many of us have gone to Puttaparthi. During Darshan, Swami takes letters from devotees, gives Padanamaskar and on special occasions gives discourses. We receive all this and yet are unsatisfied. This is a very superficial response to a profound interaction. It is my feeling that people who are gathered at Darshan do not realise its real significance. Swami is the director of all the galaxies in this universe; He is Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent. If He is truly this, then it is inconsistent to think that He cannot pay attention to a small individual, a speck, a drop in an ocean. Why then do we feel this way? Why cannot we see things as they really are? It is so, because we pay attention only to the physical dimension of our interaction with Him and do not fully experience what is happening during Darshan. This is all our senses will allow us to perceive unless we make an extraordinary effort to look beyond the senses.

Why are we so involved in our physical world even though we are multidimensional beings with unlimited potential? It is partly because of the socialisation process. Our society does not teach us to understand what is real other than to accept what our senses can perceive as real. What our senses can feel, touch, see, taste and smell, we regard as real and the rest is forgotten. In today's age it is even more difficult to see beyond the physical because of the plethora of information and technology that is available. We feel we are missing out if we don't use the senses to grasp this knowledge. There is very little energy left for anything else. The question we need to ask is whether this information is really necessary.

### **The Totality of Our Existence**

Swami says, "There are two types of knowledge. One refers to the spiritual knowledge, the other to knowledge of the physical world. Enquiring into the various properties of an article is an ordinary knowledge associated with the world. But understanding the inner principle, the underlying basis and purpose of every article that has ever existed in the world, that is the spiritual knowledge: that is what can be called wisdom. Without this wisdom, without this spiritual understanding, it is not possible for you to have true knowledge of the world. So, even for understanding the world in its deeper aspects, you have to acquire spiritual wisdom."

Baba is putting out a distinctly different viewpoint for our consideration. When He talks about education, it is not academic information alone He stresses; it is the education required for living a physically, mentally and spiritually balanced life. "Education is for life, not for a living," He says. "That which liberates is true education ... education must liberate man from the shackles of cowardice, pettiness, greed, hatred and from the limitations of 'I' and mine'." And this education, to be complete, must be applied. He emphasises transformation, not information.

Swami also stresses the inner versus the outer. He takes us beyond the environmental influences to—an understanding that everything is inside, not outside. At one time, I was in an interview, and I asked Swami if I should admit our younger daughter in a school in India so that she could imbibe the values of the Bharatiya culture. He said, rather firmly, "Samskruti (culture) is inside, not outside." What does this mean? Swami's definition of culture is broad and expansive. For Him, culture is not a description of behaviours or external manifestations of social qualities. It is the innate qualities we express in thought, word and deed. Everything else emanates from that. If this is so, then the expression of culture is a function of our Samskaras (inclinations and tendencies). It is all inside us. Environment is a relatively small matter.

On another occasion, also in an interview, Swami was talking about how when immorality goes immortality comes. He talked about how even the fish today is better than the human being because the fish as it moves through water cleans it. He continued by saying that man today as he moves through the society makes it dirtier, not cleaner. I spoke out and said, "But, Swami, in the society today, our training is such that it doesn't teach us to be selfless." Again He said, "No! It's not training, it's Samskara." So over and over again, He points us inwards, not outwards.

In practical terms this implies that everything-good and bad-exists within us and we cannot blame the external environment for what we are.

### **The Principal Teaching**

Swami has constantly emphasised that we are not separate from God. He says, "You must move from the narrow-minded idea that you are separate from God "This is the crux of Swami's message to us.

Swami repeatedly points to the importance of stepping out and reaching beyond what we know. He says, "Even an ignorant, backward child struggles to move ahead into a new class each year. Yet, adult humans who have the ability to possess infinite knowledge tend to stay in the same class for an entire lifetime." What great ignorance it is to spend an entire lifetime repeating various studies of this physical world and never moving on into the spiritual or godly class!

To move to another class, we must earnestly ask, who am I? While Swami gives us direction in all spheres of spiritual Sadhana (Japa, Bhajan, meditation and so on), He also tells us that these have no meaning without Bhava (feeling). In addition, He emphasises the need to get to the core of who we are. On His 72nd birthday, in His discourse, Swami said, "People undertake several spiritual practices to search for God. When God is in you, where is the need for such a search? You are God, but you are not able to recognise this truth. This has to be realised now" Swami goes on to say that the I is not the body, but the Atma. The body can be seen and felt by us—the seer. "All that is separate from you is the seen. The underlying principle in all that you see is 'I' This 'I' is changeless and remains the same through time—past, present and future. In truth, 'I' represents the Atma." When the body gets hurt, you feel the hurt. There is something that is watching, and if that is so, you are not the object that is hurt. Similarly, with our thoughts and emotions, the fact that we can watch our thoughts and emotions implies we are not the mind.

### **Intensity and Commitment to Apply Swami's Teachings**

Often Swami is asked, why when we want to get to the core of who we are and to reach liberation, we cannot do it. Swami's response is, "The greatest obstacle is lack of intensity." This refers to the intensity of our own desire. So, there are two things that are important: the intensity of the desire and the commitment to apply what Swami says. Swami says, "When we try to think of God, we get restless and the mind is unstable. Why do we do the things of the world with full concentration? Why? Because we are fully interested in them and with God we have doubts. In whatever work you love deeply, you have full concentration. In whatever you don't love deeply, concentration is not full. A small example: you are driving a car and at the same time you are talking to your passenger. When the road becomes narrow and dangerous, you say, please let us not talk now. I must give full concentration to the driving. Why do you say this? Because you deeply love your life and you must concentrate to avoid an accident. Because you have this

love for body, you concentrate on its safety. When you have deep love for God, concentration on Him will come automatically."

At a practical level as parents many of us have experienced how when we are separated from a newborn baby, we constantly think of it. But, can we think of God in the same way? That is our test. We can be engaged in anything, but the consciousness of the infant's needs is always with us. This is our test for ourselves: if we can think of God in the same way.

Swami's simplest of instructions has tremendous force, but we don't realise it. Why? Because we know it intellectually, we have heard it, we understand and agree with it, but we have not applied it. One New Year day, a few years ago, I was in Prasanthi Nilayam, happy to be celebrating this auspicious day in His physical presence. But lo and behold! The Lord had other plans; I could not be inside the Mandir compound because of the huge concourse of devotees. That day, I made a resolve that even though I was outside the compound, I would not let Him be far from me; I took to heart His words, "I am in you, with you, above you, around you..." Even though I sat outside, I felt so close to Him. It was truly a milestone in helping me experience the higher truth of His inner presence.

Swami says, "God's grace is proportionate to man's effort." If there is any gift that we can give to Swami, it is that of applying His simple instructions in our lives. The challenge is to apply them deeply, truly and sincerely.

#### ***SIVARATRI AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM***

### **Lingodbhava on Sivaratri**

The sacred festival of Sivaratri became doubly blessed when Bhagavan manifested an oval-shaped golden Linga on Sivaratri evening before a mammoth gathering of devotees. This year, the devotees started coming to Prasanthi Nilayam from 1<sup>st</sup> March onwards. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, Prasanthi Nilayam had become a sea of humanity. Devotees thronged Prasanthi Nilayam in hundreds of thousands for this year's Sivaratri celebrations in eager expectation since Bhagavan manifested Linga on last Sivaratri after a gap of 22 years.

#### **Showers of Divine Grace on Sivaratri Morning**

Sivaratri celebrations started on the morning of 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2000 when Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.00 a.m. to bless the devotees with His Divine Darshan. Since Sai Kulwant Hall was packed with devotees, thousands of them waited for Bhagavan's Darshan outside the Hall. As soon as Bhagavan came, a wave of ecstasy ran through the vast multitude. Swami blessed all the devotees both inside and outside the Hall. After giving the bliss of Darshan to the entire gathering, Bhagavan sat in the chair and gestured the programme to be started. At 7.30 a.m., the students started singing Stotras, which included Sivashtakam, Bilvashtakam and Lingashtakam in praise of Lord Siva. Soon after this, Bhagavan instructed the students to start Prasadam distribution. Bhajan and Prasadam distribution continued up to 8.45 a.m. Bhagavan showered bliss on the devotees and students by distributing toffees and sweets to them.

After the distribution of Prasad, Bhagavan distributed 50 sewing machines to needy persons from Anantapur and adjoining villages. They included several deaf and dumb and other handicapped men and women for whom these machines would serve as a means of livelihood. Bhagavan gave clothes also along with sewing machines to all the fifty men and women. This programme was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti of Anantapur. The morning programme came to a conclusion at 8.55 a.m. with Mangalarati to Bhagavan.

### **The Blessed Sivaratri Evening**

There was much expectation in the air when Sivaratri Bhajan started in the evening of 4<sup>th</sup> March 2000. Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.00 p.m. and blessed the congregation of devotees, which included the Chief Minister of Karnataka, Sri S. M. Krishna. Before the Divine Discourse, a musical performance was given by the famous flute player, Pandit Vijay Raghav Rao. At the end of the programme, Bhagavan blessed the artiste and materialised a gold ring for him.

Before giving His Divine Discourse on the auspicious occasion of Sivaratri, Bhagavan graciously permitted three speakers to make a brief speech. The programme began with Veda chanting by the students. Sri C. Srinivas, Member of the Central Trust then introduced the three speakers, viz., Prof. G. Venkataraman, Sri S. V. Giri and Sri V. Srinivasan. Offering his greetings to the mammoth gathering on the holiest of holy festival of Sivaratri, Sri C. Srinivas congratulated them on their great good fortune of being in the Divine Presence of the Avatar, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba at the most appropriate moment in the history of time. This surely, he felt, was the work of their divine destiny, which had provided them this rare opportunity.

Referring to the mythological story when Siva reduced Manmatha (cupid, which represented desire) to ashes, the first speaker, Prof. G. Venkataraman observed that destruction of desire in human heart made love shine in it. That was why, he said, Vibhuti (sacred ash) was the symbol of purity and was applied by the devout at the centre of their forehead, which was the place of third eye or Jnana Drishti (the eye of wisdom). Prof. Venkataraman observed that the greatest obstacle in the path of self-realisation was man's excessive body consciousness. He referred to the five sheaths of the Self (Pancha Koshas) and prayed to Bhagavan to unravel their mystery.

In his scholarly exposition of the concept of Hiranyagarbha, the second speaker, Sri S. V. Giri, stated that it was necessary to understand the Pancha Koshas to comprehend the phenomenon of Hiranyagarbha. Hence, he prayed to Bhagavan to elaborate on the concept of Pancha Koshas for the benefit of students and devotees.

Pointing at the sea of humanity in front of him, the third speaker, Sri V. Srinivasan, President, All India Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, wondered if the entire world was converging on Prasanthi Nilayam to seek the blessings of Sai Siva on the occasion of Sivaratri. Referring to the statement made by the Chief Minister of Karnataka at a recent public meeting that the people of Karnataka looked to Bhagavan Baba as their father, Sri Srinivasan said that the entire world looked to Bhagavan not only as father, but creator, preserver and protector. Elaborating this point, Sri Srinivasan said, "if there is one person in the world who can unite the entire humanity, who can give hope to the mankind against powers of destruction, and who can divinise the entire



population of the world, it is Bhagavan Baba." People from various countries, he said, were coming and uniting in bonds of brotherhood at Prasanthi Nilayam and engaging themselves in the service of mankind through Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. "Could any individual or world organisation match the work of this magnitude?" Sri Srinivasan wondered.

### **Emergence of the Linga from Bhagavan's Body**

After these speeches, the great moment arrived when Bhagavan rose from the chair at 5.15 p.m. to deliver His Sivaratri Sandesh to the eagerly awaiting devotees. In answer to the prayers of the previous speakers, Bhagavan dwelt in detail on the concept of Pancha Koshas and exhorted the devotees to transcend these Koshas and realise the Self, which was the goal of man's life on earth. Bhagavan concluded His Divine Discourse (printed separately in this issue) at 6.30 p.m. with the Bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho Rama, Rama, Rama," Thereafter, the students of Prasanthi Nilayam and Brindavan Campuses as also from Anantapur Campus started the night-long Sivaratri Bhajan.

When Bhagavan sat in the chair, all eyes were fixed on Him. Though He was moving His right hand with the rhythm of the Bhajans, signs of Lingodbhava were visible on His face. Bhagavan started drinking more and more water. The devotees held their breath when signs of the emergence of the Linga from Bhagavan's body became prominent. The much awaited moment arrived at about 7.00 p.m. when with a forceful movement an oval-shaped golden Linga emerged from Bhagavan's mouth, sending the hundreds of thousands devotees into raptures. Holding the Linga in His right hand, Bhagavan showed it to all the devotees first from the platform and then by moving between the rows of devotees. It was the greatest moment in the lives of the assembled devotees when they witnessed this soul-elevating divine phenomenon. Bhagavan left the Sai Kulwant Hall for His residence at 7.20 p.m. Night-long vigil and Bhajans continued with deep devotional fervour.

In the morning of 5<sup>th</sup> March, Bhagavan came into the Hall at 6.15 a.m. and showered His blessings on all the devotees both outside and inside the Hall, while the Bhajans continued. At 6.45 a.m., Bhagavan blessed the devotees with another Discourse. In the end, Mangalarati was offered to Bhagavan and Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees. Thus concluded the holy celebration of Sivaratri at Prasanthi Nilayam.

### **Divine Origin of Man**

*A goat cannot be born of a tigress. What emanates from God must perforce be Divine. Hence the appellation, Amrutasya Putra (child of immortality) for man in the Upanishads. So, the Atman in him, which has come from the Paramatman, is also immortal. Sparks emanating from the flames of fire have the same incendiary quality as the fire. The body is a temple of God and has been organised for the sake of the God who decided to install Himself therein. Until man realises the God within, and thus comes to understand that He is the 'mystery' that was evading him while he wandered about in the wilderness of the world, he has to attend assiduously to the upkeep of the body.*

—Baba

## Service as Worship of God

—Dr. V. P. Singh

*The fulfillment of human life consists in the service that man renders, without any thought of return, in an attitude of selflessness.*

Bhagavan Baba left his paternal home in 1940 when He was only 14 years old. He sat in a garden in Uravakonda and sang His first Bhajan "*Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam*." Singing of Bhajans was in fact the first spiritual activity started by Bhagavan in His childhood, which has grown and spread globally and today millions of devotees take part in this spiritually elevating activity in all parts of the world. This is one of the most attractive features of the Sai Movement. A little later, Baba started Vidwan Mahasabhas at many places. By this He encouraged the study of scriptures, highlighted the importance of the Vedas and Shastras and thus promoted a kind of spiritual renaissance. This was the second phase of Baba's Divinity. Next came the Sai Organisation—Seva Samitis, Seva Dal, Mahila Vibhag, Bal Vikas, Study Circles, Narayana Seva, etc. These activities are bringing about an all-round transformation of human character. Bhagavan has thus shown that spirituality does not mean a life of solitude. It also means work with multitude. We have the programme of Education in Human Values and Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. All these activities aim at the integral transformation of the human personality.

### Service brings you closer to God

In the Sai Organisation, service activities are given considerable importance. Bhagavan has said repeatedly, "Service to man is service to God. Neither performance of Tapas (austerities) nor pilgrimage to holy places nor the study of the Shastras (scriptures) will ever help you to cross the ocean of Samsara (cycle of birth and death). The only path that will help you to be liberated from Samsara is dedicating yourself to the service of others."

Human birth is very sacred indeed. There is nothing nobler than using this life in the service of others and in rendering help to the needy. There is a deeper meaning of the word "Service." Service does not simply mean doing something good for others. In vernacular languages "Paropakara" (Para-Upkara) is the term used for service. "Para" is commonly construed to mean "others." But actually "Para" means something far higher. "Para" here means the Divine Reality, God dwelling within. Thus Paropakara really means not merely service to fellow beings, but unto God, the Paramatma Himself. "Para" is the location, the seat of the Atma (soul) within us. Each one of us should cultivate the attitude that whatever service we are rendering to "others" is indeed service "unto God Himself." The service should be free from all selfish motives and one should never think of the reward or fruits of that action. Nor should we expect (desire) gratitude from the person we serve. Everything we do, we do as worship of God, without desire and expectations of reward. In the Bhagavad Gita, this spirit and attitude of service, Karma Phala Tyaga (renunciation of the fruits of actions), has been glorified as "Yoga."

The river is permanently flowing; its water is for the benefit of others only. It seeks no reward for itself. Likewise, the tree bears fruit only to give them to others. The cow gives milk for others only; it does not drink the milk itself. Thus the river, the tree, the cow: all of them are teaching us a lesson, how to live for others, how to serve God who is embodied in others. That is true service

(Seva). Through service we will be able to destroy the demon of ego, selfishness in us. Human birth has been given to us for the purpose of crucifying the ego on the cross of compassion. Through love and service to others, one can become closer and closer and ultimately become one with Him. Baba says, "Work without love is deplorable, work with love is desirable and love without duty is divine."

An opportunity to be of some service to fellowmen comes to us as a gift from God. We should serve others with a sense of gratitude, for it is in fact God who accepts it from us. Let us prepare ourselves for serving others, not only by learning the skills of first aid, the rules of the road, the technique of blood donation, the art of handling mikes and loudspeakers, wiring and fitting electric lines, etc., but at the time when we are not actively engaged in some such activity, we should devote ourselves to Japa, Dhyana or Namasmarana; otherwise we will become heartless and cruel.

### **Fulfillment of Life in Service**

Service to others is the duty we owe to the society, which has given us the culture, the breath we live on, the warmth we crave for, the security we seek. Man is born helpless, and is laid on the lap of society. The society gives him a name and a form, a personality, an individuality, an armour of beliefs, a playground of doubts and diversions. Man is the only animal who knows that he has to die, and yearn to survive death or bypass the fangs of death. Man alone has the strange thirst for the nectar that confers immortality.

The fulfillment of human life consists in the service that man renders, without any thought of return, in an attitude of selflessness. Service rendered in this spirit sheds light in the dark interior of man; it widens the heart, it purifies the impulses and confers lasting bliss.

"Expansion is the key to happiness, and love is the unfailing key to expansion. Man is a kin to all!" That is the teaching of Sanathana Dharma. This idea of kinship and our programme of social service will get a boost. Let us not analyse and blame! Sympathise and shower love. Serve in order to heal the agony in your heart, not because the constitution of the club requires the members to serve, not because it brings recognition in high places, or because it is the "duty" of those who are better off! Serve because you can have no peace unless you serve. It is the inner urge to experience the kinship.

As Baba says, even animals render service to one another and also to man. The dog is most faithful to its master. There are also examples of horses saving the lives of their masters injured in battlefield.

There are four ways in which a man renders service: (i) Swartha: It is selfish. It expects appreciation or gratitude or popularity or a career, for the service rendered. (ii) Swartha Prartha: The person finds greater joy in serving for the sake of service. Selfishness is less and selflessness is more. (iii) Prartha: The man serves expects nothing for himself. He serves for other's sake. (iv) Paramartha: By the Divine grace Prartha is transformed into Pramatha. The social worker becomes Madhava Sevak.

Jesus Christ told his disciples, "If you love your Father in Heaven, love His children as I love them and serve them." Prophet Mohammed has called upon His followers, "Do you love your creator? If so, love your brethren and fellowmen, otherwise you are a liar." Buddha said, "Spread compassion, love, peace among men. That is the highest religion."

All the saints through the ages have been praying to the Lord, "Give me a chance to serve You." Namdev, Ravidas, Kabir are some of the examples. They had realised that they could please God, the Paripoorna Sat Chit Ananda, only through serving God in man. That is why Bhagavan Baba has given us the prayer: "Sarve Sukhino Santu, Sarve Santu Niramaya, Sarve Bhadrani Pashyant, Ma Kaschit Dukhabhag Bhavat."

In 1976, during His visit to Dharmakshetra (Mumbai), Baba was to address the Sai Sevaks in the prayer hall at about 4 p.m. The afternoon sun was scorching a portion of the devotees sitting there. When Baba came down and sat on the dais, the volunteers realised that the sun was failing on Baba. They started pulling up curtains to prevent the sun's rays from falling on Baba. Then Baba said, "You are doing Swami Seva. You did not think of putting up these tarpaulins when so many Sais sitting here were scorched by the sun. Do not restrict Sai to this body alone. Try to see Sai in everyone." Through this, Baba taught us true Seva.

Experiencing Divine Presence in Seva A true Madhava Sevak understands that Karma Yoga is the body, Bhakti Yoga is the heart and Jnana Yoga is the soul. While practising Karma Yoga, it is essential to remember and develop as much egolessness as possible. As Swami Vivekananda said, "God is coming to you in the blind, He is coming to you in the lame, in the ignorant, in the ailing; what a great opportunity to serve Him! Do you think God needs your help? If you think so, you are undoing your worship and degrading yourself."

Manava Sevak has to bear in mind that the consciousness in the one he is serving is the same as that in him. When he utilises this opportunity to serve and identify himself with those he is serving, then it becomes real Sai Seva. You must feel grateful that He has given you the opportunity. Then you evolve and develop a vision. So, many bodies you see around are all the temples of only one God. The true test is when Sevak feels that he has received more than what he has given. He feels real joy and happiness.

As Bhagavan Baba says, "When Manava Sevak becomes Madhava Sevak, he gets supreme spiritual experiences. Among these, he will feel that he is not the body. Bhagavan is all along with him in all sense perceptions" He also gets the experience of oneness with God and becomes God himself like saint Ravidas, who sang, "Prabhuji Tum Chandana Hum Pani..." ("Oh Lord, you are Sandal and I am water. By Your grace, I have acquired the scent of the Sandal because we have become one.")

"Remember, one single act of service offered to the God whom you visualise in another is worth all the years of yearning for God," says Baba. Lord Krishna has said in the Gita, "Wherever My glory is sung I install Myself there." The Kali Yuga Avatar Sri Sathya Sai Baba has declared thus, "Wherever My works are completed, I will manifest there." Therefore, oh brothers and sisters! Time for us is fleeting, wake up, take up the responsibilities of Seva activities on your shoulders and enjoy His Presence.

### **True Devotion**

*True devotion is the love flowing from a pure heart unpolluted by selfish motives. Love is the intimate bond of relationship between the devotees and the Lord. —Baba*

### **Rama is Dharma**

*It is often said that Rama followed Dharma at all times. This is not the correct way of describing Him. He did not merely follow Dharma; He was Dharma. What He thought, spoke and did was Dharma, is the Dharma forever. The recitation of Ramayana verses or listening to the exposition of these verses must transform a person into an embodiment of Dharma. His every word, thought and deed must exemplify that ideal. Shraddha (steady faith) in Rama, Ramayana and oneself is essential for success. And for what end? To become good and help others to unfold their goodness.*

**—Baba**

*"On Sivaratri it is possible to get full control over the mind by contemplating on God. Hence it is considered as an auspicious night."*

## Install Rama Principle in Your Heart

*On enquiry, one will realise that charity, acts of sacrifice like Yajnas and Yagas, positions of honour, adherence to `truth, sacred rituals or even Sanathana Dharma for that matter pale in comparison with the principle of Love. (Telugu Poem)*

### *Embodiments of Love!*

There is none in this sacred land of Bharat who is not aware of the epic Ramayana. The Ramayana sets ideals for the individual, the family and the society at large. Since ancient times, thousands have heard the story of Rama. But not many have tried to put His teachings into practice. Man by birth is a human being but he is not making any effort to understand humanness. He is achieving progress in various fields but his mind is not getting transformed. What is the use of man's existence if the mind does not undergo transformation? He is changing his dresses, not his mind. He would do well if he changes his mind instead of changing his dresses. All the spiritual practices like meditation, penance will prove futile if there is no transformation of the mind. *Mano Moolam Idam Jagat* (the mind is the basis for the entire world). Man is not making any effort to understand what is most important on the path of spirituality.

### **Three Debts of Man**

Man is born with three types of debts debt to God, debt to sages and debt to parents. God is present in each and every cell of human body in the form of `Angeerasa' and it is He who protects and sustains human life. Man is therefore deeply indebted to God who vibrates in every limb of his body in the form of Divine energy. The only way man can clear his debt to God is by undertaking sacred actions and by working for the welfare of fellow human beings. That is why the path of service has been prescribed for man to clear his debt to God. Man should serve not with the feeling that he is doing favour to others, but with the understanding that he is repaying his debt to God. Every little act of service reduces a certain amount of your debt to God. You should not crave for positions of authority. You should realise that body has been given to you to serve others. A true servant is a true leader. You should sanctify your life by taking to the path of service and returning your debt to God.

The second debt that man has to repay is the debt to saints and sages. The ancient sages and seers knew the past, present and future of man. They knew the secrets of Dharma. They, therefore, prescribed various codes of conduct and spiritual paths for man so that he may find fulfillment in this life and hereafter. Man can repay his debt to the sages by following and practising their teachings in letter and spirit.

The third debt is the debt to one's parents. Parents take great pains in fostering and educating their children. Mother is the first teacher for man. The Vedas proclaim, "*Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava*" (revere the mother and father as God). In order to repay the debt to one's parents, one has to find a way so as not to be born again.

*When you are born from the mother's womb, there are no garlands of pearls and gold on your neck. There are no necklaces of gems and emeralds. But, definitely there is a heavy garland on*

*your neck - a garland made up of the consequences of your past deeds, be they good or bad. This is the garland given to you by God.*

(Telugu Poem)

Once you are born with this garland of Karma (action), you should lead your life in such a way that you are not born again. Man is born to repay these three types of debts, not for accumulating wealth and wasting his life in worldly enjoyments. People in the modern age claim themselves to be devotees of God, but their actions betray their claims.

### **Put Rama's Teachings into Practice**

Once upon a time, Buddha was traversing all over the country in order to propagate Truth. On reaching a particular village, Buddha felt tired and was not in a position to deliver his discourse. So, he told one of his chief disciples to address the congregation. Buddha went inside to take rest. As he could not get sleep, he was listening to what his disciple was saying. The disciple said, "O people, a person like Buddha was never born before and will never be born again in future. We are all very fortunate to be his contemporaries. So, make the best use of this golden opportunity." On hearing this, the congregation gave a thunderous applause. Buddha came out and asked his disciple, "Nityananda, how old are you?" Nityananda told that he was thirty-five years old. Buddha then asked, "Have you travelled far and wide?" Nityananda told that he had visited only a few cities. Then Buddha chided Nityananda saying, you have not seen much of the world. You are just thirty-five years old. With what authority can you say that a person like Buddha was not born before and will not be born again? Many noble souls were born and many more will be born in future. The world cannot exist if there are no noble souls in it."

There is no place in the world where God does not exist. You may not be able to see, but the whole universe is permeated with Divinity. All that you see, say and do is nothing but God's Will. None can describe the Divine principle. Today you are celebrating Sri Rama's birthday. No benefit accrues from celebrating the birthdays of noble personalities unless you put their teachings into practice. It is said, "*namo Vighrahan Dharma*" (Rama is the embodiment of Dharma). His speech was suffused with truth and His conduct radiated peace. Can there be a greater ideal than this? All names and forms are His and He is the embodiment of Truth, Awareness and Bliss.

The four brothers Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna are not ordinary mortals. Looking from the worldly point of view, Dasaratha was the king of Ayodhya. It is a mistake to think that Ayodhya is a city where Lord Rama was born. Once Ashok Singhal asked Me as to what was the correct birthplace of Lord Rama. I told him, Rama's birthplace was mother Kaushalya's womb. I also told him not to confine Rama to a physical form. Rama is all-pervasive. What is Ayodhya? It is an impregnable place where enemies cannot enter, i.e., Hridaya (spiritual heart). Dasaratha signifies the chariot of the human body consisting of ten senses. He has three wives, viz., Kaushalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra who represent Satwic, Rajasic and Tamasic qualities respectively. These three wives had four children, viz., Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna who represent the Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharvana Veda respectively. True devotion and surrender lies in understanding the inner significance of the Ramayana.

Kaushalya was highly virtuous and even minded. Likewise, Sumitra too was pure hearted, and as her name indicates she was a good friend of everybody (Sumitra). Her ideals were unparalleled. When Rama, before going to exile, went to seek mother Kaushalya's blessings, she lamented saying, "My son! I can't live without you for a moment." Then Sumitra consoled her, "Dear sister, God Himself has taken birth as your son Rama. He can never be farther from anybody. But, He has to act according to the time, place, cause and circumstances. Do not feel sad that He is going away from you. He will come back very soon.' What was Sumitra's advice to her son Lakshmana when he came to seek her blessings before going to the forest? She told him, "My son! Do not be under the impression that you are going to the forest. Ayodhya is wherever Rama is. Without Sita and Rama, this Ayodhya is but a forest. Sita is your mother, Rama is your father. Serve them with love. That is your primary duty." She advised her second son Shatrughna to serve Bharata.

### **Sage Vasishta Reveals a Divine Secret**

What is the reason for the intimate relationship that existed between Rama and Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna? Here you have to take into consideration an incident that happened prior to their birth. When the sweet pudding emerged from the sacrificial fire of *Putra-kameshti Yajna* (Yajna for begetting children) performed by Dasaratha, sage Vasishta told him to distribute the same to his three wives. Scholars have distorted the truth by saying that the pudding was distributed in different proportions. Dasaratha treated all his wives alike, he had no partiality towards any of them. He divided the pudding into three equal parts and distributed to each of them. He told them to have a ceremonial bath before partaking of the pudding. Kaushalya and Kaikeyi were overjoyed. They kept their share of pudding at a safe place and went inside to have a ceremonial bath. But Sumitra was not all that happy. She felt, "Since Kaushalya is the first wife of Dasaratha, the son born to her has every chance of becoming the crown prince. Even Kaikeyi's son may occupy the throne as Dasaratha had given word to her father. But the son born to me stands no chance of becoming the crown prince." Thinking thus, she completed her bath. As there were no fans or hair dryers in those days, she went to the terrace, kept the cup containing the pudding by her side and started drying her hair in the sun. Suddenly from somewhere an eagle swooped down and took away the cup containing the pudding. Sumitra was taken aback. She was not really sad for losing the pudding, but was afraid that her husband Dasaratha might reprimand her for her carelessness. She approached Kaushalya and Kaikeyi and explained to them her plight. They loved Sumitra as Sumitra loved them. So, they took pity on Sumitra and gave a part of their share to her. Out of the part of the pudding given by Kaushalya, Lakshmana was born to Sumitra, whereas Shatrughna was born out of the share of the pudding given by Kaikeyi. Hence, Lakshmana, born of Kaushalya's share, was deeply attached to Rama and Shatrughna, born of the share of Kaikeyi, was deeply attached to Bharata.

Sumitra's two children, Lakshmana and Shatrughna, started crying as soon as they were born while Rama, the son of Kaushalya, and Bharata, the son of Kaikeyi, had blissful smiles on their faces in their cradles. The children of Sumitra puzzled everybody by their incessant crying. Sumitra tried various means to make them stop crying but it was of no avail. Emperor Dasaratha consulted several physicians to cure the strange malady of Sumitra's children, but nothing worked. Mother Sumitra then called sage Vasishta as a last resort to solve her problem. The eminent sage meditated for some time and said: "Oh mother, you need not administer any



medicine to alleviate your children's suffering. All you have to do is to keep Lakshmana by the side of Rama, and Shatrughna in the cradle of Bharata." Sumitra did accordingly and found that Lakshmana and Shatrughna stopped crying immediately. The two children who had refused to drink milk till then started taking food and playing in the cradle. Surprised at this sudden change of their behaviour, Sumitra prayed to the sage to explain the cause of this behaviour. Then Vasishtha explained to her, "O mother, Lakshmana and Shatrughna are the Amshas (parts) of Rama and Bharata respectively. So, when they were united, they became blissful."

### **Put an End to Your Suffering by Uniting with God**

Lord Krishna declared in the Bhagavad Gita, "*Mamaivamsho Jeevaloke Jeevabhuta Sanathana*" (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). You are undergoing pain and suffering because you are not uniting yourself with God. You will be rid of all the troubles once you become one with God. Lakshmana's suffering ended once he joined the company of Rama. He spent his entire life in the service of Rama. Likewise, Shatrughna served Bharata all his life. It is next to impossible to find brothers like Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna in the present-day world. We find many twins bearing the names Rama and Lakshmana, but they fight with each other over property and even go to Supreme Court to settle their dispute. But Rama and Lakshmana of Ramayana attained supreme stage through unity. When Lakshmana fainted in the battlefield, Rama threw aside His bow and arrow, placed Lakshmana's head on His lap and lamented, "Lakshmana, in this vast world I may be able to get a mother like Kaushalya or a wife like Sita, but I will never be able to get a brother like you." Such was the supreme love of Rama for Lakshmana. This is a great ideal for mankind. There is no point in going through the sacred text of Ramayana unless you put into the practice the ideals it demonstrates. You should try to understand the purpose behind each of Rama's actions and how He performed them. There is much more to Ramayana than Rama going to the forest, annihilating Ravana and ultimately being crowned as the king of Ayodhya. He incarnated in order to establish Dharma. What is Dharma? It is that which delights your heart. When man takes to unrighteous means, his conscience will not approve of his acts since every man is the embodiment of Dharma. He is born to practise Dharma. But as he gets carried away by worldly pleasures, he is afflicted with misery.

At the time of going to the forest, Rama tried his best to dissuade Sita from following Him. He told her that it would be extremely difficult for her to live in the forest in the midst of cruel demons and wild animals. But Sita was not an ordinary woman. She was the daughter of Mother Earth. She had all the powers of Mother Earth. She insisted that as His wife, it was her Dharma to follow Him under all circumstances. She said, "You are the one who protects the entire universe, can You not take care of me?" Rama wanted her to stay back in Ayodhya and look after her ageing parents. Then she replied, "I am told that You insisted on Your mother Kaushalya remaining here and serving her husband. But in my case, you have reversed your stance to say that it is my foremost duty to serve the parents-in-law and not the husband. For the wife, the husband is god. It is true not in the case of Your mother alone; it is applicable to all women without exception." She continued thus, "You are Ramachandra, the moon and I am Sita, the moonlight. Is it possible for the moonlight to be in Ayodhya when the moon is in the forest? Moon and moonlight cannot be separated from each other. Come what may, I am coming with you to the forest." With such courage and conviction, she was ready to withstand any hardship for the sake of being with Rama. You should put such great ideals into practice in your life.

### **Hanuman's Supreme Devotion**

What happened to Sumitra's share of pudding that was carried away by the eagle? It was left on a mountain, which Anjani Devi consumed. As a result, Hanuman was born to her. This is the reason for the intimate relationship that existed between Hanuman and the four brothers, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna. Very few are aware of it.

When Sita and Rama returned to Ayodhya, people's joy knew no bounds. At the time of His coronation, Rama distributed gifts to all those who had helped Him in the war, except to Hanuman. On being questioned by Sita, Rama said that Hanuman did not care for any gift and that He had no worthy gift to be given to Hanuman. Then Sita took out her pearl necklace and presented it to Hanuman. He plucked each pearl, put it between his teeth, placed it near his ear and with a face indicating disappointment threw it away in disgust. Surprised at this behaviour of Hanuman, Sita said, "Hanuman, this is a precious pearl necklace given to me by my father, but you are throwing away the pearls without realising their value. You don't seem to have given up your monkey tricks." Then Hanuman replied, "O mother, I examined each pearl in order to see whether it had the sacred name of Rama in it. I could not find it in any pearl. Without the name of Rama, they are but stones and pebbles. So, I cast them on the ground. Even the hair of mine is filled with the name of Rama." Saying so, he plucked out a hair from his hand and put it near Sita's ear. She could hear Rama's name emanating from it. Then she started praising Hanuman thus: *"You are the crest jewel among the monkeys who fulfilled Rama's mission. You are the great hero who found the whereabouts of a Sita and destroyed the city of Lanka."* (Telugu Poem) It can be said that but for Hanuman, Ramayana would not have existed. He is the embodiment of devotion and surrender. Hanuman is present wherever Rama's name is chanted. Rama's name and form are not different. Hanuman experienced this unity. That is the principle of non-dualism. You call yourselves devotees of Rama and go through the sacred text of Ramayana repeatedly, but is there any transformation in your mind? Not at all. This is not true or real devotion, but only a show of devotion. Rama does not approve of pomp and show. He gives importance only to practice. Bliss can be attained only through practice. Try to understand the principle of Rama correctly.

Bhagavan then sang the Bhajan, "Rama, Rama, Rama Sita..." and the devotees ecstatically followed it in chorus.

Bhagavan added that in the story of the Ramayana you must understand the principle of Sita. Before going to the forest, Rama distributed His wealth to the poor. Sita also followed Rama and distributed clothes and jewels. Thus, she attained Rama by leaving her worldly desires. However, in the forest she desired to have the golden deer, and as a result became distant from Him. Today's man likewise is bound by desire. When you give up desire, you can attain God. *Na Karmana Na Prajaya Dhanena Thyagenaikena Amrutathwa Manasu* (immortality can be attained only through sacrifice, neither wealth nor progeny nor good deeds can confer it). You can attain Rama only through sacrifice. From the Ramayana, you have to learn the lesson of sacrifice. You have to install the principle of Rama in your heart. Rama practised Sathya and Dharma all his life. You should firmly adhere to these principles in your life.

Bhagavan then sang the Bhajan, "Rama Kodanda Rama..."and exhorted the devotees to fill their hearts with the essence of the story of the Ramayana and keep chanting the name of Rama at all times to attain permanent bliss. Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manas Kaho..."

—From Bhagavan's Sri Ramanavami Sandesh on 12th April in Sai Ramesh Hall, Brindavan

AVATAR VANI

BHAGAVAN'S YUGADI SANDESH

### Sanctify Your Life by Sacred Actions

*A person having ego and pomp will not be loved by anybody; not even by his own wife and children. Only when he gives up these evil qualities, he will be loved by one and all. Anger is one of the main causes of man's misery. A man filled with anger can never experience happiness in his life; he will always be drowned in misery. So long as one is filled with desires, one can never attain peace. A greedy man can never be happy. Therefore, ego, anger, desire and greed are mainly responsible for man's misery, anxiety and restlessness.*

(Sanskrit Verse)

When the New Year begins, people start speculating as to what the New Year has in store for them and also for the world at large. The future of the world depends on the actions of man, not on the New Year. Actions depend on the mind, the mind on thoughts. As are the thoughts, so is the action. Hence, for the world to be peaceful and prosperous, man should foster truthful thoughts. The world will enjoy safety, security and peace only through men of truthful thoughts.

### Actions Determine Your Future

*Karmanubandheeni Manushya Loke* (human society is bound by action). It is action alone that is responsible for creation, sustenance and dissolution. Merit and sin, pleasure and pain are contained in action. But man, unable to understand this truth, acts according to his own whims and fancies. He performs evil deeds willfully and feels happy while doing so without realising the truth that consequently he will have to face mountains of misery. Man is bound to face the consequences of his actions, be they good or bad, small or big. It is most essential for man to understand this truth and act accordingly. Before undertaking any action, enquire whether it is good or bad, right or wrong. Do not act in haste. Haste makes waste, waste makes worry. So, do not be in a hurry. The Upanishads taught *Thasmai Namaha Karmane*, meaning one should offer salutations to the Karma (action) before undertaking it. One should pay one's respects to the presiding deity of action so that one may perform only sacred actions, which are beneficial to one and all. This is one of the major principles of the culture of Bharat. For example, we find dancers paying their obeisance to the anklets before they tie them and start their performance. Likewise, various instrumentalists offer their salutations to the respective instruments they play at the beginning of their programme. The sum and substance of this is that man should pay his respects to the work he undertakes and do it in such a manner as to sanctify his life.

Since ancient times, the culture of Bharat has attached utmost importance to the principle of action. It is rather easy to do evil deeds, but it is very difficult to face their consequences. Do not be under the false impression that you can perform an evil deed and be done with it; remember that you will have to face the consequences for the rest of your life. Having been born as a human being and having known Divinity, sanctify your life by undertaking sacred actions. Life devoid of sacred actions is useless. A true human being is one who adheres to Sathya (truth), Dharma (righteousness) and Tyaga (sacrifice). Truth is Neeti (morality), righteousness is Reeti (procedure) and sacrifice leads to Khyati (fame). All these three constitute Manava Jati (human race). Today man has strayed away from this three-fold path of truth, righteousness and sacrifice. As a result, humanness is on the decline. It makes one really wonder whether a true human being exists in this world at all! It is said, "The proper study of mankind is man." A true human being is one who has harmony in thought, word and deed. *Manasyekam Vachasyekam Karmanyekam Mahatmanam Manasyanyath Vachasyanyath Karmanyanyath Duratmanam* (Those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in complete harmony are noble ones; those who lack harmony of these are wicked). Man does not want to be called wicked, but he lacks harmony in his thoughts, words and deeds.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Human life is the noblest and most sacred. It is divine in nature. Where is God? You are God yourself. *Deho Devalaya Proktho, Jeevo Deva Sanathana* (body is the temple and the indweller is God). Understanding this truth is the goal of all spiritual pursuits. In this temple of body, God is installed in the form of Atma.

This principle of Atma is described as *Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathana Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam* (attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, aware, free and embodiment of sacredness). Having such divine principle in you, why do you go in search of Divinity elsewhere? There are 6000 million temples in this world, which means every human body is a temple of God. Divine consciousness exists in each and every human body. The Vedas declare: *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings). But, unfortunately, people are unable to realise this truth. You should have the firm conviction that every human body is the temple of God. Do not hate or hurt anybody. One who has realised the truth that God exists in all is a true devotee. How can you call yourself a devotee if you hurt others' feelings and indulge in criticism and slander? Criticising others amounts to criticising God Himself. Human body, being the temple of God, is highly sacred. It has to be respected and revered. One should not get carried away by the outward looks of the 'temple'. Direct your vision on God (the Atma) installed in the 'temple' and experience the bliss derived therefrom. Make proper use of the body by undertaking sacred actions.

### **Emperor Ashoka and the King of Magadha**

The life of Emperor Ashoka bears ample testimony to this. He used to undertake various social welfare activities with the money collected from his subordinate kings in the form of taxes. Without collecting taxes, it is very difficult to run a kingdom. The same thing holds good even today. How can the government provide comforts to the people unless it collects taxes from them? It is foolishness to expect the government not to levy taxes and yet expect it to provide comforts and conveniences. Once on his birthday, all the subordinate kings of Emperor Ashoka, except the ruler of Magadha, brought taxes and filled his treasury. On being questioned by the

emperor, the king of Magadha replied, "O king, this year my kingdom suffered from severe drought. Consequently, people did not have water to drink and they were afflicted with terrible diseases. I had to spend a lot of money to rehabilitate the drought-affected people. I made arrangements for the supply of drinking water. I also got many hospitals constructed to treat the sick. Not merely that I established schools at various places for the education of children. All my revenue was spent on these social welfare activities. As a result, I am not able to pay tax this time." Emperor Ashoka was immensely pleased with his reply. He made him sit by his side and said, "O king of Magadha, your ideal is worth emulating. Pure drinking water, good medical and educational facilities are very essential for the welfare of citizens. So, in this regard, I will extend to you all my cooperation." Ashoka was one of truth and sacrifice. His name, A-soka, itself implies that he was one without Soka (grief). The king of Magadha won his heart by his public welfare schemes.

Education is related to the head, medical care is related to the heart and water is very essential for the sustenance of life. He is a noble one who provides all these facilities to the people. **S u c h** a person is equal to God Himself. This was the ideal taught by Emperor Ashoka. He earned name and fame by his spirit of sacrifice and sacred actions.

Good actions are very important. One who undertakes sacred actions excels everyone. That is why I often exhort you to undertake service activities. You are born and brought up in the society. You owe your education, wealth and happiness to the society. Then is it not your bounden duty to show gratitude to the society? You can express your gratitude to the society by undertaking service activities. Serve one and all because God is present in everybody.

### **Follow the Heart, not the Head**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Do not waste time speculating over what would happen in this New Year. If your actions are good, your future is bound to be good. The future of the nation depends on your actions. God is a witness. He neither protects you nor punishes you. In fact, it is you who protect or punish yourself. Whatever you utter, be it good or bad, God always blesses you saying, "So shall it be." God blesses everybody. Each one is responsible for his pleasure or pain.

Today the world is in utter chaos. Humanness is becoming extinct. Human being does not merely mean the physical body consisting of five senses. True human being is one who makes proper use of the five senses without giving scope to evil qualities like lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and jealousy. One should not fall prey to them. Foster the noble qualities that originate from the heart.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Wherefrom do the evil qualities like lust, greed, etc., arise? They arise out of the food you consume. So, keep control over your food and habits. Take only Satwic food. Then you will get only sacred thoughts. God has gifted you with many noble qualities. They are innate in you. But you are neglecting them. Reading, writing, taking up jobs, earning money, building mansions, etc., originate from the head and are related to the Pravritti Marga (outward path). These are all acquired by you with some effort. But you do not need to make any special effort to acquire the

noble qualities like compassion, love, forbearance, etc., as they are latent in you. Head is the source of bad thoughts and heart of noble thoughts.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Follow the heart, do not follow the head, lest you should be caught up in the mire of worldly life. Head puts you in many dangers. If you follow the head, you may lose your head itself? Turn your vision inward. Follow the heart, which is the source of all the noble qualities like truth, righteousness, peace, love and nonviolence. Here we find many bulbs glowing in this Hall. How? Current flows through the wire, enters the bulb and gives us light. Likewise, when the current of truth flows through the wire of righteousness and enters the bulb of peace, we get the light of love. *(cheers)* A true human being is the perfect combination of these five human values. These are, in fact, the very life principle of man, without which he is just like a corpse. But, unfortunately, these are missing in the modern man.

### **Use Your Body for Sacred Purposes**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

It is said, '*Janthoonaam Narajanma Durlabham*' (human birth is the rarest among all living beings). You cannot buy or borrow it. Human life is God's gift. Make proper use of it by rendering service to the society. Do not indulge in slander. Slander is the worst of sins. We find some people indulging in slander always. It is nothing but the result of their innumerable sins acquired over past lives. *Hasthasya Bhushanam Danam, Sathyam Kanthasya Bhushanam, Srotrasya Bhushanam Sastram* (charity is the true ornament of the hand, truth is the true necklace of the neck and listening to the sacred texts is the true ornament of the ears). Hands have been given to undertake sacred actions, not to fight with others. Why has God given you ears? You listen to vain gossip with rapt attention, but when it comes to listening to the glories of the Lord, your ears get clogged. Recognise the truth that ears are meant to listen to the glories of the Lord. Why has God given you eyes? You are never tired of watching cinema shows one after the other, but your eyes find it difficult to concentrate on the Divine form even for a minute. Today we find even small children wearing spectacles because most of the time their eyes are glued to TV sets. Consequently, they have cataract even before attaining the middle age. My body is 75 years old, but there is no trace of cataract. *(Cheers)* My vision is perfect because I have never seen cinema till this day. You should try to see the reality, i.e., Divinity and not the unreality of the cinema and the world.

*Do not take pride in your youth and physical beauty. Very soon you are going to become a decrepit old man. Your body will become weak, legs will stagger, vision will get blurred, hair will turn grey and there will be wrinkles all over your face. Then children will laugh at you and make fun of you calling you an old monkey. Realise the truth that you are no better than a leather puppet. (Telugu Poem)*

### **Bliss is My Form**

Modern youth are highly egoistic. They get carried away by their senses and are enamoured of physical beauty. Consequently, they forget humanness, misuse the body wasting a lot of energy. Is it for this purpose that God has given the human body? No. Serve the society, help the poor, and the needy. When you involve yourself in such sacred activities, your body will remain young for any length of time. Many foreigners often ask Me, "Swami, how come you look so young

and energetic even at the age of 75?" I tell them that the three P's in Me are responsible for this. They are purity, patience and perseverance. If you develop these three virtues, you too will remain young and energetic always.

Beauty is not related to the body, it originates from character and purity. Do not indulge in slander and jealousy. Do not censure anybody. If you find a mistake in others, try to correct them lovingly. Spirituality does not mean giving up everything and leading the life of a recluse. One should always be cheerful and have good thoughts. Never put on a 'castor-oil' face. Let your face be lit with smile always. Happiness is union with God. One who is in constant communion with God will always be cheerful and blissful. One should be cheerful even in the face of adversities. Believe it or not, no one has as many problems as I have. When one's desires are fulfilled, one praises Me or else blames Me. But praise and blame are confined to one's own lips. They do not affect Me. I am always blissful. The letters SSS stand for Sri Sathya Sai. Everything is contained in this name.

*Sai says 'Yes' to those who say yes and 'No' to those who say no. Yes and no correspond to your mouth, but for Sai everything is 'Yes, Yes, Yes'.*

(Telugu Poem)

If one voices one's criticism loudly, it will be lost in thin air; if one criticises within, it goes to one's own self. Either way it does not reach Me. I am always filled with bliss. Bliss is My form. I am beyond pleasure and pain. Only those who have body attachment are elated by pleasure or depressed by pain. But I am absolutely not conscious of the body. You are always conscious of the world and are related to it. That which is related to the Atma is consciousness. I am Absolute Consciousness. In fact, all are the embodiments of consciousness; so, all are divine. Once you realise this truth, you will never take to wrong path.

### **Bookish Knowledge is not enough**

*Students!*

You are young and this is your golden age. Do not misuse it. There are three important things which one has to bear in mind. The first, once it comes will not go away, i.e., wisdom. The second, once it goes will not come back, i.e., ignorance and the third, it neither comes nor goes, i.e., the principle of Brahman. Your faith also should be such that it should be steady, it should not come and go. But the faith of modern students keeps vacillating. Such faith is no faith at all.

*Students!*

What you are trying to acquire is only bookish knowledge, which constitutes only one-fourth of the total knowledge. The remaining three parts of the knowledge consist of putting all that you study into practice. You will become a truly educated person and a complete human being only when your bookish knowledge is transformed into practical knowledge. Practical knowledge is your true strength. Try to acquire it. Only then will your education find fulfillment and you will earn a good name.

In this New Year, develop new and sacred feelings and make everybody happy. Do not strive for money; strive for love. Once you develop love, there will be no scope for evil qualities like anger, jealousy, etc. If your thoughts and actions are good, your future is bound to be good. Then

the whole country, nay, the whole world will prosper. Pray for the peace and prosperity of the entire world. Peace can be attained only through practice of human values.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi*"

—From Bhagavan's Yugadi Sandesh in Sai Ramesh Hall, Brindavan on 5th April 2000

AVATAR VANI

DASARA DISCOURSES - III

## Essence of Bharatiya Culture

*O Man, why do you go hither and thither in search of God when He is present in your Hridaya itself? Serve all and be a recipient of His love. There is no greater Sadhana or bliss than this.*  
(Telugu Poem)

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Human life is the most sacred in the entire creation of God. *Daivam Manusha Rupena* (God incarnates in the form of human being). Humanness is pure, unsullied and beyond attributes. Such a sacred human life is being polluted with evil desires, and thus man is defiling human birth itself. *Janthunam Narajanma Durlabham* (human birth is the rarest among all living beings). God created everything in the universe, right from the microcosm to macrocosm. Then, why did He give utmost importance to human life alone? Only man possesses certain capabilities which no other living being possesses.

### Man should Practise Human Values

Why has God created man? One should delve into the inner significance of this. Man's life will find fulfillment only when he understands the purpose of human birth. Human body is given to serve God, not to meet selfish needs. *Sareeramadyam Khalu Dharma Sadhanam* (human body is the first means to perform Dharma). God has given human body to man to serve his fellowmen, but he has forgotten his primary duty of service to others.

*In childhood, man is immersed in playing and frolicking. In youth, he succumbs to the temptations of sensual pleasures. In middle age, he spends all his time in amassing wealth. In old age, instead of contemplating on God, he leads a life of discontentment. Unable to give up his bad habits, not having the strength and interest to follow the path of devotion, he gets caught up in the quagmire of action and reaction and ultimately meets his doom.*

(Telugu Poem)

This is not the way one should fritter away human life, which God has given with great love and hope. Under all circumstances, one should be ready to utilise the slightest opportunity that comes one's way to serve others. Human life should be suffused with idealism. This is the uniqueness of human life. But today's man is leading the life of a beast in a jungle. He does not think even for a moment what the purpose, origin or goal of human life is.



*O man, think for a while whether you have really attained happiness by forgetting God and struggling incessantly from dawn to dusk to eke out a livelihood!*

(Telugu Poem)

For whose sake are you living? Understand this and you will know the purpose of life. Why does God incarnate? He incarnates to lead man to the right path.

In 1899, a hundred years ago, gold was in its purest form. It was totally pure and shining. Gradually, it has lost its value and shine on account of its association with different metals like silver, copper and brass. Likewise, man at the time of his birth is absolutely pure and sacred, but as he grows up, he loses his human values due to his excessive desires and association with worldly relations. The sacredness of human birth is so great that even gods would salute him. Today human values are becoming extinct. Man should continue to be as pure as he was at the time of his birth. (At this juncture, Swami materialised a gold coin.) It was minted in the year 1899. Exactly 100 years have passed since then. Just as gold has lost its purity over a period of time, man too has lost human values. Excessive desires are responsible for the decline of human values in man.

Having been born as a human being, you should practise human values. This morning, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh met Swami. He too was of the opinion that the country was facing troubles due to the absence of human values. He declared that he would propagate the Sathya Sai Human Values in the society. (*Cheers*) Everyone should practise human values and lead an ideal life whether he/she is a student, a devotee or a spiritual aspirant.

The Bhagavad Gita declares that the universe is like a gigantic tree, which has its origin in the seed of Divinity. Different nations are like its branches. All the living creatures are like the fruit of this tree. So, in every species and every creature, there is the seed of Divinity. In this context, Lord Krishna said, *Sarva Bhutanam Beejam Tadaham* (I am That which is the seed of all living beings). Nations may vary, names and forms may be different, but the life principle is one. Thus, all beings have emerged from the seed of God. The same has been declared by Lord Krishna again in this verse of the Gita: *Mamaivamso Jeevaloke Jeevabhuta Sanathana* (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). But man is not prepared to believe this truth. Today man believes in reports of events occurring in distant lands like America and Japan though he does not see them, but he does not believe in the Vedic declaration that God comes down in human form. This is mainly due to the fact that he is not treading along the path of truth. God will be pleased only when man finds fulfillment in life by practising human values. Man is Born to Serve his Fellowmen Body is meant for practising Dharma. But man forgets Dharma and indulges in selfish acts. None can escape the consequences of his actions.

*"O man, do not build castles in the air. It is not possible to sow a particular type of seed and reap a different fruit. You reap what you sow. At the time of birth, you are born with an invisible garland made up of the consequences of your past actions, be they good or bad."*

(Telugu Poem)

It is the duty of each and every individual to participate in social service activities, whether one is in a village or a city. The epic Ramayana lays stress on the need for service at the individual,

family and society levels. Do not be satisfied by serving your parents only. That forms part of your duty. Your life will be sanctified only when you serve the society. When you obey God's command and serve Him, not only will your life, but that of your parents and relations also be redeemed. These are the relations you have developed here. Before your birth, where is the child-parent relationship? Before marriage, where is the question of wife and husband relationship? All the worldly relations are like passing clouds, only God is with you always. You will be wasting your life if you do not dedicate yourselves to the service of mankind. Body is given to serve the Creator and the creation. Service to man is service to God. Render service to the society with the feeling that God is present in one and all. Your education will be useless if it is not utilised for the service of the society. O man, why do you feel proud of your education, which will be a total waste if you do not worship God and serve the society? Worldly education cannot confer divine grace unless it is utilised for the welfare of the society. The education you have received from the society must be dedicated to the service of the society.

True service has twin benefits—it makes you happy and gives happiness to others. What is the use of education if it does not confer joy on others and bliss on you? Service is the main principle of Sathya Sai Organisation. Remember the truth that you are born to serve the society. Make no distinctions whatsoever in rendering service. Serve your parents, brothers, friends, relatives and even beggars alike. Divine grace will flow in abundance only when you serve with the spirit of humility and equality. Service is the easiest path to attain divine grace.

Offer service and receive the love of God. Love and service are like two wings by which man can soar to higher levels of consciousness. If you have the spirit of love and service, divine grace will follow you like a shadow wherever you may be—in a forest or in the sky, in a village or a city, in a river or atop a mountain cliff. God has no limitations.

### **Mother and Motherland are Greater than Heaven**

God has created man in His own image, so that his conduct should be in accordance with His command. You should not cause harm to anyone, for God exists in all. Always speak with a smile on your lips. You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Understand the pristine purity of Bharat. Himachala (the Himalayan Mountains) forms its northern boundary. 'Hima' is that which is pure, 'Achala' is that which is steady. So, Himachala stands for purity and steadiness. Bharat's three rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati symbolise the paths of action, devotion and wisdom respectively. The sacred scriptures like the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads make the hearts of Bharatiyas blossom with their teachings. 'Bha' means light and effulgence. So, Bharat is the country which radiates light to the rest of the world. The sacredness of Bharat is not found elsewhere. (*Cheers*) Words are inadequate to describe the glory of Bharat and the fortune of those who are born in this sacred land. Having been born as Bharatiyas, there can be no greater misfortune than this if you lament that you are poor, weak and helpless. You need not feel sorry if you have not acquired education or money. Be proud that you are born in this sacred land. To be called a Bharatiya is in itself a great qualification. The country is your mother, and its culture, your father. You will become orphans if you forsake your motherland and its culture. He is a living corpse who does not have love for his motherland and

its culture. Rama declared, *Janani Janma Bhoomishcha Swargadapi Gareeyasi* (mother and motherland are greater than even heaven).

### **Uphold the Culture of Bharat**

*Students!*

What is the use of acquiring various degrees like B.A. and MBA if you are not proud of your country? You are a Bharatiya; that is your greatest qualification. (*Cheers*) Live up to it. It is rather surprising to Me that people, having been born in this sacred land, crave to go abroad in search of material gains. The education you have got from your motherland should be used in the service of the motherland.

Once there was a Vedic scholar who was hesitant to send his son abroad fearing that he might forsake Indian culture and take to Western ways. On the insistence of his son, he reluctantly agreed to send him abroad only on the condition that he would not give up the study of the Vedas and would contemplate on God always. But the son failed to keep up his word. Once he reached abroad, he forgot all the Vedas he had studied and got immersed in Western culture. He would always lie to his father, whenever called, saying that he was thinking of God and studying the Vedas.

Four years passed. The son did not return home. On several occasions the father asked him to come back, but the son did not pay heed to his word. The father, as a last resort, sent a telegram that his mother was seriously ill. Immediately, the son rushed home and was received at the airport by his father, who took him to the temple of a goddess en route home, to offer their obeisance to the goddess. The father told the son to offer salutations to the goddess, but the son did not know what it meant as he had forgotten Indian culture altogether. As they entered the temple, the son greeted the goddess, "Hello madam, how are you?" On hearing this, the father became furious and reprimanded him. This is how people change their lifestyle once they go abroad. They forget the sacred Bharatiya culture.

For the past 60 years, overseas devotees have been requesting Swami to come to their countries. On many occasions, they brought special planes. Even now they have chalked out many programmes for Swami to go round the world. But I have no such intentions. What is not in Bharat is not anywhere else. Therefore, Swami has decided not to go to any foreign land. (*Cheers*) This should be your determination also. Instead of seeing a foreign land, try to have the vision of your true nature. Stop questioning others, 'Who are you'? Ask yourself, 'Who am I'? You will certainly get the right answer. Instead of struggling for money, you should struggle to develop the qualities of your heart. If you have love in your heart, you can get everything in life. Today many students are going abroad to amass wealth. Even some of the parents are encouraging their children to go abroad. I do not say that you should not go abroad. If you want to see foreign lands, you can always do so. But wherever you are, you should uphold the great Indian culture. When the culture is ruined, your life is also ruined. You should crave for divine love, not for money.

*Embodiments of Divine Love! Students!*

Participate in service activities and give joy to your fellowmen. This is the essence of Indian culture. Keeping this sacred culture in view, serve your motherland. Do not entertain petty

desires. If you lead the sacred life of a true Bharatiya, you can redeem not only your life, but also the lives of your family members. Fill your heart with pure feelings and try to experience the ultimate bliss, Brahmananda.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi...*"

—*From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall at Prasanthi Nilayam on 16th October 1999*

### **Cultivate Human Values**

*How can you make human values grow? A seed grows into a plant when embedded in fertile soil. Will it germinate in a tin? No. Similarly, the seed of human values can grow only in the, soil of spirituality. Without this fertile and enduring soil of spirituality, humanness cannot be strengthened. The heart filled with love for God is like nutritious soil. Sow your seed in such a heart.*

—**Baba**

### **Complexity of Parenting**

—*Rita Bruce*

*The atomic weapon for the twentieth century is multimedia. We all feared that the atomic bomb would destroy our physical world, but as we sleep it has been sophisticated shrewdly to destroy the spiritual home of our families, their hearts.*

The American population is presently moving from married couples raising children to single parents. The experts are telling us that stress is one of the number one causes. If you are a young adult and contemplating marriage, it is important for you to think of the life-long commitment that you will need to make to your marriage partner. If you have decided to have children, it will require you to assume an even larger responsibility. Swami says, "Today, there is the tendency of separation, not coming together. Life is full of troubles and challenges. We should not separate ourselves because of these difficulties, but rather face them together. Now when trouble comes, even if it is small, it separates us. That should not be the tendency; one should give one's heart to another." (Golden Age, p.140)

### **Parenting Blues**

In our complex society, the job of raising children is definitely a two-parent job. Even with two parents, the task of attending to the children, because of our lifestyle, is just enormous. We actually need a word that is stronger than stress to express adequately our present-day lifestyle.

Many households have two parents working, while they have an additional full-time occupation of being the householders. In terms of their capacity, it is an overload. Let's take a moment to examine the tasks of a householder. There is the entire maintenance of the household. This includes all the physical repairs, cleaning, purchasing and usage of supplies. If we analyse, the workload of just feeding a family daily is a huge time-consuming task. All this is quite stressful,

when you work all day and more so when you try to fit the household work into the evening and week-end hours.

### **Epidemic of Waste**

In addition, we are snagged into the peer pressure scene of keeping up with the "Jones". If the neighbours or friends take their children to sport camps, music, karate, dance classes, friends overnight, out for pizza, celebrating birthdays yearly with a grand party of friends in an entertaining and unusual manner, etc., not only are we pressured into entertaining the children in the same manner as peers, but the pressure of purchasing the same name brand clothes and toys that the child thinks is essential for them to be accepted by their peers. The inner character is not emphasised; only the outer wrappings or should I say "trappings". Sai says, "Man is never satisfied. He is greedy for more and more wealth. What man has to earn is Divine Grace. No matter what he earns, he cannot take a single pie with him when he leaves the body." (S.S. May 99, p.135) When you stop and examine all the time spent in these endeavours, plus the time spent in earning the income to pay for these items, is it any wonder that our lifestyle is "purchase driven"? Our Beloved Swami says, "Do not waste time, money or energy." He also says, "Children must learn thrift and the proper use of money. When children learn how to use money with care and without waste, the future will be bright." (SSS 7, p.146) There seems to be a "universal epidemic of waste". This abuse factor is contributing to 'big time' stress in our family life, because we work more to purchase what is not essential for living.

### **Attending to the Needs of the Child**

Education of the child is part of the responsibility of parenting. From the onset of early childhood development, parents teach their child what is needed to perform well in society. We are speaking purely about academics in this paragraph. Swami tells us that parents are the child's first teachers. They teach the child about the basic knowledge that is needed for living in society. This is religion, language, writing, reading, mathematics and manners. When the child enters the educational system, the teachers teach the child, but the parents' job is not finished. The hours of follow-up homework, and school activities is another time and energy burn-up on parents. The education of a child is from conception through university. This is usually a 22-year investment. If there are additional children, then this is extended. Baba tells us, "The primary responsibility of parents is to mould the character of their children."

Then there are emotional needs of our children. This translates as a security blanket, a blanket of love. They need security in their physical world, as food, shelter, warmth, cleanliness, etc. This also includes having mother and father living together, sharing responsibilities and loving one another. The relationship between husband and wife is the first and fundamental relationship that the child learns. If the parents have a care-giving, thoughtful, loving relationship, the child receives the emotional security that is needed to insure good, happy and content feelings about his self and the world.

We all seek emotional balance. When there are emotional ups and downs that are personality driven, the child experiences emotional turmoil. It can create uncertainty. A child needs to know that he is accepted, loved, and all his needs for survival are provided. This consistency of parental behaviour ensures emotional stability for the children. The love we have within ourselves is transferred to our children through the unity of our thoughts, words and actions.

Sai says, "The tendency (among the affluent families) is to entrust the child from birth to a nurse. The child does not get the love of the mother. The child has no knowledge of what a mother means." (S.S. June 1996, p.157)

### **The Multimedia Bomb**

The household of yesteryear was mostly composed of parental influence. Today, our children are being developed by worldly influence, not just ours. There is no sacredness, no guardian of morals for our children's formidable years. They are laid bare to every conceivable horror, evil, and violent behaviour that most adults cannot emotionally evaluate. Our world of massive multimedia is endangering the morality of all our cultures.

Sai says, "From the moment television made its appearance, the mind of man has been polluted. Before the advent of TV, men's minds were not so much polluted. Acts of violence were not so rampant previously." (S.S. Jan.-Feb. 1996)

To give you an example, I tell you a story, which Mary (not the actual name) a 12-year-old girl and her mother told me recently. There were four girls in her class, who wrote a letter of immoral proportions about a girl. The mother said that the letter was filled with so much trash that she would not even repeat what was said about the girl. The letter that trashed the young girl was e-mailed to forty of the girl's classmates! The Principal of the school made the four girls apologise to the girl whose character was assassinated, but how do you repair this horrible image when it was sent to 40 other students? This child can be scarred for life.

The atomic weapon for the twentieth century is *multimedia*. We all feared that the atomic bomb would destroy our physical world, but as we sleep it has been sophisticated shrewdly to destroy the spiritual home of our families, their hearts. Swami says, "The spoken word, though it may be short and may appear to be only a sound, it has in it the power of the atom bomb. Words can confer strength; they can drain it off. Words can gain friends; they can turn them into enemies, they can elevate or lower the individual." (Sathya Sai Speaks 11, p.143)

How much time it takes to listen to your children's problems, help them to understand and emotionally deal with the hurts that are hurled at them through the abuse of words today? The parents say that the children are verbally cruel to each other. They make fun and put down others. Criticism of parents is commonplace. "You must examine every story or account that you place before the children from the point of view of individual faith and social harmony. Does this lead the child to a better, more harmonious, more God-oriented life? That is the question you should ask yourself," says Baba (Sathya Sai Speaks 9, p.1)

### **Good Parenting is a Long-term Investment**

Spiritual development of your child is the supreme task that God has assigned to parents. Spirituality is woven like a fine gold cloth into the fabric of the physical, mental and emotional development of a child.

Parents are troubled by the lack of influence they have over their children's behaviour. They worry countless hours and when the children reach teenage, the parents' arms are not long enough to hold them within the boundaries that have prior to it been visible. They no longer

know what is happening in the life of their teenage and college-age children. Sai says, "Discipline must start from the early years." (S.S. July 1996, p.175) Isn't this the key? Discipline is the tool that inculcates the values that Bhagavan teaches us are important for our children. Words have no impact unless they are supplemented by corrective measures to ensure that our children's behaviour is exemplary. Many working parents don't want to discipline their children because they have little time to spend with them and want to be friends with them. Friendship is good. But our first role is that of a parent. It is not easy. But time spent in moulding the character is the best thing you can do to your child. If the child does not learn to obey the inner voice of his conscience through our teaching example, then we will have reason to worry because we have not prepared him for the struggle of good over evil. Parenting is indeed even more complex than I have described in this article. But it is a long-term investment.

### **Festivals Galore At Brindavan**

This year, Bhagavan Baba came to Brindavan, Whitefield on 9th March 2000. As Bhagavan did not go to Kodaikanal this summer, the devotees of Bangalore had the rare good fortune of Bhagavan's showers of grace during the entire summer. With the arrival of Bhagavan, Brindavan became vibrant with activity. During Bhagavan's stay here, a number of festivals were celebrated, beginning with the holy and joyous festival of Ugadi.

### **Joyous Ugadi Celebrations**

Ugadi was celebrated at Brindavan on 5th April 2000. Sai Ramesh Hall, the venue of the festival, was beautifully decorated with buntings, festoons, cloth hangings and flowers. Bhagavan came in a procession to Sai Ramesh Hall at 7.35 a.m. preceded by Veda chanting students. As soon as Bhagavan entered the Hall, the devotees' hearts were filled with divine bliss. Strains of sweet Nadaswaram music in the Hall heralded the auspicious programme of this holy day. Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan Baba, two speakers made brief speeches. They were introduced to the audience by Sri Ruchir Desai, a faculty member of Brindavan Campus.

The first speaker, Sri B. N. Narasimha Murthy, Warden, Brindavan Campus, congratulated the devotees who had gathered there to receive Bhagavan's blessings on Ugadi day for their great good fortune and said, whether it was Ugadi, Tamil New Year, Chinese New Year or Christian New Year, all belonged to Bhagavan. "For Bhagavan, no land is foreign land and no person is a foreigner, because Bhagavan has Himself declared that the whole universe is His mansion," said Sri Narasimha Murthy. As an answer to the question how Bhagavan was always blissful even though He carried the burden of running the whole universe, Sri Narasimha Murthy quoted the verses from Kathopanishad and said, Bhagavan has distributed His work to different gods, but He looks after the welfare, progress and spiritual evolution of His devotees Himself.

With regard to the celebration of the New Year, the second speaker, Prof. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor of SSSIHL said that not only the New Year but every minute and second of man's life was auspicious because man had to utilise every moment of his life to sanctify his life. Recalling a question which Bhagavan Himself put to a gathering of students and devotees

about the purpose of man's life, Prof. Venkataraman lamented that modern man had forgotten the goal of his life, which in the words of Bhagavan was "to go back to the source, i.e., God."

After these two brief speeches, Bhagavan showered the nectar of His Divine Discourse (full text of the Discourse has been given elsewhere). After the conclusion of Bhagavan's Discourse, the morning programme came to a close at 9.15 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan. Prasadam was distributed to all the assembled devotees at the end of the function.

The evening programme started with Bhajans at 3.40 p.m. in the usual manner. But Bhagavan in His infinite mercy and grace blessed the devotees with His Divine darshan by going even at the farthest end of the Pandal instead of sitting in the chair. More devotional fervour was added to the function when the famous playback singer Ms. P. Susheela and party gave delightful programme of devotional music after the evening Bhajans. The joyous celebration of the holy festival of Ugadi came to happy conclusion at 5.15 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

### **A Unique Mass Upanayanam Function**

In a solemn ceremony held in Sai Ramesh Hall in Brindavan in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba about 200 boys were initiated into the Brahmacharya stage of life on 9th April 2000. The function of mass Upanayanam was conducted with the help of Karnataka State Unit of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation who enrolled the Vatus (young aspirants) from Bangalore and other parts of Karnataka State.

The grand procession of Vatus and their parents started from Sri Sathya Sai Gokulam on the morning of 9<sup>th</sup> April. The Vatus in their traditional dress of a Brahmachari holding the holy Brahmadanda and the parents also in traditional dress made a grand spectacle. Nadaswaram troupe led the procession. They were followed by Veda chanting students and folk dancers with their drums, cymbals and gongs. As the procession entered the portals of Sai Ramesh Hall at 7.20 a.m., the organisers promptly conducted the Vatus and their parents to their designated seats in the Sai Ramesh Hall. Bhagavan came to the Sai Ramesh Hall ten minutes before the entry of the procession and supervised the seating arrangements.

The proceedings of the Upanayanam ceremony started at 7.40 a.m. At the outset, the Chief Priest paid his obeisance to Bhagavan for His Divine Presence and welcomed all to this grand and holy function. He then gave necessary instructions to the Vatus and their parents regarding the rituals to be performed. After the performance of usual rituals, Sacred Threads blessed by Bhagavan were distributed to the Vatus with instructions how to wear it. When the Vatus put on the Sacred Thread on their shoulders amidst the chanting of Vedic Mantras, Nadaswaram players played loud notes. This happy occasion spread waves of bliss not only in the hearts of the Vatus and their parents, but also the devotees who had come to witness this grand ceremony. Bhagavan went round in the rows of Vatus and their parents sprinkling Akshata (sacred rice) on them. After this, the fathers of the Vatus gave them Brahmopadesha and Gayatri Mantra by whispering them into their ears and the Vatus repeated these Mantras after their fathers. In the end, the Vatus performed the sacred ritual of Bhiksha (begging for alms). With this, the sacred ceremony of Upanayanam came to a happy conclusion.



After the conclusion of the Upanayanam ceremony, Bhagavan gave His Divine Message to the newly initiated Brahmacharins exhorting them to chant the Gayatri Mantra with full dedication. After the Divine Discourse and Arati to Bhagavan, a grand feast was given to the Vatus and their parents in Sri Sathya Sai Gokulam. Grand Sri Ramanavami Celebrations "Today you are celebrating Sri Rama's birthday. No benefit accrues from celebrating the birthdays of noble personalities unless you put their teachings into practice," said Bhagavan Baba while giving His Divine Discourse before a huge concourse of devotees in Sai Ramesh Hall, Brindavan on 12th April 2000 on the holy occasion of Sri Ramanavami. Sai Ramesh Hall, the venue of the celebration, was decorated tastefully, and the stage was particularly looking beautiful with fascinating flower designs. Beautiful cut-outs of scenes from the life of Lord Rama reflected the significance of the auspicious day. One of the main teachings of Lord Rama, namely, "Mother and Motherland are Greater than Heaven," was highlighted in a banner put up at the top of the central Mandap of the Hall.

Bhagavan Baba came to the Sai Ramesh Hall at 7.30 a.m. in a procession led by Veda chanting students. Unlike other festival days, Bhagavan in His infinite mercy gave the bliss of His Darshan to the devotees by going in the rows of devotees while the Bhajan singing continued. The morning session came to a conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan and distribution of Prasadam.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan came to the Sai Ramesh Hall at 3.40 p.m. led by the Veda chanting students and Nadaswaram troupe. For a few minutes, Bhagavan listened to the Bhajans and then signalled the commencement of the programme. The programme started with Veda chanting by Institute students. Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, two speakers made brief speeches. They were introduced to the audience by Sri B. N. Narasimha Murthy, Warden, Brindavan Campus.

Sri Arvind, a senior student of the Institute, was the first speaker of the afternoon. Taking a cue from the large cut-outs depicting "namo Vigrahan Dharma" and "Sai Ramo Vigrahan Prema," the speaker explained the virtues of the two Avatars. He also spoke about the symbolism of the Ramayana and pointed out the inner significance of this great epic.

The second speaker, Sri Ruchir Desai, a faculty member of the Brindavan Campus, narrated the dream of a devotee of Thyagaraja in which the great saint instructed him to go to Venkatagiri to have the Darshan of the Lord on a particular day. Bhagavan Baba granted fulfillment to the devotee when He visited Venkatagiri on the day indicated in his dream and gave him the Divine Bliss of His Darshan. After these brief speeches, Bhagavan blessed the devotees with His nectarine discourse (published elsewhere in this issue). The grand function of Sri Ramanavami thus came to a close after Arati to Bhagavan.

### **Tamil New Year Day Function**

After Sri Ramanavami on 12<sup>th</sup> April, the second successive celebration in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba was the Tamil New year falling on the 13<sup>th</sup> April. Sweet notes of Nadaswaram music and chanting of Veda Mantras by Institute students heralded the arrival of Bhagavan Baba in Sai Ramesh Hall at 7.35 a.m. Bhagavan spent the next 20 minutes with devotees before resuming the seat on the stage. All this time, Bhajan singing by Tamil Nadu devotees continued with great devotional fervour. After the conclusion of the Bhajans at 8.00 a.m., the devotees were

enthralled by a grand programme of devotional songs by the well known singer Srividya, daughter of the renowned musician late Smt. M. L. Vasantha Kumari. The morning programme came to a close with Mangalarati to Bhagavan and distribution of Prasadam.

The afternoon programme started at 3.45 p.m. with the arrival of Bhagavan in the Sai Ramesh Hall. Bhajans in the afternoon were led by the Sundaram Bhajan Group from Chennai. At 4.00 p.m., Bhagavan indicated to the Institute students to commence Veda chanting, the traditional and auspicious method of starting the programme. After Veda chanting, Sri T. G. Krishnamurthy, State President of Tamil Nadu Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, spoke about the service activities being undertaken by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation all over the world and introduced the two speakers of the afternoon.

The first speaker, Sri Buhari, Seva Dal Convener of Tamil Nadu State, said that the infinite love of Bhagavan Baba was the biggest motivating force behind all service activities of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. Emphasising the role of five human values—Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa—in the transformation of mankind, Sri Buhari said that these values could make Sai workers as worthy instruments in Divine hands. He felt that devotees should be egoless and hollow like a flute so as to receive Divine grace in ample measure.

The second speaker, Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, recalled the words of Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa to Swami Vivekananda that he could also have the Darshan of the goddess if he had the same intensity of yearning for the goddess. He emphasised the need for earnestness in devotion and true yearning for Bhagavan who has incarnated to sanctify our lives. Sri Srinivasan also recounted his experiences how world leaders and heads of several countries were eager to have the Darshan and blessings of Bhagavan.

After these brief speeches, Bhagavan Baba blessed the devotees with His Divine Discourse. The Tamil New Year programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan and distribution of Prasadam.

### **Kerala New Year—Vishu**

The festival of Vishu, the Kerala New Year, was celebrated with gaiety at Brindavan on 14th April 2000. This was the third consecutive function in the last three days at Brindavan in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. On the day of Vishu, Sai Ramesh Hall bore a special festive look as the Hall was decorated in the traditional Kerala style with buntings of tender coconut leaves.

The morning Bhajan started at 7.05 a.m. As soon as Swami came inside Sai Ramesh Hall, Nadaswaram music started to welcome Bhagavan. Bhagavan showered divine bliss by His Darshan to all the assembled devotees. Bhajan continued till 7.45 a.m. At the conclusion of the Bhajan, Mangalarati was offered to Bhagavan. The morning programme came to a close with the distribution of Prasadam.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan came to Sai Ramesh Hall at 3.25 p.m. and sat in the chair at the decorated dais. The Kerala devotees led the Bhajans, which continued from 3.25 to 3.50 p.m. After the Bhajans, the programme started with Veda chanting by Institute students. Thereafter,

the State President of Kerala Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Sri T. N. Natarajan, introduced the two speakers of the afternoon after seeking blessings of Bhagavan.

The first speaker of the afternoon was Justice Sridharan, Chief Justice (Retd.), Gujarat. Justice Sridharan narrated two incidents from his life to show how the omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent Lord, Bhagavan Baba helped His devotees in several critical situations.

The second speaker was Prof. E. Mukundan, one of the State Coordinators of Kerala State Sathya Sai Organisation and a member of its publication division. Prof. Mukundan stated that the joy of Bhagavan's Darshan was incomparable and that Bhagavan had incarnated to give joy and bliss to everyone.

Bhagavan then gave His Discourse at 4.25 p.m. With Mangalarati to Bhagavan, the programme of Vishu came to a close.

### **Sixteenth Anniversary of Trayee Brindavan**

Trayee Brindavan is the aesthetically designed lotus-shaped residence of Bhagavan Baba in Whitefield. This beautiful circular building has 18 lotus shaped awnings in its first storey while the inner circular hall has a balcony with nine lotuses. The architecture of this building carries a deep inner meaning as every act of Bhagavan has some hidden message for the mankind.

Trayee, in fact, is the composite term for the three principal Vedas—Rig, Yajur and Sama, which are the foundation of ancient wisdom (Sanathana Dharma). Trayee also represents the three aspects of God, namely, Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being, Awareness and Bliss), of which Bhagavan Baba is the living embodiment. The Trinity of Brahma (Creator), Vishnu (Preserver) and Siva (Destroyer) are the three aspects of the same Divinity that is walking today in our midst as Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Everybody can experience His Divinity if he develops three qualities of purity, patience and perseverance. The three powers of the Lord—omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience—are experienced and reported by His innumerable devotees. Thus, Trayee is the most appropriate name of the divine abode of Trigunateeta (who transcends the three qualities of Satwa, Rajas and Tamas). Bhagavan is also called Trikaladarshi (seer of past, present and future). The three paths of Karma, Bhakti and Jnana lead only to the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan. But the only thing required is Trikarana Shuddhi (purity in thought, word and deed). We can well estimate how meaningful this word Trayee is. In fact, the entire secret of spirituality lies hidden in it. Moreover, it is situated in the Whitefield signifying that the white (pure) field of the heart is the residence of the Lord.

On the auspicious day of its anniversary on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2000, Bhagavan came from His Divine Abode of Trayee at 7.30 a.m. to grant the nectar of His Divine Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan (vision, touch and speech) to the assembled devotees. After going round the rows of devotees to shower the bliss of His Darshan, Bhagavan came to the stage and sat in the chair. Soon after this, Arati was offered to Bhagavan. The programme of Narayana Seva (feeding of the poor) began at 8.45 a.m. when Bhagavan Himself served food and distributed clothes to a few 'Narayanas'. After this, the volunteers distributed food and clothes to the poor and the needy.

In the evening, Bhagavan came to Sai Ramesh Hall at 3.50 p.m. A Sitar recital by the renowned musician Sri Niladri Kumar and his party from Mumbai had been arranged to mark the occasion. The young artiste gave a thrilling display of Hindustani classical music on the Sitar. The concert came to an end at 4.25 p.m. Bhagavan then walked up the stage and materialised a diamond ring for Sri Niladri Kumar. Swami also posed for group photographs with the artistes. The day's programme came to a fulfilling end with the offering of Mangalarati to Bhagavan at 4.30 p.m.

### **Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati**

*The Vedas say, Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati (you become whatever you think). When you constantly think of others' faults, that evil enters you. How? When you have a camera in your hand, to whichever direction you turn and click, that is the picture you will capture. Your body is like a camera. Your vision is the lens, your heart is the film and your thoughts form the scene. Your intellect is the shutter. With your intellect, absorb only those impressions into your heart which are spiritual. If your thinking is bad, it gets imprinted on your heart. So, do not entertain bad thoughts.*

**- Baba**

## **Easwaramma: The Embodiment of Love and Sacrifice**

*Rama's divinity blossomed under Kaushalya's loving care,  
Lava and Kusa could become powerful and famous due to their noble and virtuous mother Sita,  
The love and care of Jijabai made Shivaji a great warrior,  
Fostered with the love of his mother Putlibai,  
Gandhi became a Mahatma.  
For all the beings in the world there is nobody greater than mother who gives them birth and  
brings them up with love and care.*

(Telugu Poem)

### *Embodiments of Love!*

The goal of man's life is neither happiness nor sorrow. Man can find fulfillment in life only if he can trace the origin of happiness and sorrow. In fact, man attains wisdom from sorrow and not out of happiness. The sages and seers of yore had to face great hardships and troubles before they could set great ideals to the rest of the world. That is why their teachings have left an indelible impression on the hearts of the Bharatiyas. Both the individual and the society can achieve progress and prosperity only after undergoing many trials and tribulations. Man has to face not only difficulties, but censure and criticism also. But noble souls will never care for difficulties or criticism. Welfare of the society is their main objective in life.

### **Adhere to Truth and Righteousness**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

You should welcome sorrow just as you welcome happiness. You will attain equanimity of mind only when you treat happiness and sorrow alike. In the human body, head is considered sacred whereas feet are not considered sacred. When somebody comes to your house, is it possible to welcome only the head and ask the feet to get out? When you welcome the head, you welcome the feet also. Likewise, when you welcome happiness, you welcome sorrow too.

The boys and girls of today are the future citizens of the country. They have to uphold the glory and good name of Bharat by their ideal conduct. They should cultivate humility and reverence towards parents and elders.

Consider the whole world as one family and love everyone. If you want to buy anything, you have to pay its price. Likewise, you can attain the human values, viz., truth, righteousness, peace and non-violence only when you possess the wealth of love. There is no wealth greater than love. One can conquer the entire world if one has love. Today human values are on the decline because man lacks the wealth of love. One can be called a human being only when one possesses human values. The culture of Bharat exhorts, *Sathyam Vada Dharmam Chara* (speak the truth and practise righteousness).

Sathya and Dharma are very essential for humanness to blossom. One should adhere to Sathya and Dharma under all circumstances. King Harishchandra sacrificed all his wealth and kingdom for the sake of upholding truth. He did not budge from the path of truth even when he had to sell his wife and son and he himself had to become the caretaker of a burial ground.

*The whole creation has emerged from truth and ultimately merges into truth. There is no place in the world where truth does not exist. Understand this principle of pure and unsullied truth.*

(Telugu Poem)

That is why it is said, Truth is God. Truth and righteousness are like the two eyes of man. One who does not adhere to truth and righteousness is verily blind. All the sacred scriptures, the Upanishads and the Vedas are based on these twin principles. The creation itself cannot exist without these two. Love is the undercurrent of both truth and righteousness. Love is the true wealth of man, be he a pauper or a millionaire. Just as a mother does not make any distinction and showers her love on all her children equally irrespective of their social status, so also God showers His love on all equally. God is the embodiment of love and is present in everyone in the form of love. You can attain Him only through love.

### **Cultivate Spirit of Sacrifice like Vidyasagar**

The Vedas have referred to this principle of love as the Atma. Truth, love and righteousness are all synonyms of the Atma. The Vedas call man Atmavan as he is endowed with the principle of the Atma. The Atma is also referred to as Brahma. Who is Brahma? The scriptures describe Him as one who emerged from the lotus that originated from Vishnu's navel. That Brahma is the 'I' (Aham) in everyone. So, this principle of Brahma is present in one and all, be he a theist or an atheist. Soham ('I am Brahma') Mantra clearly demonstrates this truth. This process of inhalation and exhalation has its origin in the navel of man. It repeats itself 21,600 times a day reminding man of his divinity. Without paying heed to the teaching of the inner voice, man goes through various scriptures and the Vedas in search of divinity. First and foremost, listen to the inner voice, which is your true preceptor and God. The Vedas describe God as Amogha, as He is changeless, eternal and beyond description. God is also called Siddha as He is ever ready to fulfill the wishes of His devotees. Though God is always ready to answer the prayers of His devotees, He does not do so when their prayers are not wholehearted. When the prayers are sincere and intense, God will certainly answer them. He does not have any desires except the welfare of His devotees. To be a recipient of His grace, one has to develop sacred thoughts.

Who is man? One endowed with the mind is man. The mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts. You will be called a true human being only when your thoughts are based on truth. God is the common property of man, be he a son who brings disrepute to the family as did the sons of Dhritarashtra?"

Why does water scarcity arise? When there is a decline in Sathya and Dharma, the level of water in the earth also declines. As compassion and love have diminished in human heart, water has become scarce. This problem is not due to divine fury as some people may imagine. It is because of the rise in evil qualities in man. If people strictly adhere to the path of truth and righteousness, there will never be water scarcity. People blame bad times for their misfortunes. But there is nothing wrong with time. There are adequate rains and perennial rivers. But they are merging into the ocean without being harnessed.

There is no dearth of scholars, scientists, educated and rich people in India, but the country is in no way benefited by them. They are afflicted with evil qualities of jealousy and hatred and fight with each other. There is no unity among them. One may be rich or well educated, but all the wealth and education will be useless if one lacks virtues. Man should cultivate the spirit of sacrifice. The Vedas say only sacrifice confers immortality. There are thousands of rich people in India, but they are not satisfied with the wealth they have. They crave to amass more and more. They ruin their lives because of their greed for money. They leave their mortal coil after depositing their wealth in foreign banks. Instead, why can't they use the same for the welfare of their countrymen? Why can't they involve themselves in social service activities? They mouth sweet words, but act contrary to what they say. They make any number of promises, but translate few of them into action. Why should they make promises at all, if they are not going to fulfill them? They are heroes in giving lectures on the spirit of sacrifice and zeros in practice. Money is meant for sacrifice. This was the ideal demonstrated by Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar. He was an orator par excellence. Yet he was very humble. People thronged in large numbers to listen to his speeches. (Here Swami narrated the incident from Vidyasagar's life when he taught the lesson of humility to an I.C.S officer by carrying his suitcase in the absence of a coolie. The officer was put to shame when he discovered that the person who carried his suitcase was none other than Vidyasagar whose speech he had come to listen.)

Easwaramma, the Mother of Easwara Today we are celebrating Easwaramma Day. Who is Easwaramma? She is the mother of Easwara. (*Cheers*) This was not the name given to her by her parents. But after her marriage, Kondama Raju (Swami's grandfather), being one of wisdom and blessed with a vision of the future, started calling her Easwaramma (mother of Easwara). She was christened as Namagiramma at the time of her birth. But Kondama Raju told her that Easwaramma was the most appropriate name for her, as he knew that she was going to become the mother of Easwara. Easwaramma was born in such a poor family that she did not even have proper food to eat. All that she had to eat was Ragi Sankati (gruel prepared from a coarse grain). Even I too eat Ragi Sankati only. Many people in Karnataka eat Ragi Sankati. I like it very much. I do not relish rice, Kurma (curry), etc. Ragi Sankati with groundnut chutney is My favourite food. Both Ragi and groundnut are available in our village. When I come here from Puttaparthi, I bring Ragi flour with Me. Even when I go to Kodaikanal, I tell the boys to bring Ragi flour for Me. Easwaramma was illiterate. When I see the egoistic attitude, perverted mentality and ostentatious behaviour of the present-day educated people, I feel it was better that Easwaramma did not have any schooling.

When I was seven and half years old, I used to teach Pandhari Bhajans to small children in our village. Easwaramma and Subbamma used to feel ecstatic watching Me sing Pandhari Bhajans and dance to their rhythm. Sometimes, her husband Pedda Venkama Raju would give Easwaramma some money for the household expenditure. Once two annas were remaining with her out of this money. One could buy two bags of puffed rice for two annas those days. So, Easwaramma bought two bags of puffed rice with the two annas and distributed to the children. She always used to give away whatever she had with her. She was the embodiment of sacrifice. She used to talk lovingly to all those who came to her. When devotees would feel sad that Swami was ignoring them, she would console them saying, "Whatever Swami does is for your own good."

When I was being taken to Uravakonda for further education, all those children whom I used to teach many good things in the evening felt very dejected. At the time of leaving, ten of those children came to Me and offered one Bottu (three paise) each as Guru Dakshina (an offering of gratitude to the teacher). When I gave this money to Easwaramma, she was moved to tears. She held My hand and exclaimed, "What a spirit of sacrifice at such a tender age!" Till she breathed her last, she kept those coins with her.

Initially, I was staying in Subbamma's house. But when the number of devotees increased, a new Mandir was constructed. One day Easwaramma came in when I was having My food. When others tried to follow her, she told them not to come. She held both My hands and pleaded, "Swami, there is no hospital in our village. Consequently, when the children become sick, mothers are forced to carry them to Bukkapatnam. I am unable to see their suffering. My children and others' children are one and the same for me. So, kindly construct at least a small hospital in our village." I promised her that I would fulfill her wish and accordingly I built a big hospital, which was inaugurated by the then Central Minister, Bejawada Gopala Reddy. Easwaramma's joy knew no bounds. The whole day she did not feel the need for food and water as she felt highly; contented and overjoyed. She caught hold of My hands and expressed her happiness as her wish was fulfilled in a, big way. I told her, "Be happy." After, some time, she approached Swami again and wanted a school to be built in the village. As desired by her, I got a school constructed. Initially, it was a small one. Later on, I made it into a big building. She was very happy. She went to the school, kissed the children and showered her love on them. She was extremely happy and said, "In this Age of Kali, it is my good fortune to have a son like You who has done whatever I wished." Then she wanted the village to be provided with drinking water. I promised that it would be done. I found that bore wells were being dug to overcome water scarcity. But they become useless within a short period of time. So, I got a big well dug in the Old Mandir. *Yad Bhavm Tad Bhavati* (as is the feeling, so is the result). If the intention is good, the result also is bound to be good. As My intention was good, a copious spring of pure water gushed forth even at a depth of seven feet! At the back side of the Mandir, an entrance was provided for people to collect water. As you are aware, Swami has now provided drinking water from the river Tungabhadra to the entire district of Anantapur. (*Cheers*) Nearly 300 crore rupees were spent for this purpose. If the ministers, leaders and elders come together, they can undertake such public welfare schemes. But this requires concern about public welfare and spirit of sacrifice.

### **Follow the Culture of Bharat**

Before Easwaramma passed away, I fulfilled all her three wishes. There is no fee whatsoever in our institutions. Education is offered totally free to one and all. Our hospitals are also free. Nowadays doctors charge at least two to three lakhs for a heart operation. No doubt doctors need money. But there should be a certain limit. It is very unfortunate that the Bharatiyas are selling food, medical care and education. In fact, they are selling themselves! Bharat is a sacred land, a land of sacrifice and spirituality. It is being converted into a land of material pleasures. Spirit of sacrifice is very essential. Share whatever you have with others. A small amount of food is enough to satiate your hunger. Why crave for the entire river Ganga when a small glass of water is all that you need to quench your thirst? Do not harbour greed and other evil qualities lest you should suffer the same fate as that of Duryodhana and his tribe. Fill your heart with love.



*Students!*

Talk softly and sweetly. You cannot always oblige, but you can speak always obligingly. You are all young. Make efforts to mould your future in the proper way. Develop the spirit of love and sacrifice. Share your love with your friends. For example, if you have two pens, give one to someone who needs it. If your parents raise an objection to this act of charity, convince them by saying, "What is the use of having an extra pen? It is better that it is given to somebody who needs it." This will certainly make them happy. There is no wealth greater than love. Respect and revere your parents as God. Offer salutations to them when you wake up in the morning, before you go to school and when you go to bed at night. Never argue with them. Try to convince them with love. Remember that as you sow, so shall you reap. Whatever you do to your parents, your children will do the same to you. Never talk to them rudely. Be obedient.

Modern education system imparts only bookish knowledge. It is making the students highly ignorant. They study by rote and reproduce the same in the examination. The very next day if you ask them the same questions, there will be no reply! More than education, culture is important. Indian culture is very sacred. Put it into practice in your daily life. Talk with humility even when you are talking over telephone. Learn to respect elders and treat the guests with love and humility. No benefit accrues from merely acquiring bookish knowledge. Adhere to the culture of Bharat and live in love. Only then will divinity manifest in you.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...* "

—From Bhagavan's Easwaramma Day Discourse in Sai Ramesh Hall, Brindavan on 6th May, 2000

GURUDEV VANI

SUMMER COURSE INAUGURAL DISCOURSE

## **True Education Leads to Divinity**

*Education is the true beauty of man; it is his bountiful hidden treasure. Education is the means by which man can fulfill all his needs; it is also the source of his fame and prosperity. It is indeed the teacher of teachers. When one is away in a foreign land, education is one's relative and friend; it is one's supreme deity. In the courts of kings, education is honoured, not wealth. A man without education is verily an animal.*

(Sanskrit Verse)

*Students - Boys and Girls, Teachers and Patrons of Education!*

In the first instance, the students must realise the importance of education. Your parents feel very sad when you lag behind in studies. The pain and agony of Bharat Mata (Mother India) is thousand times more than that of your parents when she finds you lacking in moral and spiritual values. "*Janani Janma Bhoomischa Swargadapi Gareeyasi*" (mother and motherland are greater than even heaven). The students should resolve not to put mother and motherland to suffering with their conduct and behaviour.

### **Follow the Path of Ancient Sages**

What is meant by education? What sort of education is to be acquired by the students? What is the ideal that ensures the progress of mankind? Today the students are not making any effort to understand the sacredness and significance of true knowledge. The prestige of an individual does not depend on education alone. Along with education, culture is also very essential. One will be respected and honoured only when one possesses both education and culture. Modern education bestows only information; it does not lead to transformation. Culture alone can bring about transformation. Education without culture can be compared to a field without water supply, an electric wire without power supply, a house without light, a school without teacher and a temple without deity. Modern youth have lost their direction in the absence of cultural values.

In the past, many committees were set up to reform the system of education and many decisions were taken. But they have not been put into practice. It is most essential that modern students follow the ideals set by our ancients. The ancient sages and seers fostered noble thoughts, put them into practice, experienced the bliss derived therefrom and shared it with the society. Mere acquisition of bookish knowledge will not suffice. The students should make an effort to tread the path shown by the ancient sages and seers and acquire the sacred knowledge.

### **Heart is the Source of Atma Vidya**

The word 'education' is derived from the root word 'educare'. Education refers to acquiring information from outside while 'educare' means to bring out or to elicit that which is inside. Man should bring out the sacred qualities latent in his heart and put them into practice. The worldly education that you pursue and the jobs that you undertake are related to the head. They are subject to change. But the human values like compassion, forbearance, truth, which originate from the heart, are changeless. That which is filled with Daya (compassion) is Hridaya (heart). It is the source of bliss. Instead of recognising his innate potentialities, man is searching them in the external world. All that is seen in the external world is nothing but reflection of the inner being. So, man should direct his vision inward and experience bliss. Today man wastes all his time in the acquisition of secular knowledge. No doubt, secular knowledge is essential, but it should be based on the fundamental principle present within.

### **Utilise Education to Serve the Society**

Consider, for example, this silver tumbler. This may be changed into a spoon or plate. But silver cannot be changed, it remains the same. Just as tumbler, plate and spoon are made out of silver, all names and forms have originated from the fundamental principle. Likewise, heart is the source of fundamental knowledge, which is also known as Atma Vidya (knowledge of the Self). This knowledge is the power of wisdom. One should not be content with the acquisition of physical knowledge alone. There are millions in this world who are well-versed in physical education. But are they contributing in any measure to the welfare of the country? Not at all. They are immersed in selfishness and self-interest. "*Sarve Loka Hitharata*" (work for the welfare of the entire world). "*Sarve Jnanopasampanna*" (acquire all forms of knowledge). *Sarve Samudhita Gunaihi* (be a paragon of all virtues). These are the hallmarks of a truly 'educated' person. Man is a part and parcel of the society. His safety depends on the safety of the society. So, man should utilise his education for the benefit of the society and not for commercial purposes. He should work for the welfare and progress of the society. Today the field of education has become business-oriented, a bad business indeed! All that one has acquired from

the society must be dedicated to the society in turn. Education is acquired from the society. It is inhuman to use it for monetary gains. Spirit of sacrifice is true humanness. The Vedas teach, "*Na Karmana Na Prajaya Dhanena Thyagenaikena Amritatwamanasu*" (immortality can be attained only through sacrifice, neither wealth nor progeny nor good deeds can confer it).

The Purusha Sukta says, "*Sahasra Seersha Purusha Sahasraksha Sahasra Pad*" (God has thousands of heads, eyes and feet), which means all heads, eyes and feet are His. The same truth is echoed in the Vedic dictum, "*Ekoham Bahusyam*" (the One willed to manifest into many). Thus, the Vedas have been expounding the basic unity in a society of individuals. Only One exists, multiplicity is nothing but delusion. That is why the Vedas declare: *Saha Navavatu Saha Nau Bhunaktu Saha Veeryam Karavavahai Tejaswi Navadheethamastu Ma Vidvisavahai* (May the Lord protect and nourish us! May we grow in intelligence and valour working together! May we live in friendship without any conflict!)

*Students!*

Give up the false notion that education is meant for acquiring jobs and earning money. There is nothing great in earning money. Even beggars do it nowadays.

*Wealth is worshipped as God,  
Selfishness has become the basis of life,  
Pomp and show have become the fashion of the day,  
Ego is ruling supreme in everyone,  
Ambition makes men ignore righteousness.  
There is no humility and no regard for truth,  
Education is sought for earning money,  
Hypocrisy has become the order of the day.  
How can the sons of Bharat Mata hope to progress on the right path?  
Spiritual education is the urgent need of the hour to reform our children  
And turn them in the right direction. (Telugu Poem)*

### **Realise the Fundamental Unity of Mankind**

*Students!*

Give up selfishness and foster unity and love. Lead a life of sacrifice. Do not desire for comforts and conveniences. It is the mind that is responsible for desire and disgust, aspiration and frustration. *Manah Eva Manushyanam Karanam Bandhamokshayo* (mind is responsible for both bondage and liberation of man). Where is the mind? You think the mind is in you. But mind is everywhere. *Mano Moolam Idam Jagat* (mind is the basis for the entire world). Since the mind is all pervasive, it is present in you too. You find here many bulbs glowing, but the same current flows through all of them. Likewise, the same Atmic current is present in all human bodies. As the Governor, Rama Devi, pointed out (in her speech earlier) God is present in everyone. "*Isa Vasyam Idam Jagat*" (God pervades the entire world). "*Easwara Sarva Bhutanam*" (God is immanent in all beings). I have told you many times, "*Deho Devalaya Proktho Jeevo Deva Sanathana*" (body is the temple and the indwelling eternal Atma is God). All bodies are temples and each individual soul is God Himself. So, consider the entire world as one family and love one and all. Do not hate anybody. Hating others amounts to hating your own self. Love ever, hurt never. There is no divinity other than love. Love is God, live in love.

*Students!*

Eschew all evil qualities like hatred, anger, jealousy, greed, etc. You are punished by your own evil qualities and protected by your own love. Therefore, I say:

*Start the day with love,  
Spend the day with love,  
Fill the day with love,  
And end the day with love.  
This is the way to God.*

Education should transform man into one of compassion. It should not make him stone-hearted. Once a Britisher found Mahatma Gandhi in a very dejected mood and asked him for the reason. Gandhi replied, "The hardheartedness of the educated makes me feel sad." He was worried about the current education system, which was making man stone-hearted. True education is that which fosters compassion and love and ultimately leads man to divinity. Such education is the need of the hour.

*Can one be called educated just because one knows how to read and write?*

*Does mere acquisition of college degrees make one truly educated?*

*Can that which has no moral and spiritual values be called education at all?*

*If education is meant only for a living, don't we find the birds and the beasts living without any education?*

(Telugu Poem)

Education is for life, not for a living. Give up the false notion that Vidya (education) is meant for acquiring Udyoga (job). After all what is Udyoga? Whatever work you do is Udyoga. Help your parents in the household work. Even that is Udyoga. Do all your work with divine feelings. Then work will be transformed into worship. Work is worship. Duty is God. Modern students want to go abroad as soon as they acquire a degree. They do not realise that what is not found in India is not found anywhere else in the world. Bharat is Tyaga Bhumi (land of sacrifice), Yoga Bhumi (land of spirituality) and Karma Bhumi (land of action). But alas! People are trying to convert it into a Bhoga Bhumi (land of worldly pleasures). Understand that Bhoga leads to Roga (disease). Students should give up the idea of going abroad; they should serve their motherland. One who does not take pride in one's own motherland and mother tongue is no better than a living corpse. Bharat is the noblest and the most sacred country. Since ancient times, Bharat has been occupying the exalted position of a leader to the rest of the world in all fields of life. It is rather strange that Bharatiyas prefer foreign countries to their motherland, which has such great reputation. Have faith in your motherland and work for its welfare and progress.

*Students!*

No doubt, secular education is essential. But along with secular education, one should have moral and spiritual education too. One without moral and spiritual education will never attain peace. Worldly education is negative and spiritual education is positive. Just as positive and negative are essential for the electric current to flow, both worldly education and spiritual education are needed for progress in life. So, students should imbibe both. But modern students have no inclination towards spiritual education. As a result, their hearts are filled with negative

feelings. Secular knowledge without spiritual education is useless; it can be compared to a kite with its string snapped.

*Students!*

You are endowed with noble qualities. You are in the prime of youth and are full of purity. Make the best use of this. Never act in haste. Haste makes waste, waste makes worry. So, do not be in a hurry. The moment a thought arises in you, use your power of discrimination to enquire whether it is good or bad, right or wrong. Or else what is the use of being endowed with the power of discrimination? You should not resort to individual discrimination (that which is based on selfish gains). Make use of fundamental discrimination (that which is beneficial to the society at large), entertain noble thoughts and undertake sacred activities. Only then will your life find fulfillment.

The Governor gave good counsel to the students based on her rich experience. First of all, one should have faith in oneself. Self-confidence is the foundation of the mansion of life. The walls of self-satisfaction can stand firm only when the foundation of self-confidence is strong. On the walls of self-satisfaction lies the roof of self-sacrifice. Under the roof of self-sacrifice, you can lead the life of self-realisation. One cannot live in a house without roof. Roof cannot be laid without the walls. Walls cannot be raised without foundation. So, first of all, you must lay the foundation of self-confidence. What is Self? Self means Divinity.

Everyone uses the word 'I' while referring to himself or herself. Vedanta explains this principle of 'I' at length. It says, know thyself first. You say, "My hand, my leg, my eyes" etc., then who are you? When you say, "This is my handkerchief, my tumbler," handkerchief and tumbler are separate from you. Likewise, the body is separate from you, since you say, "This is my body." Then who are you? When you enquire on these lines, you will realise that you are the Atma. In this congregation, if I ask who is Ramaiah, someone may say 'I'. If I ask who is Rangaiah, someone else may say 'I'. Thus, we see that though names and forms vary, the principle of 'I' (Atma) is one and the same in everybody. So, if you understand the 'I' in you, you will be able to understand the entire creation because the same 'I' is present in everyone. This is the teaching of Vedanta. This is non-dualism. Vedanta teaches non-dualism. *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (truth is one, but scholars refer to it in different ways). When, on seeing someone in pain, you feel the urge to relieve it, when your heart melts at the misery of your fellow beings, then you are a true human being.

### **Never Use Education for Selfish Gains**

*Students!*

You want to study and acquire high academic qualifications. But during the course of all this, never forget the sacred culture of your motherland. The cornerstone of Bharatiya culture is the understanding of unity in diversity. Make use of your education to serve the society. Today, engineering and medical colleges have become business centres. The capitation fee for a medical seat runs into lakhs of rupees. Why do you want to spend so much money to acquire this type of education? If the same money is deposited in a bank, one can lead a comfortable life with the interest accrued therefrom. Never mind if you do not get a seat, but do not spend such huge sums to acquire a seat. If a student is questioned as to what he is doing, he says *Chaduvu-kontunnaanu* (a pun in Telugu, which means that he is buying education). Even to get a seat in primary school one has to pay thousands of rupees as donation. Right from the level of primary school to Ph.D.,

everything is linked with money. Since large sums of money are spent on acquiring a medical or an engineering seat, one resorts to unfair means to earn back the money. All this is very wrong; it is neither necessary to spend like that nor it is proper to reap back the investment by dubious means. Such people cannot be called educated in true sense. With whatever education you get, is it not possible to sustain yourself? God has given you two hands and one stomach. Are two hands not sufficient to fill one stomach? Are you born as a human being just to fill the stomach? Don't you find the birds and beasts also doing the same? Instead of worrying all the time about filling your stomach, fill your mind with pure and sacred thoughts.

Modern education has become artificial. True education is that which inculcates in the students the noble qualities like truth, devotion, discipline, compassion and sense of duty. What is the use of possessing high intelligence if one lacks virtues? Mere intelligence is not enough. Is not a fox also intelligent? Intelligence should be coupled with virtues.

As you are aware, in our institution, education is offered totally free, right from K. G. to P. G. What do we expect in return? We expect you to lead your lives as ideal citizens. You should function as models for others in whatever you do in life. It is not proper on your part to sell the education that you have received here totally free. So, do not make use of your education for commercial purposes. You know the system of education that our institution follows. Emphasis is laid on the all-round development of the students. One should not become a bookworm studying 24 hours a day. Time should be allocated to study, play, service and spiritual activities. Consider the example of Napoleon. He led a life of discipline. He had specific timings for food and sleep and any activity for that matter. He strictly adhered to them. Emulate him in this respect. Modern students become lazy once they return home from college. *Laziness is rust and dust; realisation is the best and rest.* So, abandon laziness and strive for realisation. Do not indulge in excessive talk. Excessive talk reduces the memory power and intelligence. Talk softly and sweetly. You cannot always oblige, but you can speak always obligingly. Respect elders, love your parents and serve them. Only then can you be called a truly educated one.

*Embodiments of Love!*

During the next fifteen days, you will be exposed to many more talks. Listen to all these talks carefully and ruminate on them as a cow chews the cud when you go back to your room. Practise whatever you learn. Then you will be happy and healthy. With this Swami brings His discourse to a close.

**—From Bhagavan's Inaugural Address at "Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality" on 15th May 2000 in the Brindavan Campus Auditorium of SSSIHL**

## **Easwaramma Day Celebrations at Brindavan**

Sai devotees all over the world celebrate 6<sup>th</sup> May of every year as Easwaramma Day in the memory of the Divine Mother Easwaramma who gave birth to the human form of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. On this sacred day, various cultural and spiritual programmes are organised in

which Bal Vikas children take part in a prominent way. This year, Bal Vikas children and members of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Karnataka State got the rare opportunity of celebrating this auspicious event at Brindavan in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Himself. On the morning of 6<sup>th</sup> May 2000, Sai Ramesh Hall was aesthetically decorated with banners, buntings and festoons. Beautiful flower designs decorated the dais, where a picture of Divine Mother Easwaramma was placed to enable the devotees to pay their tributes to her. Bhagavan came to the Hall at 7.30 a.m. and showered the bliss of His Darshan on the huge concourse of devotees assembled there to celebrate this function. Bhajans on this morning were sung exclusively by Bal Vikas children, who paid their homage to the Divine Mother Easwaramma through this excellent programme of vocal music, which continued up to 8.00 a.m. After the Bhajans, the next programme started with Veda chanting by Institute students. Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan Baba, Sri Shriram Parshuram, a student of Prasanthi Nilayam campus, made a brief speech narrating how Bhagavan showered the love of a thousand mothers on him and cured his mother of a serious illness. After this brief speech, Bhagavan Baba gave His nectarine discourse (printed separately). The morning programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan and distribution of Prasadam.

There were two programmes in the afternoon. The first programme was presented by the Bal Vikas Gurus, both ladies and gents, who enthralled the audience for about 15 minutes with melodious Bhajans in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. Another wonderful programme of the afternoon was the musical presentation made by three students, Sri P Sujith Kumar, Sri Tara Shankar and Sri N. Karthik who sent the audience into raptures by their Telugu, Hindi and Tamil songs. At the end of this programme, Bhagavan blessed the students by creating Vibhuti and blowing it on them and those who gave them instrumental support as a gesture of His Grace. With this, the grand function of Easwaramma Day came to a close at Brindavan. Arati was offered to Bhagavan at the conclusion of the programme.

### ***Mass Marriages at Brindavan***

#### **Divine Blessings on 75 Couples**

In a simple function held in Sai Ramesh Hall, Brindavan, 75 mass marriages were celebrated on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2000 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as a part of 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan. This well planned function was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Karnataka State. Most of the brides and bridegrooms hailed from rural areas of as many as ten districts of Karnataka State and belonged to economically weaker sections of the society.

Sai Ramesh Hall bore a festive look with various types of decorations on the day of the function. The Seva Dal volunteers had not only earmarked the places for all the 75 couples in the Hall, but they had also placed there the entire Puja material required for the ceremony. Lending auspiciousness to this were 75 plantain plants in pots placed at each of the 75 places, which made them appear as individual Kalyana Mandapams for all the couples.

At 6.50 a.m., Bhagavan entered the Hall and took a round of the Hall to bless the couples and their parents before sitting in the chair on a specially raised platform. The priests started the programme after paying their salutations to Bhagavan. The chief priest gave detailed instructions to the couples and their parents to perform all the rituals in the prescribed manner. After the

initial rituals, the brides and bridegrooms garlanded each other. Thereafter, Raksha Bandhan and Kanyadan (offering of the bride to the bridegroom by the bride's parents) were performed ceremoniously amidst the chanting of Veda Mantras. The Institute students sang Bhajans and recited Veda Mantras which filled the place with sacredness and auspiciousness, At 9.05 a.m., Bhagavan blessed Mangal Sutas, which were distributed to all the couples. Amidst the chanting of Veda Mantras, and to the accompaniment of Nadaswaram and drums, the bridegrooms tied the Mangal Sutra around the necks of their brides. Bhagavan then went round the Hall and sprinkled Akshata (sacred rice) on all the couples to shower His blessings on the newly-weds. The function came to a happy conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan and distribution of Prasadam.

Besides the wedding clothes and gold Mangal Sutra, several other useful gifts were given to the couples to start their life as householders. After the function, they along with their parents were given a wedding feast in Sri Sathya Sai Gokulam in a specially erected Pandal where food was served to them on 7h May also.

AVATAR VANI

BUDDHA POORNIMA SANDESH

### **Buddha and His Gospel of Love**

*As you grind the sandalwood hard, it gives out sweet fragrance; as you crush the sugarcane more, it yields more and more sweet juice; as you heat the gold more, its sheen and brightness increases. Likewise, when a virtuous person passes through the vicissitudes of life, his nobility shines with added brilliance.*

(Sanskrit Verse)

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

The more man pours out his love on others, the more is his inner bliss. Hence, man should expand his love for his fellowmen if he wants to increase his own inner bliss. This is the royal road to Divinity. The best way to love God is to love all and serve all. This is the secret revealed by Buddha. *Buddham Sharanam Gachchami; Sangham Sharanam Gachchami; Dharmam Sharanam Gachchami.* The first of these maxims tells you to purify your Buddhi (intellect) by good company. Secondly, you should use your intellect in the service of the society. This will lead you to the righteous path. You should not hurt any living being. Help ever, hurt never. Love, the Royal Road to God

The foremost teaching of Buddha is *Ahimsa Paramo Dharma* (non-violence is the supreme Dharma). None should be hurt or harmed by thought, word or deed. You may wonder whether such a conduct is practical. Yes, it is definitely possible. With firm resolve, it is possible to achieve any great task. Once you realise that there is only one God residing in everyone, you will never hurt or harm anybody. Then there is no need for you to fear anything.

Prahlada surrendered himself to Narayana. Hiranyakasipu was one who was deluded by names and forms. Names and forms are ever transient. Narayana is the eternal truth. The highest and noblest of all the names of God is 'Sat-Chit-Ananda'. 'Sat' means that which remains the same in



all the three periods of time—past, present and future. This changeless 'Sat' can be experienced only on the path of truth. 'Chit' is total awareness. You can have the vision of Poornaswarupa (Absolute Divinity) with the help of this total awareness. When both 'Sat' and 'Chit' are experienced, 'Ananda' (bliss) manifests itself in you. Every human being craves for Ananda. Where is this Ananda? It is within you. In fact, man is born in bliss, lives in bliss and merges into bliss. His entire being is a manifestation of bliss.

Human body is impermanent. Happiness derived from this impermanent body is also impermanent. It cannot give everlasting happiness. Buddha left his home in search of happiness that was permanent and everlasting.

Outside his house, he saw a dead body, a sick person and a decrepit old man. After seeing these miserable sights, he enquired how one could escape from the sorrow of this world and experience everlasting happiness. What is the cause of death? What is the cause of old age? What is the cause of disease? After a serious investigation, he found that the human body was like a water bubble, and it was the mind that caused diseases in the body. You should not be excessively concerned about the body. You should try to experience your innate divinity sooner than later because the body is temporary and cannot last long.

Man undertakes Yajnas (sacrifices) and Yagas (rituals) without realising the innate divinity of all beings. While travelling from place to place, Buddha once came across a group of people in a village performing a ritual sacrifice. This sacrifice required the killing of animals. Buddha protested. He told them that omnipresent God was the indweller of all living beings. Therefore, it was improper to sacrifice living beings. The person conducting the ritual said that the sacrificed animals would attain liberation. Buddha laughed at this and said, "You want to give liberation to these animals, which have not desired for it! Why don't you apply the same principle and give liberation to all these men who are yearning for it? I do not accept your argument that these sacrificial animals will attain liberation. Which Upanishad or the Veda recommends animal sacrifice? How can you think of anybody's liberation when an animal is killed? This is utter falsehood. This animal has not expressed any desire for liberation. But your mother, father, wife, children, relatives and many others desire liberation. Why don't you sacrifice them and fulfill their desire? In fact, why don't you start with yourself? Nobody can attain liberation by violence on living beings. This is the worst of the sins." In this manner, Buddha propagated the principle of Ahimsa. The love that is inherent in human beings is present in birds and beasts also. Share your love with birds and beasts and fellow beings. Absolute love is true liberation. For Moksha (liberation), you need not go anywhere. It is not there at some far off place. Pure love bestows liberation. Your endeavour should be to attain this holistic love.

People undertake various spiritual endeavours to attain Moksha. But these spiritual practices give only temporary satisfaction. The scriptures recommend nine-fold path of devotion. Sravanam (listening), Kirtanam (singing), Vishnusmaranam (contemplating on Vishnu), Padasevanam (serving the Lotus Feet), Archanam (worship), Vandanam (salutation), Dasyam (servitude), Sneham (friendship), Atmanivedanam (Self-surrender). Even this nine-fold path grants temporary joy. But love is most important in this path. In fact, love should be the undercurrent of all spiritual endeavours. True Bhakti is a spiritual practice based on love. Bhakti is not mere singing of Bhajans, reciting of sacred texts or performing sacred rituals. True Bhakti is the direct

flow of selfless and unconditional love from your heart to God. In all spiritual practices that man undertakes, there is a trace of selfishness somewhere. Offer your love to God devoid of the least trace of selfishness or desire. This is true devotion. Liberation cannot be attained by the study of texts. It cannot be attained by listening to the teachings of others. Moha Kshaya is Moksha (annihilation of desire is liberation).

### **God is One, Goal is One**

The spring of devotion should well up from within. You are the abode of supreme Ananda. Your heart is the source from which the supreme delight springs spontaneously. You should offer this spontaneous supreme love to the Lord. *Deho Devalaya Prokto Jeevo Deva Sanathana* (body is the temple and the indweller is God). You must love others as you love yourself. All bodies are the temples of God. But there is only one God who lives in all these temples. One individual is called by different names by different people. His son addresses him as father, his daughter-in-law addresses him as father-in-law, his brother addresses him as brother, his grandson addresses him as grandfather. Though the individual is addressed in different ways, the individual is the same. Similarly, the Muslims call the Lord as Allah, the Christians as the Father, the Zoroastrians call Him Ahura Mazda, the Buddhists as the Buddha and the Hindus as Rama or Krishna. But all of them refer only to one God. You may continue worshipping your chosen deity as Allah, Buddha, Rama, Krishna, and so on. Whatever may be the names by which you call the Lord, there is only one God to whom all your prayers would go. Hence, God is one, goal is one. You should not entertain differences with regard to Divinity. *Sarva Deva Namaskaram Kesavam Pratigacchati*—the salutations offered to different deities reach only Kesava (God). So, you should not observe the differences of caste, creed and language. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs from Sri Lanka (who spoke earlier) said, all belong to the caste of humanity.

*There is only one language, the language of the heart.  
There is only one caste, the caste of humanity.  
There is only one religion, the religion of love.  
There is only one God, He is omnipresent.*

God has no particular name or form. He is pure energy. You should make proper use of your energy. Food and lifestyle (Ahara and Vihara) cause Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Mada, Moha, Matsarya (desire, anger, greed, pride, attachment, and jealousy). Hence, you should exercise utmost care and restraint in your food and lifestyle. Satwic food will nourish Satwic qualities. Buddha took only Satwic food and his Buddhi (intellect) became Satwic, perfect and full (Poorna Buddhi). Celebrate Buddha Poornima with Poorna Buddhi. The Vedas say, *Chandrama Manaso Jatah*. That is, the presiding deity of the mind is the moon. It is by the light of the sun that the moon shines. The moonlight is cool and pleasant whereas the sunlight is radiant and brilliant. The moonlight signifies Prema whereas sunlight signifies Jnana (wisdom). Without wisdom love will not blossom. A flower becomes an unripe fruit and the unripe fruit later ripens. In fact, the flower, the raw fruit and the ripe fruit are one and the same. Similarly, Karma, Bhakti and Jnana are one and the same. Prema is the undercurrent of all the three paths. Hence, you have to understand and develop the principle of love.

You should nourish pure and divine feelings of love. You should not indulge in criticism and calumny. Once, Buddha came to a village during the course of his travels. As he was tired, he

wanted to take rest. He called a young disciple and told him to give the spiritual message to the people. The disciple was very much delighted with the opportunity given by Buddha. He told the people, "Buddha is the embodiment of compassion, love and wisdom. He is also a Karma Yogi and a Jnana Yogi.

Such a one was never born before, nor would he be born in the future." The listeners clapped in joy at this statement of Buddha's disciple. Buddha was resting, but he overheard the words of his disciple. Immediately, he went to the assembly where his disciple was giving a discourse. He asked the disciple, "My son, what is your age?" "Master, my age is 35 years." "How widely have you travelled" Asked Buddha? The young disciple said that he had visited the land of Kurus, the land of Panchalas, etc. On hearing this, Buddha admonished him, "You have visited only a few kingdoms and your age is only 35 years. With your short experience of people and the world, how can you declare that a person like me was never born in the past nor will be born in the future! You don't know much about the past nor can you predict the future. Even your knowledge of the present is very limited. Hence, it is not proper for you to speak about the past and the future with such certainty. It is sheer ignorance. Do not speak like this in future. Many great persons were born in the past. There would be many more in future also." Buddha was the embodiment of humility and simplicity. He was averse to pomp and show.

### **Power of Pure Thoughts**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Merely thinking about the greatness of Buddha on the Buddha Poornima Day will not suffice. You must practise the ideals taught by Buddha and experience the joy thereof. But today, people are heroes in making platform speeches but they are zeros in practice. Put the teachings of Buddha in practice in your life. That is the best way of expressing your reverence for Buddha. The teachings of Buddha are lofty, sublime and sacred. The principal teaching of Buddha is '*Ahimsa Paramo Dharma*' (non-violence is the highest Dharma). Buddha exhorted the people to cultivate purity of vision. "If is only by cultivating pure vision that you can lead a pure life. You should cultivate Samyak Drishti (right vision), Samyak Shravanam (right listening), Samyak Bhavam (right feelings), Samyak Vaak (right speech), Samyak Jivanam (right life) etc. Buddha emphasised goodness in everything in life. First of all, one should develop right vision. If the vision is good and pure, the thoughts will also be pure. If you throw a pebble in a lake, it will create ripples. How far will the ripples spread? They will go up to the edge of the lake. In the same way, cast the pebble of good thoughts in the lake of your heart (Manasarovar). The ripples of good thoughts will then express themselves through all parts of your body, viz., eyes, ears, hands, legs, etc. When these ripples of good thoughts go to the eyes, you will see only good, when they go to the ears, you will hear only good, when they go to the tongue, you will speak only good, when they go to the hands, they will perform only good deeds, when they go to the legs, the legs will go only to good places. Thus, the lake of the human body becomes full of ripples of pure thoughts, purifying the body from top to toe. Hence, cultivate Samyak Drishti (right vision).

Mere study of books is not enough. You feel elevated for the time being while studying sacred books. The sublime teachings of great men must be put into practice. As fragrance is released when you go on grinding the sandalwood, these teachings leave a lasting effect on your mind by repeated study and practice. Many great men have left their footprints on the sands of time. They

left behind them great ideas and noble teachings. It is enough if you practise even a few of their teachings. God has given so much time to man. But man wastes it. Time is God. Don't waste time. Time waste is life waste. Man wastes 3/4<sup>th</sup> of his time in mundane activities. He spends the remaining spare time in idle pursuits like watching TV and other petty amusements. Why does he not sanctify his time by engaging himself in good deeds and righteous activities? This was the teaching of Buddha also.

At the time of Buddha's departure from the physical body, there was a small coin with him, which he had carefully kept in tiny knots of his cloth. Kings and emperors built magnificent monasteries for the Bhikshus (Buddhist monks). This did not delight him much. One day, an old beggar woman came to him and gave this coin with all her heart saying that it was all that she could give. He accepted the coin with both his hands, treasured it for the feeling with which it was given. It is not how much you give that matters; pomp and show stains all charity. Charity given with love and humility makes it precious. What is the use of having barrels of donkey milk? A teaspoonful of cow's milk is more useful. Even a paisa becomes sacred if it is given with a pure heart. Buddha did not value greatness, he valued goodness.

Once Buddha was sitting alone in a forest. A fierce demoness appeared before him and said, "O Buddha, I am very hungry. Will you allow me to eat you?" Buddha readily consented to the request of the demoness and said smilingly to her, "One need not be afraid of death. Death is a certainty and is bound to come one day or the other. You are hungry; feed on me and be happy." As soon as Buddha uttered these words smilingly, the demoness changed into a dove. "O Buddha, I will spread your gospel of sacrifice. People are afraid of death; but you are delighted at the prospect of sacrificing yourself to satiate somebody's hunger. I am not a demoness. I am a dove. I have come down only to test you. I will now disseminate your gospel of love and sacrifice in the world."

The cardinal principle of Buddha's teachings is selfless love. Sai also gives the message of love. Sai's basic teaching is love. In fact, all Avatars have love as the core of their message. Love is the fundamental truth that everybody should cultivate. The entire world will be with you if you develop love. No one can fully assess the power of love. Love is infinite, most precious and most blissful. The bliss of love surpasses that derived from nectar. Love defies all definitions and descriptions. It is this gospel of love that Buddha disseminated. It is this love he enjoyed and experienced, and ultimately merged into it at the end of his life. Buddha was born in love, grew up in love and merged into love. Love and God are not separate. *"The water bubble is born in water. It is sustained in water and ultimately merges with water. Man is the water bubble and the Lord is water."* Jiva is Deva and Deva is Jiva. The individual self is the Supreme Self and the Supreme Self is the individual self.

## **Love is Your Mission of Life**

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Treat everybody as the embodiment of Divinity. Love is your mission of life. Your parents have given you a name. Use it for transactions in the world. You may give your visiting cards to your friends with your name and address. But with respect to God, your visiting card is from love, by love and to love only. Love is the other name of God.

On this sacred Buddha Poornima day, you should foster the principle of love. From today onwards, you must accept love as the very mission of your life. There is no greater mission than this. Just by mastering the Vedas and the Upanishads, one does not become a scholar (Pundit). *Pundita Samadarshina*—a Pundit is one who is endowed with equal vision. But today, scholars do not possess equality of vision. They study books and consider themselves to be great scholars. This is nothing but sheer egoism. It is ego that brings disaster to man. What is the use of mastering all the scriptures if it inflates your ego? It is enough if you practise even one principle. The greatest of these principles is love. What ultimately protects you is love alone. What punishes you at the end is also love. It is love that elevates you. On the highway of love, there is one way traffic and there are no speed breakers. You can move at any speed on this road of love. You can rush towards the Lord with high speed.

The rivers teach and demonstrate the principle of love. They rush towards the ocean with all their swiftness to merge into it. They are undaunted by obstacles and impediments. Similarly, the river of life should flow towards the ocean of Divinity. You should overcome all obstacles as the rivers overcome the boulders and rocks which try to obstruct their flow. This is the effort you have to make to reach the ocean of Divinity. See that there are no lacunae and weaknesses in your effort. Move fast while adhering to the virtues of right vision, right feelings and right thoughts. When all your actions are governed by these principles of goodness, you are also rewarded with goodness.

### **Use Your Body for God Realisation**

#### *Embodiments of Divine Love!*

You need not go anywhere in quest of God. Neither temples nor churches nor mosques are the true abodes of God. They are made by man. The true abode of God is the body, which God Himself has designed and created. The body is a living temple, a talking temple, a moving temple. No ordinary engineer has designed this temple. It has been created by the pure Will of God. Hence, it is a sanctified gift of God. You must guard this sacred gift with utmost care. You must use the body in the right manner for the realisation of the Supreme Self. *Sareeramadyam Khalu Dharma Sadhanam* (body is the first medium to undertake righteous actions) So, the body should be used for performing Sadhana and not merely for eating and drinking. Of course, food is essential for the sustenance of the body. *Annam Deha Rakshanartham, Vastram Sheeta Nivaranam* (food is for the protection of the body and clothes to save it from cold). But if you are all the time thinking of food and head, what about God? If the food is good, the head will be good. With a good head, you can reach God. You must realise that the food and head are for God.

Once emperor Ashoka was travelling in a forest on horseback. He noticed a Buddhist monk coming in his direction. The emperor at once got down from the horse, went to the monk, prostrated before him and placed his head at his feet. The minister who accompanied him was dismayed at this. He felt that a great and mighty emperor as he was, Ashoka should not have placed his head at the feet of a monk. So, he thought that he would counsel the emperor about this at an appropriate time. One day, he noticed that Ashoka was in a happy mood. He said to Ashoka, "O emperor, you wear a crown on your head. You are the master of great intellect. You are a valiant and powerful emperor as well as an erudite scholar, revered and honoured by all. Why did you place your head at the feet of a Buddhist monk when we went to a forest?" Ashoka

smiled and did not say anything. After a few days, he asked him to get him the head of a sheep, a goat and also that of a man. The minister brought them to the emperor. Then Ashoka commanded him to keep these heads in the market for sale. The heads of goat and sheep were sold in no time, but nobody came forward to buy the head of man. The emperor then told him to offer the head of man free of cost to anyone. But nobody was prepared to take man's head free of cost even. The minister returned and reported to the king that nobody was prepared to take human head. The emperor then spoke to the minister: "The other day, you asked me as to why I had placed my head at the feet of a monk. You have now realised that the human head carries no value, for nobody wants to take it even free. The head attains immense value and sanctity only when it comes in contact with the feet of noble ones." "*Darshanam Papa Nashanam*" (Darshan destroys all sins), "*Sparshanam Karma Vimochanam*" (the touch liberates you from Karmic consequences), "*Sambhashanam Sankata Vimochanam*" (conversation destroys all sufferings). Wisdom then dawned on the minister after listening to these wise words of Ashoka. He realised that one should avail oneself of Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan of great men while one is alive. Once the body is gone, nothing can be done.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

You have come here with great devotion and spirit of surrender. Your devotion and dedication are worthy of commendation. Buddha was the noblest of the noble. On this day of Buddha Poornima, resolve to practise the teachings of Buddha and experience the joy derived thereof. That is the best way of celebrating Buddha Poornima. It is not enough if you remember Buddha on the day of Buddha Poornima once in a year. You must meditate and recapitulate like a cow, which goes on chewing the cud to re-enjoy the experience of eating. You must remember and recapture all that you enjoyed here. Do not forget everything the moment you leave this place. All that you have heard and learned should become a part of your being, your very blood stream. The Vedas describe God as *Raso Vai Sah* (He is the essence of sweetness). Absorb this sweetness in you. The Divine essence that is coursing through your body is known as Angirasa. It flows in every Anga (limb) of the body and ensures protection for the body in the waking state, dream state, deep sleep state. You can protect yourself in the waking state. But who protects you when you are in deep sleep state and dream state? Only God can save you in these states. You should remain steady and strong, undaunted by sorrows and sufferings. They come and go like passing clouds. Only God is unchanging and permanent. You must take Him as the very basis of your life. Think of Him, remember Him and meditate on Him always. This is the primary lesson you have to learn. Then you will achieve the purpose of your coming here.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Vahe Guru Vahe Guru Vahe Guruji.*"

—*From Bhagavan's Buddha Poornima Discourse in Sai Ramesh Hall, Brindavan on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2000*

## **Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality**

Since the start of the Summer Courses in 1972, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has been offering virtually a feast for the soul in the form of these courses to the devotees and students, particularly

the students of Sai institutions. These courses present the quintessence of spiritual knowledge, which is the basis of all cultures and religions. One of the unique features of these courses is that apart from receiving the essence of divinity and spirituality directly from the Avatar Himself, the participants have the rare opportunity of witnessing and experiencing the glimpses of His Divinity.

This year's "Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality" was conducted by Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at Brindavan, Whitefield from 15<sup>th</sup> May – 30<sup>th</sup> May 2000. Nearly 3000 students and teachers attended this two weeks course, in which various aspects of Indian culture and spirituality and their relevance for the modern man were dwelt upon by eminent educationists, scholars and experts from several walks of life. Bhagavan Baba not only blessed the participants with Inaugural and Valedictory Discourses, but showered His grace and benedictions on all by His daily public discourses.

### **Inaugural Function**

Bhagavan Baba inaugurated the Summer Course on Monday, the 15th of May, at 9-15 a.m. in the Auditorium of the Brindavan Campus by lighting the sacred lamps. Ms. Rama Devi, the Governor of Karnataka, was the Chief Guest at the function. The Auditorium was magnificently decorated with pictures of old monuments and beautiful statues of Buddha and Siva. A bright banner at the top of the stage proclaimed the theme of the function in glittering words "Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality."

At the outset, the Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Sri S. V. Giri welcomed the Chief Guest and the assembled audience to the function. He explained that the Summer Courses conducted under the benign guidance of Bhagavan Baba were deeply rooted in Indian Culture and Spirituality. Dwelling on the uniqueness of the education system of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, he said, "This system of education is meant to assist the students to cultivate self-knowledge and self-confidence so that they can learn self-sacrifice to attain self-realisation. Education in this Institute is not merely an exercise in imparting information but, it is an integral system of education in which the students practise the values imbibed in the system." He told that a study team of the Government of India which visited the Institute recently had observed that this was the only Institution in the country which had successfully incorporated human values in its unique system in a composite way, and recommended that this should be a model resource institution for the entire country.

In her speech, the Chief Guest, Ms. Rama Devi, quoted the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi to emphasise that our educational institutions should be producing value-based citizens for the country. She commended Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning as a model showing the practical way how values could be integrated with education. Referring to Swami Vivekananda as the spiritual leader of the youth, the Chief Guest advised the students to follow his teachings and develop self-confidence and courage, and be men of action.

In the end, Bhagavan Baba gave an illuminating discourse, the full text of which has been given elsewhere in this issue. The morning function concluded at 10.40 a.m. with National Anthem and distribution of Prasadam.

### **Talks by Eminent Educationists and Experts**

The morning sessions of the course were held in the Brindavan College Auditorium and were open only to students, faculty members and guests. The speakers in these sessions included eminent men and women from all walks of life, educationists, scholars, faculty members of the Institute and students.

Some of the guest speakers who spoke to the students were: Justice R. N. Bhagawati, former Chief Justice of India; Sri Maharaj Krishan Kaw, Education Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development; Sri A.N. Haksar, Chairman Emeritus, ITC; Prof. J. S. Rajput, Director, National Council of Educational Research and Training ; Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation; Sri M. K. Rasagotra, former Foreign Secretary, Govt. of India; Prof. T. K. N. Unnithan, former Vice Chancellor, Rajasthan University; Maj. Gen. S. P. Mahadevan, Central Co-ordinator (Southern States), Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Sri TG. Krishnamurthy, President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Tamil Nadu; Prof. M. Nanjundaiah, Controller of Examination and two former Vice Chancellors of SSSIHL, Dr. K. Hanumanthappa and Prof. G. Venkataraman. Besides, several senior faculty members of SSSIHL and students made their presentations on the subjects related to Indian Culture and Spirituality and teachings of Bhagavan Baba.

### **Bhagavan's Discourses**

The afternoon sessions were held in the spacious Sai Ramesh Hall, Brindavan in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba and were largely attended. These sessions commenced after 3.30 p.m. with Bhajans and Veda chanting. Summaries of the talks delivered in the morning sessions of the course were presented in these sessions. Thereafter, an elder or one of the faculty members of the Institute or a senior student gave a brief speech. Besides, Vice Chancellor, Sri S. V. Giri, Warden of Brindavan Campus, Sri B. N. Narasimha Murthy, Principal of Anantapur Campus, and Prof. (Smt.) Jayalakshmi Gopinath also spoke during these sessions.

Bhagavan blessed the audience with as many as 16 discourses, which formed the main bulk of the teaching material of this course. The subjects were dealt with in great depth and related to the Pancha Bhutas, Pancha Kosas, sacredness of the human body, the concept of Dharma, Preyas and Shreyas, the states of bliss and means of attaining bliss, the need for disciplined life on the part of the students and most importantly the need to place the interests of the motherland over everything else and serve the society in a selfless manner. Thus, not only was Bhagavan the architect and teacher of the course, the entire course was directed and hosted by Bhagavan Himself.

**Dramatic and Musical Presentations:** A special feature of this year's Summer Course was high level of participation by the students and the faculty, both in terms of quantity and quality. There was an orientation programme for the freshers and special programmes for the senior students to absorb and present spiritual aspects of daily life. Two excellent presentations were made jointly by the students of Prasanthi Nilayam and Brindavan Campuses in the form of short plays.

The first presentation entitled "The Wind Beneath Our Wings" was made on 18th May 2000 in the College Auditorium. It first showed through short skits and slide show the ethical dilemmas in the lives of a doctor, a student and an industrialist and then portrayed how solutions to these



problems could be found in the form of small changes in perception which profoundly transformed their lives. These small changes, which constitute the essence of Bhagavan Baba's teachings, make our life smooth and serene as the favourable wind beneath the wings of a bird helps it to soar high. A video clipping in the end showed how the values taught by Bhagavan were integrated in the life of the students in Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and how Bhagavan was the real wind of divinity, which helped the students to attain the goal of life.

The second presentation entitled, "Be Clear, Success will Follow" was presented on the morning of 25th May 2000 in the College Auditorium. It depicted how a modern confused man achieved success by following the seven pearls of wisdom revealed to him by three wise men. Acting by the students in the various illustrative skits and the final video clipping revealed how man could script his own success story by following the teachings of Bhagavan Baba as integrated in the system of education in Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.

Besides these two presentations, the students of Prasanthi Nilayam and Brindavan Campuses made an excellent musical offering at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Baba on the evening of 21st May 2000 in the College Auditorium. This interesting programme was presented in the form of Bhajans and Qawalis in Hindi, Telugu, Kannada and Sanskrit by Sri P Sujith Kumar, Sri N. Karthik, Sri Tara Shankar, Sri V. Ashwin and Sri S. Prasanth. Bhagavan sat through the entire programme and blessed the students at the end of the programme.

**Evaluation and Special Blessings** An examination was conducted on 28th May 2000 in College Auditorium to assess the impact of the course on the participants. Though the examination was quite difficult as observed by the Vice Chancellor, all the students not only passed the examination, but scored more than 95% marks. Two students, one boy and one girl, secured 100% marks. They earned the special grace of Bhagavan who materialised a gold chain for the girl and a ring for the boy during the Valedictory Function. A special blessing was in store for all the students and teachers on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2000 when Bhagavan gave a Benedictory Discourse exclusively for them in the College Auditorium. Another shower of blessing was received by them when Bhagavan gave Padanamaskar to all the students and teachers in the afternoon of 29th May 2000 in Trayee Brindavan.

### **Valedictory Function**

The Valedictory Function of the Summer Course was held on the morning of 30th May 2000 in Sai Ramesh Hall which was specially decorated for this purpose. After Bhajans and Vedic invocation, the Vice Chancellor, Sri S. V. Giri made a brief speech expressing profound gratitude to Bhagavan on behalf of the students and staff for the nectarine fortnight in which the nectar of Bhagavan's benedictions flowed in abundance. Summing up the deliberations of the fortnight, he observed that this was the unique opportunity for the participants to learn the fundamentals of Indian Culture and Spirituality from the omniscient Lord Himself. He advised the students to make the best use of the opportunity of their stay in the Institute and achieve spiritual glory coupled with academic excellence for the harmonious development of their personality.

Thereafter, Bhagavan blessed the participants with His Valedictory Discourse and exhorted the students not only to imbibe the values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa in their lives, but share them with others. With the nectarine discourse of" Bhagavan and His blessings,

the Summer Course came to a successful and happy conclusion. In the end, Arati was offered to Bhagavan and Prasadam was distributed.

### **Commendable Obsession**

*There is no human being in the world without love. However, that love expresses itself in many ways. In a mental asylum, there are people with, many kinds of delusions. In a sense, the entire world may be considered as a mental asylum. There are many people in the world who are crazy about money. There are others who have obsessions regarding their health and sickness. Some others are crazy about power and position. In this manner, every individual is obsessed with some desire or the other. There are, again, some who are obsessed with the idea of God. That is the only commendable obsession.*

**—Baba**

## Divine Origin of Five Basic Elements

*Smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest  
Brahman is all-pervasive eternal witness;  
Brahman indeed is the Self  
And the Self is Brahman.*

(Sanskrit Verse)

### *Embodiments of Love!*

The Vedas declare, *Anoraneeyan Mahato Maheeyan* (Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest). Human body is made up of five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. These elements are associated with five types of sensations, i.e., smell, taste, form, touch and sound. It is the presence or the absence of these five attributes of sound, smell, touch, taste and form that determines the pervasiveness of the elements. The earth, which has in it all the five attributes, is consequently quite heavy and has a highly restricted mobility. Symbolically, Krishna addressed Arjuna as 'Partha,' the son of earth. This term is applicable to every human being since all are born to mother earth.

### **The Elements are Aspects of God**

The earth characterised by all the five attributes of sound, smell, touch, taste and form is made up of all the five elements. It rotates on its axis and revolves round the sun. Though it rotates and revolves with great speed, the oceans, rivers, mountains, forests and countless other things that the earth carries upon its surface do not move. People marvel at this unique phenomenon. Though the earth is full of great power, it is subservient to the Will of God. It is the Will of God that maintains the balance of the earth and sees that things do not fall apart. The train runs on railway lines and carries the people safely. Imagine the state of affairs if the rail tracks were also to start running with the running train! It is the gravitational force that holds things intact while the earth rotates on its axis and revolves round the sun. Such a marvellous earth stands as a testimony to the supreme power of God. This powerful earth is a limb (Anga) of God. The organs of perception and cognition constitute the limbs of the human body; the body is a limb of the society; the society in its turn is a limb of mankind; mankind is a limb of the earth; and finally, the earth is a limb of God.

Water, which has four attributes, is devoid of the attribute of smell. So, it is lighter than the earth. Hence, it has the capacity to flow and move. Highly powerful fire is without the attributes of both smell and taste. Therefore, it is lighter than water. It has the capacity to rise as well as spread in all directions. Fire manifests itself as 'Jataragni' (fire representative of the digestive power) in the body. It manifests as 'Badavagni' in water. It exists even in trees and stones. That is why we see sparks of fire when two stones are rubbed or when two branches of a tree rub against each other. The fourth element, air, is lighter than fire as it has only two attributes of sound and touch. This is the reason why it wafts about everywhere and is more pervasive than fire.

The fifth element, ether, is lighter than air and is most unrestrained in its capacity to pervade amongst the elements. The reason for this is that it is characterised by just the single attribute of sound. Where does ether exist? It exists everywhere because sound energy pervades the entire creation. It is said "*Akasham Gaganam Soonyam*" (ether is the empty vastness of cosmos itself). Sound is the unique

quality of ether. Ignorant people think that ether exists high above in the skies. It is a mistaken perception.

Ether exists wherever there is sound. As an example, you see that sound is produced when I strike my hand on the table. Ether is present here! So, wherever there is sound, ether is present there.

### **Man, Nature and God**

God transcends these five attributes. He is consequently the subtlest of all, the lightest of all and manifests Himself as the One in all. With his hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe. The five elements: earth, water, air, fire and ether are all aspects of God. Since these five elements are of Divine origin, our ancestors worshipped them as the embodiments of Divinity. They adored them as the goddess earth, various goddesses representing rivers, the god of fire, the god of wind, and the god of ether.

First and foremost, our ancestors worshipped earth as Bhumata (Mother Earth). Since the crops harvested from the earth sustained their lives, they worshipped it first. However, some modern scientists ridicule this idea of worshipping the earth as a goddess and regard Indians as fools. In fact, scientists are ignorant of the inner significance of things. To them, the study of matter is the be-all and end-all of every investigation and enquiry. They are ignorant of the essential principles of reaction, reflection and resound. When you hit a table, your hand starts paining; which means even the table hits you in turn. When you go near a mountain and make some sound, immediately you can hear the resound. Thus, you see that Nature is governed by the principles of reflection, reaction and resound. Likewise, man, who is the son of Mother Nature, is governed by these principles.

Every atom is permeated with Divinity. But it is difficult to recognise Divinity. Neither is it easy to say this is Divine and that is not. As the rays emanate from the sun, so does Nature originate from God. Nature is the reservoir of power and energy. When Nature, which is the creation of God, is so full of power, you may estimate for yourself the tremendous power of God! It is said that the workings of Divinity are most wonderful.

*The stories of the Lord are most wonderful and sacred in all the three worlds. They are like sickles that cut the creepers of worldly bondage.*

(Telugu Poem)

### **Lessen Your Burden**

It is difficult to describe God. None can portray the full splendour of Divinity. Earth bears upon itself the immense burden of all matter and beings. Some people pray to Me, "Swami! I am a burden to this world by living on this earth. Put an end to my life." Will the earth's burden decrease a wee bit if I take away your life? The earth will remain as heavy as ever. Your life and death make no difference to it. It is only when you decrease your own burden that the burden of the earth will diminish. What is the burden that you bear? Your desires are your burden. It is said, "Less luggage more comfort, makes travel a pleasure". Hence, you should make a sincere endeavour to decrease your burden or desires. It is only then that you cease being a burden on the earth. Any increase in your burden adds to the burden of the Mother Earth. In fact, it is not God who carries your burden. He makes each one carry his own burden.

Once, the Gopikas sang a song bringing out this subtle aspect of Divinity:

*O! Krishna, can we ever know you?  
You are subtler than atom and mightier than the mightiest.  
You are the sustainer of the eighty four lakh species.  
Can we ever know you, O! Krishna? (Telugu Poem)*

It is impossible for anyone to fathom the depths of Divinity. Arvind (a senior student of the Institute who spoke earlier) has prayed to Me to speak on the nature of the five elements. There is nothing in this world apart from the five elements and they are all-pervasive. The entire cosmos is the Anga (limb) of God. The almanac, which contains information about the placement of heavenly bodies, is known as Panchanga. This also shows that the heavenly bodies are made up of Pancha bhutas (five elements), which form the Anga (limb) of God.

Sound is the attribute of ether. This sound is the primordial 'Aum', constituted by the three syllables A-U-M. You should listen carefully to this primordial sound Aum. Man is also the embodiment of this sound.

### **Make Proper Use of the Five Elements**

Prana (vital breath) is a constituent of air. Life cannot exist without air. Your breathing process is marked by the principle of Soham. 'So' is the process of inhalation whereas 'Ham' is the process of exhalation. You inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. This conveys the message that you should acquire good qualities and give up bad tendencies. The process of eating and excreting conveys the identical message. You should accept the Phala (fruit) and reject the Mala (excreta). You ought to take in what is good and throw out what is bad.

Trees also teach the lesson that you should always do good to others. They take carbon dioxide from the environment and give out oxygen which sustains life on the earth. Though born as humans, you do not bother to imbibe this noble message that the trees silently preach.

Fire, which burns everything to ashes, has a message to convey to all. The fire of wisdom burns to ashes, all that is foul and evil. Though man has acquired secular knowledge, he disregards spiritual wisdom. Fire teaches you that the lamp of wisdom should be ever burning, kindling the spirit of man. 'Thamasoma Jyothirgamaya' (lead me from darkness to light). The fire principle is present in the human body as Vaishvanara and digests the food taken by man: *Aham Vaishvanaro Bhutva Pratinam Dehamashrita*. There is no room for Tamas (darkness) in the presence of fire. The lamp of wisdom dispels the darkness of ignorance.

The sacred name of Rama is full of power and illumination. The word Rama has in it three syllables: Ra - Aa - Ma. 'Ra' signifies fire. 'Aa' signifies sun and 'Ma' signifies moon. 'Ra', symbolic of fire, burns to ashes sins and sorrows and bestows happiness. It removes all sins, dispels darkness and gives light. 'Aa', representing the sun, destroys Tamas and brings illumination. 'Ma', signifying the moon, cools the blazing passions. Water is the very source of life and vitality. If you sprinkle cool water on a person who has fainted, it revives his consciousness. The Prana Shakti (vital energy) contained in water is the cause for this. The earth, which bears on its surface trees, mountains, rivers and countless other things, is the source of food and energy. It sustains life.

Life on the earth has become complex in Kali Yuga. There are many easy avenues open to man for achieving liberation in Kali Yuga. But still, man is swayed by greed for wealth and materialistic acquisitions. He is taking recourse to cunning and easy methods of making money. A certain person advertised in a newspaper that the easiest way for destroying all mosquitoes was available with him. He assured the readers through the advertisement that he would destroy all the mosquitoes at their homes if people were prepared to send Re. 1/- by money order to him. Carried away by this advertisement, many people sent money to him. After making a lot of money, he published his method of destroying mosquitoes on the earth. The technique recommended by him was that wherever mosquitoes were seen, they were to be crushed with a stone! This is the extent to which man has degenerated in order to make money in the world today.

Though man has made many innovations in various fields of life, he has not succeeded in getting happiness from any of them. What is the cause for this failure on the part of man? It is the lack of virtue that brings about failures. It is only good and virtuous conduct that can lift man from the mire into which he has fallen. Virtue is the very life of man.

Man's misadventures have created several problems for the entire mankind. He has polluted the five elements causing havoc on the earth. There is pollution everywhere—in air, water, food and so on. His misdeeds coupled with his evil thoughts and feelings have degraded human life on the earth. If man acts in the righteous way, there will be no pollution at all. The water level under the surface of the earth is depleting because noble virtues like love and compassion have dried up in human heart. The five elements are sore with the offensive conduct of man.

There is nothing wrong with Nature. One with flaw in one's own vision sees flaws in others. There is nothing wrong with education or money. Mistake lies in man who puts them to misuse. Water acquires the colour of the vessel into which it is poured. It looks red when poured in a red bottle and black in a black bottle. Similarly, there is nothing wrong with the human body. It becomes evil when associated with evil thoughts and pure when filled with pure feelings. The Age of Kali has become the age of Kalaha (quarrel). It is only the cultivation of virtue that can bring about some change in the present scenario. Make proper use of the five elements. You should sanctify yourself and the atmosphere around by chanting the divine name. What is the purpose of doing Bhajans? Chanting of the divine name purifies the atmosphere by sending sacred vibrations into it. These vibrations, set off by the chanting of the divine name, destroy evil and impure feelings deeply ingrained in man.

### **Work for Your own Emancipation**

*Students!*

As is the fire so is the smoke; as is the smoke so is the cloud; as is the cloud so is the rain; as is the rain so is the crop; as is the crop so is the food; as is the food so is the man. It is most essential on the part of man to realise the significance of this cycle. The sun vapourises ocean water. Though the water of the oceans is saline, the rain water that falls from the clouds tastes sweet. Similarly, the saline water of bad conduct should be transformed into the clouds of truth by the sun of Buddhi (intellect). Then alone will the sweet water of Prema fall from the clouds of truth and virtue. This water of love will ultimately merge in the ocean of grace. Hence, you should make an earnest effort to transform all that is unclean into clean. The chanting of the divine name has the superlative

capacity to sanctify the polluted atmosphere. Sacred vibrations set off by the chanting of the divine name are absorbed by man and transform his very nature.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

You should lead a life of love. It is love which makes you the embodiment of Divinity. My life itself is a living testimony to this eternal truth. It is love and love alone that is in Me, nothing else whatsoever. I may sometimes appear to be angry but it is also an expression of My love. When it rains, you see sometimes hailstones falling down along with it. But the hailstones are nothing but solidified water. Likewise, I may at times appear to be angry with you, but it is also out of love only. Whatever I do is good for you. I am full of love from top to toe. Follow the principle of love and sanctify the five elements with this love. Undertake good actions and do your duty.

*Uddharedatmanatmanam*, one should work for one's own emancipation. Try to understand this philosophy of the Vedas.

You should try to follow the noble path laid down by the Vedas. The sacred Vedas, which were handed down to us by our ancient sages, ensure the welfare of the whole world. They bestow peace and happiness upon the entire mankind. The Vedas teach us that Divinity exists in the world as sugar exists in syrup. You cannot see sugar in syrup but it is there as the inherent sweetness. Similarly, God manifests Himself in the world. God is sweetness personified.

Once you install God in your heart, all that you experience through your senses becomes nectarine. No one mixes sugar in the mother's milk to make it sweet. Sweetness is its very nature. As the baby drinks the mother's milk, as the bee sucks the nectar from flowers, so also man should absorb the sweetness of love present in fellow human beings. Though the flowers do not extend an invitation to the bees to suck their honey, the bees do so on their own. You too should go to good people and absorb the sweetness of their goodness. Remember that good company brings detachment; detachment destroys delusion, extinction of delusion fosters equal-mindedness, which bestows immortality on man. It is said, "*Thyaja Durjana Samsargam Bhaja Sadhu Samagamam, Kuru Punyam Ahorathram*" (discard bad company and join the company of the good, perform meritorious deeds day and night and sanctify your life).

### **The Malady and the Remedy**

Human life is sacred and it is an immense good fortune to be born as a human being. But you are wasting this precious gift of human life by harbouring evil thoughts and feelings. Sanctify your life with love and goodness. Today, you go to the extent of buying evil. It is nothing but sheer foolishness. You must realise the magnificence and the power of Love. Love has no form; it makes no demands. It neither borrows nor lends. It does not indulge in business. Love is Love. Love can be obtained only by Love.

The five elements are present everywhere. They are highly sacred. In fact, there is nothing bad in the creation of God. It is man who is responsible for turning everything good into evil in God's creation. Man should make a sincere endeavour to get rid of the vices in him. The remedy should be applied where there is a malady.

Once there was a man who had a son. He was the only son of his father. One day a scorpion bit the son. When the father heard the screams of his son he went to him and found that a scorpion had

bitten him. He frantically ran to a doctor and said to him, "My son has been bitten by a scorpion. He's crying. Give him medicine." The doctor gave him an ointment and asked him to rub it on the place where the scorpion had bitten. He came back running to his son and asked him, "Where did the scorpion bite you?" "In that corner," the son replied. The father promptly rushed to the corner and foolishly rubbed the ointment there! The father did not have the common sense that he should rub the ointment on the body and not on the floor. Unfortunately, modern man is acting in the same foolish manner. He does not try to apply the medicine where the malady exists. You must use the remedy where there is a malady. Focus your attention on the vicious aspects of your own behaviour instead of trying to find faults with others and God's creation.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Good and bad lie in your feelings. There is nothing wrong in the creation. So, develop good and divine feelings. Chant the divine name. That will destroy everything evil in you. Many people assert that they were very good in the beginning but bad company spoiled them. This is not true. Do not plead that you have become bad due to the influence of others. If only you had held on to your goodness, nothing would have degraded you. Hence, it is imperative that man should make earnest efforts to remain steadfast in his goodness.

Do not speak evil. Do not think evil. Do not do evil. Do not see evil. Do not hear evil. Keechaka had evil vision and was ultimately killed by Bhima. Kaikeyi, who heard the evil words of Manthara, earned a bad name for herself. Does anybody ever name his or her children after her name?

Similarly, Duryodhana and Dussasana, who spoke evil and heard evil, were ruined completely in the end. Do not listen to evil talk and do not repeat evil and painful words, which you hear from others. If someone talks ill of your parents and you repeat his evil words to your parents, they would be hurt and pained. So, do not repeat evil words. This is a very important point you must take note of. Use your eyes to see good. You are born in this Prakriti, which is highly sacred. You have been given eyes not for roaming around and seeing anything and everything whatsoever but only to see God. The gift of vision should be used for seeing the good and the godly.

Nature is the Anga of Paramatma. It is highly sacred. You are a part of Nature. So, you should strive to merge into Paramatma. Nurture noble feelings of this kind and you will become divine. There is nothing bad in the creation of God. Change your attitude and you will see good in everything. Even when you find yourself in troubles say to yourself, "This is good for me." Treat praise and blame with equanimity. By adopting this positive attitude, you will realise that there is no Yogi greater than you; there is no Tyagi superior to you; there is no one greater than you. When you investigate the truth about the five basic elements, you will find that they are all within you also. You should strive to make proper use of these elements and sanctify your life. Think of God incessantly. Sing His glory.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin..."

***—From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Ramesh Hall, Brindavan on the evening of 15th May 2000***



*Freedom from Fear Feelings such as fear, envy, hatred, etc., become ingrained in a person if lie nurtures them for a long time from an early age in his life. God never endows man with fear. It is one's own weakness that fosters fear, because of some shortcomings in one's self. One who has not committed any wrong or evil act will have no fear and hence will not need any protection or security.*

*Fearlessness is the hallmark of divinity. One can become fearless through Tyaga (renunciation). For example, if you have some valuables with you, there is room for fear. But if you give up those valuables, you will be free from fear wherever you may be, even in a jungle infested with robbers.*

—Baba

AVATAR VANI

SIVARATRI SANDESH - II

### **Sanctify Your Life with Sacred Feelings**

*The sunlight illuminates the entire world and helps the people to carry out their tasks. But the sun has nothing to do with the pleasures and pains of the human beings. Likewise, the innumerable problems man faces are related only to his senses and the mind; his consciousness has nothing to do with them. It is said that the devotees search for God. But there is no need for a devotee to go in search of God as He is everywhere. In fact, God is in search of a true devotee whose heart is filled with the spirit of oneness.*

#### **Foster Divine Thoughts**

When you touch a hot iron ball, you say that your hand is singed by it. But it is not the ball that singed your hand. The fire present within the ball singed your hand. The world, like the iron ball, is not the cause either for the pain or for the pleasure you experience. The Divine power is present within you. You do not recognise that power and wail over your sufferings and difficulties.

Strange is the nature of modern man today. He thinks something and speaks something else. He laughs outwardly to conceal his inner wickedness. He appears to be weeping outwardly but inside he really laughs. His outward appearance is that of a human being but his mind is that of a monkey. Such hypocrites and wicked people can never find God. God expects that human beings should live like human beings devoid of such animal qualities. Pure and pious qualities are immanent in man. He should manifest these inherent pure feelings and not the animal and artificial qualities. But man today is going downhill morally. With all these contrived situations, the world has become a morose and lifeless place.

If money is lost, it can be earned again. If health is lost, it may be possible to regain it. But if time is lost, it can never be regained. So, man should utilise the time at his disposal in the right manner. Money decreases only when you spend it. But man's life-span decreases on its own with the passage of time. Every individual should be aware of the sharp scimitar called time hanging over his head ever ready to strike. You should not become its victim. You should be careful. If time is wasted, it cannot be regained. It is not like health and money, which can be regained.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

To sanctify time, you should take up virtuous actions. Good actions are the result of good feelings only. You should cultivate such pure and divine feelings. Clouds are caused by the sun, but these

very clouds overshadow it. Likewise, the clouds of thoughts which originate from the heart cover the heart. So, the source is overshadowed by the elements that emanate from it. That which originates from Brahman cannot be anything else but Brahman. What is the source of this creation? It is the splendour of the Divine. It is the Will of the Divine. As the Divine Will is the cause of man's existence, he should have divine feelings only. The creation born out of the Divine Willis called Nature. So, man being the product of Nature should manifest the qualities of Nature. He should not possess qualities alien to Nature. Desire, anger, avarice, attachment, arrogance and jealousy originate from the food you consume. They are also the consequence of the Samskaras of your past lives. They are not your natural qualities.

You introduce yourself as 'I'. That 'I' is the foremost name of the Divine; all the other mystical words originated later. In the Vedic proclamation *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman), the letter 'I' stands for Brahman. So, the first name of Brahman is 'I'. The second name is 'Atma'. The third name is 'Self'. 'Brahma' is the fourth. 'God' is the fifth. These five are the different names of one Divinity. You should understand the true meaning of these words. Where did this 'I' come from? It is the very form of the Self and the Divine. But, man is putting it to much misuse by associating it with physical body. It should be put to sacred use.

### **Recognise Your True Nature**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

You should try to know the ways and means to adhere to truth in daily life. Without recognising the path of truth, people undertake spiritual practices like prayer, meditation and Yoga. But this is not enough. In addition to the spiritual practices, you should also nurture good feelings. Good qualities, good feelings, good acts and good thoughts should manifest in you. These are natural divine traits. Despite the truth that Nature is your origin, you are discarding the qualities of Nature and are adopting artificial behaviour. You should not lead such an artificial life. You should speak what you think and do what you speak. The Vedas say, *Antar Bahischa Tatsarvamvyapya Narayana Sthita* (That all-pervasive God is present within and without). The proper study of mankind is man. Who is this man? The one who maintains harmony in his thought, word and deed is the true human being. He alone can be called man. God is in search of such a true human being. He is not searching for the one who is a human being merely in appearance.

Man has been granted sacred intellect so that he can recognise his true nature. The intellect is pure and unsullied which can be compared to a mirror. On the rear side of the mirror, a chemical is applied. Without this chemical, you cannot see your reflection in the mirror. You can see the objects that exist behind the mirror and cannot see the objects that exist in front of it. Likewise, if you want to recognise your true nature, you should coat your intellect with the chemical of love. Today you, keep the mirror without the coating of love and try to see your reflection and fail in the attempt. God has given the mirror of intellect to man to see his own form. But modern man today is not at all trying to recognise his true form with the help of this mirror. He is holding the mirror before the faces of others. Likewise, every individual is using his intellect to know the world outside. People question the whereabouts of others, but they do not try to find out their own whereabouts. Hence, stop asking others, "Who are you?" and start questioning yourself, "Who am I?"

The intellect has been granted to you to enable you to look at yourself, not to look at others. Man is forgetting his true nature as he is associating himself more and more with worldly affairs. Everyone,

from a child to an adult, is immersed in worldly affairs. Man today is not satisfied with the affairs of the world only; he is trying to probe the space and stars also. He is turning towards everything else but he is not turning inward. He is travelling lakhs of miles into the space but is not travelling even half an inch into the inner recesses of his heart. So, his feelings are taking an ugly turn. We find only selfishness in him. He is not attempting to realise his true nature.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

To realise one's real nature, one's innate disposition, is the foremost aim of spirituality. This aim is not confined to spiritual practices alone. Man should realise his true nature in every field of activity—temporal, ethical, physical and secular. You are enthusiastic in finding the faults of others but you are not trying to know your own faults. You will be able to improve yourself when you try to know your own faults. Such a man will become an ideal human being. He alone is the true human being. If you behave like a monkey, who will treat you like a human being? At the most, people may show respect to you just for the sake of courtesy. But in your absence, they may criticise you in many ways. So, you should not tread that path. You should act according to your conscience. You should follow the sacred path and put the divine qualities present within you to right use.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

You need not go in search of the innumerable aspects of the world. You should strive to know your true nature. Yesterday, I explained to you the nature of the five sheaths. The body is physical and gross. It is the cause of innumerable troubles. With the increase of attachment towards the body, attachment towards the Self declines. Without the Self, the body cannot survive. You should take care to reduce your attachment towards the body gradually. If your attachment towards the body increases, desires and avarice too will increase.

The subtle body constituted by the Pranamaya, Manomaya and Vijnanamaya Koshas is called Taijasa. How did it get the name Taijasa? It got this name because it is associated with the resplendent inner thoughts and feelings. You should recognise this divine aspect of your being. The innumerable worldly affairs you indulge in give you ephemeral pleasures only and cannot give true, everlasting bliss. So, you should develop inner vision. External vision is the vision of the animals. You should not go down to their level. This is not the true nature of man. You should purify your inner feelings. You should develop pure, unwavering and selfless intellect. Only then will you be able to love all and serve all. But modern man has no faith in himself. This is the main mistake of man today. First, he should have faith in himself. That is self-confidence. Self-confidence is the foundation of the mansion of life. You can raise the walls of self-satisfaction on this foundation. Self sacrifice is its roof. Supreme bliss of self-realisation can be attained in this mansion.

## **Develop Inner Vision**

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Do not try to find others' faults. First identify your own faults. But you will not be benefited if you simply see good in others without cultivating good qualities in you. Nurture pious feelings. You should not hate anyone. Why? *Sarvata Pani-padam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham Sarvata Sruthimalloke Sarvamavrutya Thisthati* (with hands, feet, eyes, heads, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). Divinity is immanent in every being.

Today, it is necessary to develop broad outlook. Narrow-mindedness and self-centred feelings should be annihilated. You should give up selfishness and self-interest. The size of the eye is not even one inch. But this small eye is able to see the magnificent stars in the sky. It is able to see far off objects. That is the power of the eye. You can see even greater things if you develop inner vision. So, you should have broad-mindedness. Many foreigners call it broad heart. It may denote heart enlargement. Such hearts are treated by the doctors and not by the Divine. Develop broad-mindedness in which broad feelings manifest.

#### *Students!*

You are born in this vast universe. You are living in this vast world. So, you should have broad feelings. Man living in this vast world should not have narrow feelings. It is wrong to find faults with others. There may be faults in them. But do not see their faults, see their good qualities. Then the entire universe becomes one family. This is the spirit of the brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God. Such feelings promote universal brotherhood. *Mamaivamsho Jeevaloke Jeevabhuta Sanathana* (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). The Divine is the source of the entire creation. He is the creation, the Creator and the director of the universe. Divinity is invisible. It cannot be understood. Recognise that you all are the reflections of the Divine. Then you will not hate anyone or feel jealous of anyone; you will be free from egoism.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Cultivate love. Love is God, live in love. That should be the aim of your life. There is no god greater than love. If someone questions you, "Where is God?" you should tell him that He is immanent in every being. What is His form? Love is His form. You should recognise that form of love and tell it to others with full conviction. It is not enough if you say 'love,' 'love,' 'love'. You should express it through your conduct. Only then can you command respect and honour. That is the real attainment of true human nature.

### **Find Fulfillment in Serving Your Country**

#### *Students!*

You are young and possess great energy. You have all the powers of the mother earth. Despite possessing all the powers of the earth if you feel that 'you are powerless, it is a sign of your weakness. Whenever any calamity occurs at any place in the country, you should rush there and help the people. You should not treat them as different from you. Do not harbour the feelings of separateness. You should cultivate the feeling of oneness and participate in social service.

The society is the principal limb of Nature. Just as hands, nose, eyes, stomach and feet are the limbs of the body, the body is the limb of the society. The society is the limb of humanity. Humanity is the limb of Nature. Nature is the limb of the Divine. So, you should recognise this truth and participate in social service with love. Only then does human life attain fulfillment. Limbs like hands and nose belong to the body. But the body belongs to the society. So, it should serve the society. You should work with the active participation of all your limbs. You should identify the different needs of different people and act accordingly so that they will be benefited. That is true social service. These days many people go to villages, sweep the roads, whitewash the temple walls and feel satisfied that they have done social service. No, no. That cannot be treated as service as it is your duty. What is true service? Find out the main problems being faced by the people in the villages. What are the unfavourable circumstances? What are their immediate needs? You should do your best

to fulfill their needs. Summer is the next season. Drinking water is not available in some villages. Water is the very life of man. You should help them out either by digging borewells or by channelling water through some other source. When you take up such acts, which have utility value, you can claim that you have done some social service. In fact, you should not treat this good work as service. If you feel that you are doing service to someone else that may promote egoism in you. You should feel that you are serving your own people. All are human beings. All belong to one caste—the caste of humanity. All belong to one religion—the religion of love. There is only one language—the language of the heart. You should cultivate such broad feelings. Only then the service you render becomes true service. In this way, you should serve people and make your education and skills useful and meaningful.

The purpose of education is not to go abroad and amass wealth. This is the weakness of the Bharatiyas. The moment a student gets a degree in engineering or medicine, he applies for a passport. Serve the people in your own country, in your own village instead of going abroad. People are going abroad to earn money but not to earn good qualities. You should foster your culture. Lord Rama said, *Janani Janma Bhoomishcha Swargadapi Gareeyasi* (the mother and the motherland are greater than even heaven). You chant the name of Rama repeatedly. But are you emulating Rama while performing your duties? He followed the command of his father, sacrificed his kingdom and spent fourteen long years in the forest. Your body, intellect and mind are the gifts of your parents. Your head, your blood, your food and the money you spend are all the gifts of your parents. So, you should show your gratitude to them. That is the true service of God. It will give you the true feeling of peace. Today man is shouting 'peace,' 'peace' while holding atom bomb in hand. Although he has conquered space and reached the moon, he has no peace in his heart. How can it be attained? Fill your heart with divine feelings. Throw the bomb away. Then you can experience peace. Peace is the reflection of your inner being. Everything comes from within.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

You are good, highly educated and intelligent. But selfishness is destroying your every other good quality. One drop of poison can infect the whole pot of milk. So, you should eschew anger and hatred and serve the society with love. You may be able to do service in a small way. Do not get disheartened if you cannot do service in a grand way. Enter every tiny hamlet and identify the needs of the people there. In case you do not have the required money or capacity, do not worry about it. You students come together, join your hands and work together. There is nothing in this world which cannot be accomplished with unity.

Nourish the Sacred Culture of Bharat Today in Bharat, we find difficulties, sufferings, sadness and fear everywhere. What is the reason? We attained independence but lost unity. Lack of unity is the cause of all these sufferings. Even brothers fight with each other. First achieve unity. That should be the aim of your life. Unity should underline the tasks you undertake. Only then does all your learning become meaningful. You say that you have passed MBA, MFM, M. Tech. Then you go abroad begging for jobs. If you want to beg, do it here in your own country. Do not become a beggar in a foreign land. As you are a beggar there, you are losing respect here also. Look after the welfare of your own country. Your mother may be ugly. Still you call her mother. She brought you up. Do you treat someone else's mother as your mother just because she is more charming and beautiful? You call your country a poor country. This is the weakness of the youth. Know that India is not a poor country at all. What cannot be found in India cannot be found anywhere else. India possesses all the

powers. This is the land of Yoga. This is the land of virtuous actions. These days people are trying to convert such a great land into a land of ephemeral pleasures. You should not crave for pleasures. They breed diseases. You should dedicate everything to God through sacrifice. Bend your body and work hard. Your hands should be busy in work and your mind should be filled with good feelings. If you do so, there will be no greater man than you. Such a human being is true human being. God is in search of such a true human being. Devotees need not search for God. He is everywhere. Instead make every attempt to make your mind pure and pious. You should become a good man and not a great man. Is the world gaining in anyway from these so-called great people?

### *Students!*

You should not feel otherwise. Understand the truth properly. Educated people are the cause of difficulties, losses and sufferings of this country as most of them are motivated by self-interest. They are utilising their learning and skills to serve their own interests and not the interests of the nation. There are many great intellectuals in India. They have brought the nation to this sorry state. They are not at all selfless. If they had sacred feelings, the country would have made giant strides on all fronts. They are utilising their intelligence for their personal benefit only. In our country, some people take Rs. 10,000 as salary and do not do work worth even Rs. 10. How much is the country losing that way? Question yourself. Is the work put up by you in a month worth Rs. 10,000? But such people when they go abroad work very hard. They even do extra work. They work at night also. If they can work like that in foreign countries, why not in their own country? You should express your love, sacred feelings towards your country with broad outlook. This is true devotion. Devotion does not mean worshipping the photo of God. Such activities can be treated as good actions. You should cultivate good feelings. Without good feelings, good actions yield no beneficial results.

### **Embodiments of Love!**

What is the significance of Sivaratri? Siva stands for auspiciousness. You should sanctify your life with pious feelings on this day. You did Bhajan throughout the night. It has given you happiness. But it is confined to the external activity of listening and chanting only. The happiness should be felt in the innermost recesses of the heart.

What is the use if you involve in positive and constructive activities with negative thoughts in your mind? Get rid of negative thoughts first. Fill your mind with positive thoughts. Then the entire world will flourish; the society will flourish; your village will flourish and your home will flourish. Social service should expand from the individual to the society and from the society to the entire nation. Do not observe any differences while doing service. It can be any organisation. It does not matter. You go and participate. Service is your aim; sacrifice is your aim. Nurture pious and divine feelings. Only then will your life find fulfillment. Many youth waste their time and face innumerable problems till they get suitable jobs after completing their education. They blame the government for not providing them employment. How many jobs can the government create? If it goes on giving jobs this way, is it possible for it to run the country? Moreover, the employees are asking for a hike in their salaries. But the treasury is empty. There is no expected income. If the government imposes taxes, people blame it, saying that it is harassing the public. If the government does not impose taxes, how can it look after the welfare of the people? So, you should pay attention to this viewpoint also. In our institution, no fee is charged from the students, but in other institutions students object when the tuition fee, exam fee, etc., are raised. They insist that the fee should be reduced whereas the teachers demand that their salary should be raised. Wherefrom can the government get the funds? It collects

from the public and spends for their welfare. If it does not impose taxes, it is not possible to pay salaries or to spend for the education of the children. So, you should have a broad outlook.

Indian culture preserved to posterity from ancient times spread to other lands and attained great glory. But today the Indians themselves are looking at it with indifference and thereby harming the nation and the world. No other country had a culture of its own for such a long time. Others follow one culture today and adopt another tomorrow. But for the Indians there has been only one culture which is eternal, pure and virtuous. This culture alone can help you to cultivate the true nature of man. You should uphold this truth. You should nurture human values. The process of development should not be restricted to the fields of science and industry only. If you go on establishing more industries, risk of environmental pollution will also go on increasing. So, you should nurture sacred feelings in your heart to your utmost capacity.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

You are studying many branches of knowledge and are attaining degrees. When you finish your studies and leave Prasanthi Nilayam, serve the villages with the permission and help of your parents. Do not crave for government jobs. You should yearn to serve the public. If you serve them, they will look after your welfare. You do possess divine powers, but you behave as if you were powerless and weak. Today you are trying to have friendship, wealth and strength. But you are not fostering good character. What is friendship? It is just hello, hello. If you eat well, you get physical strength. You can also earn a lot of money by working hard. But are you living just for the sake of these things? These are all passing clouds. Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows. You should cultivate virtues. You should respect elders and officials and love your parents. You should have faith in your teachers. You should nurture such sacred feelings. Humanness and human values will unfold within you, which should be nurtured and developed. Without these human values all your learning becomes useless. Contentment is the hallmark of true education.

If you help others, you will be able to set an ideal to the world. The ideal never dies. It does not get dissolved. It grows day after day. You should foster such ideals and for that youth is the right age. It is the golden age. This sacred age should not be put to misuse. You should utilise it in the right way. Only then will all your learning become fruitful and valuable.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Cultivate love. Whatever you do, do it with the spirit of love. Without love, all your actions become unsacred.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho ..."

**—From Bhagavan's Sivaratri Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 5th March 2000**

*Dvandvateetam Gaganasadrisham Tattwamasyadi Lakshyam  
Ekam Nityam Vimalam Achalam  
Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam Bhavateetam Trigunarahitam... (Sanskrit Verse)*

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Man should cultivate noble qualities in order to understand the secrets and inner meanings of lofty principles enunciated in the Vedas. The terms used in the Vedas transcend the barriers of time and space.

### **Significance of Vedic Terms**

Consider the word Brahmananda. It means eternal bliss. Such a word cannot be understood by comparison with the joy derived from materialistic pleasures (Lokananda). 'Brahma' is derived from the root word 'Brihat,' meaning vastness. Brahmananda is that which is immutable. It is true and infinite bliss. It can also be termed as Advaitananda, meaning the bliss that results from the experience of oneness. It is also described as Nirgunananda and Nirakarananda (bliss that transcends form and attributes). Paramasukhadam means that which gives supreme happiness. It has nothing to do with the worldly happiness and sensual pleasures. It is identical with the experience of everlasting bliss. Kevalam means that which transcends the limitations of time, space and circumstances. Jnanamurtim means embodiment of wisdom. Here Jnana refers to experience of oneness. It transcends body, mind and intellect. Advaita Darshanam Jnanam (experience of non-duality is true wisdom). How can man comprehend this incomparable wisdom? The Vedas contain many such words suffused with sacred inner meanings. Only Divinity, which is attributeless, ancient, eternal, ever new, pure and unsullied, can reveal the inner meanings of the Vedic principles. Dvandvateetam refers to one who transcends all dualities such as happiness and sorrow, good and bad, merit and sin, etc.

Where is Gaganam or sky? It is all-pervading. Akasham Gaganam Soonyam. Really it cannot be seen. You look upward and say it is the sky. But it is not the sky, which is just a combination of clouds. Sky is that which provides space for them. This sky exists everywhere. Is it possible to show it? Yes, it is possible. It is there when you clap your hands. It is there when Swami speaks. What is the nature of this Akasha? Sound is its nature. Whenever there is sound, there is Akasha. Even inhalation and exhalation are sounds. Therefore, there is no place without Akasha. One who is more omnipresent than Akasha is God Himself.

What is the Lakshya? There are four profound statements of the Vedas: *Prajnanam Brahma* (consciousness is Brahman) is the essence of Rig Veda; *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman) is the essence of Yajur Veda; *Tattwam Asi* (That Thou Art) is the essence of Sama Veda; *Ayam Atma Brahma* (the Self is verily Brahman) is the essence of Atharvana Veda. All these four great axioms point to one Divinity. Though they state and explain differently, their Lakshya is one Divinity. Ekam Nityam refers to one who is eternal and without a second. The Vedas proclaim *Ekam Eva Adviteeyam Brahma* (Divinity is one without a second). *Om Ityekaksharam Brahma* (the letter Om is Brahman).

*Vimalam Achalam* is one who is pure and steady. In this universe, the celestial bodies such as the sun, the moon and the planets are constantly in motion. Modern students are aware of this. The cinema reel moves rapidly at the rate of 16 pictures per second, but the rate at which mind moves



cannot be estimated. Such a wavering mind cannot comprehend Divinity, which is steady, changeless, attributeless and is the embodiment of supreme bliss and happiness. The happiness related to the body and mind is no happiness at all. Inward happiness is true happiness. It is extremely difficult to understand the divine principle. Faith is very essential to experience Divinity. Where there is faith, there is love. Where there is love, there is peace. Where there is peace, there is truth. Where there is truth, there is Divinity. Where there is Divinity, there is bliss. *Sarvadheesakshibhutam* is one who is the witness of all functions of the intellect.

*Bhavateetam* refers to one who is beyond all emotions, feelings and thoughts. *Trigunarahitam* refers to one who is free from the three attributes—Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. Attributes are associated with form. So, the formless One has no attributes.

Only Divinity can confer eternal bliss. Worldly happiness is momentary. Man should therefore follow the inward path shown by the Vedas and attain Brahmananda.

### **Divine Name is Panacea for all Troubles**

When this body was seven years old, this tiny hamlet of Puttaparthi was afflicted by dreadful and infectious diseases like cholera and plague.

Fear-stricken parents would not allow their children to go out of their house. But the children, out of their love for Me, would come to Me without even telling their parents. All those children were of the age-group of six to eight. One day, nearly 12 boys gathered around Me and said in an anxious tone, "Raju, we have come to know that cholera and plague have spread in our village. It seems they are dangerous and fatal. What would be our fate?" I told them, "The body has to perish one day or the other, whatever may be the precautions you take. So, do not be afraid of death. Contemplate on God and take care that the diseases do not afflict you." The boys asked Me as to which form of God they should contemplate on. They were all very innocent. In those days, this was a very small village with a population of 106. They had no idea as to which form of God they should worship. I told them to light a lamp, place it at a thoroughfare at 6 o'clock in the evening and do Bhajans. They did not know what Bhajans to sing. Then I composed a few Bhajans for them. I told them, "We need not search for God outside. He is within us. Let us go round the village chanting the name of Ranga, wearing ochre robes and anklets and playing cymbals. Let us also get rid of the evil qualities of anger and desire."

In those days, after 5 O'clock in the evening no one dared to go beyond the Sathyabhama Temple as people considered it to be far off from the village and believed that the area beyond the temple limits was haunted. I infused confidence in them, saying there were no ghosts or spirits and advised them to drive away the diseases of cholera and plague by chanting the name of God. We wore anklets and walked up to the riverbed of Chitravati playing the cymbals and singing Bhajans. It was the divine name which eradicated the diseases of cholera and plague within a short span of three days.

### **Swami and His Childhood Companions**

The parents brought the children to Me and expressed their gratitude for having saved them from the epidemic. They said, "Raju, we are indebted to You for having instilled courage and confidence in our children. We don't want them to attend school; instead they will come to You. Kindly impart the education necessary for their welfare" Everyday at 6 o'clock in the evening, they would assemble at

My residence for tuition, after having their dinner. They used to address Me as 'tuition master'. Their parents wanted to offer 3 paise per month as Guru Dakshina, which I flatly refused. The children used to come to Me every evening for learning numeric tables and alphabet. Taking this opportunity, I used to impart spiritual knowledge to them. I used to advise them to keep away from bad company, not to indulge in criticism and slander, cultivate good habits and good qualities, respect your parents and obey their commands. Since then there was marked improvement in their behaviour and outlook. I had immense love for the children. Keshanna, Ranganna, Subbanna and Ramanna were among the children whom I used to take to the riverbed every evening. Words are inadequate to describe their innocence, purity and love for Me. A seven-year-old boy used to request Me to lie down for a while keeping My head on his lap, saying that I looked very tired and needed some rest. Seeing this, other children also wanted to have the privilege of keeping My head on their laps. Then they thought of a plan so that all would get equal chance. It was decided that each boy would take turns to keep My head on his lap for a count of fifty. They missed no opportunity to serve Me and I used to make all of them happy.

On moonlit nights, we used to go to Chitravati at 6 o'clock in the evening and return only at 11 in the night. A few elders would also accompany us. They used to pass time by playing games like Kabaddi, but the children were not interested in joining them. In spite of My repeated entreaties, they would not participate in any of these pastimes. They were more interested in Bhajans and being around Me. They would request Me to lead Bhajans. Thus, we used to spend our time on the sands of Chitravati singing Bhajans. The children used to plead with Me to compose new Bhajans and tunes. They used to extol My composing capabilities. I used to ask them to express their desires, if any, but not praise Me.

Once a merchant named Kotte Subbanna came to Puttaparthi from Kamalapuram. He had heard a great deal about My composing capabilities and had come to enquire if I was capable of writing a song that would serve as an advertisement for his new medicine. He came to Subbamma and enquired about Me. She told him, "I know Raju very well. He is admired by the entire village. He is endowed with good character, behaviour and conduct. Not merely that, He imparts good teachings to others." One day, Subbamma invited Kotte Subbanna for lunch. During the lunch, he expressed doubts regarding My composing skills. He said it was difficult for him to believe that a tiny tot like Me could write good poetry that would sell his new medicine in the market. Since he was having doubts, I told him to go to some person whose composing skills he had faith in. After some time, Kotte Subbanna came duties sincerely. During the month of Magha (11th month of Telugu calendar), I used to take the children to the Anjaneya Temple at 4 o'clock in the morning. Some of the children were so young that they would not get up at that early hour. So, I would carry them to the nearby pond, give them the sacred bath associated with the month of Magha and take them to the temple for Pradakshina (circumambulation). I would sit in the temple while the children would do Pradakshina. One day, they insisted that I too should join them in circumambulating the temple. I yielded to their pressure and started circumambulating the temple. Believe it or not, Anjaneya himself came and stopped Me from going round the temple. (Cheers) Hanuman said, "O Lord! It is I who should circumambulate You. You should not do this:" But the children mistook Anjaneya for an ordinary monkey. I told them that Anjaneya himself came and would not allow Me to circumambulate the temple. After this incident, there was a great transformation in the hearts of the children. They went round the village telling people what they witnessed at the Anjaneya Temple.

This news reached Karnam Subbamma also. Next day, she invited Me to her house saying, "Raju, today I have prepared Dosas; you should come and partake of them." In those days, food items like Idli and Dosa were considered to be rich man's food. I told Subbamma that it is not My nature to eat alone leaving so many other children. Then Subbamma prepared Dosas for all the children.

### **Teaching Moral and Ethical Values to Villagers**

The villagers had great reverence for Me. It is because of Sathya Sai Baba that the people of Puttaparthi started thinking of God for the first time in their lives. (Cheers) It gradually spread to the other villages too. I used to exhort the villagers to refrain from eating non-vegetarian food, consuming liquor and smoking. I used to stress on the need for Satwic food. During the festival of Ekadasi, it was a practice to hold bullock cart races on the riverbed of Chitravati. They used to whip the bullocks to make them run faster. I would tell the children to insist upon their fathers to stop whipping the bullocks. Not only now, even in those days I taught the principle of non-violence. Cockfights were quite common in villages those days. They used to tie small knives to the legs of cocks and make them fight with each other till one of them fell dead. In the process, the other cock would get injured badly. I told them that one should have competition in doing good deeds, not in such cruel acts.

One day the father of this body, Pedda Venkama Raju chided Me for interfering in the affairs of the village. He said that the elders knew better and I should not cross My limits. I told him that I could not tolerate if animals were killed or ill treated. As he could not convince Me, he directed the mother of this body to advise Me. At the time of serving food, she would tell Me, "Sathya, You should not do things that would displease Your father. If You do not listen to him, You will earn a bad name in the village." I argued with her saying, I was doing only good and was not bothered about what others said. I emphasised that one who always did good would never be put to disrepute. Kondama Raju, the grandfather of this physical body, also supported My argument. He called the villagers and told them that what I was doing was good for the village. He too advised them to refrain from violence and gambling. He cautioned them that lack of unity would disturb the peace of the village. Because of this kind of teachings, some people developed hatred towards Me.

### **School Days of Swami**

I had to go to Bukkapatnam by 7 a.m. to attend the school. Teachers were very affectionate towards Me. Every teacher would first ask as he entered the classroom, "Has Raju come?" Do you realise what I was like in those days? Ours was a poor family. Like children of these days, I did not have dozens of sets of dresses. I just had one pair of shirt and shorts. As soon as I returned from school, I would take off My clothes, wear a towel round My waist and wash them and put them up to dry. This way I would make do with one pair of dress for the whole year.

When questions were put to Me at school, I would always answer well. Most other students were not good at answering questions. My fellow classmates were quite grown up—in fact, some of them were almost 25 years of age and most of them would be wearing Dhotis. I was the youngest in the class. One day when I answered a question well, a teacher named Mahboob Khan asked Me to slap the other dull students. I had to climb on the desk to reach their faces. I touched them gently on their cheeks instead of slapping them. The teacher then chided Me, "Have I asked you to apply turmeric on their faces? I will show you how to slap!" Saying this, he gave Me a few hard slaps. As I was returning to Puttaparthi, some of the students threw Me down on the sands of the river and dragged

Me by My legs. They tore off My shirt and threw Me into the slush. All through this torture, I remained calm. Peace is My nature. Love is My very breath. Truth is the form of Swami. Bliss is My resolve.

After reaching the Hanuman Temple on the outskirts of the village, I washed My clothes and put them on again. Students may well imagine My state then. My shirt was torn at some places. There was not even a safety pin with Me to hold the cloth together. Nor had I any money to buy it. I had no desire to request anyone also. I do not ask for anything from anybody. This resolve I have been upholding from that day to this day. (Cheers) I went to Sathyabhama Temple, plucked a thorn from a bush and used it as a pin to mend my torn shirt. If one remains steadfast in one's true resolve, anything can be achieved.

Once Subbamma told Me, "Raju, you are becoming weak. Eat well and grow strong." My friends would bring everything prepared in their houses for Me. But I used to tell them, "See, in your houses meat or fish is cooked and eaten. So, please don't bring anything from your houses." This way I discouraged non-vegetarianism in Puttaparthi. In the same manner, I prevented cruelty to animals in the form of cockfights and cart races and also prevented the gambling habit of the people.

### **Subbamma's Motherly Affection for Swami**

Once some people inimical to Me set fire to the hut I was sleeping in. Some 10 children aged 6-9 years were sleeping outside in the verandah. The miscreants had locked My room from outside and set fire to the roof. The children were shouting loudly, "Raju! Raju!" I peeped out through the small window and said smilingly, "Don't be afraid." *Dharma Eva Hato Hanti, Dharmo Rakshati Rakshita* (if you destroy Dharma, you will be destroyed by Dharma; if you protect Dharma, you will be protected by Dharma). We protect the truth and the truth protects us. Have firm faith in this precept. The children closed their eyes and shouted "Raju! Raju!" as if it were a Mantra. As roof was made of hay, there was a big conflagration. Suddenly, there was a cloudburst and the fire was totally put out. The downpour was just over that small hut and nowhere else. (Cheers) The joy of the children was indescribable. "Raju, Raju... what a great miracle!" they were shouting, "we cannot live without you". I called them in and gave them some guavas and bananas. They asked Me, wherefrom I got these fruits. I told them, "Why do you bother? Eat what is given. Whether it is a mansion or a wayside shelter, how does it matter? It is enough if you get sleep. Likewise, it is enough if your stomach is full."

Subbamma came to know of this episode next day. Subbamma was a great soul. Swami was her very life. She made a thorough search to find the culprits. They were caught. She ordered that they should be banished from the village. The entire property of the village belonged to her. She was very wealthy. All lands belonged to her. So, she ordered them to get out of her lands. Then I caught hold of her hands. I told her, "Please don't punish them for my sake. Knowingly or unknowingly they have committed a mistake. Please forgive them. Please don't drive them away." When she told them this, Subbamma, Ramanna and others felt very proud of Me. They carried Me on their shoulders saying, "You must have been some great person in your earlier birth. Otherwise, you could not have such nobleness in you. Because of you, gradually this village is going to attain great fame." Subbamma said, "Don't mistake Him for a small boy. He is as powerful as lightning. How can you understand His true nature?" From that day, she did not allow Me to go out of her house. I stayed in her house and went to school from there itself. She was a great lady. She was sixty years old then. She was

always looking for Me asking, "Is Raju there? is Raju there?" She would sleep only after seeing Me safe. She always tried to protect Me from the wicked people in the village.

One day, a Brahmin lady came. She requested Subbamma to send Raju to her house for taking snacks in her house. Subbamma was not very happy at this proposition. She was suspicious and thought that there was some evil intention behind the invitation. She refused and told Me, "Raju, don't go anywhere without my consent." I said, "Subbamma! Why do you want Me to refuse her request?" She replied, "There is some wicked purpose behind her invitation." But I persisted and said, "I must fulfill her desire." I went there. She had made some Vadas. They were poisoned. I ate them. Within five minutes My blood turned blue. Subbamma came to know of this and came running looking for Me. When she found Me, I told her, "Don't worry, what they wanted, they have done. I can look after Myself" Then I asked Subbamma to give Me a tumbler of water with her own hands. As soon as I took the tumbler in My hand, the entire water turned blue. Subbamma's anger had reached its limits. She said, "Such women will ruin the reputation of Puttaparthi. There is no room for such people in this village. Only righteous and good natured people should live here."

### **Children Then and Now**

She called the mothers of Swami's companions and told them, "These children are not yours. They are all mine. They should be with Raju all the time. They should spend every moment of their life with Raju." Till recently most of them were alive. Perhaps you all know Sathyanarayana of Bukkapatnam; he was one of them and is still with us here. He was My classmate in Bukkapatnam. All these children would come to Swami. It is difficult to describe their unsullied affection, devotion and attachment to Swami. But today the Kali Yuga has poisoned the minds of children.

Children's minds are now filled with unrighteous feelings. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati*, as is the state of mind, so is the state of person. Children of those days were very pure and innocent. Swami resolved to spread these qualities among the villagers for their own good. Mere Bhajan or chanting "Rama, Govinda" is not enough. Cultivate good habits. One should develop exemplary qualities and earn a good name. Swami is happy when students earn reputation for good character. The children's behaviour should be good right from the start. That is why I say, "Start early, drive slowly and reach safely." If you develop sacred habits from early age, you grow into an exemplary person. Those who were with Me are shining examples in the villages even today. When Swami returns from Bangalore, they keep standing all along the way and offer their salutations on seeing Me, saying "Swami! Swami!" with great joy. Those who have followed Me by car know how these people bring potsful of water and wash the roads. They say, "Swami, you have brought water to us. We have to offer it back to You. If I just ask them, "How are you?" they are filled with bliss.

I have not accumulated any money or property. I have no property worth even a paisa. My entire wealth is My students. (cheers) I ask for nothing. I only give and give. There is no limit to Swami's giving. The devotees must be made happy by giving something. Swami's sole concern is the welfare of His devotees. You too should aspire for the welfare of your fellow beings. Only then will your life be safe and secure. If one leads one's life without departing from truth and righteousness, life will be fruitful and meaningful.

**—From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall at Prasanthi Nilayam on 17th October 1999**

## Communion with the Divine

Lucas Ralli

*Love God, love everyone and see yourself as a reflection of God with that wonderful shining light all around you. That is the way to God.*

What does "communion" mean? My idea was simply "communication," but my dictionary says "sharing, participation and fellowship."

However, I chose this subject because I have been able to communicate with the Divine for many years, and like so many others, have been aware of the Divine Presence on my nine visits to be with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The moment I arrived at the Ashram at Prasanthi Nilayam, I felt a completely different person. No worries, no anxieties; in fact nothing except love.

### **How to Communicate with the Omnipresent Lord?**

So, there we are with Swami with the feeling of "sharing, participation and fellowship". That is certainly a good starting point, and the closer we can get to Swami and all His teachings, the sooner we will find "liberation," a release from the endless lives that we lead, some of which lead us nowhere. Hence we come back, over and over again, and continue our path back towards our Creator. Hopefully, we will eventually merge again with God and find total liberation.

Every time I am asked to write an article, I cannot escape from repeating the "beginning," i.e. the moment (after a 40-year search) I discovered Swami. It was November 1979 when I read the following words:

*There is only one religion, the religion of love,  
There is only one caste, the caste of humanity,  
There is only one language, the language of the heart,  
There is only one God, He is omnipresent.*

Those words confirmed everything I had learnt and I realised that I had found a teacher who knew everything. So I became an instant devotee, especially as I found that I could communicate with the Divine at any moment of day or night, and God was always there. Where is "there" and who is "He"? I think the simple answer is the omnipresence of God and when you have that incredible experience, you know that all your worries and fears are forms of illusion. But most of us have them and that is presumably part of the reason why we are here now, some, no doubt, as teachers/helpers, and others to continue on the long spiritual path that will eventually lead us back to God.

Although I was always able to communicate with the Divine, I had the problem in the early days when many people thought my messages were "bogus". Hence, I kept a low profile. I remember that in January 1980, I told Swami that I wanted to come to see Him. However, to my surprise, He replied "Not now, later!" Then in the summer of 1980, when I was on holiday in Greece, He said, "I will speak to you in Bombay." Little did I know at that time that He only went to Bombay once a year, and only for a few days.

## **Sai Messages**

Jean and I came to Swami with His blessings in January 1981 when Swami was at Whitefield, but then He was going to Madras and also to Bombay. After two weeks in Whitefield, He told me in a 'message' that we should go and wait for Him in Bombay, and it was there that we had our first interview, exactly as Swami had told me the previous summer. Although we had many more interviews in the years that followed, this first interview was utterly divine, and time seemed timeless. We went out again in October 1981 when Swami was at Puttaparthi and here again we had some wonderful experiences.

However, we did not go again until 1983 by which time I was the president of the UK Sathya Sai Council. I was in the Verandah and had the chance to ask Swami if all the messages were from Him. His immediate answer was simple: "Where do you think they come from, the sky?" He told me to publish the messages in a book and even chose the publisher. He also told me that Prof. Kasturi would choose the name of the book, and the first name, which he suggested, was "Sai Messages for You and Me". The first book came out in 1985, and now there are five volumes in thirteen languages. In the early days of the UK Council, there were the usual problems that you get in any organisation. Some of them bothered me. So, at an interview in 1983, I asked Swami what we should do. His answer was in one sentence: "Why do you worry so much? I am you, you are Me, all one, all God." So I learnt to surrender everything to Him and cease to worry. It certainly seemed to work and for the rest of the 1980s, we had peace in the Organisation. Also, during those years, I travelled round the UK to visit so many Sai Centres where I was invited to give talks. At first, I was very nervous, but I realised very quickly that I was simply a channel and Swami really did all the talking. I never had to think, and yet it all flowed through beautifully. I could actually "see" it coming, and towards the end of a 30/40 minute talk, I could see how Swami was going to end up, which was always brilliant! But that was Swami, and I can only call it "Communion with God". The same thing continued after I was appointed Central Co-ordinator for Europe which meant I had to travel to several European countries every year and give talks at their big meetings. It was a fascinating experience, due entirely to the Divine Presence.

So, where are we today? Surely it is time to come to terms with reality, the truth that God exists and resides in our hearts, and that each one of us is a part of the totality. Can you imagine any other miracle beyond that? God loves us all and that love will never end, regardless of all our earthly experiences, doubts and everything that goes with it. Love God, love everyone and see yourself as a reflection of God with that wonderful shining light all around you. That is the way to God.

## **From Truth to Peace**

*When you plant the seed of Truth in the heart and make faith take deep root, with the rain of chanting God's Name, peace blossoms, yielding the fruit of liberation. Therefore, every human being should sow the seed of Truth in his heart. The deeper the root of faith goes down, the stronger will be the tree of life. You must provide water for the flourishing growth of the tree by means of Bhajan (singing the glory of God) and Daiva Chintana (contemplation on God). Only then will the flower of Santhi (peace) bloom and from this the fruit of liberation will be attained.*

**—Baba**

## **Seven Deadly Sins**

*The nation today is affected by the consequences of seven grievous sins. The first is business without morality. The second is politics without principle. The third, education without character. The fourth, worship without sacrifice. The fifth, wealth without hard work. The sixth, human existence without regard for scriptures. The seventh, devotion without austerity, These are the seven deadly sins that are ravaging the nation. The country will regain prosperity and peace only when all these are banished and you have morality in business, principles in politics, educated men who have character and work as the basis of wealth.*

—Baba

*The saline water of bad conduct should be transformed into the clouds of truth by the sun of Buddhi (intellect). Then alone will the sweet water of Prema fall from the clouds of truth.*

—Baba



## Real Name of God is Love

*It is the power of love that is responsible for the earth to rotate without a pivot. It is the power of love that makes the stars stand across the sky without falling on the ground. It is the power of love that keeps the oceans within their limits. It is the power of love that makes the wind blow incessantly in all the worlds. That power of love is mysterious, infinite, most wonderful and one without a second; it permeate.- the entire cosmos. The entire creation is saturated with love.*

(Telugu Poem)

### *Embodiments of Love!*

God is love. Love is the form of God. The Bhagavadgita declares: *Mamaivamso Jeevaloke Jeevabhuta Sanathana* (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of the Divine). Just as God, the embodiment of love, showers His love on the entire world, man too should share his love with one and all. The principle of love is beyond definition or description. As man is not able to recognise the sacredness of love, he is directing it towards worldly and ephemeral objects.

### **Follow Your Dharma**

God transcends all attributes. The same can be said of love too. But man conditions and limits love by associating it with worldly relations and wastes his life.

He uses the sacred word love to describe the relationship between mother and child, wife and husband, brothers, friends and relatives, etc. Prior to birth, who is mother and who is child? Similarly, prior to marriage, who is husband and who is wife? The relationship that exists between mother and child, wife and husband, brothers, sisters, friends, relatives, etc., has physical body as its basis. This physical relationship cannot be called love in the true sense of the term. There is no giving and receiving in true love. Many modern devotees pray, "O God, if you fulfill my desires, I will offer you ten coconuts." They offer their filthy hair and pray for mighty favours. Can this be called devotion? No, not at all. A true devotee is one who only gives and does not expect anything in return. Surrender is the true sign of devotion.

Human life is a combination of physical and spiritual aspects, which are related respectively to the head and the heart. But man follows the head and has only the physical world in view, thereby forgetting the spiritual aspect. So long as man follows his head alone, neither he nor the society nor the country at large can attain peace and security. Peace and security will reign supreme in this world only when man gives up body attachment and follows the principle of love that originates from his heart.

The dualities of righteousness and unrighteousness, truth and falsehood, merit and sin, heat and cold, etc., co-exist in this creation of God. People want Adharma (unrighteousness) to be eradicated completely from this world. They want only Dharma to exist, but it is not possible. In this world, Dharma cannot exist without Adharma and vice versa. The world itself is a combination of Dharma and Adharma. It cannot exist if one of them is absent. Man should use his power of discrimination and lead a life dedicated to Dharma. There lies the secret of man's happiness.

Man's Dharma is different from the Dharma of animals. But man is unable to differentiate between the two. Man's Dharma is to adhere to the principles of truth, non-violence and compassion. Man can never attain peace and security so long as he does not give up bestial qualities. Food, sleep, fear and procreation are common for men and animals. Then, what is man's Dharma? To think that you are a human being constitutes only half of the total truth. The other part of the truth lies in understanding that you are not an animal. You should keep reminding yourself, "I am a human being, not an animal" Do not stop at this stage. Enquire further as to which sex you belong to and which stage of life you are in, whether you are a Brahmachari, Grihastha, Vanaprastha or Sanyasin (celibate, householder, recluse or renunciant).

Follow the appropriate Dharma according to the stage of your life. When you are a celibate, you should not follow the Dharma of a householder. There will be decline in morals giving rise to troubles and turmoil when man fails to adhere to the Dharma appropriate to his stage of life. Man today is unable to understand the principle of Dharma corresponding to each of the four stages of life. The code of conduct is different for different stages of life. Never be under the mistaken notion that Dharma is the same for all people irrespective of their stage of life. The cause of Adharma today is that man is trying to follow Dharma that is not appropriate to his age or stage of life. Each should strictly adhere to the Dharma corresponding to his or her age and stage of life.

### **All Belong to the Race of Humanity**

Today people do not understand the significance of different faiths and different modes of worship that are prevalent in Bharat. They feel it is the existence of different castes, communities and religions that is responsible for all the violence, unrest and conflicts in this country. Existence of different religions has nothing to do with the violence and conflicts in this country. Absence of inner purity is responsible for all this.

It is the mind of man which is responsible for conflicts and disturbances, not differences in religions and communities. It is a grave mistake to attribute unrest and disturbances in a country to the existence of different religions. For thousands of years, people in India have lived in unity and fraternity in spite of the existence of various religions and communities.

*Religions are many, but goal is one,  
Jewels are many, but gold is one,  
Stars are many, but sky is one,  
Cows are many, but milk is one,  
Beings are many, but breath is one,  
Nations are many, but earth is one,  
Flowers are many, but worship is one.*

Different religions have come into existence to lead man to Divinity, not to create conflicts and disturbances. There is nothing wrong with any religion. Mistake lies in Mati (mind), not in Matta (religion). If mind is good, how can one find fault with religion? All people belong to one Jati (race), i.e., Manava Jati (human race). You should understand the meaning of Jati. It is based on form. For example, all flowers belong to one Jati. All trees belong to one Jati. Likewise, all human beings belong to one Jati. Mango tree and Neem tree belong to the same Jati, but you

cannot get mangoes when you sow a Neem seed. No doubt, all trees belong to the same Jati, but their fruits and tastes of their fruits vary. There are in all 450 kinds of tastes corresponding to the fruits of various trees. You should try to understand the underlying principle of unity of each Jati. Human race is one, but human beings are different; their feelings, thoughts and behaviour patterns are different. It is utter foolishness to think of annihilating the Jati as a whole. It may be possible to kill a few individuals, but it is not possible to annihilate the entire human race. Human race is true and eternal. It is highly sacred. It is a sign of ignorance to give room for differences and conflicts without understanding the unity of the human race. You have to recognise the divinity in man as the basis of human unity. The ancient culture of Bharat lays great emphasis on understanding this unity in diversity. This is possible only through love.

*Love is God. God is love. Cultivating love is the true spiritual practice. If one holds on to the principle of love firmly, one becomes eligible to attain the state of non-dualism. (Telugu Poem)*

### **Love is Your True Form**

The state of non-dualism is contained in the principle of love alone. But man, being carried away by body attachment and physical relationship, fragments his love in various ways. This cannot be called love in the true sense of the term. As Swami repeatedly stresses on the need to cultivate love, some people may wonder as to what the form of love is. The answer is: Love is God. *Prema Easwara Hai, Easwara Prema Hai* (Love is God, God is Love). Love is the fundamental basis of everything. Atma, Brahma, Hridaya, Uniki (existence) are synonyms of Love. Love is Atma. Love is Brahma. Everything is suffused with love. Then how can anyone describe the form of love? The same principle of love exists in one and all. Once you understand this principle of unity, there will be no scope for hatred. Today conflicts are on the rise because unity is forgotten. *Ekatma Sarvabhutantaratma* (bodies are different, but the same Atma dwells in all). *Advaitam Brahma* (Brahma is non-dual). Brahma means vastness. It indicates unity and not multiplicity. So, give up body attachment and strengthen faith in the spirit of oneness. It is only the body attachment that is responsible for evil qualities like anger, jealousy, greed, etc. Some people go to the temple of Lord Venkateswara and pray, "Swami, if You fulfill my desires, I will perform Brahmotsavam for You." Some others pray, "Swami, if my daughter gets married, I will conduct Your Kalyanam"(marriage). Can there be a marriage for God? Does God fulfill your wish so that you may perform His marriage? With such prayers, people are trying to cheat even God. One should pray to God out of love, not with expectation of any favours from Him.

Prayer born out of selfishness is no prayer at all. You should see the Atma everywhere and think that you are in the company of God always.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

I often address you as 'embodiments of love' because love is your true form, which is pure, unsullied, eternal, ancient, formless and non-dual. You love your mother because you have the confidence that she is your mother. So, confidence is the basis of love.

*Where there is confidence, there is love,  
Where there is love, there is peace,  
Where there is peace, there is truth,  
Where there is truth, there is bliss,*

*Where there is bliss, there is God.*

Peace, truth and bliss are not elsewhere. They are in you. You are the embodiment of peace, truth and bliss. It is foolish to search for peace and bliss in the external world. Nothing exists separate from you. Everything is the reflection of the inner being. Try to visualise your reflection in everybody just as you see your reflection in a mirror. In order to propagate this truth, Lord Krishna declared in the Bhagavad Gita: "All are a part of My Being." You and I are not separate. The principle of love is one and the same in both of us. All your spiritual practices will prove futile, if you do not adhere to the principle of love.

The world is like a mirror. All that you find in this mirror is only the reflection, not the reality. Your right eye appears as left eye in the mirror. Then how can you consider it as reality? When the mirror is removed, the reflection also disappears and the reality remains. Consider yourself as embodiment of divinity. Experience your true nature of love. This is Sakshatkara (vision of the Self). Some people claim to have the vision of the Self in meditation, but the vision of your reality is true Sakshatkara.

All the worldly relationships are temporary like passing clouds. They are subject to change with the passage of time, but the reality is absolutely changeless. That is the principle of love. Worldly love may turn into hatred with the change of time. What is liked today may not be liked tomorrow. But love has no likes and dislikes. God is no different from love. You may adore Him as Jesus, Zoroastra, Allah, Rama, Krishna, Buddha or Guru Nanak. You may call Him by any name. All these are *Pettina Perlu* (names given by somebody). Love alone is *Puttina Peru* (natural name). The names given are bound to change, but love is changeless. You should aspire for that love. That is true Bhakti (devotion). Bhakti confers on you Yukti (discrimination), Virakti (detachment) and Mukti (liberation).

Lord Krishna is the embodiment of love. His name consists of five letters—K, R, S, N, A, which represent Pancha Bhutas (five elements), Pancha Pranas (five life forces), Pancha Koshas (five life sheaths). Krishna is interpreted as *Karshati Iti Krishna* (because He attracts, He is Krishna), *Krishiti Iti Krishna* (Krishna is the plougher). That is, Krishna is one who ploughs the field of your heart and sows the seed of love in it. *Krushyati Iti Krishna* (because He imparts bliss, He is called Krishna). Thus, Divinity of Krishna can be perceived in every place and activity. In this world, everything is suffused with divinity. Other than divinity nothing exists. Even this cloth (handkerchief) is divine, this flower is divine, and everything is divine. If there is no divinity in this cloth, one will not desire for it. Love pervades everything. You should make every effort to understand this. Human heart is full of love. Many students write to Me, "Swami, I love You." They use the symbol of Hridaya to denote love. This means Hridaya is that which is filled with love and compassion. Hridaya is the very form of God. *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God dwells in all beings). *Isavasyam Idam Jagat* (God permeates the entire universe). *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma* (verily all this is Brahman). Share your love not only with your fellow beings, but also with birds and beasts. Stand united. Consider the entire universe as a single family.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Today you find disturbance and unrest all over the world. The reason is that man lacks broadmindedness. There is no expansion of love in him, there is only contraction of love. Narrow mindedness is man's own creation. You are subjected to hardships because you are trying to limit the infinite Atmic principle.

### **Guru Disperses the Darkness of Ignorance**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Today we are celebrating the festival of Guru Poornima. Who is Guru? 'Gu' stands for Gunateeta (attributeless). 'Ru' signifies Rupavarjita (formless). There is another interpretation of the word Guru. *Gukaro Andhakarasyat, Rukarasthannirodhaka* ('Gu' signifies darkness and 'Ru' denotes that which dispels darkness.). So, God, who is attributeless and formless, is the true Guru. In the word 'Bhagavan', (God) the letter 'Bha' stands for effulgence. An ordinary electric bulb illuminates only a limited area, but God who is all-pervasive illumines the entire creation. Divinity shines in everybody. So, do not hate anybody. In this world, people are driven by hatred and narrow feelings. They go even to the extent of killing each other. What a heinous crime it is! Hurting others amounts to hurting God Himself. Your hatred will certainly rebound on you. Today people derive demonic pleasure in causing harm to others without understanding the truth that one day or the other they will have to reap the consequences of their actions. Make others happy and you will certainly be happy. Today violence and murders have become the order of the day. Greatness does not lie in killing others; even an insect is capable of doing that. Greatness lies in saving lives.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

You are bound to face the consequences of your actions. So, do good and you will certainly reap good results. Do not get disheartened if there is no immediate reward. Wait for a while, you will certainly be rewarded. Your suffering is nothing but the consequence of bad deeds in the past. Prayer alone can alleviate your suffering to some extent. Prayer is a way of expressing your gratitude to God. The sun is extolled as *Kritaghnaagnaya Namah*, (salutations to the destroyer of the ungrateful), meaning it will withdraw itself from the eyes of those who have no sense of gratitude.

As Venkataraman has pointed out (in his speech made earlier), the quality of Kshama (forbearance) is most essential for one and all.

*Forbearance is truth, forbearance is righteousness, forbearance is nonviolence, forbearance is the teaching of the Vedas, forbearance confers happiness and heavenly bliss.*

(Telugu Poem)

Forgive those who have harmed you and criticised you. Have faith that whatever happens is for your own good. If someone hurls abuses on you, do not retaliate. Enquire within yourself whether he has criticised the body or the Atma. If he has criticised the body, indirectly he has done a favour to you because body is nothing but a heap of flesh, blood, bones and faecal matter. On the other hand if he has criticised the Atma, it amounts to criticising his own self because the same Atma exists in both of you. One should cultivate this kind of forgiveness and broadmindedness.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Guru is one who dispels the darkness of ignorance arising out of body attachment. Body is but an instrument. God has given you the body to take to the path of action. It is God's gift. *Deho Devalaya Prokto Jeevo Deva Sanathana* (body is the temple and the indweller is God). Consider all bodies as temples of God and offer your salutations. Salute even your enemies. *Sarva Jeeva Namaskaram Kesavam Pratigachchhati* and likewise *Sarva Jeeva Tiraskaram Kesavam Pratigachchhati* (whomsoever you salute, it reaches God and whomsoever you censure, it also reaches God).

### **Understand the Principle of Unity**

I often address you as *Bangaru* (gold) because you are the embodiment of Hiranyagarbha. The principle of Hiranyagarbha is present in your heart. You may change the shape of the jewel, but gold remains changeless. The value of gold decreases when it is mixed with various metals like copper, brass, etc. Likewise, man by birth is highly pure and most valuable. But on account of his association with evil desires and bad company, he loses his value.

*Thyaja Durjana Samsargam, Bhaja Sadhu Samagamam, Kuru Punyam Ahorathram, Smara Nityamanithyatham.* (Discard bad company, join good company, perform meritorious deeds day and night and enquire into that which is permanent and that which is ephemeral.) This is your Dharma.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

It is said, *Janthunam Narajanma Durlabham* (birth as human being is the rarest of all beings). So, sanctify your life by making proper use of your senses. Do not talk as you please. Talk softly and sweetly. Have proper control over your vision. You all know what happened to Keechaka when he looked at Draupadi with evil intentions. Bhima smashed his head into pieces. That is why Buddha exhorted mankind to cultivate Samyak Drishti (sacred vision).

Buddha attained enlightenment only after he cultivated sacred vision. Consider all that you see as the form of God. Think what is good, see what is good, hear what is good, talk what is good and do what is good. Only then can you attain Divinity.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

This body is approaching its 75th birthday. All these years, I have remained blissful because I am aware of the principle of unity. (*Cheers*) You too can experience bliss if you understand this truth. I do not hate anybody. Neither do I have any enemies. I have absolutely no fear because everything is My own form; the same Atma exists in all. When an innocent child smiles at you, you too smile at it. Likewise, when I smile blissfully, all of you do the same. Have a sacred heart. Cultivate sacred feelings. Then the result also will be sacred. Have faith that God is everywhere. You may have to undergo trials and tribulations, but never lose faith in God. Consider faith as your very life-breath. Each one of you is an embodiment of love, but because of improper food and habits, evil qualities like jealousy and anger arise in you. As is the food, so is the head; as is the head, so is God. So, consume only Satwic food. Then you will have only sacred feelings and your speech will also become sacred.

### **Do not become a Dunnapota**

In order to put you on the right path, I sometimes pretend to be angry, but in reality I am never angry. (*Cheers*) The only harsh word that I use is *Dunnapota* (he-buffalo). You are truly a buffalo if you do not undertake good actions. You can become a good fellow only when you do good. When there is a heavy downpour, the cow and calf may run away to safety, but the he-buffalo remains where it is because of its sloth and inertia. You should not become inactive like a he-buffalo; try to transform yourself. Human life is highly sacred. Do not put it to disuse. I love everybody. Love is My true form. All of you are the sparks of My Divinity. So, share your love with your fellow beings, just as I share My love with you all. Then you too will become divine. When all follow the sacred path, the world will undoubtedly attain peace and prosperity.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Give up ignorance, light the lamp of wisdom within you and ultimately merge with the Divine. This is Swami's message for you today. Develop love. Through love alone can you annihilate the mind and through love alone can you get cured of any disease. Only love can eradicate the evil qualities in you. So, love all. Love the Hridaya, not the physical body. Love the Divinity that is installed in your heart. Body, mind, intellect and senses are merely instruments, you are the master. So, master the mind and be a mastermind. Never become a slave of your mind.

Contemplate on the Divine day in and day out. That alone can bring about transformation in you. You may chant any name, contemplate on any form; but understand the truth that God is one and only one.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...*"

—*From Bhagavan's Guru Poornima Sandesh in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2000*

AVATAR VANI

DASARA DISCOURSES - V

## **Fascinating Memories of Swami's Childhood**

*When you give up ego, you become dear to one and all,  
Grief will not touch you if you get rid of anger,  
Freedom from desires brings peace,  
You will be happy and blissful if you leave greed.*  
(Sanskrit Verse)

### *Embodiments of Love!*

In the world, ego is a demonic quality. An egoistic person loses the love of even his wife and children. As long as one has anger, one cannot escape from misery. A person who has many desires can never be peaceful. Similarly, a greedy man can have no happiness.

### **All are My Friends**

Restraint of the mind is essential for everyone from the common man to the celestial beings. Without such discipline, one cannot accomplish even a trivial task however powerful one might

be. Even though God is omnipotent and omnipresent, He too adheres to certain rules and regulations when He takes human form, for he behaves in a restrained manner and thereby strives towards the uplift of humanity. Avatars like Rama and Krishna too exercised considerable restraints while performing their duties. Rama took three vows—His first vow was to have only one wife. The second, to hit the target with one arrow. And the third, not to break the promise once made. He never broke these vows. Lord Krishna too took three vows: *Dharma Samsthapanarthaya Sambhavami Yuge Yuge* (I will incarnate again and again to re-establish righteousness), *Yogakshemam Vahamyaham* (I will look after the welfare of My devotees) and *Mokshayishyami Ma Shucha* (I will grant liberation if you surrender to Me).

I too have taken some vows. One of the vows of Sai is that I shall never go back on My promise. Once I give My promise to someone, I will never forsake him or distance him from Myself even though he may work against Me or disobey My command. This is the nature of My love. There are many people who received this promise from Swami and are enjoying peace and happiness. Some of them were treacherous and tried to harm Swami. But Swami never harmed or hated them. I have never hated anyone till date. I do not know what hatred is. Hatred is, in fact, a perversion of the mind. I wish that no one should come to harm. Then why should anyone have feelings of hatred towards Swami? It is the consequence of the Samskaras (inherent tendencies) of their previous births. No one can escape the consequences of his deeds, come what may. Everyone has to reap the consequences of his/her evil deeds. Only those who have feelings of love in them can understand the sweetness and power of love. Swami has no enemy in the world. All are My friends. I am a friend of even those who deny My friendship. (*Cheers*)

### **Power of Devotion and Surrender**

The Vedas say: *Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati* (the knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman). You become what you think or contemplate on. Darwin was a great scientist. He was known for his good qualities and broadmindedness. Henslow was his favourite teacher and friend. He religiously followed Henslow's teachings and imbibed his manners and personality traits. Consequently, he started looking like Henslow. At one time, some of their friends saw both the preceptor and the disciple together at one place. They could not make out who was Darwin and who was Henslow. You read in the Bhagavata that Prahlada was the son of a demon. But as he contemplated on the name of Lord Hari constantly, his face reflected the brilliance of Lord Hari. Ratnakara was a ruthless dacoit. Inspired by the teachings of seven Rishis, he started chanting the name of Lord Rama. Consequently, his face reflected the effulgence of Lord Rama. You worship Rama as the creator, sustainer and redeemer of the world. At the same time, you recognise the heights reached by Ratnakara—who later came to be known as Valmiki—as the foremost poet and the author of the great epic Ramayana. In fact, the power of devotion and surrender is so great that it is difficult to describe it. No one can estimate the sweetness of love. So, never hate anyone.

Anger, hatred and jealousy are demonic qualities. These qualities should be annihilated and human values should be cultivated. Sathya and Dharma are chief human values. That is why the Vedas proclaim: *Sathyannasti Paro Dharma* (there is no Dharma greater than truth) and *Sathyam Vada Dharmam Chara* (speak the truth and adhere to righteousness). You should follow this command of the Vedas. But today's man is disregarding Sathya and Dharma and taking to the path of untruth and unrighteousness, thereby destroying his humanness. First and foremost, you



should practise Sathya and Dharma. It is impossible to describe the power of Sathya and Dharma. The entire creation emerged from truth and would ultimately merge into truth. The Vedas therefore exhort that man should imbibe this quality of Sathya. Truth is a Satwic quality. This should find place in your heart. Contrary to this, modern man is filling his heart with negative qualities. Can such a man be called a human being in the real sense of the term? In this context, I relate to you certain incidents of My childhood days.

### **Childhood Days of Swami**

When I was a young boy, many children aged 5-7 years used to come to Me to play and sing Bhajans. I used such occasions to teach them the cannons of righteous conduct. I would tell them: "Your mother gave birth to you bearing all the difficulties and discomfort. She nourished you in her womb for nine long months. Your father brought you up against all odds. So, love your parents. That is your foremost duty. Adhere to truth under all circumstances. Do not try to cover up your faults due to the fear that your parents will reprimand you. Do not tell lies. Let your parents rebuke you or even beat you. It does not matter. You speak the truth only" The power of truth surpasses the power of atom bomb and hydrogen bomb. There is no greater weapon than truth. But you should know how truth should be uttered. *Anudvegakaram Vakyam Sathyam Priya-hitham Cha Yat* (speak truth in such a way that it is pleasing and does not annoy others). You should not utter harsh words.

When children grew a little older and entered their seventh or eighth year, they asked Swami questions about right conduct. I told them to eschew anger, hatred, jealousy and ostentation. Naturally, kids relish food and some kids try to steal whenever they find some dish of their liking. I used to tell them, "Don't try to steal anything. In case you have a genuine need for food, a book or a pen, you should ask your classmates and get it. But never take anything without their knowledge."

In those days, there were many Muslims in this village. They used to celebrate Moharram. Some Hindus too used to join them. I used to tell the children, "Morality is more important than the mode of worship or religion. Morality is our life-force. Hence forget the religious differences and make friends with everybody. You too should participate in this festival." One boy said, "Raju, I belong to the Brahmin community. My parents will not permit me to participate in the celebration of Moharram." I said, "You are a human being. You belong to the human race. Your caste is the caste of humanity. Your religion is the religion of humanity. Keep this in your mind:' When the parents came to know that I was telling their children to give up the differences of caste and religion they started quarrelling with Me. "Raju, why do you spoil our children by telling them that there should not be any differences on the basis of caste or religion? Is it fair on your part?" they argued. "There is no greater religion than the religion of love in this world," I told them firmly. I was not afraid of anything. Why should truth be afraid of anything? By adhering to truth one can achieve anything.

One day, the children had a discussion. "Raju is telling us many good things. Are we putting into practice at least one of them?" they questioned each other. One boy said, "I am trying my best to speak the truth under all circumstances." Another boy said, "God is my beloved. He is my mother, He is my father and He is my life." His name was Kesanna. He was the son of Buggapalli Acchamma. She used to eke out a livelihood by selling Beedis and cigarettes in a

small kiosk. "It is not possible to put into practice all the teachings of Raju, but I feel happy to listen to his words," said another boy. "So sweet are Raju's words. How can we refrain from listening to Him? Raju is very dear to me," another boy commented. "Do you alone love Raju? Don't we love Him?" other children questioned him. In this way, the children showed their love for Me and My teachings.

**Subbamma Realises Swami's Divinity** One day, we all visited Karanam Subbamma's house. She was a pious lady with a broad mind. "Raju, you have brought all these children. But I didn't cook anything for you. You all come again tomorrow. I will keep something ready for you to eat," she said. That day, she prepared Sambhar and rice thinking that I would relish it. I told the children to observe limits since she belonged to Brahmin community and it was not so easy for her to give up the differences of caste or religion. She brought rice and Sambhar in a vessel and served food in the hands of children. They all had a hearty meal. She knew that I would not be satisfied if I was fed first and I would be satisfied only when other children were fed first. So she first served them. At the end, only a small quantity of rice was left. She felt bad for not being able to feed Me properly and put that rice into My mouth. "She served food in our hands whereas she fed Raju with her own hands. What is the reason?" the children started whispering. I said, "Subbamma, your act has annoyed the children." She turned to the children and said, "I love you all equally.

But Raju feels satisfied when all of you are fed first. So, I served food to you first. In the end, only a small quantity of rice was left. It was not enough even to make a morsel. So, instead of serving in His hand, I put the rice in His mouth. Raju feels satisfied only when everyone else is satisfied. That is His nature. There is not a trace of selfishness in Him. You all should emulate Him. Give up selfishness and self-interest and nurture love. You should believe that your happiness lies in the happiness of your fellow human beings. Only then will you prosper and become an example for others." Then she told me, "Raju, I will prepare lemon rice tonight. So, go out and get me some curry leaves." Under that pretext she sent Me out. I was then eight years old. Though I was older than other children, yet I was the shortest of them all. But I could climb up the trees well. I climbed up a tree and plucked a branch of curry leaves as asked by Subbamma. Do you know why she sent Me out? She wanted to tell the children about Me.

In My absence she told them, "Children, do you know how fortunate you are to get the friendship of Raju! He is not an ordinary boy. One day, He will become the king of kings and the emperor of emperors. (*Cheers*) You just follow His command. Let it be any issue, do not disobey Him. If you do so, all the gods will be angry with you. Derive happiness by making Him happy. He won't express His unhappiness. But you have to face the consequences if you do anything wrong. So, conduct yourselves in such a way that He never feels dissatisfied."

Subbamma's husband had a second wife called Kamalamma. She said to Subbamma, "Sister, how can these children understand the philosophy you are teaching them?" Subbamma replied, "This is not philosophy at all. I am simply telling the children how to conduct themselves in day-to-day life. I have no children. So, I treat them as my own children. They are companions of Raju who is my very life."

One day, Subbamma prepared Vadas in her house. As there were not sufficient Vadas which could be distributed to all the children, so she wanted to give them to Me only. She went on to

the terrace of her house and called Me through a window as My house was adjacent to her house. "Raju, Raju, come here at once." I ran to her. She handed over a small packet through the window. I said, "Subbamma, it is not fair that you should give something to Me alone. When you give, give to all the children." "Forgive me, Raju, this time. From tomorrow, I will distribute to everyone equally," she said. Swami kept that packet of Vadas till evening and distributed a small quantity equally to all the children. You know why Swami is telling all this. These are glimpses of My love. It is beyond anybody's perception to understand the nature of My love, equanimity and Divinity. (*Cheers*) My love is infinite. It cannot be described in words. It is inexplicable. Some people misunderstand Swami's love and ruin their life. Swami wants everybody to be happy. *Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu* (May the entire world be happy!) No one should undergo any suffering. That is My wish.

### **Swami's School Days**

You all know Gunda Sathyanarayana of Bukkapatnam who visits this place often. He is here now. He was My classmate. Look at him.

(Swami gestured to Sathyanarayana to come to the dais. Surprised by the sudden invitation he faltered as he moved up to the platform and prostrated before Swami. The audience went ecstatic and gave a loud applause when Swami lovingly introduced His childhood friend and asked him to speak. Sri Sathyanarayana described how Swami had been showering His love and affection on him from His childhood days. Later Swami continued His discourse.)

I along with some other boys used to go to school in Bukkapatnam. We were studying in 5th Standard. My family was very poor. Other children of this village too were poor. Mother Easwaramma used to prepare Ragi balls. Making a small pit in the Ragi balls, she used to keep groundnut chutney in it. In those days, there were no tiffin carriers or boxes. So, the food was packed in a cloth. I would carry it on My back to Bukkapatnam. We would run to the nearby tank as soon as the lunch bell rang at 12 noon. It was not possible to unpack the food immediately as it would get stuck with the cloth. We would keep the pack in water for some time before unpacking it. As soon as we started eating the food, the school bell would ring again indicating the closing of the lunch period. One of the children was the son of a wealthy man. He was an intelligent student. He used to bring rice and Sambar. He would distribute the food he brought among the children. I too would distribute the Ragi balls. That is how we enjoyed unity both in eating and playing. There is immense happiness in unity. But today unity and love are absent in the educated people; instead, jealousy and hatred are on the rise. People quarrel with each other even on flimsy matters. I used to teach the children not to fight under any circumstances.

During My stay in Bukkapatnam School, I composed many poems. I composed a poem on Bukkapatnam town also. (Swami sang this beautiful poem composed by Him in His childhood.)

*Captivating is the river Chitravathi  
Encircling the land with full flow  
And yonder the rising range of hillocks  
Guards the land like a fortress.  
Studded in this landscape is the town of Bukkapatnam*

*Like the crown jewel of Bukkaraya's glory,  
At the centre dwells Mother Chitravati Devi  
And there lies close by My Puttapuram.  
(Telugu Song)*

When Swami composed songs and taught to the children, they felt very happy. They wondered at My composing skills and asked: "Raju, how did you acquire these poetic talents?" In the Bukkapatnam school, prayer was held in the morning. The headmaster told Swami to compose songs for the morning prayer. (Swami sang the prayer song He used to sing during those days.) Even in those days of My childhood, I preached unity of all religions. The villagers of Puttaparthi used to call Me a Vedanti (one endowed with knowledge of the Vedas).

Later, when I was studying in Uravakonda, I had to share the desk in My class with two other students. I used to sit in the middle, flanked by Ramesh and Suresh on either side. They were very dull students. It was next to impossible for them to get even one mark out of hundred. I used to help them in our class. In those days, there was a public examination called E.S.L.C. We were required to appear in this examination. But Suresh and Ramesh were gripped with fear when they came to know of this. All the time they were beseeching Swami, "Raju, you are our saviour." "Don't get scared. Be bold," I told them. Even in those days I used to infuse courage in children. In the examination hall, the invigilators supplied the blank papers. The examinees were not allowed to carry any piece of paper. The teachers screened the children thoroughly as they suspected that some of the students might have kept in their pockets some slip or written something on their palms. Meanwhile, one teacher came and said to the other teacher, "Kondappa, who do you think these students are? They belong to Raju's group. They will not resort to any copying in the examination" The other teacher said, "I know. It is evident from the brilliance of His face."

We all went into the hall. That was our first examination. As our numbers were not in sequence, we were sitting at three different places in the hall, far away from each other. Ramesh and Suresh lost all hope. Then I told them, "I will write your answer sheets also. Don't panic! Do as I say. I will play a drama. When I am the director of the cosmic drama, can't I bail you out!" (*cheers*) First I wrote down the answers with great speed and folded them after writing My name and number. I kept the papers aside. Then I wrote the answers in Ramesh's handwriting, and noted down his name and number. In the same way, I answered all the questions in Suresh's handwriting. I kept all these three sets of answer sheets with Me. Meanwhile, the bell rang. The invigilators were in a hurry to collect the papers. Ramesh and Suresh were looking for Me. I told them to go out of the hall. They went out without giving their papers and I kept all the three sets of papers on the table of the examiner. Results were announced after one week. Only we three got first class and secured cent per cent marks. "Very, very, very good" were the remarks of our headmaster. Ramesh and Suresh expressed their gratitude by saying, "Raju, we got first class because of you only."

### **Revelations of Divinity**

There was a 70 years old man named Subbarayudu. He used to visit the temple of Sathyabhama regularly. He would wash his feet and sit on the raised surface there. One day, I was passing that way. "Raju, Raju, come here," he called. When I went near him and asked him what he wanted,

he said, "I am a hefty man. You can sit on my lap and relax for some time. It is broad enough." "What benefit do you derive if I sit on your lap?" I asked. "I cannot explain it. The benefit is infinite and magnificent. Raju, you are the light of this village Puttaparthi. In future, your glory will reach every nook and corner of the world."

The words uttered by him on that day have become a reality today. The name and fame of Raju and the glory of this village Puttaparthi have reached everywhere not only in this country but also in the entire world. (*Cheers*) In those days, it was a tough task to reach this place even for wayfarers. Such a tiny hamlet has attained a highly significant place in the world map. Subbarayudu could predict that this village would have a glorious future. He had no children. He embraced Me warmly and said, "Raju, how fortunate I am to get this opportunity of embracing You." He felt very happy. "But Your father and I are not on talking terms. So, Your father may not like if he comes to know that I have spoken to You. Don't tell him," he requested Me. "There is nothing wrong in it. I will speak the truth. My father is a good man," I said.

When I reached home, the father of this body questioned Me, "Why did you speak to Subbarayudu? He is my foe." "He may be a foe to you but not to Me. That is why I spoke to him." I folded My hands with respect and said, "Elderly people like you should never hate anybody. Give up hatred, join hands with others and work for the development of this village." He was not convinced, and again asked Me, "What did he speak to You?" "He said that this village would illumine the entire world because of My presence and glory," I replied. "What is Your glory Subbarayudu is describing so greatly?" He was sarcastic in his remarks. I left that place, brought flowers with both the hands and asked him, "Do you know who I am?"

*I am Sai, know the truth  
Give up attachment and futile attempts  
The worldly link between you and Me is severed.  
No one can restrain Me  
However mighty he might be. (Telugu Song)*

Saying this, I scattered the flowers on the floor. The flowers formed themselves into Telugu letters—"Sri Sathya Sai Baba." From then onward, the father of this body was careful while dealing with Me. In this way, I used to preach not only to children but also to elders. I would teach women and youth also. I told the youth to give importance to character. They should not have evil feelings, which are like poison. I taught great truths to even small children.

Sathyanarayana is a noble person. He had a small shop in Bukkapatnam. One day, he saw My torn shirt. In those days, the price of both shirt and shorts was nine paise only. He brought cloth for shirt and shorts and said, "Raju, you should not feel otherwise. I have brought this pair with great Love. You get them stitched." "If you want to maintain good friendship with Me permanently, you should not offer them to Me. I won't touch them," I said.

Till date I have never desired anything. I have not touched even a single paisa of anyone. Things come to Me on their own unasked whenever the necessity arises. I have never stretched My hand before anybody from My childhood till now and this will be the norm in the future also. I feel happy in giving and not in receiving. Some people may criticise Me out of jealousy if they don't

get their desires fulfilled according to their expectation. If they criticise loudly, their accusations get scattered in the air. If they do it silently, they will be the recipients of that criticism and not Swami; it will never reach Me. I don't hate, criticise or ridicule anyone. I would lovingly speak to even those who mocked at Me in My childhood days.

### **Swami Keeps His Word to Subbamma**

One day, Subbamma came to Me and said jovially, "Raju, You are giving many good useful pieces of advice to innumerable people. My husband is on the wrong path. Why don't You set him right?"

"I will do if you don't feel otherwise," I told her. He used to sit near a basil plant in front of his house every evening. I composed a song in a pleasing tune. I taught the song to some children and asked them to pass before the Karanam (Subbamma's husband) singing: *"Don't run after bad women, you will become a vile fellow; it is for certain. People of your community will excommunicate you; relatives will drive you away. Friends will slap you in the face with sandals."* (Telugu Song) The Karanam got annoyed when he saw the children passing that way singing this song. He went inside. Later, he sent word for the children. "I wonder who wrote this song for you?" he asked them. "Raju wrote it," the scared children blurted out.

He too knew that I was behind the drama and no one else could do it. The next day he called Me, offered some mangoes and said, "Raju, please don't teach such songs to children." I said, "Sir, you are the head of this village, you are not supposed to do such things."

He promised that he would behave well henceforth. I too gave word to him that I would not trouble him any more. Subbamma came to know of this and felt very happy. I brought transformation in elderly people in those childhood days too. After the demise of her husband, Subbamma dedicated her life to Swami. She was in Swami's service till she breathed her last. It is essential for you to know how devoted she was to Me. She used to provide free food to devotees. One day, we were travelling in a bullock cart. "Subbamma, what do you want?" I asked her. She looked around and noticed that no one else was there. Then she said, "Swami, I don't want anything. But when I breathe my last, please sanctify my life by pouring water into my mouth with Your hands." I promised that I would fulfill her desire.

Later, one day I had to go to Chennai in a hurry as desired by some devotees. I had to stay there for ten days. It was the war period. Once in every hour there used to be air-raid siren. The streets would become empty with that warning. Swami could not return to Puttaparthi. Meanwhile, Subbamma fell seriously ill. She was taken to Bukkapatnam. There she died. Her relatives started making sarcastic remarks: "Sai Baba gave word to her that He would pour water into her mouth at her last moments. Did He come? Where has He gone?"

During My return journey, I stopped at the cremation ground as it was on the way. I saw some people there. The logs of wood were kept ready for cremation. "Who is going to be cremated?" I asked them. Washerman Subbanna was there. He said, "Swami, Subbamma died." "Is it! When did she die?" I enquired. "Three days ago, Swami," he replied. I went to the house where her body was kept. Her relatives were about to carry her for cremation. Her sister saw Me and started wailing. "Baba, she longed for Your arrival. She yearned that You would pour water into her

mouth before she breathed her last. At last she died with that disappointment." I told her that there was no possibility for such an eventuality and asked her to fetch water in a tumbler. I put a basil leaf in the water and I removed the cloth from her face. Ants were crawling over her body as three days had already elapsed. "Subbamma," I called her. Immediately she opened her eyes. (*Cheers*) She held My hands and wept. "Subbamma, look here," I said. I wiped tears from her face with a towel. "Now close your eyes peacefully," I told her. I poured the sacred water into her mouth and kept My promise.

### **Eradicating Differences of Caste and Community**

Subbamma always tried to protect Me from wicked people. Washerman Subbanna was a very strong man. The other Subbanna of Chandrappa was seven feet tall. Subbamma ordered that one of these two should be always with Me. She told them, "Swami might go to the river at any time. He is very young. He cannot walk down the distance. So, one of you should carry Him on your shoulders." She used to make several arrangements for my comfort. She was a highly virtuous woman. Whatever she did she used to do it in such a way that pleased Swami most.

One day, a Harijan by name Ganganna invited Me to his house at mealtime. He is still alive. He is 90 years old now. His son is now working in our administrative office. I told Subbamma that I was going to Ganganna's house to eat food. She said that she too would accompany Me. "I am going to a Harijan's house. You don't come," I said. "Swami, when You are going, why shouldn't I come. I know no fear. I will accompany You," she told Me. We ate at Ganganna's house. Ganganna was scared when he saw her as she belonged to Brahmin community. I told him, "You should not feel like that. Give up the differences of caste and religion. Live happily with the spirit of unity." From those days itself I started promoting unity among different castes and religions. I can go on telling about My childhood days for any length of time.

Children should nurture good qualities. They should give up bad qualities like anger, ostentation and jealousy. They should not allow the ego to grow. Cultivate love. It should be your life-breath. Without love, you are as good as a living corpse. In any situation do not leave love. With love, you can conquer the whole world.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho Ram, Ram, Ram...*"

—From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall,  
**Prasanthi Nilayam on 18th October 1999**

### **Fraudulent Collection of Donations**

It has come to our notice that one organisation in Nagpur is fraudulently collecting thousands of rupees as donations from patients stating that they, as donors, would get free treatment in Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences (Super Speciality Hospital). They have printed letterheads in the name of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences with address, phone numbers, etc. On these letterheads, a report called patient report is made indicating the name of the patient, address, age, occupation, phone number and the name of the department in

the hospital and these patients are directed to show to the concerned department in the hospital the so-called patient reports with the donation receipts for getting free treatment.

The persons who are collecting donations from patients stating they would get free treatment in Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences are cheating the patients, as Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has established 100% free Super Speciality Hospital called Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences at Prashantigram, Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh with the departments of Cardiology, Cardiothoracic Surgery, Urology, Nephrology and Ophthalmology, where patients requiring treatment in those specialised departments are given totally free treatment without distinction of caste, creed, race or religion. Moreover, patients are registered in the Hospital Computer in chronological order and they are called for surgery strictly according to this list.

All readers of Sanathana Sarathi are requested to give wide publicity to the above facts to the fellow devotees and to the general public at large.

**Director Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences**

#### ***GURU POORNIMA CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM***

#### **Cultural Offerings at the Divine Lotus Feet**

*On the holy occasion of Guru Poornima, many cultural programmes were held at Prasanthi Nilayam to offer homage to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Jagadguru of millions of devotees from all parts of the world. A glimpse of these programmes is given here for "Sanathana Sarathi" readers.*

#### **Ashadi Ekadasi**

An excellent programme was presented by the Bal Vikas students and Youth Wing of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Mumbai (Maharashtra) on the holy occasion of Ashadi Ekadasi on the morning of 12th July 2000 in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 6.55 a.m. and showered the bliss of His Darshan on the large concourse of devotees. The first item of the programme was a dance by a group of Varkaris who came in a procession symbolising the traditional procession called "Dindi" when devotees throng the temple of Panduranga at Pandharpur.

This was followed by the main item of the programme in the form of a play entitled "WWW. God Exists. Luv" The play beautifully depicted that man had to look deep within and visit the Divine website rather than waste his time in visiting websites in the computer and burden himself with more and more information without bringing about transformation. A dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna after the Mahabharata war and a skit regarding the harmony between head, heart and hand further illustrated this theme.

Interspersed with beautiful songs and dances by small children, this well-scripted and well-presented play earned the appreciation of one and all. In the end, Swami showered His love and



blessings on the participating children and also materialised Vibhuti for them. The morning programme came to a close at 8.20 a.m. with distribution of Prasadam and Arati.

### **Sant Tukaram**

On the evening of 12th July 2000 on the holy day of Ashadi Ekadasi, an excellent play was presented by the Bal Vikas students of Maharashtra in Poornachandra Auditorium at Prasanthi Nilayam in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. The play entitled "Sant Tukaram" brought live the life story and teachings of this great saint of Maharashtra.

The play shows that Tukaram's worldly life is a total failure as he is totally engrossed in the contemplation of Vitthal. Neither his poverty nor the reprimands of his sharp-tongued wife Avali can deter him from his total surrender and devotion to the Lord as his heart is one with God. In a befitting finale, Tukaram ascends bodily to heaven when a chariot of lights comes to his house to take him to the abode of the Lord.

Lofty theme of Bhakti, excellent acting of the children and perfect choreography made this play a befitting presentation at the lotus feet of Bhagavan Baba who blessed the children, distributed clothes to them and also materialised a gold chain for the child who played the role of Tukaram. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan.

### **Musical Offering by Pandit Bhim Sen Joshi**

At the end of the play, to the pleasant surprise of the audience, an announcement was made that Pandit Bhim Sen Joshi would make his musical offering at the lotus feet of Bhagavan. The first composition in Rag Lalit and Bhatiar was a special offering to Bhagavan, the opening words of which were: "Charana Kamal Balihari Sai Charana Kamal Balihari." Sri Joshi sang two more Bhajans and sent the audience into raptures. Thus, the day of Ashadi Ekadasi culminated in the most befitting manner by the rich and melodious devotional presentation by this renowned singer and ardent devotee of Bhagavan. In the end, Bhagavan honoured the singer with a shawl and materialised a glittering gold bracelet for him. The programme came to a close at 8.00 p.m.

### **Kuchipudi Ballet**

On 15th July 2000, Bal Vikas children of Hyderabad presented a classical dance drama "Srinivasa Kalyanam" in the Poornachandra Auditorium as part of Guru Poornima celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam. Bhagavan Baba came to the Auditorium at 6.00 p.m.

The children presented the mythological story of Vishnu descending to Bhuloka as Srinivasa and doing penance. To bring Vishnu (Srinivasa) back from penance, Siva and Brahma also descend to Bhuloka along with Lakshmi who takes birth on the earth as Padmavati. The ballet ends with the marriage of Srinivasa with Padmavati while Brahma presiding as priest.

It was a feast for the eyes to see this divine play enacted by the children, who performed as if they were professional dancers and actors. At the end of their performance, Bhagavan went up to the stage, blessed the children and also materialised a gold chain for the girl who played the role of Srinivasa. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan.

### **Guru Poornima Function**

A unique feature of Indian Culture is that it accords the highest place to the Guru, since the Guru shows the path to God, the ultimate goal of man's earthly sojourn. The festival of Guru Poornima, when the Guru is ceremonially worshipped, has therefore very great spiritual significance. This festival assumes extraordinary significance in Prasanthi Nilayam because this is the abode of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Guru of all Gurus.

This holy festival was celebrated on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2000 in Prasanthi Nilayam where thousands of devotees attended the function in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba with great devotional fervour. Bhagavan came out of His abode at 6.45 a.m. to grant the bliss of His Darshan and shower His grace on the devotees who occupied every inch of space in the Sai Kulwant Hall and all its surrounding areas. Two bands of boys and girls from Primary School led Bhagavan into the Sai Kulwant Hall. In His infinite mercy and compassion, Bhagavan went out of all the gates of the Hall so that all devotees both inside and outside the Hall might be blessed with His Darshan.

After Darshan, Bhagavan sat on the chair on the dais at 7.00 a.m. Soon after this, the Institute students started chanting Stotras in praise of Guru. Before giving His Divine Message on this holy day, Bhagavan graciously permitted Prof. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, to make a brief speech. Prof. Venkataraman congratulated the devotees who had this unique opportunity of receiving the blessings of Bhagavan Himself, the Divine Guru of all Gurus, on this auspicious day. He referred to several incidents from Bhagavan's life, particularly His stay at Kamalapuram, to show how Bhagavan bore all difficulties with fortitude and forbearance, and practised the value of forgiveness to teach these virtues by His own example.

After this, Bhagavan gave His nectarine Discourse (given separately). The programme came to a close with distribution of Prasadam and Arati. Universal Symphony Orchestra God, it is said, is lover of music and singing His glories wholeheartedly is one of the most effective ways of attaining Him. That is what 44 musicians from 19 countries must have aspired for when they presented at the lotus feet of their Divine Guru, Bhagavan Baba a wonderful concert entitled "Universal Symphony Orchestra" on the holy evening of Guru Poornima on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2000. The programme organised in the Poornachandra Auditorium at Prasanthi Nilayam was dedicated to Bhagavan for harmony in the universe. Bhagavan Baba came to the Poornachandra Auditorium a few minutes before 6.00 p.m. and showered the bliss of His Darshan on the assembled devotees. The programme started with a classical presentation entitled "Tannhauser Overtime" which depicted the struggle between the inward and outward tendencies of man. For the next one hour, the audience had a taste of divine music interspersed with singing of individual singers. At the end of the programme, Bhagavan went up the stage, blessed the artistes and honoured them with shawls. This delightful programme came to a close at 7.15 p.m. with Mangalarati to Bhagavan.

## **Man is the Embodiment of the Trinity**

*Evil thoughts make a person ignoble,  
Good thoughts make a person noble,  
The person with no thoughts attains peace,  
The word of Sai is the word of Truth. (Telugu Poem)*

### *Embodiments of Love! Boys and Girls!*

Man is the crown jewel of all living beings that exist in this infinite cosmos. He is at the very apex of God's creation. Human life is most worthy, valuable and sublime. What is it that lends such great value to man? Is it the body or the form that is responsible for this? No, not at all. The body is ephemeral, consisting of foul smelling flesh, urine and faecal matter. It is only a rented house for the Atma.

### **The Nature of the Trinity**

At the end of his long speech, Deepak Anand (a senior student who spoke earlier) asked Me to answer his question: "All Avatars have parents. Then who are the parents of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara?" Neither the Upanishads nor any other scriptures give the answer to this question. Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara are not embodied beings; they are symbolic of Gunas (attributes). They exist in the form of attributes in the human body and impel it to perform various functions. But man, who is unable to understand his humanness, is not capable of recognising the divinity within him. *Isavasyam Idam Jagat* (Divinity pervades the entire cosmos). God is present in all beings as their indwelling spirit (*Sarva Bhutantaratma*).

The divinity, which fills the entire cosmos, exists in man as 'Hridaya'. The Vedas name this 'Hridaya' (spiritual heart) as 'Atma'. Atma has another name 'Easwara'. *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God dwells in all beings). The mind originates from the Atma and is known as Vishnu Swarupa, as stated in the axiom *Viswam Vishnumayam* (the universe is pervaded by Vishnu). It is said, Brahma originated from the lotus blooming from the navel of Vishnu. So, speech, which originates from the mind, represents Brahma. Therefore, Easwara is Atma Swarupa, Vishnu is Mano Swarupa and Brahma is Vak Swarupa. The three aspects of Godhead, viz., Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara are intimately interrelated. In a way, they do have a form. But this is not a physical form, but the form of consciousness.

Vishnu is Sarva Vyapaka (one who is omnipresent); so is the mind. *Manomoolam Idam Jagat* (the mind pervades the world). The mind can go anywhere at any time. It is not bound by time, space and circumstances. Brahma is Brihat Swarupa (one with cosmic form), which signifies vastness. Similarly, Vak (sound), which represents Brahma has limitless vastness. Brahma is addressed as *Shabda Brahmayi* (Brahma is the primordial sound). Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara are limitless, infinite and all pervasive. This Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara, thus, permeates the entire cosmos. But it is also present in its microscopic form in human body. They exist as the smallest of the small and also as the vastest of the vast (*Anoraneeyan Mahatomaheeyan*). This greatest of the great divine power is present in the smallest of the small form in every atom of the universe.

It is not possible for anyone to see the infinite cosmos and the Trinity that pervades it. But it is possible to realise Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara who reside in the human body. You can attain the knowledge of their cosmic form only when you realise them within yourselves.

Hridaya stands for Easwara. One who realises this should not harbour evil thoughts and evil feelings. Easwara is described as *Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathanam Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta Nirmala Swarupinam* (attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, conscious, free and embodiment of sacredness). Man's conduct should therefore be according to the attributes of Easwara. But men today behave as heartless beings even though they are endowed with the pristine and unsullied heart. It is essential for man to conduct himself befitting the sanctity of the heart with which God has endowed him. Brahma symbolises speech. What kind of speech is being referred to here? The speech which is symbolic of Brahma has auspiciousness, purity, splendour and sweetness. You should see that your speech is pure, soft and sweet. Brahma pervades the entire universe as primordial sound. You should therefore preserve the purity and the sanctity of speech by observing silence and truthfulness. The words you speak should contain the magnificence, sanctity and purity of Brahma.

You should exercise utmost care and attention while speaking. The ancient sages laid down the Sadhana of Mounam (silence) to maintain the purity of speech. They realised that excessive talk could lead to sins and abuses like hurting others, speaking falsehood or creating emotional excitement. That is why they recommended penance of the tongue for spiritual aspirants. Mounam does not signify merely the absence of speech. It also signifies the absence of Sankalpa (thoughts). In fact, the mind is a bundle of thoughts. Look at this handkerchief. You call it a cloth; but it is, in fact, a bundle of threads. The threads constitute the cloth. If you want to do away with the cloth, you should remove the threads one by one. Similarly, if you remove the thoughts, the mind is dissolved. For this, you must control your speech. Only then can you experience the Brahman.

Since the mind represents Vishnu, it is your duty to keep the mind pure and untarnished. Vishnu is depicted as always smiling blissfully and remaining ever peaceful. So, too, your mind should possess the serenity, sanctity and bliss of Vishnu. Vishnu is, in fact, only Mano Swarupa, though in paintings He is shown with Shankh (conch), Chakra (discus), Gada (mace) and Padma (lotus) in His hands. Man should achieve the extinction of the mind by emptying it of all thoughts. That is why I say 'die mind' whenever I materialise a diamond ring for devotees. I bless them that their human mind should die and the divine mind should be born.

### **The Story of Jaya and Vijaya**

Once upon a time, the four sages (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujata) went to have the Darshan of Vishnu. These four sages are depicted as eternally young and their minds are as pure and unsullied as those of children. They are beyond the three attributes and body consciousness. Endowed as they are with the boon of eternal childhood, these sages move about like innocent children without putting on any clothes. But the door-keepers of Lord Vishnu, Jaya and Vijaya, did not allow them to enter the abode of Vishnu in this condition. The sages argued that God is beyond three attributes and they had come for His Darshan having transcended the three attributes. But the guards would not let them in. This infuriated the sages who cursed the guards to be born as demons. Cursed by the sages, the two guards went to Vishnu and petitioned their prayers thus, "O Lord! What will happen to us now? We have no other desire than to have Your Darshan. Your Darshan (vision) is our delight; Your Sparshan (touch) is our food; Your

Sambhashan (speech) is our breath. We yearn for this Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan. We pray to You that we should be with You at the earliest."

Touched by the pleas of the doorkeepers, Vishnu said to them, "The words of the sages are irrevocable. As you have been cursed, you are bound to be born as demons. But your prayers and My grace will help you to come back to Me. It is not possible for anyone to revoke the curse of the sages. But I give you two options. You may take birth as demons devoted to Me for nine lifetimes and then come back to Me. Else, you can come back to Me after three lifetimes itself, during which time you, as demons, will be My enemies, filled with fury and hatred against Me." The two guards Jaya and Vijaya opted to be born as demons for three lifetimes and reach the Lord thereafter. They tenaciously clung to the principle "*Sarvada, Sarvakaleshu Sarvatra, Hari Dooshanam*" (blaming and abusing God at all places and at all times). If you call Krishna a thief, the devotees of Krishna will pick up a quarrel with you. But when in Bhajans you sing, "*Chittachora Yashoda Ke Bal Navaneeta Chora Gopal*" (O son of Yashoda, You are the stealer of hearts and stealer of butter), all the devotees will also join in singing. Does it not amount to calling Krishna a thief? But devotional music lends sweetness to these phrases and the abuse disappears.

### **Focus Attention on the Present**

Easwara is symbolic of the heart. "*Tridalam, Trigunakaram, Trinetrām Cha Triayudham, Trijanma Papa Samharam, Eka Bilvam Sivarpanarri*" (we offer the trifoliate Bilva leaf which is symbolic of the body with three attributes to the three-eyed Siva, who carries the trident and has the potency to destroy the sins accumulated over three births). Siva is depicted as the one with the third eye. The third eye does not refer to the physical eye. It is symbolic of wisdom and foresight. Man has only two eyes as he can visualise only past or present. But God knows the future also. That is why He is depicted as having the third eye. Today man is always preoccupied with the past and the future and blatantly ignores the present. The present is most important, for the present is the consequence of the past and contains the seed of the future. It is the present that shapes the future. Hence, all your attention should be on the present so that you can have a bright future. The present is the seed that comes from the tree of the past. It is also the seed for the tree of the future. Your future lies in your present. You can sanctify your present by good speech and good thoughts. So, first of all, you must make sincere efforts to achieve the sanctity of speech. But it is the purity of the mind that leads to the sanctity of speech. Where did Brahma come from? Brahma came from the navel of Vishnu who symbolises the mind. You need the grace of Vishnu to cultivate purity of speech, for it is the purity of the mind that leads to the purity of speech.

### **God's Will Ultimately Prevails**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

You are all the embodiments of the Trinity! You are the embodiments of the three attributes (Trigunas)! You must propitiate Lord Siva to achieve the purity of the heart, for Siva signifies the heart. It is ultimately His Will which prevails. Here is a small story to illustrate this. One day Parvati pleaded with Siva, "O Lord! You roam around the world without having a house of Your own. Since You do not have a house, how can I carry on my life with You? If You build a small house, we can live comfortably and it can also shelter the sages who come frequently to You." Grihalakshmi (housewife) naturally wants Griha (house). It is a natural desire of all women.

Having heard the words of Parvati, Easwara said, "O Parvati! It is not enough if you merely build a house. We should have a cat to hunt the rats that will take shelter in the house even before we move in. We will then need a cow to feed the cat with milk. Following this, a maid-servant will be required to look after the cow. Why go for all this bother? It is better we do not have a house at all." Easwara tried His best to dissuade Parvati from her pet project, but Parvati did not budge.

Finally, Easwara said, "it is not the auspicious time for building a house. Agni (the god of fire) will burn it to ashes. I know what is going to happen in the future." But Parvati was determined to have her way. She said to Easwara, "The god of fire is your servant. You are the embodiment of all power and strength. All the gods and the five elements are at Your beck and call. You have to simply pass an order to the god of fire not to touch our house and he will obey it."

Eventually, Parvati prevailed upon Siva. He agreed to go to the god of fire to get a promise from him not to burn down Parvati's house. When Siva was about to start on His journey, she told Him, "it will be a humiliation for me if Agni decides to burn our house. In case he does not accept Your request, please play on the Damaruka (Siva's musical instrument). I will instantaneously get the message and set the house on fire myself. I will not stand the mortification of Agni razing my house to the ground."

Siva went to Agni. Agni saluted Siva and said, "O Lord, what has brought You here? What is Your command for me?" Siva replied, "Parvati is building a house. Since she has started the work at an inauspicious time, there is a possibility that it may be burned to ashes. Hence, you should promise that you will not burn the house." Agni promised that he would do as commanded. But he had a request to make to Lord Siva: "O Master! I have been yearning for a long time to see Your Tandava Nritya (cosmic dance). Bless me by acceding to my prayer!" Siva obliged and started performing the cosmic dance to please Agni. During the course of the dance, Siva started playing on His Damaruka.

*"Holding the Damaruka, Lord Siva performed the Tandava,  
With Ganga coursing through His matted locks,  
And the third eye flashing on His forehead,  
As the crystal rosary sparkled and glinted,  
Siva danced the Tandava."*

(Telugu Song)

Meanwhile, listening to the sound of Damaruka, Parvati thought that Agni had not yielded to the request of Lord Siva. As she did not want to give a chance to the god of fire to burn down her house, she herself torched it. In the meanwhile, Easwara came back to Parvati and was stupefied to find the leaping flames burning Parvati's house. He asked her, "Parvati, why have you set the house on fire? Agni promised Me that he would not burn your house." "Then why did You play on the Damaruka?" Parvati queried. It was My Will that there should be no house. But in order to please you, I went to Agni. There I performed Tandava dance to fulfill the wish of Agni who had been yearning to see Me perform it. While performing the Tandava dance I played on Damaruka inadvertently," Siva said. The moral of the story is that the Will of Easwara prevails, come what may.

The Will of Lord Siva is bound to be fulfilled for it emanates from the heart. The noble thoughts that arise from the heart are bound to find fulfillment without fail. The heart is verily Siva Himself. Hence, you should cultivate a pure heart.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

It is to be emphasised that you should cleanse your heart. Criticism, calumny and crookedness should never enter the heart, for the heart symbolises Siva Tattwa (auspiciousness). It is from the pure heart that the pure mind emerges. This is not the monkey mind as some people call it. The mind is symbolic of Vishnu and it should be filled with pure feelings and thoughts. It acquires the form of Vishnu when it is filled with love, bliss, truth and compassion. It is vitiated when evil thoughts enter it. Truthful speech emerges from such a pure mind. Such truthful speech represents Brahma. So, it should be sanctified by Sathya (Truth).

*Creation arises from Truth,*

*Creation dissolves in Truth,*

*There is no place where Truth does not exist,*

*Witness, O people! the splendour of Truth. (Telugu Poem)*

### **God Protects His Devotees**

Divinity has two aspects: Rudra (destroyer of evil) and Bhadra (beneficent). God fulfils those desires of yours, which will do you good. He will not fulfill those, which are harmful to you. The Lord is prepared to go to any extent to give succour to His devotees. The story of Markandeya testifies to this fact.

Lord Siva blessed sage Mrikandu with a child, Markandeya who had a life-span of only sixteen years. But Markandeya did not know that he would die at the age of sixteen. On the eve of the last day of the sixteenth year, Markandeya noticed his parents crying and asked them to explain the cause of their grief. Then the parents spoke with anguish, "What to speak of our misfortune! Today is the last day of your life." Markandeya was astonished when he heard this. He felt sad that he had not used his time properly. He said that he would not waste even a single moment and rushed to the temple of Easwara to pray for His grace. He firmly clasped the Siva Linga and prayed to Him with all his heart. Lord Yama (God of Death) entered the scene to snatch away the life of Markandeya as his time was over. He reflected for a moment how to throw the noose of death over Markandeya, for Markandeya was clinging firmly to the Siva Linga. As the time was fast running out and the destined moment came, Yama had to throw the noose on Markandeya. Since Markandeya had embraced the Siva Linga, the noose held the Linga as well. Lord Siva appeared instantaneously, reprimanded Yama for the affront and blessed Markandeya with eternal life.

The story of Markandeya illustrates that you are safe in the company of the Lord. It was the determination of Markandeya that changed the Will of Easwara. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as you think, so you become). As is the food, so is the belch; as is the action, so is the result. God's grace depends on the sincerity of devotees' prayers. Do not give room for doubt at any time and never deny the Lord. Be firm in your faith that your Hridaya is Easwara, your mind is Vishnu and your speech is Brahma. Make the best use of the speech, the mind and the heart and you will surely attain the goal of supreme blessedness. Your actions decide the results.

I have given this discourse on Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara as Deepak Anand prayed to Me to speak about the Trinity. Otherwise, I would not have unravelled this divine mystery. Many people fritter away their time without making any effort to understand the hidden truths. Time is most sacred. The Lord is time itself. Hence, the Lord is extolled as "*Kalaya Namah, Kalakalaya Namah, Kaladarpadamanaya Namah, Kalaswarupaya Namah*". God controls and transcends time, God is the master of time. Sanctify your time by good speech, good mind and good heart. Make love as the basis of your life.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...*"

**—From Bhagavan's Summer Course Discourse on the evening of 16th May 2000 in Sai Ramesh Hall, Brindavan**

### **Caution is Advised**

Well-meaning devotees from different countries visiting Chapala, Mexico close to Guadalajara are advised that Dr. Hilarion Dorce and members of his family have not been authorised by the Sathya Sai Organisation to collect funds for any Ashram, clinic, hospital or any other activity using the name Sri Sathya Sai Baba. It is strongly advised that devotees limit their charitable contributions to the established trusts and foundations of the Sathya Sai Organisation in order to avoid deception and disappointment.

**—Leonardo Pablo Gutter Chairman Zone 2 Latin America**

*Precious Pearl of Grace You have won this human body, this human life, as the reward of many lives spent in acquiring merit. You have won this chance, this unique good fortune of being able to get Darshan of Sai. Plunging deep into the waters of this tumultuous ocean of Samsara, you have heroically emerged from its depths, with this rare pearl in your hands—the Grace of Sai. Do not allow it to slip from your clasp and fall into the depths again. Hold on firmly to it. Pray that you may have it forever and be filled with the joy that it confers. That is the way in which you can render this life fruitful.*

**Baba**

*All of you are the sparks of My Divinity. So, share your love with your fellow beings, just as I share My love with you all.*

**Baba**



## Flowers That Never Fade

*Eight are the flowers that please the Lord,  
Offer Him the flowers of non-violence and sense control,  
Compassion on all creatures, forbearance and peace  
Penance, meditation and truth above all  
These are the flowers dear to the Lord.*

(Sanskrit Verse)

### *Embodiments of Love!*

God does not expect you to perform rituals nor does He want you to study the scriptures. All that He desires from you is eight types of 'flowers'.

### **Ahimsa and Sense Control**

The flower of Ahimsa (nonviolence) is the first of the eight flowers that one should offer to God. Nonviolence means not causing harm to any living creature by thought, word and deed. We find doctors performing surgeries on patients to cure them of their ailments. In the process of surgery, the doctors cut the body with a knife. You cannot call it an act of violence because it is beneficial to the patient. Some people may argue that even cutting the vegetables is an act of violence because the vegetables and trees have life in them. No doubt, vegetables and trees have life, but they do not have the mind. Consequently, they do not suffer any pain. Only man has got five sheaths, namely, food sheath, life sheath, mind sheath, wisdom sheath and bliss sheath. One with the mind experiences pain and pleasure. Men, animals, birds and insects are endowed with the mind, not the trees and vegetables. In some trees, you find the sap oozing out when you pluck their fruit. Oozing of sap from a tree is a natural phenomenon, but some people mistake it for the tears of suffering. The trees do not suffer any pain because they do not have the faculty of the mind.

The second is the flower of Indriya Nigraha (sense control). All spiritual practices will prove futile if one lacks sense control. Control of the senses is very essential for one and all. Lack of sense control is the main cause of all the unrest and agitation that you find in the world today. How can one control the senses? First of all, one should exercise control over the tongue.

*"Oh tongue, ever sensitive to sweetness,*

*I tell you truly that which is sweet and yet yields perfect health....*

*All this is contained in the sweet words—Govinda, Damodara, Madhava."*

(Sanskrit Sloka)

You must control your tongue as it always craves for a variety of delicacies. You must ask this question, "O tongue, how many bags of rice, wheat and vegetables have you devoured! How many delicacies have you consumed? Be on you if you are still not satisfied:" *Bhikshannam Deharakshartham* (a morsel of food is enough to sustain the body). You should eat for the sake of satisfying your hunger and sustaining the body. Do not give undue importance to taste. Likewise, tell your eyes to see God instead of watching unsacred things on the television or video. Teach your ears to listen to the stories of the Lord instead of listening to vain gossip.

*"O ears, you are interested in listening to vain gossip and tales about others, but you pay least attention when the wonderful stories of the Lord are narrated."* (Telugu Song) Think for a while, how you are benefited by listening to unsacred things. In fact, you are polluting your heart in the process. All that you see and hear gets imprinted on your heart. Once your heart is polluted, your life will become meaningless. The other day, while speaking to the devotees from Visakhapatnam, I made a mention of this. Human heart is like a pen. The colour of the words that you write will be the same as the colour of the ink in the pen. Likewise, when you fill your heart with love, all that you think, say and do will be suffused with love. God expects you to fill your heart with love and lead a sacred life.

### **Daya and Kshama**

The third is the flower of Daya (compassion) towards all living creatures. The Bhagavad Gita says, *Adveshta Sarva Bhutanam* (do not hate anybody). Live in amity with everyone, but do not have too much connection with people.

The fourth is the flower of Kshama (forbearance) which is very special and significant. The Pandavas suffered a lot at the hands of the Kauravas. But never did Dharmaraja lose forbearance even when Draupadi was being humiliated by the Kauravas. It was the virtue of forbearance which protected the Pandavas and made them an ideal to the rest of the world. This flower of forbearance is very dear to the Lord. God will be pleased with you and confer boons on you only when you offer Him the 'flowers' which are dear to Him. No benefit accrues from offering the flowers which fade away and decay. The ever blooming flowers of Ahimsa, Indriya Nigraha, Daya and Kshama are liked by God.

Students might have heard the story of Abu Ben Adhem who always offered *Sarva Bhuta Daya Pushpam* (compassion on all beings) to the Lord. Everyday he used to go round the streets to serve the destitute and the handicapped and return home late in the night. One night when he returned home, he found in his bedroom an angel writing something. When he asked her as to what she was writing, she replied that she was making a list of those who loved God. She replied in the negative when he asked her if his name was there in that list. The following night, when he returned home, he again found the angel writing something. He queried, "Mother, what is it that you are writing now?" She said, "Son, I am writing the names of those who are dear to God." He again wanted to know if his name figured in the list. She replied that his name was on the top of this list.

The sum and substance of this story is that God is pleased when you serve your fellow human beings. The scriptures have prescribed nine paths of devotion, namely, Shravanam (listening to the Lord's stories), Kirtanam (singing His glories), Vishnusmaranam (remembrance of the Lord's name), Padasevanam (service to the Lord's Lotus Feet), Archanam (worship), Vandanam (salutation), Dasyam (servitude), Sneham (friendship), Atmanivedanam (offering oneself to the Lord) i.e., complete self-surrender. But the path of service is the greatest of all. *Neither by penance nor by pilgrimages nor by going through the sacred texts can one cross the ocean of worldly life; one can redeem one's life only through service.* (Sanskrit Verse) Abu Ben Adhem became the recipient of God's love because he spent all his time in the service of his fellowmen. God loves all, for He is the embodiment of love. But He will give Himself to those who show compassion to all beings.

### **Santhi and Tapas**

The fifth is the flower of Santhi (peace). One should remain peaceful through all the vicissitudes of life. Only then can one attain divine grace. Great devotees like Thyagaraja, Tukaram and Draupadi underwent many hardships. They bore all sufferings with patience. Thyagaraja said, "One cannot attain happiness without inner peace" Man needs peace at the physical, mental and spiritual levels. Peace is not present in the external world. It is present within. You are the embodiment of peace. In the worldly life, there are bound to be many hardships, but one should not be perturbed. One should bear all sufferings with fortitude and patience. Human life is given not merely to enjoy the worldly pleasures like birds and beasts. Life becomes meaningful only when one experiences the peace that originates from the heart.

The sixth is the flower of Tapas (penance). Penance does not mean retiring to the forest and living on fruits and tubers. In fact, such a life can be called a life of Tamas (dullness), not Tapas. True penance lies in controlling one's emotions, thoughts, words and deeds arising out of Satwic, Rajasic and Tamasic qualities. One should contemplate on God at all times and achieve harmony of thought, word and deed. *Manasyekam Vachasyekam Karmanyekam Mahatmanam* (he is a noble one whose thoughts, words and deeds are in complete harmony). Do not be carried away by pain or pleasure. The Bhagavad Gita teaches, *Sukhadukhe Samekruthwa Labhalabhau Jayajayau* (one should be even-minded in happiness or sorrow, gain or loss, victory or defeat). One should discharge one's duty and serve society without any expectation of reward. Such even-mindedness and desireless state is true penance.

### **Dhyana and Sathya**

The seventh is the flower of Dhyana (meditation). Meditation does not mean sitting in Padmasana (cross-legged posture) with eyes closed in contemplation of God. This is physical, worldly activity. No doubt, this is also needed, but true meditation lies in unifying the mind with God. Just as milk and water cannot be separated, likewise, the mind, once merged with God, cannot be separated. An iron ball cast in fire will become one with it. Likewise, your love should become one with Divine love. This truth is contained in the Vedic dictum, *Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati* (the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman Himself). Some people contemplate on God for a limited period in the morning and evening. This cannot be called meditation. *Sarvada Sarva Kaleshu Sarvatra Harichintanam* (contemplate on God at all times, at all places and under all circumstances). Perform all tasks with your mind firmly fixed on God. That is true meditation. Thinking of God for a limited period cannot be termed meditation. That is only part-time devotion. Part-time devotion confers only part-time grace. You should have full-time devotion in order to attain full-time grace.

The eighth is the flower of Sathya (Truth). This is very important." *The entire world has originated from truth, is sustained by truth and ultimately merges into truth. There is no place without the principle of truth.*" (Telugu Poem) *Trikalabadhyam Sathyam* (Truth is changeless in all the three periods of time, i.e., past, present and future). Everything may disappear, but Truth remains forever. So, Truth is God, live in Truth.

God will be pleased only when you worship Him with these eight types of flowers. The priests in temples worship God with various types of flowers. But God does not want these flowers. He

says, "O priest, is it what you have learnt all these years? You are worshipping Me with lorry loads of roses and jasmines, which fade away in a short time. These are not the flowers that I expect from you. Worship Me with the flowers of peace, love, non-violence, etc., which will never fade."

### **Sanctify Time by Service**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

People worship God with devotion and sincerity, but God is not satisfied with external worship. You should serve society. Only service can confer bliss on you. By rendering service to society, not only can you alleviate the sufferings of the people, but you can also bring about transformation in their lives. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as is the feeling, so is the result). If you serve with sacred feelings, it is bound to yield sacred results. Serve society to your utmost capacity. You are doing Bhajans in the morning and evening. The satisfaction that you get by participating in Bhajans is temporary, whereas service confers permanent satisfaction. A few minutes ago, the students sang Bhaja Govindam, in which it is said, *Ma Kuru Dhanajana Yauvana Garvam, Harathi Nimeshath Kalah Sarvam* (do not be proud of your wealth, progeny and youth; the tide of time may destroy them in a moment).

Youth and wealth are like passing clouds. Do not entertain excessive desires. Do your duty sincerely. Whatever happens, be it good or bad, accept it as the gift of God. Understand that it is good for you. Time is the most precious gift of God, but you are wasting it in vain pursuits and unsacred feelings. Sanctify the time given to you by serving society. Through service alone can one get rid of worries, ego, pomp and show and other evil qualities. The Vedas say, *Chittasya Shuddhaye Karmah* (the objective of actions is to purify the mind). Service alone can purify the mind. Today people waste a lot of time, wealth and energy in performing activities which do not foster purity of the mind. That is why they are unable to experience peace of mind. The peace that one gets out of worldly activities comes and goes like a passing cloud. One should aspire for the true and eternal peace, which originates from the heart.

Though the Pandavas were subjected to many hardships, Dharmaraja always remained peaceful. When Draupadi was being humiliated by the Kauravas, Bhima became furious and tried to attack Dussasana with his mace. It was Dharmaraja who pacified Bhima saying, those who adhere to Dharma will ultimately emerge victorious. Not all can attain the level of peace that Dharmaraja attained. It is possible only for a few. Where there is peace, there you find Divine power, grace and fame. The Kauravas were many in number, whereas the Pandavas were only five. But the fame of the Pandavas has remained permanent in society. Dharmaraja is liked by one and all.

Today unrest and violence have gripped the world as Sathya and Dharma have declined in the hearts of people. All that you find outside is nothing but the reflection, reaction and resound of your inner feelings. Human life is highly sacred, most precious and divine. Do not fritter away this life by indulging in unsacred activities. It has to be lived in the proper way by exercising control over the ten Indriyas (senses). Speak sweetly and softly. You cannot always oblige, but you can speak always obligingly. Pray for the well-being of all. *Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu* (May the whole world be happy!). Sanctify your senses by serving all. If you exercise control over your senses, you can achieve anything in life. If God is not pleased with you, you will be looked down upon by everyone in the world. You may think that you have given away ten bags

of rice in charity and distributed clothes to five hundred people. Such accounts are to be submitted to the Income Tax Department and not to God. God is not interested in quantity, He sees the feeling behind your acts. So, whatever may be the act of charity you undertake, do it with the spirit of love and sacrifice. What is Your Dharma?

What is the teaching of the Bhagavad-Gita? Some people say that the path of action is the main teaching of the Bhagavad-Gita. Some others say that the Gita teaches the path of devotion. Still some others point to the path of wisdom as the main teaching of the Bhagavad-Gita. But none of these are correct. What is the first Sloka in the Gita?

*Dharmakshetre Kurukshetre Samaveta Yuyutsava,  
Mamaka Pandavaschaiva Kimakurvata Sanjaya?*

And the last Sloka reads as follows:

*Yatra Yogeshwara Krishno, Yatra Partho Dhanurdhara,  
Tatra Srivijayo Bhutir Dhruva Neetirmathirmama.*

When you join the last word of the last verse and the first word of the first verse, it becomes Mama Dharma, meaning 'my Dharma'. This is what the Gita teaches. What is your Dharma? Your Dharma is to lead the life of a human being. Remind yourself that you are a human being, not an animal. Having been born as a human being, you should cultivate human values. Do not behave like an animal. Adhere to truth and righteousness.

The entire creation is based on truth. Where there is truth, there you find plenty and prosperity. Human life is not meant to enjoy physical comforts and worldly pleasures, which are momentary. It is meant to set an ideal to the rest of the world. Having lived all these years, what is the ideal that you have set? What is it that you have achieved? Put a question to yourself. The answer is a big zero. You might have done a few good deeds in life, but they pale in comparison to the number of bad deeds you might have performed. That is not the quality of a human being. Cultivate good thoughts, speak good words and perform good deeds. That is true humanness. The names of ancient sages and seers are remembered even today because of the good deeds they performed. Do unto others what you would like others to do unto you. Do not follow the dictates of the body, for the body is like a water bubble. Do not indiscriminately follow the mind, for the mind is like a mad monkey. Follow the conscience, i.e., the principle of the Atma. Your life will find fulfillment when you please God by offering Him the eight 'flowers' mentioned above. Love is the undercurrent of all this. So, lead a life suffused with love.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...*"

—From Bhagavan's Krishna Janmashtami Sandesh on 22nd August 2000 in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam

## **Festivals at Prasanthi Nilayam**

### **Krishna Janmashtami Celebrations**

Krishna Janmashtami is celebrated to mark the advent of Dwapara Yuga Avatar, Lord Krishna who incarnated on the earth to re-establish Dharma. This festival assumes special significance in Prasanthi Nilayam where Kali Yuga Avatar has incarnated as Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba to re-establish Dharma again by transforming man through His Divine Love.

This sacred festival was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam with piety and solemnity on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2000 in Sai Kulwant Hall, which was beautifully decorated and lighted for this holy occasion. Bhagavan was greeted with Nadaswaram music when He came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 6.50 a.m. from His abode. After showering the bliss of His Darshan to a huge concourse of devotees, Bhagavan came to the dais. As soon as Swami occupied the chair, the Institute students started chanting Stotras in praise of Lord Krishna. The students chanted selected hymns from Krishnashtakam, Madhurashtakam and a few Slokas from Bhaja Govindam. Thereafter, Bhagavan gave His Krishna Janmashtami message and exhorted the devotees to offer the flowers of virtues like truth, love, forbearance and non-violence to God instead of offering the flowers that fade away soon (full text of Bhagavan's Discourse has been published elsewhere in this issue).

After delivering His Divine Discourse, Bhagavan went out of the Mandir gate where brilliantly bedecked Sai Geetha and 20 cows were waiting impatiently for Bhagavan's caressing and love. While the Institute students sang Bhajans, Swami showered His love on the cows and Sai Geetha and fed them with His own hands. Swami also released a few white pigeons. It was a fascinating sight to watch Swami fondling a fawn with motherly care. In the end, Swami broke coconuts as a mark of auspiciousness.

At the conclusion of this sacred function, Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees and Mangalarati was offered to Bhagavan.

### **Mass Marriages Function**

Bhagavan has been blessing various programmes of social and rural uplift which benefit the weaker sections of society: The programme of mass marriages is one of these programmes which saves the parents of the bride and the bridegroom a lot of expense and unnecessary pomp and show at marriages. Mass marriages functions were earlier celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2000 and at Brindavan, Bangalore on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2000 where Swami gave His blessings to the couples who hailed mainly from rural areas and belonged to the weaker sections of society. Swami gave His blessings to a much larger number of couples at the mass marriages function held on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2000 at Prasanthi Nilayam. It benefited rural masses most as brides and bridegrooms belonged mainly to rural areas of Sathya Sai Taluka comprising of Puttaparthi, Bukkapatnam and Kothacheruvu.

One day before the function, Bhagavan distributed wedding Saris to the brides and wedding dress to the bridegrooms which they were to wear on the wedding day. On the day of wedding, the procession of brides and bridegrooms with their relatives started from the Old Mandir (now Sri Pedda Venkama Raju Kalyana Mandapam). This grand procession was led by beautifully

caparisoned elephant, Sai Geetha and was accompanied by Nadaswaram musicians playing auspicious notes. It reached Sai Kulwant Hall a few minutes before 7.00 a.m. where they were seated in orderly rows and supplied the necessary Puja materials by the Seva Dal volunteers. While the Institute students chanted Veda Mantras, Swami went in the rows of the couples and their relatives to bless all of them. The wedding ceremonies started after Swami inaugurated the programme by lighting the sacred lamps. The Chief Priest gave detailed instructions to the couples and their parents to perform all the rituals in accordance with scriptural injunctions. After the Ganesha Puja and the initial rituals, the ceremony of Kanyadan was performed by the parents of the bride. Bhagavan then blessed the Mangal Sutras to be distributed to the couples. At 8.15 a.m., the bridegrooms tied the Mangal Sutra around the necks of their brides to the accompaniment of Nadaswaram and amidst the chanting of sacred Mantras. The couples then exchanged garlands. Bhagavan went round the Hall and sprinkled Akshata (sacred rice) on the newly-wed couples to shower His blessings on them. The function came to a happy conclusion with distribution of Prasadam to all the devotees and Arati to Bhagavan.

The couples were given several gifts besides the wedding clothes. They and their relatives were also given a wedding feast after the conclusion of the function.

### **Shraddhawan Labhate Jnanam**

God is as close or distant as you imagine, say the Vedas. Your feelings alone take, you closer to or farther from Divinity, because God is everywhere, at all times.

God is present in the smallest of atoms and He encompasses the entire creation. *Anoraneeyan Mahato Maheeyan* (He, is smaller than the smallest, vaster than the cosmos). When man resolves to reach that glorious Divinity, when he perseveres in spiritual enquiry with faith and devotion, he will definitely achieve his goal. *But* man does not strive to understand these concepts. He wastes his life in mundane activities. He does not give even a few moments to spiritual enquiry: This lack of Shraddha (steadfast faith) is a disease. *Shraddhawan Labhate Jnanam* (one with Shraddha acquires wisdom). —**Baba**

GURUDEV VANI

SUMMER COURSE DISCOURSES - III

### **Sanctify Your Body by Cultivating Virtues**

*If wealth is lost, one can earn it again by some way or the other;  
If a friend is lost, it is possible to acquire many more;  
If wife is lost, one can marry again;  
If land is lost, it can be acquired by human effort;  
All these can be acquired again;  
But if the body is lost, it cannot be regained.*  
(Sanskrit Sloka)

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Human birth is the rarest of all living beings. Human body is most sacred, precious and wonderful. It is your foremost duty to keep it healthy and fit. The body is the means by which

you can do what you want. Without the human body, you cannot perform even a small task. The body is more valuable than gold, wealth and other materialistic acquisitions. You must therefore sanctify it by putting it to proper use.

### **Body is Meant for Selfless Service**

The days and nights that have passed cannot be retrieved. You cannot obtain even a drop of Ganges water once it has merged into the ocean. A fruit once consumed cannot be taken out. Similarly, if the body is lost, it cannot be regained. Men are more valuable than all the wealth of the world. It is man who lends value to wealth, gold, land and all other assets. What value can be attached to these items if man does not exist in God's creation? Human life is very difficult to obtain. That is why it is said *Janthunam Nara janma Durlabham* (birth as a human being is the rarest). There are many tasks to be accomplished in life. It is therefore most essential to understand the value of the human life. The body is your most precious possession as divinity itself is enshrined in it.

*"The human body is like an iron safe, which protects the precious jewels of virtues contained in it. Safely placed in it is also the priceless jewel of Divinity."*

(Telugu Poem)

Treasured in the iron safe of the human body are jewels of noble thoughts, lofty feelings and sublime virtues. These valuables, if lost, cannot be got back easily. It is the virtues that lend value to human life. Human life is valuable because of the presence of the human values like love, compassion, forbearance, sympathy, sacrifice, etc., in man. But today, man does not bother to understand the importance of these values. The human body is a clock in which the seconds hand represents days, the minutes hand, months and the hours hand, years. With each passing hour, the clock tolls and warns us of the impending end. No one knows when it will sound the final toll, signalling the termination of life. So, you must make the best use of the human body while it is healthy and strong. It is the means by which one performs the long journey of life. You have to face many a trouble on the way if you do not keep this body safe and sound.

Man should strive to find the answers to questions like: "What is divinity? What is purity? What is steadiness? What is selflessness?" Without making any effort to find answers to these questions, man makes use of the human body for self-interest and for selfish ends. God has not given this body to man to lead a life of selfishness. *Paropakaramam Idam Sareeram* (human body has been given for serving others). You should resolve firmly to serve not only yourself but also your fellow human beings. When you work selflessly for others, your needs will be automatically taken care of.

Unfortunately, man does not know the very meaning of the words 'help' and 'service'. The essence of all the eighteen Puranas is condensed in just two sentences: *Help ever. Hurt never.* God has given the human body for the purpose of serving others. Devoid of the spirit of service, man is sunk in selfishness. All his thoughts, feelings and deeds are prompted by selfishness. Man has become a puppet in the hands of selfishness. How can one who is enslaved by selfishness ever be free? So, you must reject selfishness and accept selflessness. Then alone can the human life find fulfillment.



## **Real Meaning of `I'**

The human body has three important constituents - the heart, the mind and the speech. The heart represents Easwara, the mind, Vishnu and the speech, Brahma. Hence, man symbolises the Divine Trinity. It is rather strange that man, who is the embodiment of the Divine Trinity, is unable to understand his true nature. How can one understand others without first understanding oneself? One should first and foremost know the real meaning of `I'. Once a devotee prayed to Swami, "Swami, I want peace". Bhagavan said to him, "Remove `I' which stands for ego; remove `want' which stands for desire. What remains is peace." Man identifies his `I' with his body and gives a name to it. But this is his assumed name (*Pettina Peru*) and not the real name (*Puttina Peru*). Since he forgets his real name, he identifies himself with his body. When the body perishes, the assumed name also perishes as do all the names and forms of the world.

*Made of five elements, devoid of strength, you do not know when this human body will perish. Even though man's life-span is said to be a hundred years, one can never be sure still. Death may strike in childhood or in manhood or in old age. That is a certainty. One should strive to know oneself before the death overtakes one.*

(Telugu Poem)

The real Self or Universal `I' is eternal as it is identified with the Atma. It is this `I' which you should strive to know by enquiring, "Who am `I'?" `I' is not the body; it is neither the mind nor the intellect. `I' is not the Chitta (reflective mind); `I' is not the Antahkarana (inner motivator). `I' is just `I'. Once you understand the true meaning of `I', you will understand everything in the world.

## ***Embodiments of Love!***

The most valuable, subtle and significant treasure is latent in the human body. But no one is trying to know this secret. All the powers and potentialities, which you find in the world, are within you. You cannot find anything in the world other than what already exists in the human body. It is foolishness to search for happiness in the external world. What you are seeking is within you; unfortunately, you are unable to trace that treasure.

The Vedas explain the real meaning of `I'. The one who experiences and realises the `I' (latent divinity) in him is called a Vyakti. One who does not realise the divinity within cannot be called Vyakti at all. Hence, it is essential that you should foster your identity with divinity and thereby develop your Vyaktitwa. In order to foster Vyaktitwa, one has to adhere to the cardinal principle of *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* (follow the truth and practise righteousness). Sathya and Dharma alone can lead man to the sacred path. God has given the body to man to foster Sathya and Dharma. Man should make a consistent endeavour to manifest the divinity latent in him.

No one is a scholar at the time of his birth. It is by consistent and constant effort that one becomes a scholar. The process of realising one's innate potential is known as `Educare'. Secular learning that you find today is merely worldly education. It is all artificial and external. Art is outside, while the heart is inside. Modern education is related to art, whereas Educare is related to the heart.

*The scholar, in spite of mastering much learning, does not know his own Self. Such a one is a fool indeed! The wretched one, despite all his high learning, does not free himself from his meanness. It is foolish to acquire knowledge which merely leads one to futile argumentation. Of what avail is all this secular learning if you do not become the master of the science of the Self? One should gain the knowledge which bestows immortality! What is this knowledge? It is the knowledge of the Self, the immortal `Universal I'.*

(Telugu Poem)

This is the kind of knowledge one should master today. One should know this `I', which is deathless. The mind that originates from this `I' also is deathless. You should not identify this immortal `I' with the body, which is nothing but gross matter. All the materialistic and visual phenomena are ephemeral. *Yad Drishyam Tannashyam* (all that is seen is bound to perish). The entire creation is bound to dissolve. You should focus your attention not on the temporary but only on the eternal.

### **Attain the Hidden Treasures**

Once, Adi Sankara, during the course of his journey, noticed a man rigorously learning by rote Dukrun Karane', a principle of Panini's grammar in Sanskrit. Adi Sankara went to him and enquired, "Why are you learning Panini's grammar by rote?" "I wish to become a great scholar," replied the man. The conversation then proceeded as follows: "What do you gain by becoming a scholar?" "I will earn a lot of money." "What will you do with all this money?" "I will lead a happy life with my family." "And what after that? How will this money help you after death?" The scholar thought for some time and finally admitted, "I do not know." Adi Sankara then told him, "O, foolish one! If your learning helps you only to eat, sleep and die like animals, why bother with all this trouble to acquire it? God has given you this human life not merely for eating, sleeping and dying. Chant the name of the Lord. That alone will save you and grant liberation."

*"Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam, Govindam Bhaja Moodha Mate  
Samprapte Sannihite Kale, Nahi Nahi Rakshati Dukrun Karane"*

(Chant the name of Govinda, O! foolish one! The rules of grammar will not come to your rescue at the time of death.)

The body is bound to perish one day or the other. One should prepare oneself for the hour of death right from the early age. Unless one is attuned to the chanting of the Divine name from early life, it is impossible to achieve this at the time of death.

*When your throat is choked and you are in critical condition; when your relatives lose hope of your recovery and get ready for your funeral; when the messengers of death appear with the noose to snatch away your life; when your kith and kin are wailing and weeping over your plight, is it ever possible to utter the name of God at that dismal hour? (Telugu Poem)*

Who will come to your rescue at the hour of reckoning? You must prepare yourself for the inevitable by remembering God from your early years itself. He alone can redeem you. Experience your innate virtues by putting them into practice. Lead your life with good conduct and entertain sacred feelings till your last breath. The body is not eternal. It is made of flesh, filth

and foul-smelling urine and faeces. Though the physical body is transitory, you have to keep it safe and sound for the sake of finding the treasures of truth and reality hidden in it. Acquire these treasures before giving up this body. It is said: *Neither penance nor pilgrimage nor the study of scriptures can help you to cross the ocean of worldly life. It is the service rendered to the noble alone that can take you across the ocean of life.* (Sanskrit Verse)

So, devote yourself to selfless service. *Anityam Asukham Lokam Imam Prapya Bhajasva Maam* (having come in this temporary world which is full of misery, contemplate on God continuously). God has given you the body for spiritual attainments and not for running after ephemeral worldly pleasures. What is the end result of these pleasures? Here is an example. In the war between Germany and France, the French were defeated though they were better fighters. The Commander-in-Chief of the French forces observed that the French lost the battle not for want of courage but because of sensual indulgence. You degenerate yourselves by succumbing to the pleasures of the body. How long will the pleasures of the flesh last? They are momentary, bound to vanish at any time. Hence, it is a serious folly to think that God has given the body for these fleeting pleasures.

### **Virtue is the Beauty of Man**

Once Dakshinamoorti was walking on the seashore. Dakshinamoorti was the embodiment of intelligence. As he stood gazing at the ocean, he noticed that a gust of wind blew some dirt into the ocean. However, a mass of waves swept back the dirt onto the shore. This struggle between the dirt trying to gain entry and the waves pushing it back went on for some time, watching all this; Dakshinamoorti addressed the ocean, "O infinite and unfathomable one! You are so vast and deep; you lose nothing by accommodating a small speck of dirt. Why are you so selfish?" After uttering these words, Dakshinamoorti sat in meditation. Then he heard the voice of the ocean saying, "Dakshinamoorti, I am endowed with invaluable treasures like pearls, corals and many other precious stones which add to my form and beauty. But if I start allowing even a little dirt to enter, in course of time, it will become a huge dump, which will distort my very appearance. I do not want my fair form to be distorted in the least. For me, my waves are my beauty." Likewise, you too should not give room for even a fraction of evil, lest it should grow to huge proportions and distort your true nature.

*To a village, the houses are its beauty; to the ocean, the waves are its beauty, to the sky, the moon is its beauty, to a woman, character is her beauty, to a devotee of Siva, the sacred ash on the forehead is his beauty, to a human being, virtue is his beauty.*

(Kannada Poem)

But man today is lured away by the flashy physical ornaments, disregarding the real ornaments of virtues, which constitute his true beauty.

*Students!*

As you are young, yours is a long journey. You have to keep your body in good shape to endure the long and arduous journey. Do not cultivate attachment for the body. But take care of your health and with a healthy body perform actions, which are worth performing.

*Life is temporary, youth and wealth are temporary, kith and kin too are temporary, it is only truth and reputation that are eternal.*

(Sanskrit Verse)

Hold on to truth at all times. It is by dint of truth alone that you can acquire reputation. So, you must adhere to truth throughout your life and protect it as well. Today, many political leaders urge the youth to protect the country. Who can protect the country? It is only Sathya and Dharma that can ensure protection for the nation. When you protect Sathya and Dharma, they will protect you in turn. *Dharmayeva Hatho Hanthi Dharmo Rakshati Rakshita* (if you protect Dharma, you will be protected by Dharma, and if you destroy Dharma, you will be destroyed by it). But the youth today are neglecting Dharma completely. They have forgotten truth and justice. How can such people bereft of truth and righteousness save the country? You have put on the vesture of human body. You must conduct yourself befitting your form.

### **Act your Role with Sincerity**

Once an actor came to the court of a king and entertained him by enacting the role of a Sanyasi (renunciant). He preached philosophy and discoursed eloquently on Vedanta. He even made an elaborate commentary on the philosophy of Sankara. Delighted by his performance, the king offered him a tray full of gold coins. The actor then said to the king, "O king! I have played the role of a Sanyasi.

It is not proper for a Sanyasi to accept gold coins. My conduct should be in accordance with the garb I have put on. Hence, I cannot accept your offer." The next day, the same actor came to the court as a dancer and danced to the joy of one and all. The king again offered him some gold coins. The actor said, "O king! I am not satisfied by this meager reward." The astonished king said, "Yesterday, I gave a good many gold coins; but you refused to accept them. Today you are asking for more. Explain your baffling conduct." Then the actor said, "My conduct should be befitting the role I perform and the dress I wear."

Students! You have put on the dress of a student and are performing the role of a student. Your conduct should be befitting the role you are performing. Your behaviour should add to the stature of a student. You should be models of humility and obedience. Humility is the hallmark of a student. You must adhere to truth and righteousness and conduct yourself with utmost decorum and decency.

*"Education should instill sterling virtues, good intellect, truthfulness, duty, discipline and devotion. That alone is true education which fosters these qualities, and a student should imbibe all these."* (Telugu Poem)

If your behaviour is not appropriate as a student, you are belittling yourself.

### **Cultivate Right Vision**

*Embodiments of Love! Students!*

I know that you stand as ideals and earn respect for the student community by your good conduct. But it is My duty to advise you, so that you do not become complacent. A student should cultivate right vision. He should not allow his gaze to wander here and there and should

not watch each and every thing like a crow. Do not cast evil looks on women. At this age, all of you should live like brothers and sisters. Elderly women should be treated as mothers. The sun god, who is the presiding deity of vision, warns, "Whoever cultivates evil vision, I shall withdraw myself from his eyes." While walking on the road, let your gaze be fixed only in front of you and not wander hither and thither. While riding on a bicycle on the road, do not look at the cinema posters on the walls; an unwary moment may cause you an accident. You should control your vision. Buddha preached the need for cultivating Samyak Drishti (right vision). Evil vision will turn you mad.

Once Socrates was having an evening walk with his gaze fixed right in front of him. Since he preached right vision to his students, he also followed it strictly. He was deeply engrossed in self-enquiry. At the same time, an officer was coming from the opposite direction. Socrates did not notice the officer and collided with him. The officer, in a fit of rage, demanded, "Who are you?" Socrates promptly replied, "Sir, that is exactly what I have been trying to understand all along. Pray, kindly let me know who 'I' am?" Socrates was an ideal man who never cast evil looks. He also did not hear anything bad. You should not see anything bad. You should not hear anything evil. You should not think evil. The Kauravas, who indulged in bad thinking and evil hearing, brought destruction upon the entire Kaurava clan. They harboured evil intention of destroying the righteous Pandavas. You should not utter evil words. You must always speak pleasantly. You cannot always oblige but you can speak always obligingly.

*Students! Boys and Girls!*

Virtues are the true ornaments of a student. It is the most appropriate age for you to cultivate any number of virtues. They will stand you in good stead in the future years. You should become the leaders of Bharat. The students of today are the citizens of tomorrow. The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow. As are the leaders, so is the nation. If you are good, the entire nation will be good. India has been a Tyaga Bhumi (land of sacrifice), Yoga Bhumi (land of spirituality) and Punya Bhumi (land of meritorious deeds). Being the children of such a great nation, you must cultivate good qualities. For achieving all this, you must take care of your body. If the body is lost, you can never get it back. You can achieve anything when your body is strong and healthy. A devotee should never give up until he realises his goal.

*Having resolved, what ought to be resolved, hold on to it till you have succeeded. Having desired what ought to be desired, hold on to it till your desire is fulfilled. Having asked what ought to be asked, do not leave the hold till you get it. Having thought what ought to be thought, hold on to it till you have succeeded. Either you should pray with all your heart forgetting yourself or God should take hold of you out of your obsession for Him. You should strive incessantly without stopping on the way. It is not proper on the part of a devotee to give up his chosen mission halfway through.*

(Telugu Poem)

Treasure in your heart all that the elders, students, guests and teachers have spoken to you. Recall these teachings in the future years and benefit from them. Hoping and blessing that you will lead ideal lives, I bring My discourse to a close.

*—From Bhagavan's Summer Course Discourse on the evening of 17th May 2000 in Sai  
Ramesh Hall, Brindavan*

### **Global Cultural Unity at Prasanthi Nilayam**

*Global cultural and religious unity is witnessed in Prasanthi Nilayam as more and more enthusiastic devotees from all parts of the world with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds present their cultural and musical programmes to depict and sing the glory of the Lord in different languages of the world. A glimpse of these magnificent programmes held recently in Prasanthi Nilayam is presented here.*

#### **Facets of Spirituality**

The Sai Spiritual Education (Bal Vikas) children of Southern California Region of America made a cultural presentation at the Divine Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Baba on the evening of 19<sup>th</sup> July 2000 in Poornachandra Auditorium. The programme consisted of three parts. The first part showed how all religions and faiths had grown and prospered in America. This was shown through video clippings of temples, churches, mosques and religious places of all religions in many parts of America. The second part showed the quest of a child for his spiritual father, showing symbolically the foundations of spirituality in America by native Americans. The third part depicted the life story of a spiritual lady who walked 25,000 miles all alone to spread the message of peace and love to all corners of North America. The programme concluded with a beautiful song in praise of Bhagavan Baba who is promoting the unity of all religions and faiths in the world.

In the end, Bhagavan went up the stage to bless the artistes. He distributed clothes to them, and as a special gesture of His grace materialised a gold ring for the child who played the part of the native American boy in search of his spiritual father. The programme came to a close at 7.00 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

#### **A Call of Love**

This excellent drama was presented by Sai devotees of Germany in Poornachandra Auditorium, Prasanthi Nilayam on the evening of 21st August 2000 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba.

The first scene shows a Bal Vikas class in which the teacher dwells on the teachings of Bhagavan Baba and explains the true meaning of life through the famous prayer *Asato Ma Sadgamaya*. He emphasises the role of selfless service for God realisation by giving the message of Bhagavan in His words—"Love all, Serve all. That is the way to God." To illustrate his point, he gives the example of Saint Elisabeth of Germany who attains God through selfless service of the sick and the poor. Scenes 2-6 then depict Elisabeth's life story in its true spirit and bring out the message of love, compassion, fortitude and forgiveness.

Born in 12<sup>th</sup> century as the daughter of a Hungarian king, Elisabeth is a happy and joyful child with deep faith in Jesus Christ. She is engaged to the son of a count in Germany and is married to him at the age of 14. Though she becomes a countess of one of the most glamorous royal courts

of Europe, yet she does not find satisfaction in wealth and power as her heart is in unity with God. So, instead of wallowing in wealth she finds bliss in feeding the hungry and nursing the sick. With the help of her husband, she sets up two hospitals and devotes her life to the service of the poor and the sick. Though her charity attracts the contempt of the court, yet she devotes herself more and more to the mission of service. After the death of her husband, she leaves her home in the Wartbourg Castle in order to completely dedicate the rest of her life to the service of God. In spite of intense suffering, she remains steadfast in her resolve and sheds her mortal coil at the age of 24. Her soul leaves the body in bliss and follows Jesus Christ through the gate of truth. Her life is an example of total dedication to God.

In the end, the Bal Vikas teacher explains how Bhagavan Baba's teachings are timeless and eternal and how they are followed and practised in all parts of the world. This excellent drama came to an end at 7.00 p.m. Bhagavan then went up the stage and blessed the participants of the drama and distributed clothes to them. He also materialised a gold chain for the lady who enacted the role of Elisabeth. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan.

#### **Sai Mahima—4**

This was fourth of the series of dramas presented by the Bal Vikas children of the United Kingdom in Prasanthi Nilayam as the first three of the series had been enacted earlier. Based on the Human Values of love, tolerance, patience, devotion, faith and unity, this magnificent drama was presented in Poornachandra Auditorium on the evening of 23rd August 2000 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. Bhagavan came to the Poornachandra Auditorium at 6.10 p.m. and the drama started with a beautiful scene of Ganesha Vandana in which nine Ganeshas appeared on the stage with appropriate make-up to show nine of the 16 forms of Ganesha. What followed after this was a marvellous show consisting of six scenes from the lives of Bhagavan Baba and some great saints of India. Superb acting of the children, soft, elevating music, meticulous planning, and efficient stage management—all contributed to make it a memorable event.

The first scene shows an incident from Bhagavan Baba's childhood when He endures all suffering with immense fortitude and forgives those who ill-treat Him. Bala Sai goes to Pushpagiri to take part in a scout camp. When He returns, He is punished and hit on His hand with a ruler by His elder brother Seshama Raju. But Bhagavan neither complains about it to His father nor adopts vindictive attitude towards His brother and sister-in-law. The second scene effectively brings home the power of Namasmara through the story of Saint Thyagaraja, who is blessed with the Darshan of Rama, Lakshmana accompanying sage Vishwamitra in the forest after he completes one million repetitions of Rama Nama Japa on the advice of sage Narada. The third scene is devoted to the story of the great devotee of Lord Krishna, Andal, who merges with her beloved Lord through the power of her intense devotion. Another scene depicts the story of Markandeya who, after learning from his parents about his imminent death, clasps Siva Linga and is thus saved from the death noose of Yama, the Lord of Death. The next scene depicting intense devotion tells the story of Saint Kanakadasa, who sings about the playful pranks of Bala Krishna whom he loves intensely. As an answer to his profound prayers, the Lord miraculously breaks the temple wall, reveals to him the statue of Udipi Krishna which turns to face him. The sage then has a beautiful vision of Lord Krishna as Bala Krishna who runs to him and embraces him. As a grand finale of this dance drama, the last scene depicts a beautiful formation of the

children in the shape of Sarva Dharma Emblem to demonstrate the unity of all religions as a cardinal teaching of Bhagavan Baba.

Pleased with the performance of the children, Bhagavan went up the stage in the end and blessed the children and organisers. He also materialised a gold chain for the child who played the role of Bala Sai and a ring for the child, who enacted the role of Markandeya, besides distributing clothes to all of them. This beautiful programme came to a conclusion at 7.20 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

### **Melody of Devotional Music**

It is said, "Music is the language of the heart. So, it unites all" This unity was witnessed in Prasanthi Nilayam on the evening of 25<sup>th</sup> August 2000 when devotees from the U.S.A. presented a grand programme of devotional music from various cultures of the world in different languages in Poornachandra Auditorium in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The singers poured out their heart to sing the glory of the Lord. The songs chosen from Hindi, Sanskrit, English, Japanese, Spanish, Russian, Telugu and Arabic languages had lofty themes but remarkably simple diction, which the audience could follow and appreciate. Bhagavan Baba who came to the Auditorium at 6.00 p.m. sat through the entire programme and blessed the artistes at the end of the programme. He also distributed clothes to them. This excellent programme of devotional music came to a close with Mangalarati to Bhagavan at 7.00 p.m.

*Is Your Heart Full of Love? Be a bee drinking the nectar of every flower; not the mosquito drinking blood and distributing disease in return. First consider all as children of the Lord, your own brothers and sisters. Develop the quality of love and seek always the welfare of humanity. Love and you will be loved in return. Hate will never be your lot if you promote love and look upon all with" love. That is the one lesson I teach always; that is My secret too.*

—Baba

AVATAR VANI

VARALAKSHMI VRATA SANDESH

### **Women are the Embodiments of Nobility and Virtue**

*This land of Bharat has given birth to many noble women like Savitri, who brought her dead husband back to life; Chandramati, who extinguished wild fire with the power of truth; Sita, who proved her chastity by coming out of blazing fire unscathed and Damayanti, who reduced an evil-minded hunter to ashes with the power of her chastity. It is because of such women of character that Bharat has attained the reputation of being the land of plenty, prosperity and opulence. Among the Vratas (sacred practices) of Bharat, the Varalakshmi Vrata has supreme significance. (Telugu Poem)*

*Embodiments of Love!*



Since time immemorial, the sacred land of Bharat has been enjoying peace and prosperity because of men and women of character. Bharat has always accorded a exalted position to the mother. The Purohit (chief priest) made a mention of this in the morning during the course of Varalakshmi Vrata.

### **Glory of Indian Womanhood**

Legend has it that Parvati once asked Easwara if there was any way to ensure auspiciousness, prosperity and well being of the women. She desired that every woman should lead a long, happy and healthy life with her husband, children, grandchildren, friends and relatives. Easwara was pleased with Parvati's prayer and told her about the Varalakshmi Vrata, which would confer all a woman may ask for. This particular Vrata is a boon for all women. Women always strive hard for the welfare of their family. They always aspire for Samata, Samagrata, Samaikyata and Sowbhratrutwa (equality, integrity, unity and fraternity). Their speech is truthful, their hearts are full of peace and their actions are righteous. Women, being the recipients of eight forms of wealth, confer prosperity and auspiciousness on the family, society and the world at large.

You might have heard the story of Savitri, who, with the power of her character, overcame many obstacles to bring her dead husband back to life. Even in this Age of Kali, it is the prayer of wives that protects their husbands in times of danger. Many women in the past performed Varalakshmi Vrata with devotion and sincerity and became the recipients of the grace of goddess Lakshmi (consort of Vishnu and goddess of wealth.)

Sita came out of blazing fire unscathed when she was asked by Rama to undergo Agni Pareeksha (the test of fire) to prove her chastity as Ravana had held her captive for ten months in Lanka. Though Rama, being omniscient, had no doubt regarding Sita's chastity, He did so only in order to dispel doubts from the minds of people. Evil-minded people are like crows; they are full of doubts and pre-conceived notions. But will the cuckoo stop singing just because the crows are cawing? Likewise, the women of nobility and character are least perturbed by the criticism of the evil-minded people. They do not give scope for any doubts. Their pure heart is their witness and their sacred feelings are their Dharma. They follow their conscience and adhere to truth and righteousness. This is the teaching of the culture of Bharat: *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* (speak the truth and follow righteousness).

You all know the story of Anasuya (wife of sage Atri). She was put to test by God Himself. The Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara went to her in disguise and begged, *Bhavati Bhiksham Dehi* (mother, give us alms). When she was about to serve them food, they said that they would accept it only if she served them without wearing any clothes. Immediately, she transformed them into three infants and fed them as per their wish. She could transform even Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara into small babies and play with them only because of her purity of heart and the power of chastity. Ultimately, Saraswati, Lakshmi and Parvati, the wives of the Trinity, begged her that their husbands may be returned to them. Anasuya, being one of compassion, yielded to their request. The Trinity blessed sage Atri and Anasuya, saying that they would be born to them in the form of Dattatreya. The name Dattatreya signifies one who is adopted by sage Atri.

Sumati was also a woman of chastity. She was pure-hearted and totally selfless. One day, a sage cursed her husband that he would die immediately after sunrise on the next day. She prayed to God with all sincerity and purity. It is only prayer that can atone man's sins and save him from curse. Sumati prayed, "if my thoughts are pure and truthful, let there not be sunrise at all." As a result, there was no sunrise and the entire world was engulfed in darkness. That is the power of women of chastity. All the gods and sages approached Sumati and prayed, "Mother, is it proper on your part to plunge the entire world into darkness for the sake of your husband?" Sumati replied, "Without my husband, the world has no value for me." Only when the gods and sages assured her of the safety of her husband, did she allow the sun to rise. Thus, since ancient times, women of Bharat led an ideal life and proved to the world the power of chastity. Not only in the bygone ages, even in this Age of Kali, there are many women who are leading exemplary lives.

### **Vratas are Givers of Boons**

Since ancient times, the women of Bharat have upheld the dignity and honour of the family and the community at large. The worship of goddess Varalakshmi earned them her grace and they could accomplish all this. Varalakshmi is one who grants all the boons that women pray for. She confers on women all the eight types of wealth. Noble women like Savitri, Damayanti, Chandramati and Sumati accomplished mighty tasks only due to the grace of Varalakshmi. Worship of Varalakshmi confers wealth, prosperity and bliss. But due to the effect of modern age, people do not adhere to such sacred practices. That is why their houses lack purity and sacredness. In Bharat, there is a proverb: "You can judge a housewife by looking at the house." In those days, housewife was considered to be Grihalakshmi (goddess of the home) who kept her house sacred and unpolluted. It reflected her own purity.

Today, the food you eat, the water you drink and the air that you inhale are all polluted. Man himself has become highly polluted as he has filled his mind with negative feelings, which are nothing but worldly desires. No doubt, one can have desires, but they should be under certain limits. The letters that you write will appear blue when the pen is filled with blue ink and red when it is filled with red ink. Likewise, all that you see, hear and say will become negative when your heart is filled with negative feelings. So, first of all fill your heart with love. Then all that you see, hear, say and do will be suffused with love. *Sarvam Prema Mayam Jagat* (the whole world is permeated with love). So, you will find love everywhere. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as is the feeling, so is the result). Today human heart has become a den of evil qualities like anger, hatred, greed, jealousy, pomp and show. Love alone can drive away these negative qualities. Desire, anger, greed, jealousy, etc., arise out of body attachment and improper food habits. So, one has to put a check over body attachment and control desires. It is said, less luggage more comfort makes travel a pleasure. In order to have a comfortable journey of life, reduce the luggage of desires. One can have body attachment to some extent because the journey of life is undertaken with the help of the body. When one is living with family and friends, it is not possible to give up body attachment altogether. But one should lead a sacred life with the noble feelings of *Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu* (may the entire world be happy!).

All the powers that you find in the external world are present in man. The human body itself is a generator of electricity. The human mind can be compared to television and the heart to a radio. When a particular programme is broadcast on Delhi Radio Station, you are able to hear it at the same time by tuning your radio to the appropriate frequency. Today we have radios, but in those

days, people considered their hearts as radios. So, make your hearts pure and sacred. All that you see in the external world can be visualised on the screen of your mind. So, the mind itself is a television. All the powers are latent in man. All that you see outside is nothing but the reflection of the inner being. Everything is related to the principle of reaction, reflection and resound. When you criticise or abuse someone, it means you are seeing the reflection of your own bad feelings in him. Good and bad arise from within, they are not outside.

You can see your reflection in the mirror only when its rear is coated with a chemical. Your heart can be compared to a mirror. It should be coated with the chemical of love. Only then can you see your true self in it. Vedanta declares, *Raso Vai Saha* (He is sweetness Itself). Here is an example: When sugar and water are mixed, it becomes syrup. The sugar and water become inseparable. Just as sugar is present in every drop of syrup, God is present in the entire creation. Easwara revealed the secret of Varalakshmi Vrata to Parvati in order to bestow peace and prosperity on all the women. Performance of this Vrata is easy, though it has a potency of giving great boons. You are all very fortunate to have performed it in a sacred place sanctified by the presence of the Divinity. These practices have the desired effect if you do them in the prescribed manner with purity of heart.

Betel leaf alone cannot make a *Pan*. It has to be mixed with an appropriate quantity of betel nut and lime before it becomes a *Pan*. Betel leaf is green in colour, betel nut is brown and lime is white. When mixed together in appropriate proportion, they form red colour. Lime adds taste to the *Pan*, but when used in excess, it will burn the tongue. That is why it is said, *Na Sreyo Niyamam Vina* (no good accrues without the observance of rules).

The normal temperature of the body is 98.4° F. Fever sets in when the temperature crosses this limit. Likewise, the normal blood pressure of man is 120/80. When it shoots up to, say, 150/90, it becomes harmful. Likewise, everything should be under certain limit. Your speech and actions should also be within certain limits. Act as per your capacity. Before undertaking any activity, enquire, where, when and how it has to be done. If you do not adhere to such discipline, you will be inviting trouble.

All the spiritual practices will yield good results only when they are performed with purity of heart and steady mind. If you have the grace of God, there is nothing that you cannot accomplish in this world. When God can bring the dead back to life, can there be anything impossible for Him? He can change sky into earth and earth into sky, but you should pray with purity of heart to attain His grace. Do not indulge in vain gossip. How can you expect God to fulfill your wishes if you talk ill of others?

## **Dharma Forms the Basis of the World**

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Our ancients performed these Vratas with sacred feelings. But today people have lost faith in such sacred practices. They have faith in things which are transient and ephemeral. First of all, man should transform his heart. He should have the firm faith that God is Hridayavasi (indweller of the heart). *Deho Devalaya Prokto, Jeevo Deva Sanathana* (body is the temple and the indweller is God). Respect and revere all bodies as temples of God. Then the world will be free from all conflicts. Today, as selfishness and self-interest are on the rise, the world is gripped in

troubles and turmoil. In order to get rid of conflicts, man should cultivate moral values, undertake righteous actions and love everybody.

Human life is a combination of morality, spirituality and righteousness. Today, the whole world is centred around money. I often tell you, *money comes and goes, but morality comes and grows*. Money is like a passing cloud. No doubt money is required for your livelihood in this world. But it is not the be all and end all of life. Earlier people believed *Dharma Moolam Idam Jagat* (Dharma forms the basis of the world). Now people consider *Dhana Moolam Idam Jagat* (wealth forms the basis of the world). Understand that Dharma alone will confer peace and bliss on you. Dharma alone will protect you.

### **Secret of Draupadi's Power**

During the course of the Kurukshetra War, Bhishma was the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army. One day, Duryodhana and Dussasana confronted him and said, "O grandsire, you seem to be very inactive these days. As a result, our enemies are growing from strength to strength. It is time that you shed your slackness and show your prowess." Provoked in this manner by Duryodhana and Dussasana, Bhishma declared that he would kill all the Pandavas before sunset, the next day. Draupadi was highly perturbed when she came to know of this. She was one of chastity and a great devotee of Krishna. In this Age of Kali, people wonder how Draupadi, who had five husbands, could be called a Pathivrata (one of chastity). Who are the five husbands? They do not represent physical bodies. Here five husbands symbolise five elements and five life principles. Draupadi fell at Krishna's feet and prayed that He should protect the Pandavas. Krishna said, "Follow My command, I shall certainly protect your husbands." Draupadi said, "Krishna, who else can I follow other than You? You are our everything."

It was night-time. As the war was over for the day, all were taking rest in their respective tents. Bhishma was feeling very depressed. "I have vowed that I will kill the Pandavas tomorrow. But how am I to kill them who are noble and virtuous and whom I have brought up with my own hands all these years? It is the food of the Kauravas that has spoiled my head (mind)." Thinking thus, Bhishma was pacing up and down in his tent. Krishna sensed Bhishma's predicament. He always plans according to time, place and situation. His is the master-plan. He told Draupadi to follow Him.

As there was no electricity in those days, there were only oil lamps burning in each tent. After walking a certain distance, Krishna asked her to put off her sandals as they were making noise. Draupadi implicitly obeyed Krishna's command. Krishna immediately wrapped her sandals in His shawl and carried them with Him. Once they reached Bhishma's tent, He told Draupadi to hurry up and fall at Bhishma's feet at once. Draupadi did accordingly. Hearing the jingling sound of bangles, Bhishma thought it was a married woman and as was his wont, he blessed her saying, *Deergha Sumangali Bhava* (may you and your husband live long). After uttering this blessing, Bhishma noticed to his great surprise that it was Draupadi whose husbands he had vowed to kill the following day. In the meantime, Krishna entered the scene. Bhishma realised that it was Krishna's master-plan. He extolled Krishna saying, "O Lord, none can describe Your Leelas (divine play). They are most wonderful and most sacred in all the three worlds."

Krishna told Bhishma that He had come to Draupadi's rescue as she was highly virtuous. What was the secret of Draupadi's greatness? *"Draupadi was always contented with what she had. She was always obedient to her husbands and would always find time to serve them. There is no woman greater than Draupadi."* (Telugu Poem)

Today people are conferred various titles like Padmashri, Padma Vibhushan, etc. But the titles conferred on women such as Grihalakshmi, Illalu, Dharmapatni, Ardhangi, etc., are very high and sacred. How can women with such exalted titles to their credit be inferior to men? But, unfortunately, today due to the effect of Kali Age, men look down upon women and treat them as mere servants. This is a big mistake. The more you respect women, the more you will be respected.

### **Destructive Power of Anger**

You should see to it that women do not shed tears. Otherwise, the family will face hardships. A thorn can be removed from the foot, but a harsh word, which has wounded the heart, cannot be taken back. So, never use harsh words. Talk sweetly and softly. The husband has the right to point out the mistakes of his wife, but he has no right to use harsh words and hurt her feelings. *You cannot always oblige, but you can speak always obligingly.* The family will attain peace and prosperity once you observe these principles. Usually, the element of anger is more in men than in women. If you get angry once, the energy gained by you from the food consumed over three months will be destroyed. Not merely that, it also boils your blood which will take nearly three months to cool down. Such being the case, imagine what would be your fate if you lose your temper time and again.

The story of Jarasandha bears ample testimony to this. Many a time, Krishna challenged him for a battle. However, when Jarasandha would come with fierce anger, Krishna would run away from the battlefield. Seeing this happen time and again, Krishna was asked the reason for His strange behaviour. Then Krishna replied, "Don't be under the mistaken notion that I am running away from the battlefield out of fear. I can kill him in no time, but this is not the right time to kill him. By arousing his anger time and again, I am draining out all his strength." Gradually, Jarasandha lost all his strength and ultimately met his doom. Krishna never considered it an insult to run away from the battlefield because He was acting according to His own master-plan. He adopted this method of conquering His enemy to teach an important lesson. All the plans of God are meant only for the welfare of others. He does not do anything for Himself. God always does only good, which may appear to be bad to some people. Mistake lies in their vision, not in God's creation. Whatever God does, it is always meant to help you and develop your sacredness.

### **Women are endowed with more Powers**

Easwara revealed the sacred Varalakshmi Vrata to Parvati, so that the future generations might perform this Vrata and derive the benefits therefrom. The Purohit (chief priest) has enumerated the benefits which this Vrata confers. When a woman performs the Varalakshmi Vrata, she gets the blessings that she may live long with plenty and prosperity as Sumangali (a woman whose husband is alive) with her children and grandchildren. Varalakshmi protects seven past generations and seven future generations. Noble women like Savitri and Anasuya enjoyed peace and prosperity by performing this sacred Vrata. The purpose of Varalakshmi Vrata is to atone your sins, develop sacredness and ultimately lead you to Divinity. The culture of Bharat

considers the word Mata (mother) as most sacred. In times of suffering, one naturally calls out 'Amma' (mother), not 'Appa' (father). The word Amma is most soothing and gentle. It bestows immense strength. The first word that a child utters is Amma or Ma. That is why the culture of Bharat has accorded highest place to the mother ahead of father, teacher and God. None loves you as much as your mother does. Mother's love defies all description. Varalakshmi is extolled as Lokamata (Divine Mother). She is the mother of the world. All are her children. That is why the Vedas address human beings as *Amrutasya Putrah* (sons of immortality).

*Students!*

When you lose the love and affection of your mother, your life will lose its direction like a rudderless boat. Mother is the source of all your strength. So, respect your mother and obey her command. If your mother is satisfied with you, the whole world will be satisfied with you. If the mother is not pleased with you, you will become cheap in the eyes of the world. Do not be proud of your youth, beauty and physical power. Realise that very soon you will have to pass through old age. If you neglect your parents now, your children will neglect you.

Varalakshmi Vrata is performed by women. But men should not discourage them from performing this sacred Vrata. They should provide all the necessary support. Its performance is beneficial not only to women, but also to men as women pray for the well-being and long life of their husbands. Men should not behave in an arrogant way towards women thinking themselves to be more strong and powerful. Truly speaking, women are more powerful than men. The scriptures declare that men have only three powers, whereas women have five. Women are ready to sacrifice even their life for the sake of their husbands. Savitri was ready to give up her life for the sake of her husband. But do we find such spirit of sacrifice in men? If their wife dies, they are ready to marry again. But women are not like that. They are the repositories of the five virtues of respect, dignity, sacrifice, contentment and prosperity. On the other hand, men are prone to evils of anger, stubbornness and foolishness. Women are the embodiment of virtue and nobility. Names of the Divine couples like Lakshmi Narayana, Radha Krishna and Parvati Parameshwara indicate that women are given place of priority over men. That is why even in invitation cards, people write Srimati and Sri (Mrs. and Mr.) and not the other way round. Prakriti symbolises feminine aspect of God. Prakriti and Purusha are inseparable. As the women are the embodiments of Lakshmi (goddess of wealth), the world will attain prosperity only when they are respected. Therefore, men must treat women with respect, so that they will be respected in turn. You can see it yourself, where there are women of character, there you find all prosperity. You all know that many countries suffered destruction during the two world wars. It is entirely due to the presence of virtuous women that Bharat remained safe and secure. Bharat owes its greatness and glory to its women. So, respect women and make them happy.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho..*."

—From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2000

**VARALAKSHMI VRATA AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM**

**A Unique Function to Worship Goddess Lakshmi**

Among the various programmes that are being organised as part of Bhagavan Baba's 75th Birthday Celebrations, the function of Varalakshmi Vrata (worship of Divine Mother, Lakshmi) celebrated on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2000 in Prasanthi Nilayam was unique in many ways. It was for the first time that a function to worship the Divine Mother was organised in Prasanthi Nilayam, and that too on such a grand scale. Moreover, it was organised by the ladies from the families of Swami's sisters and brothers. Bhagavan Baba very graciously gave them this opportunity to take part in His Birthday Celebrations in this unique manner.

The programme was organised in the Sai Kulwant Hall which was beautifully decorated with buntings, festoons and floral arrangements. While the two big idols of the Divine Mother mounted on lotus-shaped pedestals were put up on either side of the semi-circular dais of the Hall, a beautiful Kalasham of the Divine Mother adorned with precious jewels and shaded by plantain leaves embellished its central part. Bhagavan came to the Hall at 7.00 a.m. in a grand procession led by girls and boys school bands and Veda chanting group of girls. The ladies who organised this holy function also formed part of this procession with Kalasham in hands and followed Bhagavan.

As soon as Bhagavan entered the Hall, He was greeted by Nadaswaram music. After showering the bliss of His Darshan to the huge assemblage of devotees, Bhagavan came to the dais and occupied the chair. The programme started with the lighting of sacred lamps by Bhagavan at 7.10 a.m.

At the outset, the Chief Priest gave detailed instructions to the ladies as to how the rituals of the Vrata have to be performed. First of all, worship of Ganapati was performed for the removal of all obstacles. The Chief Priest then explained the purpose and significance of the Vrata which is traditionally performed on a Friday immediately before Poornima (full moon day) in the month of Sravana. While the ladies performed the Vrata and the priests chanted the sacred Mantras, Bhagavan went in the rows of the ladies and showered His blessings on them. At the end of the Vrata, Toram (sacred yellow thread) was tied on the wrist of the ladies as a mark of protection and blessings of the Divine Mother. Bhagavan then blessed the offerings that were given to the ladies invited for the Vrata. Before the conclusion of the function, Bhagavan again went round the rows of the ladies and showered Akshata (sacred rice) on them as a special blessing while the Institute students chanted Veda Mantras and musicians played Nadaswaram. And this was the grand finale to the Vrata so joyously celebrated with meticulous observance of scriptural injunctions. The programme came to a conclusion at 8.45 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan and distribution of Prasadam to all the devotees.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.40 p.m. to deliver His nectarine discourse on this sacred occasion. The programme started at 4.00 p.m. with Veda chanting by school girls. Before Bhagavan's discourse, Prof. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, made a brief speech underlining the significance of this function. Prof. Venkataraman observed that Prakriti (Nature) is part of Purusha (God) and goddess Lakshmi represents the mother aspect of God. So, we should worship her not merely for material prosperity but for spiritual attainments also by acquiring the wealth of virtues like love,

compassion and forgiveness. After this, Bhagavan gave His Divine Discourse (given elsewhere in this issue). This grand function came to a happy conclusion with Mangalarati to Bhagavan.

### ***Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma***

*"As the core of this universe about which we speak and describe, there is Paramatma (Overself) about whom we cannot speak and who is beyond all description. Both the cognisable and non-cognisable have emanated from the same One Indivisible Consciousness. Each is full and complete in itself. The individual consciousness is the manifestation of the Cosmic Consciousness. When the material sheath falls off, it merges with its source. The Vedas declare, "That whole; this is whole. From the whole, emerges the whole. When the whole is taken from the whole, the whole remains whole." So, the cosmos, the world, the individual—all are embodiments of the whole. Nothing can be fractional or incomplete. The symbol of the whole is Om, the Pranava. The Vedas declare, "The one indestructible sound Om is Brahman, the Universal Absolute." The moving and unmoving, everywhere, are only paraphrasing Om, elaborating its nature, illustrating its potentialities. The past that has gone, the present that is here and approaching future are all three its characteristics. The three Gunas or modes and the stage beyond them are also Om: The Pranava is the Name (Nama) and Paramatma is the Named (Naami). The two are not separate, Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma (all this is indeed Brahman)."*

**—Baba**

### ***Aham, Brahmasmi***

*The Vedic axiom Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahman) can be made clear by an example. To curdle milk and get curd for use, we add a small quantity of curd itself to the milk. Then, all the milk turns into curd. Wherefrom did we get the curd initially? From milk which was similarly treated. The years of life are the milk; the Divine Principle, Brahman, is the curd, which, when it is ushered in to pervade life, converts them into a Divine Saga. This is what the Upanishads mean when they declare Brahmaiva Bhavati (he who knows Brahman becomes verily Brahman). Asmi is the process of mixing, the consummation of adding, the merging, and the union. When it happens, Aham becomes Brahman.*

**—Baba**



## Ganapati Confers Buddhi and Siddhi

*If money is lost, one need not be worried about it, for one can earn it again.*

*If a friend is lost, one can have another.*

*If wife is lost, one can marry again.*

*If one loses one's piece of land, one can purchase another.*

*All these can be regained, but if body is lost, one cannot get it back.*

**(Sanskrit Sloka)**

In this physical, transient world, everything comes and goes. Man may acquire wealth by various means, but he may lose it in no time. He may make many friends in life, but they may leave him at one time or the other. While he can acquire all these again by some means or the other, there are no means by which he can get back his body once it is gone. Man should realise this truth and sanctify his life by cultivating human values while the body lasts.

*"Worldly life is temporary. Wealth and youth are momentary. So too are relatives and friends. Only truth and righteousness are permanent."*

**(Sanskrit Sloka)**

## Ganapati is the Master of Ganas and Sadgunas

*Embodiments of Love!*

Man should adhere to truth and righteousness, as these two never desert him under any circumstances; they follow him in all the births and in all the worlds. These two principles have been the mainstay of ancient culture of Bharat. The Vedas, the Upanishads and the Puranas emphasise these principles: *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* (speak the truth and practise righteousness). By ignoring these twin principles, man undergoes all sorts of sufferings and miseries and in the process forgets his very divine nature. It is impossible to experience Divinity without cultivating human values. Having been born as a human being, man's foremost duty is to cultivate human values. Otherwise, his life will become meaningless. What is the purpose of human life? Is it only to eat, sleep and indulge in pleasures like birds and beasts? No. Man is born to set an ideal to the rest of the world. *Uddharetatmanatmanam* (one should work for one's own emancipation), says the Gita.

Man should redeem his life and also help his fellow human beings to work for their redemption. This is the spiritual knowledge that Ganapati imparts. The name Ganapati has many inner meanings. Ganapati is the master of all the Ganas (gods) and Sadgunas (virtues). 'Ga' stands for Buddhi (intellect) and 'Na' for Vijnana (wisdom). So, Ganapati is the master of Buddhi and Vijnana. He is the master of Suraloka (heaven). Ganapati has no master above Him. Being the master of all, He teaches the qualities of leadership. Ganapati has been worshipped and extolled since Vedic times. The Vedas and the Upanishads contain hymns in praise of Ganapati. So, Ganapati worship is not of recent origin; it originated in the hoary past.

Divinity shines in every man and illumines the path he ought to follow. But man is ruining his life by not paying heed to the promptings of divinity within him. He is suffering from lack

of peace as he is ignoring humanness in his mad pursuit of physical and ephemeral attainments. Acquisition of worldly education and worldly powers is not the objective that man is supposed to achieve in life. All these attainments correspond to the Pravritti Marga (outward path). That which is related to Pravritti is transient. One should follow the Nivritti Marga (inward path), experience the joy therefrom and share it with others. *"The body is made up of five elements and is bound to perish one day or the other, but the indweller has neither birth nor death. He has no attachment and no bondage. Truly speaking, the indweller is God Himself."* (Telugu Poem) But man wastes his time as he considers the body as permanent and ignores the indweller. Time is the most precious gift of God, but man does not realise the value of time. He wastes three-fourths of his time in vain pursuits. How can such a person redeem his life? To sanctify the Kaya (body), one has to make proper use of Kala (time).

The Vedas, the Upanishads and the Puranas attach utmost value to humanness. Man studies all these scriptures. But does he understand the value of their teachings? Has he put them into practice? Mere study of sacred texts is futile unless their teachings are put into practice. Peace and Bliss are within you. On this day of Vinayaka Chaturthi, it is the practice of the Bharatiyas to prepare delicacies and offer them to Vinayaka. These offerings are unique and special. Til (sesame) seeds, rice flour and jaggery are mixed, made into balls, cooked in steam and offered to Vinayaka. You should enquire into the purpose of making such an offering. These steam cooked preparations are good for the eyes and are beneficial to people suffering from Asthma and Eosinophilia. These offerings are meant to improve health and confer happiness on man. They are not to be treated as mere ritualistic practices. All that is related to God has a sacred inner meaning. Man, unable to understand this truth, treats everything in the worldly perspective.

Man is endowed with Pashu Lakshanas (animal qualities) as well as Pashupati Lakshanas (divine qualities). Pashu Lakshanas originate from the head. Worldly education and intelligence are related to the head. The scientists make use of their intelligence to study things, which are related to the world. This corresponds to the Pravritti Marga. Virtues like love, compassion, forbearance, which originate from the heart, lead man to Nivritti Marga. Today man wants to be intelligent, not virtuous. The Gita declares: *Anityam Asukham Lokam Imam Prapya Bhajasva Maam* (as the world is temporary and is full of misery, attain divinity by ceaseless contemplation on God). Give up Pravritti and take to Nivritti. Only then can you redeem yourself. Today we find elders teaching the children matters that are related to Pravritti, not Nivritti. Right from a child to a decrepit old man, everyone is interested in Pravritti. But is there anyone who could experience peace in life by treading the path of Pravritti? How can one attain peace? Where is peace? Keeping an atom bomb in hand, people give lectures on the need for peace. Such people may be able to reach the moon, but can never attain peace and happiness. There is no need to search for peace in the external world. All that you get in the external world is only restlessness. Peace is within you. It is your form. Try to manifest it from within.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

There is no power greater than that of love. You can attain peace by cultivating love. Peace is your birthright. External peace is temporary. Man should try to attain inner peace, which alone is pure, unsullied, eternal and immortal. For this, it is necessary that man should make proper use of time. It is therefore his foremost duty to utilise time in a sacred manner. Today man is wasting

a lot of time in vain gossip and talking ill of others. The Atmic principle that exists in you also exists in people whom you consider as 'others'. Understand that all are sparks of the Divine. *Isavasyam Idam Jagat* (the whole world is the manifestation of God). *Deho Devalaya Prokto Jeevo Deva Sanathana* (body is the temple and the indweller is God). As all are divine, you should love all and hate none. Do not observe differences on the basis of your likes and dislikes. Treat everyone alike. Understand that Divinity is one. *Ekatma Sarvabhutantaratma* (the same Atma is the indweller of all beings). Once you understand this truth, you will lead your life with peace and happiness.

### **Cultivate Purity of Heart**

Today, devotees from Bangalore have brought 750 idols of Lord Ganapati to offer worship, as this year happens to be the commencement of the 75<sup>th</sup> year of Swami's physical body. One may bring 750 idols or 7 crore idols, but Ganapati is only one. (*Cheers*) No benefit accrues from offering worship to a number of Ganapati idols without purity of heart. It is enough if you offer worship to one Ganapati idol with the feeling of oneness. What is the purpose of doing Pujas and Vratas (austerities)? These rituals are prescribed to cultivate purity of heart. *Chittasya Shuddhaye Karmah* (the objective of actions is to purify the heart). All the nine paths of devotion, namely, Sravanam (listening), Kirtanam (singing), Vishnusmaranam (contemplating on Vishnu), Padasevanam (serving the Lotus Feet), Archanam (worship), Vandanam (salutation), Dasyam (servitude), Sneham (friendship), Atmanivedanam (self-surrender) are meant to confer purity of heart. Sweets like Mysore Pak, Gulab Jamoon, Burfi, etc., vary in name and form, but the sugar present in them is the same. Likewise, the principle of love is the undercurrent of all the paths of devotion. So, spend your life with love and end your life with love. This is the true spiritual practice. You are not separate from God.

Divinity is the basis of human life. You can divinise your life by your Karma (action). Offer salutations to Karma before undertaking it. A driver, before taking his seat, offers salutations to the steering wheel. A dancer pays obeisance to her anklets before she wears them and starts her dance performance. A devotee pays his respects to the Gita before reading it. The purpose of offering prayer to Karma is to see that you perform only good actions which yield good results. This is the teaching of our ancient culture. You should offer Karma and its fruit to God before undertaking it. An illiterate lorry driver pays obeisance to the work he does, but not a scientist who is endowed with knowledge. Ego is the main cause for this. Such a scientist may consider himself to be very wise, but actually he displays ignorance. Just as our shadow follows us, ignorance follows one who is bloated with ego. Human life is a combination of wisdom and ignorance. It is a big mistake to consider yourself one of wisdom. Ignorance follows you like a shadow in all that you do. In order to get rid of this ignorance, you should consider the whole world as the manifestation of Vishnu (*Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat*). There is nothing in this world which is not divine. On this basis, Thyagaraja sang, "O Rama, right from a Cheema (ant) to Brahma, You are present in everyone in the form of love." How can one ignore such an all-pervasive Divinity?

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Consider every day as sacred day. You do not need to wait for Vinayaka Chaturthi or Navaratri to worship God. Consider every moment as divine and make proper use of it. People do Bhajans without understanding their significance. Instead of focusing their attention on God, they are

bothered too much about the tune and rhythm. No doubt, the tune and rhythm are also essential in Bhajans. But once you fill your heart with Divine love, the tune and rhythm will automatically be taken care of. If you concentrate too much on the tune and rhythm, you will not be able to think of God.

Just as the iron ball cast in fire becomes one with it, your mind should become one with God. Water cannot be separated from milk; likewise, your mind should get merged with God. You should not think that you are separate from God. One who realises this principle of unity is a true human being. Do not limit worship of God to festival days alone. Each and every moment should be spent in the contemplation of God. You may think, "If every moment is spent in the contemplation of God, then how is it possible to do our work?" Do not distinguish between your work and God's work. Your work is God's work as you and God are one. It is a mistake to think that all that you do in the prayer hall is God's work and outside it is your work. You should not entertain such feelings of separateness. Consider your heart as the altar of God and turn your vision inward. One who understands this truth and acts accordingly is a true human being.

You think that you love your family and friends, but that cannot be called love in the true sense of the term. That is only attachment. Love towards God alone is true love. If you call yourself a devotee of Swami, act according to Swami's expectation. Do not count the number of bags of rice and the number of Saris and Dhotis that you have given away in charity to the poor. You may submit such accounts to the Income Tax Department, not to God. God wants quality, not quantity. He sees the feeling behind your acts of charity. Even a small act of charity will assume immense significance in the eyes of God, if it is done with purity of heart. One teaspoonful of cow's milk is better than barrels of donkey's milk. God is pleased even if you offer a teaspoonful of milk with love. God always observes your feelings. God's valuation is always perfect; none can match Him in this respect.

### **Attain Divinity through Selfless Service**

Many students worship Vinayaka to secure high marks in the examination, to attain high qualifications and great reputation. But they do not aspire for good conduct and good behaviour. They should cultivate qualities, which are dear to God. Before undertaking any task, enquire whether it is pleasing to God. You are bound to attain success if God is pleased with your actions. Do not go by your own likes and dislikes. Conduct yourself in accordance with God's wish. Eschew selfishness and self-interest. Cultivate sacredness and steadfastness. This is the teaching of Lord Ganapati. Ganapati confers on you Buddhi (intellect) and Siddhi (fulfillment). One can attain siddhi only when one has good Buddhi. You have to love God wholeheartedly and offer Him all that you do. Then even a simple task performed by you will become significant.

In this land of Bharat, Ganapati is highly venerated. Ganapati worship is prevalent in all parts of India. Lord Ganesha shines in every heart. Who is Bhagavan (God)? 'Bha' means effulgence. One whose effulgence spreads everywhere is Bhagavan. Having self-effulgent God in our heart, why should you search for Him outside? Look into your heart.

*Embodiments of Love, Students, Boys and Girls!*

Divinity can be attained only through pure and selfless love. You may chant hundred and eight names or thousand and eight names of God. But without selfless service, it is of no use. All these are sterile activities. Service alone is fruitful. *"Penance, pilgrimage, learning of the Shastras or endless chanting, none of these can help in crossing the ocean of Samsara without service to the pious."* (Sanskrit Sloka) Service to your fellow beings is equivalent to worship of God. If you find someone in distress, try to help him before attending to your work in the office or elsewhere.

A small example: A boy from Delhi had been listening to Swami's teachings carefully. One day, he was going to the college to appear in an examination, which was to begin at 8 a.m. On his way, he saw a beggar, who stumbled as he was very sick and could not walk. He helped him to get up, took him to hospital and had him admitted there. By that time it was 10 a.m. When he noticed the time, he found that it was too late for the examination. He thought, "Well this was a test of my conduct by Swami Himself." He had no regrets that he missed the examination. He was actually happy. When he came to Me, he told Me, "Swami, one paper is gone, I will not pass this year. But next year is always there. I have no regrets for I have passed in Your test." I told him, "Don't worry, you have passed in your test also." Next month, the result was out. He secured first class. *(Cheers)*

The boy did not bother about his examination because he had done a noble act of service to a poor man. He thought that he had failed in the worldly test, but he had passed in the test of God. There are many students like this who would put service before self. When you have this attitude in your life, you will never fail. Whatever you do, do it wholeheartedly. In this way, you can experience Divinity.

### **Forbearance is the Highest Virtue**

There are many people who consider worship as important. They disregard work in the process. This is a big mistake. Worship is important, of course. But, what is worship? Offering of various kinds of flowers to the image of God is not worship in the real sense. You should offer the flower of your heart to God. That is why I told you earlier,

*"Offer to God the flowers of non-violence and sense control, compassion on all creatures, forbearance and peace, penance, meditation and truth above all. These are the flowers dear to the Lord."*  
(Telugu Poem)

The best flower of all is forbearance. The possession of this flower led Dharmaraja ultimately to liberation. In spite of the troubles and travails that he encountered, he was successful in the end. His wife was humiliated in public. Everyone looked down upon the Pandavas. But Dharmaraja was unaffected. Whatever is bound to happen will happen. One has to bear all that comes one's way. Thinking on these lines, Dharmaraja closed his eyes and meditated on Krishna. But Bhima was boiling with anger. He was furious, "Brother, enough of this Dharma of yours. Now, leave it to us and see what happens." Dharmaraja replied, "My dear Bhima, do not talk about your Dharma and my Dharma. Dharma is one. The course of action, which satisfies the conscience, is the Dharma that one should follow." Bhima said, "When our wife is being humiliated in public, how can we quietly close our eyes? I shall tear the Kauravas to pieces." But Dharmaraja pacified him. The Pandavas had such complete trust in Dharmaraja that ultimately they won.

When Ashwathama killed the sons of Draupadi, Arjuna was very much agitated. He caught hold of Ashwathama, tied his hands and feet, brought him before Draupadi and told her, "Here is the villain who killed your sons. I shall cut him to pieces. You can anoint your hair with his blood." Draupadi pacified Arjuna saying, you should not do any such thing. Why? *"The one who is full of fear and has lost all courage, or the one who is in deep sleep or dead drunk or has surrendered to you, or the one who is a female, O Arjuna, it is not proper to kill such a person."* (Telugu Poem) Thus saying, she held the hand of Arjuna from killing Ashwathama. She fell at the feet of Ashwathama and said, *"It is at the feet of your father, Dronacharya, that my husbands have learnt all that they know. Being the son of Dronacharya, was it proper for you to kill my children? How could you have the heart to kill them, who were unarmed, young, quietly asleep, were not having any grudge against you, and were not contemplating any harm to you?"* (Telugu Poem) Though she chided Ashwathama for his cruel act, she was calm all the while. Such an attitude of calmness often solves many difficult problems. You should not lose your peace even under the most trying circumstances. Under any provocation, you should not contemplate causing harm to anyone. Draupadi asked Arjuna, "If you kill Ashwathama, will not his mother suffer the same pangs of sorrow as I suffer now?" In spite of that Bhima was still bent upon killing Ashwathama. So high was his anger that he said: *"This Draupadi is a stupid woman, for she pleads for this wretch's freedom. She feels no anger against this murderer of her sons. This assassin Ashwathama is not a Brahmin. Do not release him but kill him. If you do not do that, I myself will hammer his head with my powerful fist, for you to see!"* (Telugu Poem)

But Draupadi prevailed upon Bhima and Arjuna with her pleadings and saved Ashwathama. Such was the nobility of character of the women of those days. Women are by nature forgiving. There were many women of fortitude, forbearance and purity in this country. It is because of such great women that India still holds its head high in spirituality.

Forbearance and forgiveness are the qualities which should be fostered by all individuals. You must be able to forgive even your enemies. This day consecrated to Ganapati teaches you forgiveness and love, so that you may realise Divinity and enjoy bliss.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, *"Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi..."*

—From Bhagavan's Ganesha Chaturthi Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam  
on 1st September 2000

AVATAR VANI

ONAM SANDESH

### **Eradicate Immorality to Attain Immortality**

*O foolish mind, why do you go here and there in search of Lord Vishnu, when He is very much present in you. Look within and worship Him with devotion and steadfastness just as Empero Bali did.*

(Telugu Poem)

Emperor Bali was Vishnupriya (one who loved Lord Vishnu). He was endowed with the virtues of charity and righteousness. But his reputation was slightly tainted because he was born in the clan of demons.

### **Emperor Bali's Charity and Sacrifice**

As Bali had immense love for Lord Vishnu and he was a repository of virtues, Lord Vishnu wanted to grant him liberation. He incarnated as Vamana and approached Bali when he was performing the Vishwajit Yajna. Emperor Bali welcomed Him and enquired if he could do anything for Him. Vamana asked him for just three footsteps of land. Bali laughed at this simple request of Vamana and said He could ask for much more than mere three footsteps of land. But Vamana said that He did not want anything else. As desired by Vamana, Bali not only gave what he was asked to give, but in the process offered himself also to the Lord. In this world, there are many people who would give away wealth and other materialistic acquisitions in charity. But true charity lies in offering oneself to the Lord.

Emperor Sibi was also one of charity like Emperor Bali. Once an eagle was in hot pursuit of a small bird, which sought refuge from Sibi. The eagle argued with Sibi that the bird was its rightful prey and food. So, he should give it at once. But Sibi said that he would never forsake one who had sought his refuge. He offered his own flesh to the eagle in order to protect the bird. The word Bali means sacrifice and Emperor Bali lived up to his name. Lord Rama, in order to uphold the promise of His father, renounced the kingdom and spent fourteen years in exile in the forest. Likewise, Gangeya (Bhishma) remained a Brahmachari (celibate) throughout his life for the sake of his father's happiness. That is why their names are imprinted on the hearts of people even today. Bhishma means one who remains steadfast in his vow. Bharat is the land of many such noble souls and emperors, who led a life of sacrifice.

Kerala occupies a place of prominence in this sacred land of Bharat, which is Tyaga Bhumi (land of sacrifice), Yoga Bhumi (land of spirituality) and Karma Bhumi (land of action). (*Cheers*) The state of Kerala owes its reputation not only to Emperor Bali but also to the advent of Lord Vamana. It is the tradition of Kerala not to turn away anybody empty-handed. In fact, every Bharatiya is endowed with this spirit of sacrifice. The people of Kerala are not affected by the impact of Kali Age as they continue to follow the ideals set by Bali and lead their lives happily. They are righteous, devoted and god minded. I wish that they live in harmony like members of one family. (*Cheers*) Kerala is, in fact, the birthplace of sacrifice. But today people are trying to convert this Tyaga Bhumi into Bhoga Bhumi.

*Forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land of Bharat. Of all the sacred virtues, adherence to truth is true penance. The nectarine feeling in this country is the feeling towards one's mother. Character is valued far more superior to the very life itself. People have forgotten the basic principles of the culture of Bharat and are following and adopting Western culture today. Bharatiyas are not aware of the greatness of their cultural heritage just as a mighty elephant is not aware of its own strength.* (Telugu Poem)

### **Human Beings should Imbibe Human Values**

The sacred land of Bharat, which was once highly reputed for men of sacrifice, is witnessing a sharp decline in moral values day after day. There is no unity whatsoever. Hatred is spreading

like wild fire among men. Man is expected to cultivate human values like compassion, forbearance, love, truth, tolerance, etc. Human life will lose its significance if man loses human values. People may belong to different political parties, but they should have love for each other. But they are devaluing love due to their association with political parties. Parties are, in fact, parting people from each other and creating differences among them. Man is giving up the principle of love for the sake of petty worldly gains. Love is the birthright of man. Love *all and be loved by all*. Give up hatred, brush aside all differences and lead a life suffused with love. Today there is a decline in human values. Evil qualities like hatred, jealousy, pomp and show are on the rise. It is a matter of great shame to call oneself a human being without giving up these wicked qualities. If you call yourself a human being, show at least one human quality.

Man has degenerated so much that he does not have love even for his own children. He is always filled with tension and temper. How can such a person work for the welfare of the nation? Some people call themselves Desha Nayakas (leaders of the nation), but in practice they are Desha Nashakas (destroyers of the nation). One who works for the progress of the nation is a Nayaka (true leader). One who calls himself a leader should always speak sweetly and lovingly. He should not indulge in criticism. Criticism is nothing but the reflection, reaction and resound of one's own wicked qualities. The bad qualities that one sees in others are nothing but the reflection of one's own inner feelings. No one has the right to find fault in others. He is the worst sinner who indulges in fault-finding. The tongue has been given to make others happy and to sing the glories of the Lord. You cannot always oblige, but you can speak always obligingly. The hands have been given not to hurt others, but to earn one's livelihood and perform acts of charity. The ears have been given not to listen to vain gossip, but to listen to the sacred stories of the Lord. In this manner, man should put his each limb to proper use and sanctify his life. Today science has advanced, but senses have become polluted. What is the use of acquiring education, which does not confer sense control?

*A foolish person boasts of high education and intelligence, yet does not know himself. What is the use of all the education he has acquired, if man cannot give up his evil qualities? All the worldly education will only lead him to vain argumentation, not total wisdom. It cannot lead him to immortality. So, man should acquire that knowledge which will make him immortal.*

(Telugu Poem)

Love alone can confer immortality. Love is deathless. Love is changeless. All things in the world change or perish, love alone is immortal. How is one to achieve this state of immortality? Removal of immorality is the only way to immortality.

You have to abandon bad thoughts, bad company, bad habits and everything that is bad. We find hatred all over the world these days. Deha (body) is being incinerated with Dwesha (hatred). No separate cremation is required for the body; this blazing hatred itself will reduce it to ashes. Man brings about his own end by the fire of hatred.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Born as human beings, you should practise human values to retain your claim on humanness. All the powers that are manifest in the world are latent in man. All human virtues have been kept in high esteem in Bharat since ancient times.



*This motherland of ours gave to the world noble souls renowned in all the continents. It is the land which ousted the foreign rulers and achieved freedom. This is the sacred land which achieved great heights in music, literature and science. This divine land is the nursery of painting, sculpture and other fine arts. O devotees, it is your bounden duty to keep this Bharatiya tradition alive and flourishing.*

(Telugu Poem)

This glorious tradition is slowly declining these days. It is enough if man retains his humanness. But sadly man seems to have lost his basic qualities of humanness. He has even lost the right to call himself a human being. You must have the courage of conviction to proclaim that you are a human being. You must also be able to proclaim the greatness of your motherland and act in such a way as to preserve its glory and reputation. You should declare with pride, "This is my motherland, this is my mother tongue!" It is sad and deplorable that the Bharatiyas have lost respect and love for their mother tongue, motherland and culture. Men have reduced themselves to mere caricatures of humans. From, Shiva (embodiment of auspiciousness), man has become Shava (corpse). A person stuffed with hatred, jealousy, pride, ostentatiousness is no better than a corpse. Do not have anything to do with such characters. Those who bring a bad name to their country are worse than pests and worms. Do not pay heed to such scandal mongers.

### **Recognise Your Divinity**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Yesterday you saw the drama on Bhasmasura. He wanted that everything he touched should be reduced to ashes. What happened finally? He reduced himself to a heap of ashes. All evil qualities, anger, hatred, etc., are destructive. People are heroes on the platform but zeros in life. You think that you are criticising somebody else, but in fact, it is your own self that you are abusing. Criticising others is a bad habit. One who abuses others is the worst sinner. One who sees the virtues of others is himself virtuous. *Sarva Jeeva Namaskaram Kesavam Pratigachchhati* (salutations to all beings reach God). *Sarva Jeeva Tiraskaram Kesavam Pratigachchhati* (abuse of all beings also reaches God). Criticising anyone is criticising God Himself. Honouring anyone is honouring God.

Adherence to righteousness and respect for others are as important as the care of the body and love for your country. Man today is destroying his life by indulging in selfishness and greed. He has become so blind that he is unable to recognise the consequences of his actions. He neither knows his origin nor his goal. It is not the right attitude. It is not wisdom. It is ignorance. Lord Krishna declared, *Deho Devalaya Prokto Jeevo Deva Sanathana* (body is the temple and the indweller is God Himself). Therefore, treat every human body as a temple and the indweller as God. Every individual is an aspect of Divinity. Therefore, respect all individuals. Only then will your life acquire meaning and others will also respect you. Modern man does not have this perspective of life. He lacks broad-mindedness. He respects none, but expects everybody to respect him. How is it possible? As is your company, so you become. That is why I say, tell Me your company, I shall tell you what you are.

God, who is pure, unsullied, eternal, immortal, omnipotent is very much present in you, beside you, above you, below you, all around you. You do not need to search for God outside because

you are God yourself. If you develop this outlook, you can realise God. So long as you bind yourself with human limitations, you continue to be man. Give up your body attachment and recognise the divinity in you. Then you become liberated. God in the form of Vamana came to Emperor Bali to teach him this reality. He said, "Bali, you are no ordinary person. I am in you always wherever you are. Do not identify yourself with your body."

The human body is made up of mere refuse devoid of any fragrance. Are you merely this body? No. Body is merely a leather puppet. Inside the body, there is the eternal being.

*The divine play between the Atma and Paramatma (Cosmic Principle) continues in the body. They are together and separate at the same time. God is the string puller of this entire puppet play. (Telugu Poem)*

Why, wherefrom and what for have you come in this world? You have come from God, for God and to attain God. Be aware that God is with you always. If this kind of unity with God is attained, all your actions become pure.

### **Students should never enter into Politics**

*Students!*

You have heard the speech given by a student from Srisailam Vidyapeeth. All the students of Srisailam Vidyapeeth are very pure and sacred. (*Cheers*) In fact, all students everywhere have pure heart. It is the elders who spoil the innate goodness of the students.

No matter what field you enter into, always have an attitude of service. Students should serve society. Serve everybody. Keep yourself pure. Do any work, but never enter into politics. Politics pollutes the mind. Politics has become synonymous with evil. If you want to ruin yourself, get into politics. If you want to be an ideal person and want to receive God's grace, then cultivate all good qualities. In olden times, there were many ideal political leaders. They practised what they preached. That is why, quite a few students were drawn into politics. Even little urchins would collect in crowds to see leaders like Jayaprakash Narayana or Subhash Chandra Bose. They used to decorate their houses with pictures of such leaders. What do you see today?

You get into any student's room; you see nothing but pictures of film stars. You do not see pictures of ideal men today and do not listen to sacred words. Because people in those days were emulating ideal persons, their actions were also pure.

*Embodiments of Love!*

You should also have a pure heart. It is the purity of your heart that attracts everybody like a magnet. The whole world, in fact, is a magnet. Every object howsoever small has this magnetic power. But in man this magnet is further magnified. This is the magnet of love. Love is God, live in love. This magnet of love must be pure. Everybody will then be attracted to you. A small example: All of you are here. Did I send you any invitation card? Did I send word to you? The magnet of My love has drawn all of you here. (*Cheers*) Bhagavan's greatest property is love - boundless love. Bhagavan is not interested in any other property. There is no wealth greater than love anywhere. Therefore, you too should enhance this property of love in you. Speak with

sweetness and concern with everyone. Such pleasing speech has become scarce. We hear harsh words all around. Speak softly and sweetly. Then all will become your friends.

*Students!*

Making friendship is nothing great in itself. You lose friends as easily as you make them. There is no point in having such friendship. Have friendship with God for which you should be prepared to sacrifice everything, even your body and life. Cultivate love.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajans, "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...*" and "*Govinda Hare, Gopala Hare...*"

—From Bhagavan's Onam Sandesh in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 10th  
September 2000

### **In the Palm of Your Hand**

You are the beginning and You are the end,  
You keep me safe in the palm of Your hand.  
Your love and protection guide me on my way,  
Your grace gives additional light to my day.  
Each morning I wake up and right from the start  
I know that You are in the midst of; my heart.  
You are around me, You are above and below,  
You are everywhere, wherever I go.  
You take away the veil from my soul,  
You show me bliss, a glimpse of the goal.  
You render strength of Your special kind  
That leads to courage and peace of mind.  
I thank You for being with me, everyday  
To guard me during my earthly stay.

—Marita Neckenburger

#### **FESTIVALS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM**

### **Ganesha Chaturthi and Onam Celebrations**

Prasanthi Nilayam bore a festive look with the grand celebrations of Ganesha Chaturthi and Onam festivals right from the beginning of September 2000. Ganesha Chaturthi Celebrations This year, the festival of Ganesha Chaturthi was celebrated on a much larger scale at Prasanthi Nilayam. Apart from the celebrations in Sai Kulwant Hall that are held every year, an aesthetically designed and beautifully decorated Pandal was set up in a big lawn where as many as 751 manifestations of Ganapati were displayed and Puja, Homam and Bhajans were conducted for seven days starting from 1st September 2000, the day of Ganesha Chaturthi. This

magnificent display and Puja, etc., were organised by Sri Sathya Ganapati Sangha of Bangalore as part of Bhagavan's 75th Birthday Celebrations.

The celebrations first started in Sai Kulwant Hall on the morning of 1st September. As soon as Swami entered the Hall from His abode, the Institute students started chanting devotional hymns in praise of Lord Ganesha. While Swami showered His blessings on the assembled devotees on this auspicious day, the students continued chanting the Stotras. Thereafter, showers of Divine bliss came in the form of Bhagavan's nectarine discourse (given separately in this issue) which started at 7.05 a.m. after Veda chanting by Institute students. Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi...*" This programme came to a close with distribution of Prasadam to all the devotees and Arati to Bhagavan.

Thereafter, the venue of the celebrations shifted to the specially erected Pandal where Puja and Homam were going on since early hours of the morning. Bhagavan arrived at this venue at 8.40 a.m. in a procession preceded by Veda chanting group, Nadaswaram and Yaksha Gana cultural troupe. On arrival at the venue, Bhagavan was received with Poorna Kumbham by the priests. Bhagavan lighted the sacred lamp to inaugurate the function and also unveiled a six-foot long Sanathana Sarathi Ganapati idol placed on a chariot drawn by four horses. After the inauguration, Bhagavan proceeded to the galleries of the Pandal, where 751 forms of Ganapati were displayed. He was then led to the specially designed stage, where the priests were conducting the Homam. Bhagavan showered His blessings on the organisers and materialised a gold chain with a pendant for one of the ladies. Bhagavan then performed Poornahuti (final oblations) amidst the chanting of Veda Mantras. This programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 8.55 a. m.

In the evening, Sri R. K. Prasanna Kumar of Bangalore presented a magnificent programme of classical vocal music in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. He rendered with utmost devotion the popular Kritis of Thyagaraja and Purandaradasa. At the end of the programme, Bhagavan blessed the artiste and also materialised a gold chain for him. Arati was offered to Bhagavan at 6.10 p.m. With this, the 1st day's programme of Ganesha Chaturthi came to a happy conclusion.

The immersion of Ganesha idols consecrated by Puja in the schools, colleges, hospitals, etc., was done on the afternoon of 5 September 2000. The idols were brought to Sai Kulwant Hall in a procession on specially decorated and well-designed vehicles resembling temples amidst Veda chanting and Bhajan singing by the students, teachers and other staff members. Bhagavan was present in Sai Kulwant Hall when these groups converged before the Mandir after circumambulating it. Bhagavan Baba blessed all the groups and posed for photographs with them. As a mark of auspiciousness, Bhagavan broke coconuts before all the idols, after which the idols were taken away for immersion.

The programme in the specially erected Pandal continued from 2nd September to 7th September 2000 after its inauguration by Bhagavan on 1st September. The daily programme included Homam, Abhishekam and Puja in the morning and Puja and Bhajans in the evening.

On the final day, i.e., 7th September 2000, Bhagavan came to the Pandal at 7.15 a.m. amidst Veda Gosha and Nadaswaram. He blessed the priests and organisers and performed Poornahuti with His Divine hands, which sent divine vibrations to all directions. Arati was offered to Bhagavan before He left the Pandal at 7.35 a.m.

In the afternoon of 7<sup>th</sup> September, the idol in the form of Shirdi Sai Ganapati was taken out from the Pandal for immersion in a grand procession amidst chanting of Veda Mantras, Nadaswaram and Bhajans. The procession first came to Sai Kulwant Hall to receive Swami's blessings. Swami blessed the organisers, posed for photographs with them and later broke coconuts before the idols were taken from the Mandir for immersion. Thus, concluded the grand Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam.

### **Onam Celebrations**

After the grand celebration of Ganesha Chaturthi from 1st September to 7th September, three-day Onam celebrations started at Prasanthi Nilayam the very next day and culminated on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2000. The festivities commenced with the Panchavadyam and Nadaswaram music on the morning of 8<sup>th</sup> September in Sai Kulwant Hall, which was decorated in a typical Kerala style with palm leaves festoons and floral schemes. In the afternoon, a delightful programme of devotional music was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Kerala, in which some eminent musicians from Kerala entertained the huge concourse of devotees.

An excellent programme was presented by the children and youth of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Kerala on 9th September 2000 in the Poornachandra Auditorium in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. There were three items in this programme. The first item of the programme was a playlet entitled "Think before you Leap" presented by the children of Sri Sathya Sai Vidyapeeth, Srisailam, Kerala. The playlet showed how the demon king Bhasmasura acquired a boon from Siva and brought about his own destruction, clearly depicting the message that we should think twice before we make our prayers to God for materialistic acquisitions and worldly powers.

The second item of the programme was the play entitled "Sai Mahima" presented by the youth wing of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Kerala. The play showed how the message of Sai changed the materialistic outlook of a family and brought about harmony, peace and spirituality in it through the influence of the Bal Vikas programme.

The last item of the programme was a beautiful dance "Sathyameva Jayate" presented by the children of Ernakulam District of Kerala. The day's programme came to a happy conclusion with this delightful dance. At the end of the programme, Bhagavan went up the stage to bless the children. He posed for photographs with them and distributed clothes to all. He also materialised a gold chain for the boy who enacted the role of the businessman's son in the drama "Sai Mahima". The programme concluded with Arati to Bhagavan.

On the day of Onam, i.e., 10<sup>th</sup> September, a grand welcome was offered to Bhagavan when He came to Sai Kulwant Hall in the morning. Bhagavan was led into the specially decorated and brilliantly lit Hall by Kavadi dancers accompanied by Nadaswaram musicians and Veda chanting

Pandits. Children holding lamps in their hands welcomed Bhagavan inside the Hall. Bhagavan was offered traditional welcome by Poorna Kumbham when He reached the dais.

The day's programme started after Bhagavan lighted the sacred lamps. Thereafter, Bal Vikas children of Kerala expressed their joy on this holy occasion by performing group dances. Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, two speakers made brief speeches. The first speaker was Sri K. Jaya Kumar, Education Secretary, Kerala. The speaker expressed gratitude to Bhagavan for His teachings which were transforming the lives of the people. Referring to the festival of Onam, he observed that Onam was a festival of equanimity and equality, which were the main lessons of Bhagavan. He exhorted all to follow the path shown by Bhagavan and redeem their lives. The next speaker was a student of Sri Sathya Sai Vidyapeeth, Srisailam, who referred to the values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa taught by Bhagavan which have special significance for the students studying in Bhagavan's institutions. He said, it was a privilege to study in a Sai school and expressed gratitude to Bhagavan for showing the path of duty, discipline and devotion to the students.

Bhagavan then gave His Onam Sandesh (given elsewhere in this issue) and concluded it with two Bhajans, "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...*" and "*Govinda Hare...*" The morning programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan and distribution of Prasadam to all the assembled devotees.

A magnificent cultural programme was presented in the Poornachandra Auditorium by the Bal Vikas children and youth of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Kerala on the evening of 10th September 2000, the holy day of Onam. This programme consisted of two items. The first item was an excellent dance entitled "Vande Mataram" presented by the Bal Vikas children of Wynad District of Kerala. The flawless performance of the children, who made many beautiful formations during the dance, won the hearts of the audience who applauded time and again in appreciation of the performance. The second item of the programme was a small but beautiful play entitled "Bhakta Hanuman" presented by the Bal Vikas children of Ernakulam District of Kerala. The play successfully depicted how Hanuman is the model for all Bhaktas of the Lord. All the scenes were well presented and the children acted with precision and perfection. The special effects like sunset in Ashoka Vatika in Lanka and Hanuman setting the Lanka on fire were well presented.

Bhagavan, who came to the Poornachandra Auditorium at 6.00 p.m., sat through the entire performance, blessed the children and posed for photographs with them at the end of the programme. He also gave clothes to them and showered His special grace on the child who enacted the role of Hanuman by materialising a gold chain for him. Arati was offered to Bhagavan in the end. Thus, Onam celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam came to a happy conclusion with this beautiful cultural programme.

AVATAR VANI

INAUGURAL DISCOURSE: INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE ON STRENGTHENING VALUES EDUCATION

## **Education Should Foster Values**

*Modern education fosters only intelligence, not virtues.  
Of what avail is education if it does not inculcate virtues in man?  
(Telugu Poem)*

*Embodiments of Love!*

Since ancient times, the Bharatiyas have been using the word 'Prapancha' while referring to this world consisting of mobile and immobile objects. It is constituted by the five elements, viz., earth, water, fire, air and ether.

**Convert your Knowledge into Skill**

The Bharatiyas have been worshipping these five elements as the manifestations of Divinity. They called earth as Bhudevi (goddess earth), water as Gangadevi (goddess Ganga), fire as Agnideva (fire god), wind as Vayudeva (wind god), and ether (Aakasa) as Shabda Brahman (primordial sound). The five elements relate to five senses of perceptions in man and their attributes are sight, taste, touch, smell and hearing. The true meaning of the worship of the elements is that man should not only make proper use of these elements, but should also sanctify his senses of sight, taste, touch, smell and hearing. But neither the students are making any effort to understand the divine nature of these five elements nor are the teachers making them aware of this truth. The students are interested in acquiring merely bookish knowledge and not in understanding the sanctity of these elements. True education is that which confers virtues, good intellect, devotion, duty and discipline. The teachers are also interested in imparting only bookish knowledge to the students and not the spiritual aspect of education.

Today, all the five elements are polluted and consequently, man is mired in insecurity. Mere acquisition of degrees should not be the objective of students. They should make proper use of the five elements. This is the true value-oriented education the world needs today. Values are for education, education is for life, life is for love, love is for man, man is for spirituality, spirituality is for the world and the world is for peace. So, one should travel from values to peace. Today the students are acquiring education with selfishness and self-interest in mind. They are craving for money. Money comes and goes but morality comes and grows. The students should strive hard to cultivate morality. They should convert their knowledge into skill and bring about balance in their lives. But modern students are actually killing their knowledge, i.e., they are putting it to misuse. Consequently, they have completely lost their mental power and their inner reality is also eclipsed.

Modern education cannot be called education in its true sense. What is the use of intelligence if one lacks power of discrimination? And of what avail is knowledge if it is not converted into skill? True education is that which develops in you love for your fellow beings and motivates you to serve the community. Modern system of education has undergone many changes but no change has brought about any worthwhile results. First of all, the mind of man should be transformed. Then the entire world will be transformed because the mind forms the basis of the entire world (*Mano Moolam Idam Jagao*).

Today, the students do not know how to convert their knowledge into skill. Where does the mistake lie? Does it lie with the parents or the teachers or the leaders? It is the mistake of

everybody. The students are pure and tenderhearted. It is the responsibility of the parents to teach them the importance of human values like truth, righteousness and love. But the parents are not making any effort to teach the children to speak the truth. In fact, some parents misguide their children in this regard. For example, if the father does not want to attend a particular telephone call, he tells his son to utter a lie, saying his father is not available. In this manner, children are taught to speak untruth. As a result, they lead a life of untruth after they grow up. Under any circumstances, one should not utter a lie. The students should learn to practise this maxim: *Help ever, Hurt never*. Those who adhere to this dictum will certainly progress in life.

Balance in Life and Balance in Nature Today boys and girls acquire education with an eye on the external world. They do not realise that all that is seen in the external world is transient. One can develop inner vision in life only when one makes proper use of one's knowledge. Humanness has declined because man lacks balance in life. If human values are to be fostered, man should convert his knowledge into skill and maintain proper balance in life. Today the world is losing its ecological balance as man, out of utter selfishness, is robbing the mother Earth of her resources like coal, petroleum, iron, etc. As a result, we find earthquakes, floods and such other devastating natural calamities. Human life will find fulfillment only when ecological balance is maintained. Balance in human life and balance in Nature, both are equally important. Today even marine life is in danger due to so-called advancement in science. Advancement in science is welcome but it should not lead to ecological imbalance. The people and the world at large should be benefited from science. But today everyone is interested in selfish gains. No one seems to care for society.

The food that we eat, the water that we drink, the air that we breathe are all polluted. In fact, all the five elements which are of utmost importance for man, are polluted. It is the foremost duty of the students to cleanse the world of pollution. Keep your body and mind clean. Cleanliness is godliness. Purify your actions and feelings. Speak sweetly and softly to everybody. The culture of Bharat teaches *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* (speak the truth and adhere to righteousness). Love everybody because God is present in all. The Vedas teach, *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God dwells in all beings). God has another name Viswa. It means that the entire universe is His form. What is the Goal of Education? One does not find unity among students as they lack the virtue of love. You should consider love as your very life. I often tell My students - when the electric current of truth flows through the wire of righteousness and enters the bulb of peace, you get the light of love. In order to cultivate love, you should adhere to the values of Sathya and Dharma. *Sathyam Bhruyat, Priyam Bhruyat, Na Bhruyat Sathyamapriyam* (speak the truth, speak it in a pleasant way and do not speak the truth that is unpleasant). Sathyam Bhruyat is the moral value, Priyam Bhruyat is the social value and Na Bhruyat Sathyamapriyam is the spiritual value. But modern man is not interested in spirituality.

Today the rich and the educated are neglecting spirituality. They consider money as the be-all and end-all of life. Money can never give peace and bliss. Devotion is most essential. The country is facing hardships because people lack devotion to God. They do not think of God who is manifest in the form of five elements. We know water is essential for life. But values like truth and righteousness are as essential for man as water. Who is a human being? Is he merely the body? No. One with purity, love and devotion alone is a true human being. Today people are in mad pursuit of money. No doubt, money is essential but it should be within limits. Once you have love for God, money will follow you of its own accord. People are ready to sacrifice even



their lives for the sake of money but do not spend even a minute in the contemplation of God. They do not undertake even a single sacred activity during the day in the 24 hours given to them by God. Each one has to enquire whether he is making proper use of time. People waste a lot of time in vain gossip and in watching television, etc. What is it that you get out of these activities? You just waste time. Time is God. Time wasted is life wasted.

One may be wealthy but wealth is useless if one lacks character. After death, are you able to carry your bank balance with you? No. It will remain in the bank only. You cannot carry even a fistful of sand with you. So, character is most essential, not money. True education is that which removes the pollution of the mind and develops character. It is not enough if the students get good marks; they should take care that they do not get bad remarks. Only then will their marks have value.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Everyone should foster divine qualities, be he a student or an elder. Without these virtues, life is meaningless. For all your needs, do not depend on others, depend on God. In fact, you are not human; you are God as God is present in all beings. You will remain a human being so long as you think so. Have the firm conviction that you are God. Follow Dharma and share your love with all. This is the essence of true education.

*"Can you call all those who know how to read and write educated?*

*Can one be called educated merely by acquiring degrees?*

*Can you call it education which does not confer virtues?*

*If education is just for a living, don't we find birds and beasts carrying on their lives?"*

**(Telugu Poem)**

The goal of education is not merely reading and writing, which constitute worldly education. It is to attain purity and divinity. Worldly education is transient. Knowledge of the Self alone is eternal. It can be acquired only through devotion and love for God. Man is born to set an ideal to the rest of the world, not to amass wealth. Money makes many wrongs. Make your mind sacred. Where are all those kings of yore who amassed riches and conquered kingdoms? What is the use of such a life? One should lead a life which makes one immortal.

*"A foolish person boasts of high education and intelligence, yet does not know himself. What is the use of all the education he has acquired, if man cannot give up his evil qualities? All the worldly education will lead him only to vain argumentation, not total wisdom. It cannot lead him to immortality. So, man should acquire that knowledge which will make him immortal."*

**(Telugu Poem)**

That is true education. It will protect you wherever you are. This education will earn you the friendship of all, even if you do not have money and you are in a foreign land. Never give up human values under any circumstances. Only then can you set an ideal to the world. Human values cannot be acquired from textbooks nor can the teachers bestow them on you.

They are with you right from your birth. You have to cultivate them through self-effort. Lead a truthful life. The whole creation has emerged from truth, is sustained in truth and ultimately

merges into truth. Is there any place where truth does not exist? In order to lead a peaceful life, one should always adhere to truth and righteousness. No doubt, the path of Dharma is beset with difficulties. In the beginning, you may have to face many problems, but you should take them in your stride and proceed on the path of truth. Purity, patience and perseverance are very essential for man. But man is becoming a patient as he lacks patience. Each one has to question himself/herself whether he/she has these virtues. It is not enough if you proclaim that you are pure; let others say it.

### **True Education Fosters Purity and Unity**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Do not have excessive desires. It is said, "Less luggage more comfort makes travel a pleasure." Your desires are the luggage in the journey of your life. You will have peace of mind only when you reduce your desires. Swami is the best ideal in this regard. I don't have any desires; I don't want anything. (*Cheers*) As you are aware, we have a very big hospital at Puttaparthi and there are many educational institutions. They are functioning smoothly because they have been started with love and noble intentions.

My only desire is that all people should live like ideal human beings. After the Bhajans, you chant the prayer *Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu* (May the entire world be happy!). It is not enough if some are happy and some are not. All should be happy. That is possible only when human values are practised. There are many who give lectures on human values. He alone is a true human being who puts them into practice. Elders should sow the seeds of human values in the tender hearts of the children. They will grow into gigantic trees and give shelter to many in future. It is said, "Start early, drive slowly, and reach safely." Human values should be taught to the children right from their early years. So, some schools have to be started for this purpose. If you start fostering values from Primary School level, the children then will grow to become ideal leaders of the nation. Parents and teachers should strive hard to inculcate ideals in children. If the parents at home, teachers in school and companions in the neighbourhood foster values in children, then there is nothing greater than this.

It is said, "Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are." As is your company, so shall you become. So, run away from bad company; join good company. Undertake good activities day in and day out. Even wicked will get transformed on seeing your good conduct.

Love is most essential for mankind. To whichever country or race you belong, however rich or poor you are, you must adhere to truth and righteousness. Use your tongue to speak the truth only. With the hands given by God perform acts of charity. With the ears capable of hearing, hear only pure words. This is the purity of the limbs of man. In the same way, you must maintain the purity of the five elements.

It is solely for this purpose that Jumsai has done a lot of work. This task of fostering human values cannot be accomplished by a single person. All have to join together. Will a single thread make cloth? When threads are interwoven, cloth is produced. All worthwhile causes can be achieved only by the cooperation of several people. This handkerchief is strong only because many threads have been interwoven closely. If you remove the threads one by one, they will break easily. So, unity is essential for our movement to advance. Jumsai has great hopes for the

growth of this movement. In the coming three or four days, many new ideas will emerge in the conference. The faltering of a few must be compensated by others and all must move forward together. Unity, goodness and good action must be practised. If these are practised well, you can grow faster and increase in number.

### **Internalise Human Values and Redeem your Life**

It is not enough if you start an institution. The students must be brought up in the right way. Speak gently. Never show anger towards the children. You cannot always oblige but you can speak always obligingly. Talk to the children softly and sweetly. Interaction between the teachers should also be pleasant. Then the children will be encouraged by their example.

Every little thing should be taught to the children to the best of your ability. Only then the children will learn with enthusiasm. Mathematics, Physics or Chemistry can be learnt from books or by experiments in the laboratory. But human values cannot be learnt that way. It is not something that can be acquired from books. It cannot be taught by a teacher by mere oral instruction. It is like training in physical exercise. Drill can be taught only by demonstration. The drill master demonstrates the actions and helps the learners to follow the steps. The children imitate their elders. Therefore, you should teach the children the values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema by first practising the values yourself. Then the children will progress in the right direction. The whole country will grow. Not only this country, all countries of the world will be transformed. There are very few who teach these things today. Fewer still try to prove them. Those who practise are rare. That is why the world is in such bad state now.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Many of you may be wealthy. Many of you are scholars. Your greatness will not be judged merely by your possessions. To what extent you are spending your wealth in a good way, to what extent you are using your learning to good purpose, to what extent you are using your intellect for the good of the community, that is what counts with Bhagavan. Swami wants quality and not quantity. One teaspoonful of cow's milk is useful. Of what use are barrels of donkey's milk? What you have not put into practice is of no use. Practise and demonstrate. Then you become truly rich and a true scholar. Wealth, scholarship, intelligence—all become worthwhile only when used in the right way.

Money may come and money may go. Things like money are mere passing clouds. But love comes and grows. You have to realise this in all sincerity and earnestness. Then you become truly human. If you have love, all will be drawn closer to you. If you are devoid of love, none will come near you. A small example: Bhagavan is the embodiment of Love. That is why there is such a large gathering here. No invitations have been sent to you. My Love has attracted all of you here. So, you should also expand your love. With love you can achieve anything.

You have three or four days more in this conference. Put together your queries and doubts. Analyse them and arrive at appropriate solutions. You have to make this conference an ideal for other such gatherings. Many people go to seminars and conferences. Hardly any understanding results. This is not such a conference. The outcome of the conference should appeal to your feelings and intellect. That is a proper conference. All should be united. Develop love and share

love. Speak the truth. Practise righteous conduct. Lead a sacred life. That is true living. Then your life will become meaningful.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Many of you have come from far off places, spending a lot of money. After making so much effort and spending so much money, you must take back with you what will really sanctify your life. All of you have assembled here. Share your love with others and receive their love in return. Understand the meaning of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema. Fully internalise these values. Truth does not mean merely to repeat faithfully what you have seen. Truth is eternal; it does not change in all the three periods of time (past, present and future). You must speak the truth and practise righteousness. What is Dharma? *Dharayati Iti Dharmah* (that which sustains you is Dharma). Dharma is the true nature of man. Fire is that which burns. If it does not burn, it is mere coal. Only when Dharma is well established in a person, his humanness manifests. The principle of love must shine prominently in you.

In the coming few days, if you have any doubt, ask without hesitation. Bhagavan is ready to clear all your doubts. Make full use of Bhagavan's proximity. Ask and be satisfied. You are Mine and I am yours. You and I are one (*cheers*). We are not different from each other. Many say 'thank You', 'thank You' to Bhagavan. It is a meaningless cliché. You thank only the third person. Bhagavan is not a third person. He is the second person. You do not thank the second person. If your mother serves you good food, do you say 'thank you' to her? No, no, it is her duty. To love you all is the duty of Bhagavan. Don't ever say 'thank You' to Bhagavan. It is your right to ask. It is your right and Bhagavan's responsibility. When right and responsibility are balanced, bliss results.

*—From Bhagavan's Inaugural Discourse at the International Conference on Strengthening Values Education in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 25th September 2000*

## **International Conference on Strengthening Values Education**

A new chapter was added to the Values Education programme of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba when a galaxy of over 600 delegates from 78 countries of the world congregated at Prasanthi Nilayam to participate in the "International Conference on Strengthening Values Education" from 25th to 29th September 2000. This Conference was organised by the Institute of Sathya Sai Education, Thailand.

### **Inaugural Session**

The inaugural session of this Conference was held on 25th September 2000 in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.30 p.m. After invocatory chants by the Institute students and students of Sathya Sai Schools of Zambia, Thailand and Nepal, Bhagavan Baba formally inaugurated the Conference by lighting the sacred lamp amidst loud applause of delegates and devotees.

After the inaugural ceremony, Dr. Artong Jumsai, Director, Institute of Sathya Sai Education, Thailand, welcomed the delegates to the Conference and stated its aims and objectives. Commenting on the appropriateness of Prasanthi Nilayam as the venue of this International Conference, Dr. Jumsai observed that there could be no better venue than this abode of supreme peace with its spiritual and divine vibrations. Expressing gratitude to Bhagavan Baba for permission to hold the Conference at Prasanthi Nilayam, Dr. Jumsai stated that Bhagavan Baba is not only the Supreme Being in human form but the very model of all Human Values. Before concluding his speech, Dr. Jumsai introduced the day's speaker Dr. Michael Goldstein, President, Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Foundation.

Dr. Goldstein spoke about the global impact of Bhagavan Baba's inspiring teachings. Addressing the assembled delegates, Dr. Goldstein observed that the Divine proximity of Bhagavan provided an environment where there was perpetual flow of love, wisdom, insight and inspiration which would help the delegates to arrive at tangible solutions to the problems of the world through a global programme of Human Values.

After these speeches, Bhagavan Baba gave His inspiring message (printed separately in this issue) in which He exhorted the delegates to draw out a programme of Human Values to transform the mankind and put it on the path of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. Bhagavan's inaugural message set the tone for the rest of the Conference and guided the delegates in their deliberations.

### **Plenary Sessions**

After the inauguration of the Conference in Sai Kulwant Hall on 25th September 2000, the Plenary Sessions of the Conference were conducted on 26<sup>th</sup>, 27th and 28th in the International Conference Hall. There were in all four Plenary Sessions, each with a keynote speaker on one of the main themes, viz., 1. Education and Human Values: A Conceptual Framework, 2. Innovative Approaches to Values Education, 3. Teacher Education for Values Education and Peace Education, and 4. Regional and International Cooperation for Strengthening Policies for Values Education.

Dr. Art-ong Jumsai of Thailand delivered the Keynote Address on "Education and Human Values" in the first Plenary Session on 26th September. After his illuminating Keynote Address the distinguished speakers who presented their papers and addressed the delegates were Dr. Sanjeev Chaudhry (India): "Values Education for the 21st Century," Dr. Frances Shoonmaker (U.S.A.): "Values Curriculum" and Dr. James Lee (U.K.): "Teaching Values Effectively." In the second Plenary Session on 26<sup>th</sup> September on the theme of Innovative Approaches to Values Education, Dr. Leonarda Jekantaite, Secretary General of UNESCO (Lithuania) presented the Keynote Address. After this, four distinguished speakers presented their papers in this session. They were Dr. Rosalia Arteaga, Ex-Vice President of Ecuador, Dr. Wichien Ketsingha, Deputy Secretary General, National Education Commission (Thailand), Prof. Chisela Lange (Italy) and Ms. Christine Churcher (Ghana).

In the third Plenary Session held on 27th September, the focus was on "Teacher Education for Values Education and Peace". In this session, the Keynote Address was presented by Dr. Yassin Sankar (Canada), who drew the attention of the delegates towards the need for character

education. This was followed by two very stimulating presentations. The first talk was given by Dr. Yamaguchi of Japan on "Peace Education" and second on the topic of "Teachers' and Parents' Role" by Dr. Teerakiat Jareonsettasin (Dr. Judo) of Thailand.

The fourth Plenary Session held on 28th September dealt with the theme of "Regional and International Cooperation for Strengthening Policies for Values Education." Dr. Victor Kanu of Zambia was the Keynote Speaker of this session. Dr. Kanu's talk was followed by three scholarly presentations. The first presentation was made by Dr. Michael Mel (Papua New Guinea) on "Teacher Education," the second by Prof. Stanley Kalpage (Sri Lanka) on "International Cooperation for Strengthening Values Education" and the last talk of the session was on "International Peace Education Policies" by Mrs. Maria Lourdes Arcenas (Philippines). Besides the presentation of papers in the Plenary Sessions, the programme included Case Studies, Workshops and Small Group Discussions to provide in-depth study of the problems of Values Education.

### **Case Studies**

The following three interesting Case Studies were presented on 26th September: (1) "Impact of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values at Sathya Sai School, Zambia" by Dr. Peter Chomba Manchishi (Zambia) (2) "Child Centred Approach to Education" by Dra. Clan Visser't Hooft (The Netherlands) and (3) "Implementation of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values in Public Schools in New York, Chicago and San Diego" by Dr. Ronne Marantz (U.S.A.).

On 27th September, the following three Case Studies were presented: (1) "Quality Assurance in Human Values" by Ms. Stephanie Mew (U.S.A.), (2) "Teacher Education for Global Peace through Art" by Mr. V. Balu (India) and (3) "How Value-oriented Programmes have Helped Thousands of Children in Los Angeles Area" by Mr. Richard Selby (U.S.A.).

The Case Studies presented on 28th September were: (1) "A Case Study on Mary Pillay: From Receiver to Giver" by Mr. Sagie Naicker (South Africa), (2) "A Hong Kong Case Study- Implementation of SSEHV in the Mainstream Curriculum" by Ms. Dorothy Ng (Hong Kong) (3) "A Case Study on Values Adoption Programme in Schools in Chihuahua, Mexico" by a team of teachers from Mexico, (4) "A Case Study on Values Education in New South Wales Government Schools" by Ms. Ann McIntyre (Australia) and (5) "Case Study of 'Kura Kaupapa Maori' and their foundation document 'Tel Aho Matua'" by Dr. Katerina Te Mataira (New Zealand).

### **Workshops**

Like Case Studies, Workshops conducted during the Conference widened the horizon of the delegates on Values Education. Three Workshops were conducted on 26th September, viz., (1) "Curriculum Strategy for Teacher Preparation" by Mr. B. G. Pitre (India), (2) "Interaction of Brain and Heart in Education" by Dra. Charlotte Korbee (The Netherlands) and (3) "Art and Human Values" by Ms. Masako Tsuruta (Japan).

The Workshops conducted in the session on 27th September were as follows: (1) "Profile of an Ideal Educator and how to Approximate that Ideal" by Ms. Marta Balan (Australia) (2) "Methods and Techniques to Assist in the Transformation of the Child" by Mrs. Loraine Burrows (England) (3) "Communication Strategy for Values Education" by Mr. Nimish Pandya (India),

(4) "Integrating Values Education into the Mathematics Programme" by Dr. Margaret Taplin (Australia) (5) "Value Parenting" by Dr. Pal Dhall (Australia) and (6) "Grounding Human Values through Open Dialogue" by Dr. Thorbjorn Meyer (Denmark).

Three Workshops were conducted on 28th September. These were: (1) Workshop on Women Education for Inner Peace" by Dr. Prameela Gukhool (Mauritius), (2) "Music and Values" by Ms. Barbara Robbins (U.S.A.) and (3) "Global Ethics, Self-integrity and World Constitution Making including the Librecom Project" by Mr. Richard Mochelle (Australia).

### **Youth Forum**

In addition to Case Studies, Workshops and Group Discussions, another significant feature of the Conference was "Youth Forum". The youth held their sessions on three days, i.e., 26th, 27th and 28th and prepared an Action Plan for serving the needs of their communities.

### **Strengthening Values Education Exhibition**

A very informative exhibition on Education in Human Values was open throughout the Conference. The exhibition was inaugurated by Her Royal Highness Princess of Nepal, Helen Shah on 25th September 2000. The contributions were from all parts of the globe. They depicted a wide variety of aspects of EHV, e.g., EHV in sports, music, medicine, diet, peace etc.—in all dealing with 15 topics. There were exhibits from Sai Schools around the world. The exhibits were aesthetically and elegantly displayed and attracted a large number of visitors from Prasanthi Nilayam in addition to the delegates to the Conference. Visiting the exhibition was indeed a very enriching and rewarding experience.

### **Cultural Programmes on Human Values**

Two magnificent cultural programmes were presented in the Poornachandra Auditorium on 26<sup>th</sup> and 28th September in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba during this International Conference.

The first programme presented on 26th September consisted of a unique cultural orchestra entitled "Symphony of Unity and Love (SOUL)" and four other excellent presentations of music and songs devoted to values.

An inspiring cultural programme entitled "Reaching for the Stars" was presented on 28th September. It was a story of love and sacrifice through the history of mankind depicting the lives of Louis Pasteur, Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, Florence Nightingale and Sochiro Honda. The performers were drawn from Singapore, Malaysia, Latin America, France and the U.S.A. Even with such diverse cast and global theme, the play was a marvellous success in terms of music, acting and presentation.

### **Special Blessings of Bhagavan**

Bhagavan Baba showered His special grace on the participants of the Conference by giving two special discourses on 26th and 30th September 2000, apart from His Inaugural and Valedictory Discourses.

### **Valedictory Function**

The Valedictory Function of the Conference was held on the morning of 29th September 2000 in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba.

The programme commenced with chanting of Vedic hymns by Institute students at 7.20 a.m. First of all, Dr. Art-ong Jumsai expressed gratitude to Bhagavan for His blessings and guidance, without which an International Conference of this magnitude could not be held. Dr. Jum Sai then introduced the speakers who presented the summary of the deliberations of the Conference. Ms. Himela Bahadoorsingh (Canada) presented the Report of the Youth Forum of the Conference. She informed that the Youth Forum consisted of over 40 youth representing more than 15 countries of the world. She also presented the Action Plans prepared by the youth for their respective regions.

Thereafter, the Summary of Small Group Discussions and Individual Action Plans were presented by Mr. Tom Scovill (U.S.A.). He informed that there were 39 Discussions Groups which met for one hour on two days and covered a wide range of components within the education system.

Presenting the Overview and Summation of the Conference, Dr. Roger Packham of Australia observed that the most tangible and action-oriented outcome of the Conference was Prasanthi Nilayam Declaration.

In the end, Dr. A. Parasuramen of Mauritius read out the Prasanthi Nilayam Declaration which was adopted unanimously by the delegates.

After these deliberations, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba delivered His Valedictory Address and answered the questions asked by some of the delegates. In His Valedictory Address, Bhagavan exhorted the delegates to first concentrate on inculcating values in the family because parents are the first teachers of the child. The function came to a happy conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.30 a.m.

**Prasanthi Nilayam Declaration**  
**29th September 2000**  
**Human Values for all Through Education**

***It is here by declared:***

*All children have a right to equal opportunity to receive the best and free education that would bring about good character and human excellence; and, Human values must be an integral part of all subjects taught in the education systems of the world; and, All governments should be encouraged to develop and implement laws and policies which enable values in education to be an integral component of teacher education, professional development and student learning experiences; and, Education in human values, peace and international understanding should be taught across the entire teacher education curriculum; and, In order to implement the above, a voluntary network of educators sharing the education goal of human excellence will be established for educators to exchange ideas, experiences and promote values education.*



*The Prasanthi Nilayam Declaration will be submitted to UNESCO, the United Nations and other international organisations for further consideration and action.*

Use Buddhi for Self-realisation Buddhi is best used as an instrument for self-realisation. It is closest to the Atma in man, but when it is ever busy seeking faults in others, it gets polluted, in the process and loses the power of reflecting the majesty, the splendour and the glory of the Atma which can illumine it. Now, the advantage of closeness is lost and Buddhi strays far into the world in search of objective pleasure and sensory satisfaction. If the summum bonum of living is the satisfaction of the senses, the birds and beasts with far less intelligence and much poor discrimination are as successful as man, if not more. No! Man has a nobler and higher purpose—the realisation of the Eternal Truth.

—*Baba*

What the country needs today is not wealth and prosperity.  
Human life is sacred, valuable and worth living.  
Without human values, spirituality will reach its abysmal depths;  
morality, integrity and peace will become extinct;  
sweet experience of right conduct will be destroyed;  
idealism will reach its rock bottom.  
Have faith that you are born to foster human values.  
Keep the welfare of society as your ideal and sanctify your time.

—Baba

Bhagavan in His infinite love and compassion has showered His blessings on the entire humanity by giving His Divine Message in His own handwriting for this Special Issue of Sanathana Sarathi. The original Telugu script is given on the previous page and the English translation is printed above.

—Publisher

### *Editorial*

## **A Saga of 75 Glorious Years**

It is an occasion of great rejoicing for the mankind to celebrate the 75th year of the advent of Divinity on the earth in the human form of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. We are indeed very fortunate that we have been afforded this rare opportunity of witnessing the unfolding of at least a part of this Divine Saga before our eyes. It is in fact for the first time in the history of mankind that this glorious spectacle is not only being witnessed by millions of people from all parts of the world, but it is also being recorded, documented and filmed for the benefit of the future generations in the very lifetime of an Avatar.

No other Avatar has shown His omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience so clearly to tens of thousands from all strata of society and from all parts of the globe. Bhagavan Baba has come indeed with unlimited powers. He has demonstrated beyond an iota of doubt that He can bring the dead to life; He can cure any number of people of deadly diseases without any medication; and He can save people from fatal accidents occurring at thousands of miles away just by the power of His Will. The number of objects materialised by Him not only in His physical presence but wherever He wills in any part of the globe may run into millions. He Himself fondly narrates several incidents from His life when the clouds and other elements obeyed His commands. He communicates directly without any intermediaries with tens of thousands of His devotees at physical as well as subtle levels. He knows the past, present and future of all. He guides all those who come to Him with faith and devotion in all worldly as well as spiritual matters. As He Himself states: "No other Avatar has done this before - going among the masses, counselling them, guiding them, consoling them, uplifting them and directing them along the path of Sathya, Dharma, Shanti and Prema."

He declared His Mission on the earth as back as 1940 when He was a child of 14 years. In MAY 1947, in reply to a letter from His elder brother, who doubted His Divinity, He made this historic declaration: "I have a Task: to foster all mankind and to ensure for all of them lives full of bliss; I have a Vow: to lead all who stray away from the straight path again into goodness and save

them." Humanity has witnessed that Bhagavan has never wavered even for a minute from His declared Task in the last 60 years or so. He has ceaselessly worked day and night to fulfill His Mission. By no stretch of the imagination could one think that the remote village of Puttaparthi would become a well-known place in the world and thousands of people from foreign lands would throng this place. Nor could anybody imagine at that time that this tiny village with a population of over 100 persons in a few thatched huts would have an airport, a railway station, a university, a super specialty hospital, a planetarium and a modern township like Prasanthi Nilayam. What He declared before His playmates and others around Him in 1940's has come true.

Bhagavan Baba has done which others may consider impossible. For example, He has shown how quality education even up to postgraduate level including professional courses like M.B.A., M.F.M. and M. Tech. can be provided totally free of charge. Similarly, Bhagavan has shown how the best medical facilities can be made available to the poorest of the poor without any charges whatsoever. The social welfare projects like Drinking Water Project, construction of schools and colleges, hospitals and houses for the poor and numerous other schemes are the shining examples of Bhagavan's selfless love of humanity, by which He motivates various units of His worldwide Organisation to undertake such welfare schemes in all parts of the world. Thus, His work of social reconstruction and spiritual awakening of mankind has assumed global proportions. What He wills is completed in the shortest possible time, and still all that He creates and builds is perfect and grand in style. All these projects and tasks are not only the steps in the fulfillment of His declared Divine Mission, but a firm proof, if proof is required, of His Divine Sankalpa of reformation of mankind and reconstruction of the world. A few Reports of Bhagavan's Social Welfare Projects and a few articles from a cross-section of society included in this Special Issue of "Sanathana Sarathi" bear ample testimony to Bhagavan's Divinity.

For full 60 years, Bhagavan's work has continued unhindered as willed by Him. As He Himself declares: "Nothing can impede or halt the work of this Avatar. The splendour of this Avatar will go on increasing day by day." This indeed has happened all before our eyes and it is happening in all parts of the world every day as He engulfs the entire humanity in the splendour of His Divine Love. The powers of Bhagavan have not diminished even a bit despite the doubts expressed by many skeptics. He was the master of supreme Divine powers in His childhood and He is still the master of the same powers, if not more, after 75 years. Not a day passes when He does not give proof of His Divinity before tens of thousands who flock to Prasanthi Nilayam from all parts of the world to experience His selfless Divine Love. He is the master of boundless wisdom despite little formal education, and He uses His wisdom not for His selfish gains but for the welfare of the humanity.

He is always calm, quiet, gentle and full of bliss and love. At the same time, His resolve is firm like a rock. Whatever He wills, it does happen. It can never happen otherwise. His is Divine Will—no obstacle can come in between His Will and its execution, whether it is a big project like a super specialty hospital or materialisation of a ring, a pendant, a necklace, a chain or an idol for a devotee. All His materialisations are perfect and most appropriate for the person for whom they are intended and they all happen in the twinkling of an eye. Everyday He delights groups of people by His Divine Play when He calls them for interview. Thousands have

witnessed how He changes the embossing on a ring or a pendant by just blowing on it three times.

In spite of all this, modern man suffers from the malady of disbelief. He has lost trust even in his very near and dear ones. That is why he is restless and bewildered. He would do well to suspend his disbelief at least for some time and give himself a chance to experience Divinity by taking one step towards Bhagavan. This may prove to be the turning point of his life, as it has happened to millions in the world who could manage to take one earnest step towards the Avatar of Kali Age, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. This one crucial step is needed to merit the blissful experience which Bhagavan Baba has come to give to all without any distinction of caste, creed, religion and country. As Bhagavan Baba has Himself assured all: "Many hesitate to believe that things will improve, that life will be happy for all and full of joy and that the Golden Age will recur. Let Me assure you that this Dharma Swaroopa, this Divine Body, has not come in vain." Humanity is a witness that Bhagavan's Sankalpa has never failed in the last 75 years of His life, and there is no reason to doubt that His promise of Golden Age will not come true. He has, no doubt, come down on the earth as the Divine Saviour of strife-torn beleaguered humanity which is sitting precariously on a stockpile of atomic arsenal.

Bhagavan is the embodiment of unbounded love and compassion. Offering this Special Issue of "Sanathana Sarathi" at His Divine Lotus Feet, we earnestly pray that He may bless us all to become deserving instruments of His Divine Mission.

—Editor

AVATAR VANI

DASARA DISCOURSES - I

## **Happiness is Union with God**

*Mere are many who preach about the Knowledge of Brahman  
But there are few who realise it in practice. Sai's word is verily the Truth.*

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

The heart of the Bharatiyas is full of purity and divinity. Their faith that every object in the world is divine is based on the profound statements like Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma (verily all this is Brahman), Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat (the entire world is pervaded by God) and Isavasyam idam Sarvam (Divinity is immanent in everything), which have been propounding the Eternal Truth. Bharatiya culture is a repository of such great teachings. But today the number of people who practise such sacred teachings is declining. There are many people who say God is all-pervasive but they neither really believe in it nor do they try to realise it.

### **Divinity Pervades Everything**

Bharatiya culture is eternal, glorious and divine, but such a great culture is being neglected by the people today. What is the reason? They disregard the divinity within themselves and forget the human values immanent in them. Bharatiya culture teaches that God is Truth. It is uniformly present in everyone. But modern man is engrossed in delusion. He is therefore unable to recognise this Truth.

Since ancient times, the Bharatiyas have been worshipping trees, anthills and even stones. Many people do not understand the real meaning of these practices and consider the Bharatiyas as foolish and superstitious. But this is not true, for there is nothing in this world which is not divine. This being the case, what is wrong in worshipping a tree or a stone? This demonstrates that God is one. But this principle of unity is not understood by men today.

The Bhagavad-Gita also states that divinity pervades every object of this universe. It proclaims unity as the very essence of spirituality. Instead of recognising this, people indulge in criticising others. Criticising others would amount to criticising God as divinity is latent in every being. This basic philosophy of social justice of Bharat is not found anywhere else as this sacred principle is not understood by others. But if you enquire about the truth of human life, you can see the all-pervasive divinity. The Bhagavad-Gita states that the divine aspect present in stone, frog, mound, tree and anthill is one and the same. Even today people in Bharat worship trees. They plant Tulsi in their homes and worship it. Bilva and Tulsi leaves are believed to be sacred offerings to God. For the Bharatiyas whatever they see, say, do, think or practise, it is the manifestation of divinity. Many great people in the past realised this unity and practised it. Thyagaraja taught this unity through music—"O Rama, You are in the ant and in Brahma, in Siva and Keshava! O Compassionate One! Shower Your grace on me." He believed that divinity is present even in an ant. This little ant has been given so much power that its bite causes pain even to man. God has given this power to the ant for its self-protection. But the purity of faith of the Bharatiyas is not understood by the people of the world. Even the Bharatiyas themselves do not really understand this.

This evening, Sanjay Sahni (Commerce Lecturer of the Institute) spoke about the little dog which received Swami's love. A dog can comprehend an imminent danger, which man cannot. For example, if you are walking along a path and a dog lies in a ditch twenty feet away, it does not even get up when you do not intend any harm to it. But if you plan to throw a stone at it, even when you are twenty feet away, the dog runs away. See how clever it is and how it senses the thoughts of man!

Divinity is latent in all mobile and immobile objects. There is nothing in this universe without divinity. One can never decide conclusively that this is God and this is not. Every Bharatiya should firmly believe this. Examine any stone. You will find that it has a definite shape. Try to estimate its weight, value and form. It has power also. It can cause injury to anyone. Scientists attribute this power to the law of Nature. This is a big mistake. It is not the law of Nature, it is the law of creation. The energy of the Creator is the fundamental basis for this.

Analyse anything, you will find divine energy in it. This towel is made of cotton. Cotton is so light that it gets blown away even by gentle breeze. It has now taken this form of a towel and has become quite strong. Unity of threads has given strength to this cloth. When you develop such a relationship with God, you too will become divine. So long as you think a tree as a tree, a stone as a stone, it remains so. You should perceive divinity in it. It is divinity that helps all. The tree gives shade even to the person who would axe it down. Unmindful of the harm done to it, it even offers its fruit to him! The tree does not care for praise or blame. Then, why should man develop hatred?

### **Do not Restrict your Love**

Today man worships God and at the same time harms his fellow beings. Is this devotion? No. When you recognise the truth that God is present in all beings, you should try to experience divinity by loving all. Sometimes, people love and respect their fellow men but harm other living forms. God's love is one and it should be shared selflessly with every being. It should not be restricted to yourself or your fellow beings. As you go on expanding this love, it goes on multiplying. It is a mistake to restrict your love only to humans. It is for all living beings. Instead of considering such love as God, people treat God as mere idol and an inert object. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as is the feeling, so does it happen). If the onlookers' feeling is bad, whatever they see appears to be bad. Mistake lies in the vision and not in the creation. Why should such feelings arise in you when you too are divine? It is because of the body attachment.

It is due to this attachment that you acquire attributes. Divinity has no attributes. Divinity is described as Nirgunam, Niranjana, Sanathana Niketanam, Nitya, Buddha, Shuddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swaroopinam. (attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, aware, free and embodiment of sacredness). You are unable to recognise its real nature due to your excessive attachment to the body. This body is inert and perishable. Then, why should you have attachment to it? The body is necessary to perform your duties. You have to utilise it as an instrument. But do not identify yourself with this instrument. If you do so, it will affect your power to identify yourself with the Self or the Atma. When you identify yourself with the Atma, you can realise the principle of oneness. Then you will never harm any being. Harming any being amounts to harming one's own deity. People worship their deities only as mere idols, not realising the divinity latent in them. The Bhagavad-Gita says, *Deho Devalaya Prokto, Jeevo Deva Sanathana* (the body is the temple and the indweller is God). You should keep this temple pure and clean. How can you worship the deity if you do not maintain the temple properly?

You know many sacred principles, but are you practising even one? You say God is present in Brahma as well as in an ant. But you salute Brahma and at the same time kill the ant when it bites you. You worship one form and harm another. There is no correlation between your words and actions. All that you say is meaningless when you do not practise it. It verily distances you from Divinity.

Today man's desires have become limitless. These need to be curtailed. Only then can he realise Divinity. Of course, it is necessary to maintain the body fit and healthy. It needs food and clothes. *Bhikshannam Deha Rakshartham* (a morsel of food is enough to sustain the body). While Jesus was being crucified, Mary was very sad. An ethereal voice declared, 'Death is the dress of life' The dress continuously changes but the Jeeva or individual soul remains the same. It is said, "*The soul is birthless, deathless and eternal. It has neither a beginning nor an end, it is neither born nor does it die; it cannot be slain. It remains in the form of Supreme Self, the Eternal Witness.*" (Telugu Poem)

Spirituality had its origin in the sacred land of Bharat. What is the use of one's life if one does not recognise this native land of spirituality? You do worship daily and also meditate. But on whom do you meditate, you do not know. Avoid such meaningless rituals. Love every living being. While Dharmaraja was proceeding to heaven, his brothers and wife left their mortal coils

one by one on the way. But a dog followed him to the end. As the heavenly messengers invited him into the heaven, Dharmaraja insisted that the dog be allowed in the heaven before him as it followed him all the way. Dharmaraja was endowed with morality and integrity. Never betray the trust of people and never cheat anybody who has helped you. Today's man lacks gratitude. He receives all the favours and does harm in return. If you receive help from someone, you should remain grateful to him throughout your life. Here is an example.

### **Ingratitude is the Worst Sin**

When I was in school at Bukkapatnam, I used to teach elders aged between 20 and 30 in Puttaparthi. They earned their livelihood by selling jasmine flowers. I used to teach them in the evening after coming back from Bukkapatnam. They respected Raju (Swami) as their Guru. But modern education has brought a decline in human nature. Gratitude has disappeared. Hence, the whole country is suffering. In those days, there was a lot of mutual respect. Once when I was returning from Bukkapatnam, a mother was removing lice from her child's hair. She was chewing Paan and without noticing Me, she spat. It splashed all over My shirt. She felt very sad. She made Me remove My shirt and herself washed it. Such was the good conduct of even illiterate villagers in those days. Villagers were full of love and affection. Purity and gratitude are as important in life as blood in the body. There is no atonement for the ungrateful. Our vision is a gift of the sun. *Chandrama Manaso Jatha, Chaksho Suryo Ajayatha* (the moon was born out of the mind of the Supreme Being and sun out of His eyes). The sun withdraws the power of vision from the ungrateful ones, say the scriptures.

In the month of Magha, the children of this village used to have sacred bath in the pond near the Hanuman Temple. Once after the bath, I told them to circumambulate the temple. They asked Me to join them but I feigned leg pain. Upon their loving insistence, I took a round with them. At the end of the first round, a big monkey blocked My path. The efforts of the others to chase the monkey away failed. The monkey prayed to Me not to go round the temple. I then explained to the boys that the monkey had come with such a sacred feeling. The huge monkey was none other than Hanuman himself.

When Seshama Raju (Swami's elder brother) went to Uravakonda, he decided to take Me there for higher studies. Coming to know of this, the villagers felt sad. They wanted to offer some money to Me as Guru Dakshina. At that time, money was more valuable than other materials. All of them pooled a paisa each and offered it to Me. I refused to take it and asked them to keep it with them. This way the villagers showed their gratitude towards Me. They walked along with Me till Bukkapatnam. They cried all the way and kept asking Me when I would return. Such was the love of the people for Me.

In school two boys, Ramesh and Suresh, shared the desk with Me. Once I had to attend a scout camp but had no uniform. Ramesh's father was an officer. Ramesh asked his father for two pairs of uniform, but he did not tell that the second pair was for Me. Ramesh packed the uniform and placed it in the desk with a note that if I did not accept it, he would give up his life. In turn, I left another note that if our friendship had to last, Ramesh should take back the uniform. Ramesh considered this as My command and took it back. Thus, even in those days, children used to follow My commands.

Mahboob Khan was our English teacher. His relationship with Me was not external. It was an Atmic one. When he came to take our class, he would ask the other teacher to leave the classroom immediately. When the children saw Mahboob Khan coming, they would start teasing Me. Mahboob Khan seldom taught anything when I was in the class. The moment He took his seat, he would call Me near him. I told him softly, "Sir, other students may misunderstand you, so I too shall sit at the desk with other boys. Please do not call Me every time." This made him angry and he said, "Let them think what they want to, I am not afraid. I am not doing anything wrong. I love everyone but I love You more. This is because of the divine power in You."

I am telling this incident again for the benefit of the public. Ramesh and Suresh were not good in studies. So, whenever a teacher questioned them, they used to give the answers prompted by Me, for which teachers used to praise them. Thus, I continued to help them, which brought a gradual change in their attitude. They started believing that Raju was their only saviour. They uttered My name all the time. When their mothers prepared any delicacies at home, they would wrap them in a paper and bring them for Me. But I would refuse all these, asserting, "I am always a giver but not the one to take. Our friendship will last longer without these give and take transactions. If I take anything, I have to remain always indebted to you. Therefore, I should not accept anything."

We had to appear in the public examination called ESLC. Ramesh and Suresh were very much upset due to the ensuing examination. I told them, "Have faith in Me, I will make you pass." I told them what to do. As soon as we entered the hall, blank answer papers were given and we settled in our respective places. Numbers allotted were such that the three of us were far away from each other. They followed My command strictly to the minutest detail. They went to the examination hall and, as were told, pretended to write their papers. After two hours, papers were collected. I wrote for both of them in their handwriting after finishing My paper within half an hour. Thus, I submitted all the three answer papers and we came out. All the students discussed their answers outside the hall. But these two, sticking to My words, never spoke anything. When the results were declared, only Ramesh, Suresh and Myself passed in 1<sup>st</sup> class. (cheers) None could doubt their high marks as our seats were far apart and the handwriting of the three papers was also different. We were taken in a grand procession in the streets. On the third day, there were questions in the class based on the examination. Ramesh and Suresh could not answer any of them. They bent their heads down. I encouraged them to be bold and lift their heads. I told them to say that during the examination they remembered the answers but could not recollect now.

After I returned from Hampi, I lost My collar pin. It was then that I declared: "*The collar pin is an illusion. I am free from all bondage. Know Me truly as Sai, stop your efforts to bind Me in attachment. All My relationship with you is cut off now, it is not possible for anyone to understand Me.*" (Telugu Poem) Seshama Raju noted this down. Later also he used to remind Me of this from time to time.

When I left Uravakonda, even the headmaster was shedding tears. In fact, everyone started shedding tears. But I cared for none. Will I submit Myself to all this? Next day, another boy was asked to lead the prayer in My place. That boy, who was a Mohammedan, was a good singer. He walked up to the stage but could not sing. Remembering Me, he broke down. The prayer was stopped and a holiday was declared. Without Raju, Ramesh and Suresh refused to sit on the



bench or stay in the classroom. Ramesh ran and jumped into a well giving up his life. Suresh kept crying, "Raju, have You left us? Raju, have You left us?" Ultimately, he became mad and was admitted to the mental hospital in Bangalore where he left his mortal coil after some time.

I had two dogs, Lilly and Billy, in the Old Mandir. Jack and Jill were born to Lilly. The two were none other than Ramesh and Suresh come again to stay near Me. One would sleep near My head and the other at My feet. They used to get up at My slightest movement. One day, the Queen of Mysore came for Swami's Darshan. She got down from her car at Karnatanagapalli and walked up to Puttaparthi. After his dinner, her driver had to go back to the car. It was dark and he did not know the way. There was no electricity in those days. I ordered Jack to show him the way and the driver followed it. The driver slept in the car while Jack slept under the car. The next morning when the driver started the car, it ran over Jack's back. From there, Jack dragged itself across the river Chitravati towards the Mandir. The washerman, Subbanna, who used to look after the Mandir, told me that for some reason Jack was crying. I replied that I knew and walked up to the Mandir gate. Crying aloud, Jack fell at My feet and gave up its life. Jack was buried behind the Old Mandir. Jill too died after a few days. I built a Samadhi for them and planted a Tulasi plant over it. It remained there for a long time. When I was at Bangalore recently, the engineers razed it in order to extend the Kalyan Mandapam. Thus after spending their next lives as dogs, Ramesh and Suresh finally merged with Me. Those who surrender to Me, will not lack anything.

### **Saintly Ratnakara Family**

All of you know about Kondama Raju. He was a good singer. When he narrated the episode of fainting of Lakshmana in the battlefield, the people of the entire village would gather to listen. In Anjali Devi's film, you must have seen his character. He was 116 years old. Every morning he would come walking all the way to this Mandir. One day, I went to him. Then he asked Me, "Swami, how much longer will I live? When will I give up this body?" I told him that I would come to him at that time. Some days later, I went to the village. He sensed it and called out to Easwaramma, "Easwaramma, Swami is coming. I have to leave now" He asked her to bring a tumbler of water. Then he asked Swami to drink the water from the tumbler and give him the remaining water. I drank a little and after that he drank it. Then he told Me before dying, "I had a small shop. I never cheated anybody. But inadvertently, I might have forgotten to return a paisa or two to someone. In our family, Swami is born. So, our Ratnakara lineage has been sanctified. Therefore, I should not leave behind any debt. You should grant me a boon. When they take my body in procession, let some small coins be thrown all over, so that my debts would be cleared as people pick them up." Thus, he gave up his body peacefully.

The father of this body too had a small business. He used to run to Bukkapatnam even for a coconut required by the devotees. Thus, he used to help them all. One day, he came to Swami and said that he wanted to talk to Me for a minute. I had already called a group for interview. I told him that I would call him after the interview of the devotees. But he said, it was an urgent matter. So, I called him in. He used to tie money in the corner of his Dhoti. There were no wallets or pockets those days. He took out a collection of coins and placed it in My hands and asked Me to distribute food to the poor on the tenth day after his demise. He also mentioned that he had kept aside rice, jaggery, etc., required for that purpose. After this, he went home and

passed away peacefully. Those who lead a sacred life will have a sacred end without any suffering.

Easwaramma also had a sacred end. During the Summer Classes at Bangalore, breakfast had been served to the students at 7.00 a.m. Gokak, who was a strict disciplinarian, used to conduct everything on time. Easwaramma had her breakfast and was sitting in the verandah. I was upstairs in the bathroom. All of a sudden, she shouted, "Swami, Swami, Swami" thrice. As I responded, "coming, coming," she breathed her last. Pure souls have sacred end. This was also the case of Kondama Raju and Pedda Venkama Raju; all had peaceful death. They were all chosen by Swami. (Cheers) This is the glory of Swami's Life Story.

Sanjay Sahni spoke about the Avatars. That is why I spoke about these incidents. I have never hurt anyone. I never use harsh words either. At the most, I would chide someone by saying Dunnapota (he-buffalo). I always bestow Ananda on all. I make everybody happy. I shower bliss on all. (Cheers) I lead everyone on the spiritual path, developing their self-confidence. Only with self-confidence can one's life attain fulfillment. Even if one does not have Vishvas (faith), one should have Atma-vishvas (self-confidence). Life is useless without it. In fact, the Atma is life. Everyone should enjoy the bliss of the Atma. What is happiness? Happiness is union with God. Enjoy the bliss of this union.

Today is the first day of the Navaratri festival. Navaratri is dedicated to Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. These three deities are not different but one and the same. Durga is the form of energy. Saraswati is the presiding deity of speech. Lakshmi is the embodiment of Ananda. All these are present in every man. We do not have to search for them elsewhere. Man is divine, humanity is divinity. Consider man as divine and the body as the temple of divinity. Enjoy the bliss of union with God.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Shanti Nahi...*"

—From Bhagavan's Dasara Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, at Prasanthi Nilayam on 1<sup>st</sup>  
October 2000

### **Weapon of Love**

*In this Kali Age, the wicked have to be reformed and reconstructed through love and compassion. That is why this Avatar has come unarmed. He has come with the message of love. The only weapon which can transform the vile and vicious is the name of the Lord uttered with love.*

—Baba

### **Summer dawn at Prasanthi Nilayam**

Summer dawn at Prasanthi Nilayam  
Provides a unique and mystic experience.  
First, there sounds a vibrant note of blessed quiet,

Reminiscent of the lively lull of the lofty hills.  
Soon, the atmosphere stirs with the wakeful activity  
Of the devout, taking up devotional rituals,  
To serve as humble offerings to the Living God!  
As the morning breeze resonates with Omkaram, Suprabhatam and Vedic chant;  
And the Nagarsankirtan progresses round the sanctum sanctorum,  
Spiritual vibrations spread in all directions  
And the Ashramites experience a mood of blissful elation.  
Rather, the synergy animates all living beings.

Lo! There starts the dawn chorus in full zeal  
As if it were the glory of the Almighty being sung:  
The heaven is rent with their full-throated strains;  
Though the sharp melody of the koel is more conspicuous,  
For she too seems tickled by the Divine thrill.  
Overwhelming, indeed, is this Nature's orchestra:  
Emanating from the dense cluster of trees,  
Beside the garden most sublime.

The fragrant breeze, the salubrious ambience,  
Above all, the echoes of Sai Ram all around,  
Render the heart light, the mind composed, the spirits charged.  
'Tis a rebirth - unto the heaven:  
That Prasanthi Nilayam verily is!

—P.C. Sharma

## **Sai's Precious Teachings**

—Samuel Sandweiss

Swami awakens us to our divine nature. The mind struggles and doubts, but Swami's love tames it and gives confidence. Resting our minds in Swami's teachings and remembering His words bring us freedom.

*"The end of wisdom is freedom."*

### **Spiritual Pilgrimage**

I would like to look into Swami's endless stream of wisdom that fosters, protects and leads us to God. His wonderful life-giving teachings are the essence of the Vedas.

*"My main tasks are the fostering of devotees and the fostering of the Vedas."*

Swami's teachings are practical guidelines for a worthwhile life and peaceful society. First He brings us close to Him and becomes our omnipresent friend. Then He instructs us to see Him in each other.

*"See Him in every being, every moment of existence."*

With this vision firmly planted in eye and heart, He instructs us to practise His teachings in the community. So, the community becomes His very form - love, harmony and unity. This is a critical step in the spiritual pilgrimage—*the practice of spiritual principles for the uplifting and betterment of the community*. Swami has said that His "miracles" attract because of their inexplicability in order to "transform, reconstruct, reform" so that the person is made useful and serviceable for society. In the process, the ego is effaced and the person affirms the unity of all beings with God.

The person who has undergone this transformation becomes a humble, humane servant of those who need help. Service of this kind, done with reverence and selflessness, prepares man to realise the One that pervades the many. So, spirituality leads devotees to become befitting servants set upon building Dharmic communities as a crucial step on the path to union with God. *"The Lord incarnates in human form to re-establish righteousness on a firm footing, and to re-educate the human community on the paths of peace."*

Swami has come to save the world community and to re-establish Dharma on a firm footing. He is calling each one of us to this high task. How glorious that an Avatar has come to rally us to this task! For me, meditating on Swami's teachings has helped me to serve the community better.

I have been meditating on Swami's marvellous teachings each morning since meeting Him 28 years ago. One day, about a year ago, I felt something gel—the emergence of a clearer overview. I listed eight core elements which helped me deal more effectively with disturbing problems. As I rest my mind on each element, they speak to the problem and help me put it in proper perspective. My mind finds a place to settle, where confusion can clear.

### **Eight Elements**

1. **Remember - Man is God.** What a glorious revelation! We can believe this incredible truth because Swami shows us His Divinity - which awakens us to our own. We are infinitely blessed, because He does not show everyone, only a rare few. So, we must not lose this opportunity of achieving unity with God. This is a new insight for many people. It is an insight that transforms our lives. Remembering turns the mind from the outer world of sensory objects. And He helps us remember. Just being in His Presence or hearing about Him helps us remember Him.

Dr. Hislop told me he saw Swami change into Lord Krishna, and Professor Kasturi told me he saw Swami transform Himself into Lord Siva. Many experiences have convinced me of Swami's loving omnipresence. What grace - God Himself is our friend and teacher! Swami's closeness, closer than our breath, helps us remember that man is God! Loving Omnipresent Sai and feeling His love brings confidence in our own divinity and ability to overcome earthly problems.

*"This confidence generates immense internal power."*

2. **The Mind is the Key.** We are unaware of our divine nature because of the limitations of our mind. The mind however has the capacity to overcome its own limitations when aware of them.

*"It is the thorn that removes the thorn."*

Turn the mind to the left, through the senses to the outer world of objects, and we are trapped in delusion. The mind is attracted by external objects and becomes attached, addicted and deluded. We become locked in the dual world of pleasure and pain, birth and death, happiness and suffering. Turn the mind to the right, inward to God, and we open to our own omnipresent divinity. This is the way to transcend the "mad monkey mind."

3. **Develop a Relationship with Sai.** The only way to tame the mind is to attach it to God, through love. Swami instructs us on the nine steps of devotion, which bring us closer to Him. These steps turn the mind/ key to the right, to Swami. They include listening to stories about Him, singing His glories, contemplating on Him, serving His feet, prostrating before Him, worshipping Him, offering service to Him, taking Him as friend and surrendering to Him.
4. **See Sai in the World.** One of Krishna's great promises, which Sai Krishna also extends, is to "bear the burden of your welfare," when we offer all acts to Him. This teaching instructs us to attach consciousness to God at all times and in every place. We can find Him in others and in the outer world once we develop a strong inner contact with God. Thus, we begin the process of attaching to God and detaching from the outer world of sense objects.
5. **Bring Sai into the Community.** Swami has come to re-establish righteousness on a firm footing so that man can live in harmony and love. This involves practising spiritual principles. Swami gives us guidance. Right action grows out of holding to virtue and acting according to our conscience, He says. This is accomplished when we constantly ask,  
*"Is this what Swami wants?"*

Swami has given us the prototype of a Dharmic community in His Centres. k Dharmic communities are built on lte foundation of worshipping God through devotion, service and education programmes. To become good instruments of unity and love in the community/ centre, we must overcome differences. Finding oneness through love and helping to create unity through selfless service is the spiritual path in the outer world that leads us to inner oneness with Him. Practising Dharma requires using our intellect to understand the needs of the community and then to discipline and develop ourselves to serve these needs as an offering to Sai.

*"Help ever, hurt never."*

6. **Commit to the Process of Purification.** When we commit ourselves to any relationship such as building a Dharmic community as an offering to Sai in addition to experiencing love, we have to be ready to 'face problems. Today, commitment is difficult for most of us. (In the U.S., 60% of marriages end in divorce.) A marriage to Sai must overcome the tendency to run away from commitment. It requires the understanding that in order to "Follow the Master," we must be willing to sacrifice.

*"Follow the Master, face the devil, fight to the end, finish the game."*

We can expect to face trials, tribulations, troubles, fears, anxieties and sadness along the path. When we stay steady and focused, offering all to Swami, we go through a process of purification and the giving up of our pain.

7. **Control the Senses / Mind.** Swami has given us tools for controlling the mind and releasing our pain. At the Ashram, He teaches us to remain calm and peaceful and turns us inward by making us sit silently and wait for Him.  
*"Silence is the speech of the spiritual seeker."*

And He teaches us to further quiet ourselves by putting a ceiling on desires.

8. **Merge in Sai's Peace.** All the other elements are part of the process of merging in Sai and finding contentment by knowing that all is a gift from Him. And Swami tells us there is a final state of oneness with Him as well when He and I are one. Sai promises that if we follow the path, it will free us from fear—*"You will draw near to Me, you will approach Me, you will understand My mystery, you will enter into Me, you will melt in Me, you will merge in Me, you will become Me."*

Keeping Swami's teachings in mind all the time will bring peace and love to ourselves and our communities. It will guide us to oneness with Him. How fortunate we are to have the supreme authority, the embodiment of peace and boundless love to be our guide, guardian and God. Swami has come when we are so beaten and bewildered; He has come with a love that will make us whole and happy. I pray that we immerse ourselves in His love and with dedication, discipline and discrimination become bright instruments of His love and Dharma. We are beholden to You, Swami for being such a clear bright loving light that illumines our minds and dispels the darkness. Let us all  
*"Be good, do good, see good."*

### **God Serves**

*When you offer milk to a hungry child or blankets to a shivering brother on the pavement, you are but placing a gift of God into the hands of another gift of God! You are reposing the gift of God in a repository of the Divine principle! God serves; He allows you to claim that you have served! Without His will, no single blade of grass can quiver in the breeze. Fill every moment with gratitude to the giver and the recipient of all gifts.*

—Baba

### **Showers of Divine Love**

—S. B. Chavan

I consider myself very fortunate to have Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's blessings from the time when I had Swami's Darshan at P. K. Sawant's place when he was a Cabinet Minister of Maharashtra some time in 1961-62. Thereafter, Swami has been blessing me and giving me guidance in all my activities.

I was attracted to Swami not by seeing the number of things materialised by Him, but because He had no personal cult. He was having equal respect for all the religions, and in His discourses He emphasised that people should sincerely follow the commandments of their own religion. According to Him, the basic philosophy of all the religions teaches love and not hatred. It is because of this approach that the Bhajans sung at Puttaparthi are devoted to the teachings of all religions. It might be the only place where the festivals of all the religions are being celebrated with gaiety and devotion. Swami has been emphasising in all His discourses the principles of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa.

### **New Lease of Life for my Wife and me**

In my personal life, whenever members of my family or I went to Puttaparthi to get Bhagavan's blessings, we found that we returned with great energy and self-confidence. He has been a source of great strength and inspiration and I have no hesitation in saying, whatever position and status I have is purely because of Bhagavan's blessings. We have been going for Bhagavan's Darshan when only the main Mandir was there in Prasanthi Nilayam. Swami has always been very kind and gracious to all of us. My only prayer is that I should continue to receive the same affection and protection which He has been giving me and my family.

Once my wife was in a Mumbai hospital for quite some time for a heart problem. At one stage, we were worried whether open heart surgery would be done. I contacted the Ashram authorities and requested them to get Bhagavan's blessings. Quick came the reply from Bhagavan that it would be only a minor surgery. The doctors who performed the angioplasty told us that it was only because of Bhagavan that the operation was successful. Bhagavan was 'present' there at the time of the operation. The doctors were worried, but because of Bhagavan's grace, my wife got a new lease of life. This was stated by Bhagavan Himself also.

I used to have very severe attacks of dehydration four times in six months. I used to get very high fever of 106°F and become unconscious. When I had one such severe attack in Nanded, Maharashtra, the four doctors who were attending on me throughout the night were very much worried about my health. At this stage, Bhagavan came to my rescue and saved me. It was a new lease of life which both my wife and I got. Bhagavan Himself narrated how He was present to save us. These are personal experiences which we have had recently.

I had cataract in both the eyes and I requested Baba to allow me to get operated at Puttaparthi hospital. With Bhagavan's blessings, the doctors could successfully operate and remove the cataract. Bhagavan allowed me to stay in the new ward which was air-conditioned and where I was shifted after my short stay in the intensive care unit. Bhagavan visited the hospital and it was because of His special grace that I regained my eyesight.

I was very fortunate that Bhagavan accepted the invitation of the marriage of my son, Ashok. In fact, Ashok's marriage was performed by Bhagavan Himself. Bhagavan told us to bring the bride

and bridegroom at the appointed time to Andheri where Dharmakshetra is located. Bhagavan was to go for the morning Bhajan. Before that, He got the hall decorated, and asked me whether I was satisfied with the arrangements. I told Bhagavan that He was showering His special grace on us. Later after the Bhajans, He came back to the hall and gave garlands to the bride and bridegroom to garland each other. Bhagavan materialised a ring and asked my daughter-in-law Amita to put on Ashok's finger. Then, He materialised a Mangal Sutra and gave to my son Ashok put round Amita's neck. This special event was witnessed by all the friends and relatives, who had come for the marriage. Bhagavan gave lunch to all of us and this was a special blessing Bhagavan showered on us.

Bhagavan was gracious enough to give Darshan to my entire Cabinet when I was the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. He spent more than an hour with the Members of the Cabinet. He also blessed me with a visit to my official residence and spent quite some time with the members of my family and blessed all of us. He gave us the opportunity to serve meals to Him.

### **Education in Human Values**

When I was Union Education Minister, Bhagavan blessed us to have the meeting of eminent educationists at Simla where many eminent educationists and specially invited representatives of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning were there to guide the seminar. At the end of this three days seminar, it was unanimously agreed that courses on value-based education should be introduced in all the schools. National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) was specially requested to prepare textbooks for this purpose.

When I was the Chairman of the Committee on Value Education of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the entire Committee came to Puttaparthi and Bhagavan was gracious enough to guide us in our deliberations. After the report on value-based education was placed on the table of the Rajya Sabha, a copy of the same was sent to the Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning for comments for our further guidance.

One incident comes to my mind distinctly. Bhagavan had invited all the scientists of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and wanted them to speak on science and spirituality. Bhagavan materialised a medallion before all the scientists and gave it to Smt. Madhuri Ben Shah, an eminent educationist. All the scientists heard with rapt attention the discourse of Bhagavan in which He said, "There is no contradiction between science and spirituality. Spirituality starts where science ends." This is a profound message to the entire scientific community all over the world.

### **Teaching by Example**

Swami has been emphasising that everyone in the country should get education, medical help and drinking water free of cost. In furtherance of this approach, the students are charged no fees right from Class I to the postgraduate courses of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.

The first hospital which Swami completed in a record time of six months has all the super specialities and the latest equipments. The treatment is completely free. The design of the hospital is so magnificent that it looks more attractive than a palace. A special feature of this hospital is its upkeep and maintenance which is done by volunteers coming from different States.



They perform the duties assigned to them with great devotion and keep the hospital clean and tidy. Each batch works for a fortnight or a week; the next batch comes well in time and takes over the duties without any fuss. I have seen a number of hospitals constructed by great philanthropists, but the hospital in Puttaparthi is a unique example of a hospital which provides treatment without charging any money.

Swami has also been emphasising the need for providing drinking water to villagers. Anantapur District in Andhra Pradesh is a chronically drought prone area, but in this district the villages have been provided drinking water. These schemes were also completed in record time and handed over to the Government of Andhra Pradesh for running on proper lines. I was present at this handing over ceremony.

As if this was not enough, Swami wanted to have a bigger hospital at Bangalore. It is located behind the International Technological Park. As soon as the land was handed over, Swami started the work the very next day. Swami's Sankalpa (resolve) is to start the hospital in November 2000. As Swami's Sankalpa never fails, the hospital has been built within the specified time. It is nothing short of a miracle to complete this hospital, which is much bigger than the hospital at Puttaparthi, within such a short time. Here the people have been working round the clock. It is going to provide only super specialties in the areas of Cardiology and Cardio-surgery and Neurology and Neuro-surgery.

On Bhagavan's 75th Birthday, all the devotees around the world pray to Bhagavan Baba for spiritual power so that we realise our responsibility by taking a pledge to spread the message of love and try to implement the same in our sphere of activity. Let us spread Bhagavan's message of universal brotherhood by seeing the divine spark in every living creature.

## **Realising Supreme Beautitude**

—Sunil Gavaskar

Every devotee of Bhagavan Baba has his own connection with Him and the beauty is that in spite of so many millions dying to connect with Bhagavan, He has time for all. Most of them have had some experience of Bhagavan's Divinity. Not only is the experience a very personal one and very, very dear, but there is also the feeling that since it does not concern anyone else, the others may not be interested in hearing or knowing about it. But 75th Birthday Celebrations of Bhagavan is a joyous occasion and it is the joy of sharing that prompts me to write this piece. I will try and write to the best of my ability knowing fully well that no one can really do full justice to writing about Bhagavan.

### **Swami's Vision to my Mother**

Since the day my mother got the vision of Bhagavan, my family has been a Sai devotee. Like any middle class family, we too believe in God and participate in all the festivals which are celebrated in the year. We have a small Mandir where idols of various Hindu gods are kept and prayers offered there daily by the family members.

However in 1970, things changed suddenly. My mother was in the kitchen and there she saw a vision of Swami on the wall. She was restless and wanted a picture of the vision, and so she immediately rushed out of the house and went to the newspaper vendor at the corner of the street who also kept pictures of various Hindu gods. She looked at the pictures one by one but could not find the picture of the vision that had appeared in front of her. She went further down to see if any other shop had the picture she was looking for. There was none, so she came back to the first one and requested him to have a look again, and to and behold, there was a picture of Bhagavan with His hand raised in blessing exactly as she had the vision of. The newspaper vendor refused to take any payment saying that since he had not ordered the picture and had no idea how it got there, he would not accept any payment.

That photograph was put up in my bedroom, so that every morning when I woke up, my first glimpse was of Bhagavan. That photo could also be seen by any visitor to the house particularly if the bedroom door was open and I do believe that it was after seeing that picture of Bhagavan that my late father-in-law decided that his daughter's hand could be entrusted in mine. And when he passed away in May this year, his last action was to fold his hands in prayer to Bhagavan and his last words were "Sai Ram."

### **Miracle of Vibhuti**

I remember one incident very clearly. We were in Australia and in one of the tour matches, I slipped and tore a thigh muscle. In those days, the Indian team did not carry their own physiotherapist. So, we had to ask the local state team's physiotherapist to have a look at the injury. He examined me and announced that since I had a torn muscle, it would take about three weeks of therapy and one more week of training before I would be able to play again. With the First Test Match due to start in just over a week's time, this simply was a blow that was too much.

As soon as this news reached my family, they sent me packets of Swami's Vibhuti through some media persons who were coming for the coverage of the Test series. These arrived just about three days before the start of the First Test. I was taking physiotherapy regularly but the improvement had been marginal. I could barely put weight on my leg to walk.

However after I started applying Vibhuti, there was marked improvement and on the eve of the Test Match, I requested the team management not to rule me out but to have a fitness test on the morning of the Test Match. From barely being able to put weight on my leg, I was able to walk comfortably in just two days. But there was a stiff soreness that was worrying.

On the morning of the match, I applied Vibhuti to the leg and went to the ground. This was going to be my first attempt to try and run in about eight days' time. Even as I stepped on to the ground to give my fitness trial, I realised that the stiffness was almost gone. At the Queensland Cricket Ground in those days, you had to descend a few steps to the ground and it was these few steps which were painful previously and I had to step down gingerly. But on this day, I felt confident enough getting down these steps normally and not the one step at a time as on the previous couple of days. I took a light jog around the ground and with every stride I could feel the soreness going away. Though I did not do anything silly as a quick dash or sprint, I felt confident enough to play in the Test and so informed the management who accepted it and included me in

the playing eleven. It was unbelievable. Nobody including me had given myself a chance of playing the Second Test, leave alone the First Test and here I was, thanks to the Vibhuti, playing in the First Test Match.

### **In the Presence of the Supreme Being**

About a year later, I was in Chennai (Madras then) and heard that Swami was going to be in the city. It was here that I had my first Darshan of Bhagavan. My counterpart in the West Indies team, Alwin Kallicharan was also keen to have Swami's Darshan. Fortunately in those days, there used to be a rest day in the Test Matches and we were taken for Swami's Darshan.

Nothing had prepared me for that experience. I had seen plenty of Swami's photographs but seeing Swami in person for the first time is an unforgettable experience. When Swami glided in, there was a glow around His face and His smile was so beautiful that it immediately brought smiles on everybody's faces. Both Kalli and I were standing together and automatically our hands folded in Namaskar as we saw Bhagavan. That first sight of Bhagavan was the most humbling experience of my life. It made me realise that there was a superior being, the Supreme Authority. He was standing in human form and sending these happy vibrations to all who had come there! It was the kind of happiness that even a century or a victory for the side could not bring about. It just made one's heart feel lighter. I have been lucky to experience it time and again since then and I consider myself blessed to do so.

That day both Kalli and I were hoping that Swami would bless us just a little bit more than the other, for the Test Match was evenly poised. Of course, Swami when He gave us an audience did not take sides, but the Indian team also had another Sai devotee in G. R. Viswanath and it was Vishy who took us to victory the next day.

### **Grace Unbounded**

Later on, both Kalli and I had the rare privilege, honour and good fortune to be the masters of ceremonies for Swami's 70th Birthday Celebrations. How that came about is a story in itself. I received the invitation card for the celebrations of Swami's 70th Birthday more than a month earlier. When I went through the celebrations planned and the VIPs that were due to come to Puttaparthi starting from the President of India and the Prime Minister to other cabinet ministers, I thought to myself that with all the security for them there would be no way to get even a glimpse of Swami. But I said to myself that if Swami wants me to be there for His Birthday, then somehow I would be there in Puttaparthi.

Just two days before the Birthday, I got a call with the words "Indian, how are you? What are you doing in Mumbai? Why aren't you in Puttaparthi?" It was Alwin Kallicharan who was already in Puttaparthi. We always called each other 'Indian' which is how people of Indian origin call each other in the West Indies. I explained to him that I was beginning to shoot for a new TV serial for the forthcoming 1996 World Cup and so would not be able to come to Prasanthi Nilayam. I had fixed those dates for shooting, so that my mind would concentrate on the shooting of the serial and I would not feel the pangs of missing Swami's Birthday Celebrations. Kalli informed me that they were trying to organise air transport for me and would let me know about it the next day. When he called to tell me that a charter had been arranged, I could not believe it and my joy knew no bounds. After all, I was going to be present at my beloved

Swami's Birthday Celebrations. When I landed there, I was told that I was to be the master of ceremonies, something which I had never done before in my life. But with Swami present, I was sure that He would help me not to forget my lines.

A few years later, I was privileged to arrange the players for the Unity Cup Cricket Match. Swami has always said, "Life is a game. Play it." Bhagavan wanted to show that there could be unity among different countries, cultures and communities through sports. So, the Unity Cup was played with players from all over the world including Pakistan.

Several senior retired players were honoured and had the good fortune to be blessed by Bhagavan. Who can forget Bhagavan patting Sachin Tendulkar on the back and telling him, "I am with you!" What a season Sachin had after that as he virtually single-handedly demolished World Champion Australia with his batting that seemed to be of a totally different dimension after that pat from Bhagavan!

Devotees who have had Swami's Darshan even from afar know how it becomes a craving and if Swami even glances at you fleetingly, you feel an incredible joy that cannot be described in words.

Swami will turn 75 this year, but He is eternal. As a cricketer and a batsman my humble greetings to Swami on His 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Swami's 75th Birthday is a time for all His devotees to celebrate. We are blessed to have Bhagavan with us and we must strive to join Him in serving humanity and helping the poor and the downtrodden. We can do it in our own way, quietly and without fanfare. We can start by promising that every day we will do at least one good deed. That would be the best present for Bhagavan for it may lighten His load even if it is ever so slightly.

*GURUDEV VANI*

*SUMMER COURSE DISCOURSES – IV*

## **Splendour of Divinity**

*God controls the entire creation while Truth holds sway over God;  
But Truth itself is subservient to a noble one; such a noble one is the embodiment of Divinity!*  
(Sanskrit Verse)

### *Embodiments of Love!*

An individual has many experiences in the waking state and other distinct experiences in the dream state. In this latter state, he creates everything he experiences—feelings, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow. In the deep sleep state, he is oblivious to everything worldly or imaginary and becomes one with Primary Consciousness. Thus, under three different circumstances, the same person has three different types of experiences. Experiences may vary but the Transcendental Being within is eternal and not subject to any change. A garland drawn on a piece of paper will never move, shake or wobble. The paper itself might get tossed violently by gusts of wind but the garland would always remain firm on the paper and not undergo any relative movement. Likewise, although the external circumstances and thoughts of an individual

may undergo changes, the Divinity imprinted within will ever remain steady, constant and never undergo any change. All aspirants must cultivate clear vision and steady mind.

### **Body is the Reservoir of Auspiciousness**

The human body may be compared to a bamboo pole. The bamboo has many joints that interrupt its smoothness. For the human being, the six evils, namely, Kama (desire), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Moha (attachment), Mada (pride), Matsarya (jealousy) represent the bends or the joints.

The human body has been referred to as Tungabhadra. Tunga means infinite and Bhadra means auspiciousness. Thus, when one uses the word Tungabhadra for the human body, it means that the body is the reservoir of infinite auspiciousness. Everyone must therefore carefully introspect to check whether this sacred gift called the body is being properly used or is misused and mishandled.

It was sage Narada who gave this name Tungabhadra to the human body. People often mistake Narada to be Kalahapriya (one who foments trouble). This is not correct; such a view is an imagined and a distorted one. Narada is the sage who has shown the path that can put an end to all sorrow. He radiates knowledge. Narada is endowed with the knowledge of the three periods of time—past, present and future. He is dear Narayana. He gave this unusual name Tungabhadra to the human body after deep enquiry. Tungabhadra is that which gives limitless bliss and auspiciousness. You have to make every effort to understand the sanctity behind the name, use the body only for noble and sacred purposes and derive bliss thereof. Human life should not be looked at from just a worldly, material and physical perspective. Through intense enquiry, sages of yore unravelled the deeper significance of human existence. Man today faces misery because he does not make proper use of his body and does not lead his life as he ought to, that is to say, in the service of humanity. Totally preoccupied with himself and his family, he has no thought for the community or society he lives in. It is only when man becomes concerned with society that he will begin to understand why the human body has been called Tungabhadra.

### **See God in Man**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

You are undoubtedly aware that human life is the noblest and the most precious of all. That is why the Vedas declare: *Janthunam Nara Janma Durlabham* (it is a rare blessing to be born as a human). You must really appreciate how rare and precious human birth is.

Man is called Nara. This word has two syllables, `Na' and `Ra'. `Na' means 'no', and `Ra' means 'death'. Thus, Nara means one who is deathless, imperishable and immortal. If you examine deeply, you will discover that the three words Nara, Narada and Narayana, all represent the same thing. Narada (the sage) is the one who shows Narayana (God) to Nara (man). What a lofty meaning this word Nara has! You must ponder over the fact that man who is intrinsically sacred is now wasting and ruining his invaluable existence. God is not really separate from man. Narada recognised the identity of man with God and declared that God is not outside but within man. He described the relationship between man and God in these words:

*Yallabdhwapuman, Iccharamo Bhavati,*

*Trupto Bhavati, Matto Bhavati, Atmaramo Bhavati.*

(After attaining God, man gets total satisfaction, fulfillment, ecstasy and bliss).

Man is not really different from the Indweller, and the individual is God Himself. Goodness lies in seeing Narayana (God) in Nara (man). On the other hand, man today revels in seeing God as man. Such perception arises from utter lack of faith and deluded thinking. People think that it is important to achieve greatness; however, it is far more important to be good than to be great. The truly good one sees God in every human being. The evil one, on the other hand, reduces even the Divine to mundane levels. Such a one can be described as Ravana. Ravana considered God as an ordinary human, quite in contrast to Narada who always saw Narayana in Nara. Every individual has divine power latent within.

### **Attachment Leads to Misery**

Students must carefully examine all such matters thoroughly. They must go into the deeper aspects of the subjects they read. Take the Ramayana, for example. This epic reveals how unity can lead to bliss. On the other hand, disunity leads only to unhappiness and sorrow. Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna achieved great renown in the world on account of their unity. Contrast this with Vali and Sugriva. They too were brothers but both had to undergo suffering on account of lack of unity. The Pandavas too illustrate how unity is strength. All the four younger brothers always bowed to the command of Dharmaraja, the eldest brother; they never went against his advice. The glorious example set by them in the Dwapara Yuga continues to remain a shining beacon even in this Kali Yuga. Disunity, discord and disaffection between brothers invariably produce pain and suffering. Unity, on the other hand, always paves the way for happiness.

The scriptures offer many ideals for people to live by. Ravana realised his folly in the end. He said, "O people of this world! By yielding to lust and anger, I have brought ruin to one and all, including my family. I could not conquer hatred and jealousy and thereby lost all my relatives. Unable to understand the fundamental truth, I lost my kingdom too. Do not repeat my mistake." This was the warning given by Ravana just prior to his death. Noble souls are very powerful because they completely grasp the basic truth. Ravana was mighty. He was one of great penance. He had acquired multiple capabilities—physical, mental and even spiritual. But ultimately, of what use were all these various achievements? Of no use at all. Becoming a slave of attachment and hatred, he had, in the end, to suffer and perish. There was not a trace of love in him. If, on the other hand, one imbibes love in one's heart, one can emerge victorious even under the most adverse circumstances.

The scriptures hail man as Amrutasya Putra (son of immortality). Unable to understand this truth, man has degenerated into Anrutasya Putra (son of falsehood). Man should conduct himself in accordance with his true nature as the child of immortality and not of falsehood. You should not only love God but become God Himself. Only when you experience love, you would begin to get a feel of who God is. Where is God? If you believe that God is far from you, He is definitely far away. But if you earnestly believe that God is very intimate and that He is your greatest friend, then He is as close to you as you are to yourself. It is a big mistake to believe that God exists only in a temple or a sacred place or in a pilgrim centre. All this has been explained very clearly by noble men who have experienced Divinity within. Traditional and ritualistic practices are

certainly needed to start with. It is like learning the alphabet first when one learns a language. Once you have learnt the alphabet a, b, c, d, etc., you can learn words like God. After learning words, one can form sentences. Once one can read sentences, one can then read an entire book. In the same way, wise men of the past initiated people to the concept of Divinity by advising them to visit temples, holy places, etc., This is rather like learning the alphabet. All such practices were recommended as spiritual drill for the ordinary people and beginners on the spiritual path. But practising rituals without understanding their real meaning becomes an obstacle in spiritual growth.

### **Unfolding Divine Mysteries**

For every spiritual practice, there is an inner meaning, however trivial the practice might seem. Sainath (Physics Lecturer of the Institute who spoke earlier) mentioned that even apparently simple things that Swami says are full of deeper meaning. He is speaking from personal experience. Sainath, Dilip, Satyajit, Patle, Srinivas, all these boys who serve Swami, stay with Him in the Poornachandra Auditorium. At night, they sleep not far away from Swami, and nothing escapes their attention.

On occasions, departed souls come to have Swami's Darshan both during the day as well as night. Those who left their bodies 50 to 60 years ago also come to visit Swami. One morning, Swami returned to the Auditorium as usual after morning Bhajans. It was around ten o'clock, and Swami went upstairs. Sitting there in the chamber was Easwaramma, the mother of Swami's body. Swami asked her, "Why do you come like this? What would people say? Don't come like this." She replied, "Swami, I am Your mother. What do You know about the love of a mother? Only a mother can understand my feelings. I am a mother and You are God full of love for all. A mother cannot understand God's love and God cannot understand a mother's love! I have come here in order to tell You something." Swami then told her, "Say quickly whatever it is that you want to; I am in a hurry." Easwaramma pleaded, "Swami, I don't know what to do because You are always in a hurry! Please relax, spare me a few moments, and listen carefully to what I have to say." Swami asked her to tell what she wanted to say. Then she said, "The situation in the outside world today is not very good. Everywhere, it is bad thoughts, bad actions and evil manipulations. You believe that people who come here are all full of love for You. It is natural for You to think so but in my opinion, this is not always the case. When You give Darshan, so many people offer handkerchief to You. This frightens me. Please accept handkerchief only from those in whom You have complete trust; ignore the rest." Swami then asked, "Why are you making such a request?" And she replied, "For You, all are equal. Everyone is Your child. However, some people are wicked. The handkerchief they offer may have poison and when You wipe Your face, the poison may enter Your mouth." Swami then said, "All right, to satisfy you, I shall henceforth be very selective."

Some days after this, Swami was resting at night. The boys serving Swami were all sleeping nearby. Around 1 a.m., the mother of this body once again made a visit. Swami motioned her to the bathroom, where the conversation took place. She began to speak loudly and Swami cautioned her, saying, "Shh! Speak softly; the boys are all sleeping nearby. If they wake up, they will know about your visit." Easwaramma said in reply, "Swami, why should I be afraid of them? Only those who have done something wrong need to be scared. I have not done anything wrong. I have come here only out of my love for You and nothing else." Swami then said, "All

right, now tell me what it is that you have come for." She then said, "Swami, yesterday was a festival day and You wore a new Dhoti. To properly secure it, You went looking for a belt. You did not like any of those brought to You because they all were rather ornamental" What she said was correct, and Swami did ask the boys for a belt. Easwaramma then continued, "Swami, why do You have to ask others? You gave me a chain just before I died. Here it is; take it and use it as a belt." The day prior to her death, Swami had materialised a gold chain for Easwaramma and placed it round her neck because she liked such things. Next day, she gave up her body calling, "Swami, Swami!" After her demise, her body was taken to Puttaparthi. Just before that, Swami told Ramabrahmam (who was the caretaker in Brindavan at that time), "Easwaramma liked that chain very much. Let her be buried along with the chain." So, the chain was not removed from her body. This was the chain she was now offering to Swami. To send her back, Swami accepted the chain. Meanwhile, Sainath woke up. Even at the slightest sound these boys wake up! Sainath began to wonder, "I am hearing voices. How could anyone have entered Swami's room? All the doors have been locked; the lift has also locked; and the keys are with me. How could anyone get inside?" Slowly the boys came near Swami. They all were scared but Satyajit picked up courage and gently asked. "Swami, we heard voices. Who was that?" Swami first said, "That is none of your business." But seeing their concern for Swami's safety, Swami revealed who had come. Swami said, "The one who came was the mother of this body. She passed away over thirty years ago." These boys are all in their mid-twenties or so. The boys then wanted to know what Swami's mother had given to Him. Swami showed them the chain; they all saw it. Later, Swami gave the chain to one of the boys and it is still with him.

On another occasion, a lady in Simla suffered a massive heart attack. She had lost her husband and had two small children to look after. She was suffering intense physical pain and, on account of her children, deep mental anguish as well. It was 2 a.m. Swami left the body in order to save her. This body then collapsed and fell down; hitting the floor with a big bang. The boys heard the sound and rushed inside. They saw the body on the floor, seemingly lifeless. There was no movement at all. They tried to lift the head but could not. Imagine this; four or five young men, all so strong, could not lift this little head! They brought towels to wipe the wounds if any, but there was no sign of any bleeding. Slowly they understood; Swami was away on an extra-corporeal trip in order to save somebody. They just sat there and waited for Swami to return. When the task was completed, Swami re-entered the body, and the boys were very happy.

The boys staying with Swami have had many such experiences. They are all extremely devoted to Swami. They never waste a single moment and rush to Swami's side the moment their work is over. This is true of those working in the Institute and of those serving in the Super Specialty Hospital. On festival days when they feel that Swami may retire early, the hospital boys come back ahead of schedule without having their meals. If Swami asks them about food, they reply that they are not hungry. But Swami does not accept such replies and arranges food for them. All these boys are very devoted to Swami, and Sainath is one of them. Swami does not wish to give publicity to these boys but at the same time, the world must know about loving care they take of Swami.

### **God Needs no Decoration**

It is not possible to enumerate or describe the kind of experiences one can have with God. Man and God are not separate from each other. Drawing attention to this, Sainath quoted the saying:



"You and I are one." Even this is not the best way of putting it correctly as `You' is not different from `I'. There is only `I' and no `You'! You are I and I am You! God is present in everything in the creation. *Deho Devalaya Prokto, Jeevo Deva Sanathana* (the body is the temple and the Indweller is God.)

It is popularly said that Lord Vishnu bears the conch, the discus, the mace and the lotus. What is the inner meaning of the words conch and discus? Conch symbolises sound, and discus symbolises time. Therefore, when people say that Vishnu has the conch and the discus, it really means that God is the Supreme Master of sound and time. One should not imagine God to be separate from oneself. All the powers inherent in the body are really under the control of God, who is actually within. Therefore, do not think God is separate from you, do not give Him a separate form and do not start decorating that form.

About thirty years ago, on the loving insistence of Burgula Ramakrishna Rao, Swami went to the holy city of Tirupati, where Lord Venkateswara is the presiding deity. At the temple, Swami was received in the traditional style with full honours, and was conducted into the sanctum sanctorum, where the idol of the deity is installed. Mr. Anna Rao was the Chief Executive Officer of the temple at that time. Swami told Anna Rao, "Why do you disfigure this beautiful idol with so many decorations and ornaments? If the jewellery is removed, the Lord would look far more majestic" Burgula Ramakrishna Rao added, "Swami, I too do not like all these decorations but people always do such things for their own pleasure" Swami then remarked, "It is better to leave the idol in its natural form:" Anna Rao listened to all this but was unable to do anything. Decoration of the idol is not the proper way to see beauty in God and experience joy. Inner beauty is what gives true Ananda (bliss), and this bliss is the Makaranda (nectar) of life.

God needs no decoration. However, the human form that enshrines Divinity has to be given due respect and treated accordingly. As Swami mentioned earlier, the human body has been given the name Tungabhadra. Is it then proper to display it or treat it in an improper and inauspicious manner? Everything that Swami does has its own inner significance. Swami wears a long robe not for decoration, but to cover the body completely so that no part of the body is exposed. However, it is not possible to cover the hands, feet and face. Sometimes, My hair partially covers My face. But what can I do about it? An Avatar's body comes with brilliant effulgence of its own from His very birth. In fact, every being has divine effulgence within. People eat when they are hungry and drink water only when they are thirsty. One cries only at times of sorrow and smiles only when happy. For every action, there is a specific reason.

### **God always Helps His Devotees**

The three P's, namely, purity, patience, and perseverance are very important. Swami is the Embodiment of Purity. Whatever Swami does is always for others and never for Himself. The purity present in Swami cannot be seen anywhere else; and no one can find even an iota of impurity in Swami. It is this purity that draws people in thousands from all over the world to Swami. No invitation is ever sent to people to come here, and yet they come in such large numbers. Such is the magnetism of a truly pure body.

Swami is also very patient. Mountains may move but Swami's heart is ever unruffled and peaceful. However, at times, Swami may pretend to be angry. This tactic is used solely to

improve and correct the people who are going astray. Such methods become necessary because people do not always respond to nice words of advice! When Swami gently asks people to sit down, they do not listen but when He raises His voice, there is instant obedience! (laughter)

Voice and tone modulation can be useful and effective. This at times can even save the lives of people. Once during the Kurukshetra war, Ashwathama, the son of Dronacharya, took a terrible vow to annihilate all the Pandavas. Coming to know of this, Draupadi prayed to Krishna to save the Pandavas. The Leelas of the Lord are not only wonderful but also most mysterious. God enacts dramas and even changes the scenes in His play for the welfare and safety of His devotees. In this instance, the Lord saved the Pandavas with a delicate touch that He alone is capable of.

He went to meet sage Durvasa, who was immensely delighted to receive Krishna. The sage then asked, "Lord, what brought You to my humble Ashram?" Krishna smiled and said, "I have a small job for you." The sage was happy and said, "I am at Your service. You just have to command." Krishna then said, "Good! Tonight, you have to save the Pandavas." Durvasa was puzzled and asked, "Lord, it is You who protect everything in creation. Who am I to do that job?" Krishna replied, "That is a different matter. But for this job, you will be My instrument. I extend protection in many different ways. On this occasion, you have to do something specific as per My instructions." Durvasa wanted to know what it was and Krishna continued, "Dig a pit, ask the Pandavas to hide themselves in it, cover it with planks, grass and mud, and then take your seat on the cover so prepared. The enemies of the Pandavas may come and ask you about the whereabouts of the Pandavas. They may say, you know the past, present and future. Please tell us where the Pandavas are hiding" Durvasa intervened and said, "Lord, I cannot tell a lie." Krishna countered, "Did I ask you to utter falsehood? I am Myself the Embodiment of Truth, and I will always ask you to speak only the truth. However, you are at liberty to change your voice suitably to achieve the desired effect. I am sure you understand" The sage nodded and smiled.

Some time later, after the Pandavas had been hidden away, Ashwathama came there, exactly as Krishna had foreseen. Durvasa was sitting with his eyes closed. Bowing to the sage, Ashwathama sought, in a most humble manner, some information concerning the whereabouts of the Pandavas. Durvasa slowly opened his eyes; they were flaming. Angrily he roared, "Yes, the Pandavas are here, right beneath me." Besides anger, there was also much sarcasm in the sage's voice. Ashwathama was frightened because the sage was well known for fiery temper and his propensity to curse those whom he was angry with. Promptly, he fled from the scene, and the Pandavas were duly saved. All Avatars employ such techniques, and Swami too does the same when required.

In the Rama Avatar, it was the de scheduled for the coronation of Rama. Rama had just met Kaikeyi and returned to His palace, where Sita was busy getting dressed for the big occasion. Smiling broadly, Rama told Sita, "Listen to this, for it is very important. I have to leave Ayodhya immediately. On account of a promise given earlier by My father, I have to go in exile to the forest" Sita said, "You are going to the forest? In that case, I too will come with You." Rama replied, "No, you cannot. The forest is not a fit place for you to live in. You will constantly face danger from the demons and the wild animals." Sita then said, "What! You are the protector of the whole world. Will You not protect me? I do not believe that; it is simply that You do not

want me to accompany You! But I am determined to follow You!" Rama tried hard to Sita from going with Him but she was adamant. Speaking sternly, Rama then said, "If you come, it would mean more trouble for Me; you would just be adding to My burden. I have to go to the forest by way of obeying My father's command. What role do you have in this? Why do you have to come?" Rama then prepared to leave the premises when Sita asked, "Where are You going now?" Rama replied. "I am going to see My mother in order to bid her goodbye." Sita said, "I shall come with You," and Rama agreed. Together they went to Kaushalya's palace.

Kaushalya was in tears. She lamented, "O my dear son, I was so happy thinking that You are going to be crowned. But in a few short moments, destiny has taken such a shocking turn. After You leave, I cannot remain here in Ayodhya even for a second. So, I too will come with You to the forest." Rama softly replied, "Father is old and also somewhat disabled. You cannot leave him in this condition. For a woman, husband is God. Your prime duty is to serve him" Sita heard all this. She was very intelligent! On return to their abode, Sita opened the topic again and told Rama, "I am coming with You." Rama tersely replied, "Not possible." It was now Sita's turn to raise her voice and she said, "You told Your mother that husband is God. In that case, is not my husband God for me? You are Ramchandra, the moon and I, Sita, am the moonlight. The moon and its light can never be separated. Moonlight has to be where the moon is. It is unthinkable that Rama is in the forest and Sita is in Ayodhya. I am coming with You!" Rama had to yield to this powerful and indisputable argument!

### **Commence Spiritual Practice at an Early Age**

As Swami said earlier, never utter falsehood. But, for the sake of the welfare of others, you can adopt other suitable strategies to achieve the desired goal. *Sarvaloka Hithe Ratah* (one should be engaged in the welfare of all). *Sarvajnanopsampannah* (one should master all forms of knowledge), *Sarvasamudhita Gunaihi* (one should be the embodiment of all virtues). The key to these three cardinal principles, namely, well-being, wisdom and virtue, is contained in three P's- purity, patience and perseverance. In the strict pursuit of the three P's, Swami remains unmatched in the entire world (loud applause). Whatever Swami does is always for the good, welfare, joy, and comfort of others, and not for Himself. Never does Swami do anything for His personal benefit or advantage. From top to toe, there is no trace of selfishness in Swami, and there is no place for it either. Everything that Swami does is always for you and you alone.

### *Embodiments of Love, Boys and Girls!*

It is not possible to understand God. People may declare that they understand so but the very next minute, they are full of doubts and confusion. Such vacillations are due to tendencies acquired over many births. Influences of the past can and do hamper spiritual progress. Hence, transformation does not come easily; it has to happen slowly but steadily. That is why Swami repeatedly says: "Start early, drive slowly, reach safely." Yours is the right age to make a serious start and to begin spiritual practice. Always remain calm and peaceful. Do not defile your purity. Purity and patience would automatically make perseverance quite easy.

Swami always addresses you as Premaswarupulara (embodiments of love). Swami is ever full of love and that is why His words too are always saturated with love. Swami expects all of you to actually become what He hails you as. You should ensure that your love does not ever get diminished or diluted under any circumstances whatsoever. If you live like that, Swami is ready

to grant you whatever you want! Students of today will become the leaders of tomorrow and the emancipators of this country. You must therefore drive away all bad feelings, cultivate virtues and have sacred vision. Be ever careful about what you say and let there be no room for untruthful and improper words. Such ideal behaviour would bring great joy to your parents. It is your duty to make them happy. Remember, *Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava* (revere the mother and father as God). All parents love their children. Your parents care for you as much Swami's parents cared for Him. It is therefore your duty to bring Ananda (bliss) to them in every possible way.

Bhagavan concluded His Divine Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Bhava Bhaya Harana...*"

**—From Bhagavan's Summer Course Discourse in Sai Ramesh Hall at Brindavan, Bangalore  
on the evening of 18th May 2000**

### **Divine Companion**

*To confer on man Jnana, God in His infinite mercy comes down as man; or else, man will degrade himself to the level of beasts. Unless he learns to surrender his ego in complete sincerity, with no reservations, to the Lord, he cannot realise Him, though He is resident in his own heart. The anguish that fills the penitent seeker will move the Lord to manifest Himself. In the ecstasy of that moment, man will experience: I am Thou; Thou art I. —Baba*

## **Experiencing Bhagavan Baba's Divinity**

How lucky we are that we are able to see and talk to God in human form, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and also get His blessings and protection!

Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma

Consider all of us to be very fortunate because we are living in the era of the Avatar, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Bhagavan's devotees are in millions and each one has his or her own experience of His divine love and grace. I would like to share with readers some of my experiences with Bhagavan.

### **My First Experience of Bhagavan**

Some time in 1968, I had my first indirect experience of Bhagavan. I came to know that in Vile Parle, a suburb of Mumbai, Bhagavan's Vibhuti was being materialised in a person's house. I went to play my Santoor there and was amazed to see the whole glass frame of Baba's photograph fully covered with Vibhuti. It was removed in my presence, but by the time I finished playing, the whole glass frame was covered with Vibhuti again. I asked the owner of the house how and when it had started. He told me that his wife was a devotee of Bhagavan, but he was against it! He used to quarrel with her over this matter. After some time, he got a severe problem of gout in his knees. He tried different treatments but it became worse and he was even unable to move. His wife would tell him to go to Bhagavan, but he would scold her. Ultimately, he

reluctantly agreed to go to Puttaparthi along with his wife. They would go for Darshan everyday, but Bhagavan never came towards him; he started getting restless. Finally one day, Bhagavan came and stood in front of him. Touching his knees with His divine hands, He said, "What's wrong with you? Get up." He got up and started walking! After Bhagavan's blessings, they came back to Mumbai. When they entered their house, the first thing they noticed was that Bhagavan's photograph was full of Vibhuti, and since then it had never stopped!

### **He Knows Everything**

After knowing the whole story, I was filled with great joy that I could play my Santoor there and experience the materialisation of Vibhuti. But I wanted to have Bhagavan's Darshan in person. So, we started going for Bhagavan's Darshan. Two days later, Bhagavan called me along with my wife Manorama for a personal interview. That was the greatest moment of my life. For the first time, I came to know that Bhagavan was divine love personified. He knew about all my problems, everything about me, my professional hardships. Santoor, the instrument that I play, was never before used in Indian classical music. Those were the days that I was struggling hard to establish the instrument. Swami's blessings gave me tremendous energy and will power to achieve my goal. Swami materialised a ring for me and putting it on my finger, He said, "From today, this is your home and My home is in your heart; come to Me any time."

I have experienced the omnipresence of Swami a number of times. Sometimes, we are deluded to think that Swami lives at Puttaparthi or at Whitefield only. But in reality, He is always with us. It does not matter where we are or what we are doing, He knows everything. Once I went to a music director's house in Mumbai. The famous playback singer Asha Bhosle came there. Suddenly, she noticed that I was wearing the ring materialised by Baba. She said, "I don't believe in Him. Why are you wearing this ring?" I said, "This is something very personal and I would not like to discuss it with you." She was very insistent and said, "Let us have a bet, if He is really an Avatar, let Him come in my dream tonight. Then I will be convinced and will go with you to Puttaparthi." I said, "Ashaji, I don't want to get into any betting about Swami and please stop this discussion." After a while we left that place. Next day at 6:30 a.m., I received a telephone call; it was Asha Bhosle on the line and she told me that she had a vision of Swami in her dream and was totally amazed by this experience. She said, "Please take me to Puttaparthi." I said, "I am happy that Swami has given you Darshan in your dream, but I am sorry, I am not free and cannot take you to Puttaparthi." That day, I was recording in a studio; Asha Bhosle came there in the evening with her mother and younger sister and requested me to take them at least to the Ashram in Mumbai. After my recording was over, I took them to Dharmakshetra in Andheri, and I requested some people there to open the room. We all sat for a while and then came back. I think after a day, Asha Bhosle left for Puttaparthi alone. Afterwards she told me that she kept going for Darshan in the morning and in the evening for, so many days, but Swami never came that side. One day, Swami finally came and spoke to her and narrated the whole incident about her coming over there!

### **Leelas of Bhagavan Baba**

Swami protects His devotees in every difficult situation and from any problem. Once we surrender ourselves at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan, He takes care of everything. Once I was in Canada, and it was my first major concert in Toronto. It was raining very heavily and the organisers were really worried whether people would come or not. Their previous concerts with

some other artistes had not done well. When I came on the stage, I was pleasantly surprised to see that the auditorium was full. The concert went off very well. After the concert, there was dinner at a person's house. During the conversation, the host told us something very strange. He said, "Tonight when you were playing, I had a very strange experience. I have seen Sri Sathya Sai Baba's photographs, but I am neither a believer nor His follower. But during your performance, I saw a couple of times that your face was changing into Sri Sathya Sai Baba's as if He was playing the Santoor." Everybody present there was amazed to know this.

A few days later, I had a concert in San Francisco, America. We had great difficulty with the sound system which we were checking before the concert. And also there were very few people waiting outside. I came back to the green room and prayed to Swami. After a while, we came on the stage. Zakir Hussain was playing Tabla with me. The first thing we noticed was that the auditorium was full! And as soon as I started playing, we were really surprised to notice that the same sound system which was giving so much trouble earlier, was now sounding excellent. The next day came another surprise. During a dinner party a person, who was present the earlier evening in the concert, took me aside and said, "I want to share something with you. I believe in Sri Sathya Sai Baba and I have noticed that you are wearing a ring materialised by Baba. But yesterday when you were playing on the stage, a few times I experienced as if Baba was playing and not you!" I was totally amazed at the course of events. In one week at two different places, two different types of individuals having the same kind of experience. There is no limit to Swami's Leelas.

### **Tukaram's Forbearance**

*Once Tukaram was bringing home in his cart the sugarcane crop harvested from his small farm. As he was going home, the children of the village gathered round him and pleaded for a piece of sugarcane. In his boundless goodness, Tukaram allowed the children to help themselves to the cane on the cart. By the time he reached home, there was only one stalk of cane left. Seeing this, his wife got enraged, abused Tukaram, and taking out the cane, struck Tukaram with it. The cane broke into three pieces. Tukaram calmly remarked, "I was wondering how to distribute the single remaining cane to the members of the family. You have solved the problem. You can keep one piece and give the other two to the children." Such forbearance and equanimity can be found only in a few high-souled persons. These qualities can be acquired only through devotion and faith. —Baba*

### **My Experiences with Bhagavan Baba**

*After experiencing Swami's Divinity in the last 30 years, I have come to realise that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the embodiment of all gods—Lord Vishnu, Lord Siva, Lord Ganesha and Lord Rama.*

V. P. Singh

We are so very fortunate to be born on the planet earth at the same time as the Avatar, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. We are especially Messed to be among those who are not only living at the

same time as He, but are aware of His coming. He has blessed us with the knowledge of His Mission, and is giving us the wonderful opportunity to visit and observe Him as He walks among us.

As I travel and speak to so many groups and individuals across Canada and in other countries, I find that my audiences are most interested in reports of personal contact with Swami. While many of you reading this article have travelled to Prasanthi Nilayam and have enjoyed the Darshan of our Lord, a few have been so blessed as to have the close personal contact that He has granted me on so many occasions. As a matter of fact, I have had the rare good fortune of getting over 100 interviews in 30 years. Since I have enjoyed this closeness with the Avatar of the Age, it is therefore incumbent upon me to share with you the blessings that He has showered on me by reporting to you the delectable incidents in which He reveals, in so many ways, His love for us all. Following are a few incidents that I am sure you would be interested in hearing about.

### **My Journey to God**

One day, a friend of mine named Govind Sitaram, son of Mr. S. Sitaram of London, U.K., lent me a book entitled "Sathyam Sivam Sundaram," Part II. After reading a few pages, I told Govind that I found the book interesting and I wanted to know more about Bhagavan Baba. He immediately gave me the telephone number of his father who was in charge of the Sai Organisation in the U.K. When I phoned Mr. Sitaram in London, he advised me that my wife should visit Puttaparthi to receive the blessings of Bhagavan Baba. That same night, my wife had a dream of Bhagavan Baba who asked her to come to Puttaparthi. She was intrigued and made all arrangements to go. On the day she left home, all the lights of our house suddenly went on. This was our first experience of the 'presence' of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

My wife reached Puttaparthi by bus from Bangalore. Swami gave her an interview the very next day and blessed her. He told her to wait in Puttaparthi while He travelled to Goa, because He would give her another interview with her husband upon His return. My wife replied that her husband did not believe that Swami was God incarnated on earth, and would not come to India. Swami told her not to worry and He would ask her husband to come. Swami then asked Prof. N. Kasturi to write me a letter about Him.

Prof. Kasturi wrote: "Your wife reached safely. Swami gave her an interview and blessed her. I understand that you want to know about Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. This small piece of paper is not enough to write about the glory of Bhagavan. You come and experience Him for yourself. Yours, N. Kasturi."

When I received the letter, I showed it to Mr. Dan Bryan, the president of my company. He said, "You never know, may be God has come." He suggested that I visit India to see my wife, then come back after two months. I responded: "I couldn't take two months time, may be four weeks at the most." I left for India a week before Christmas, 1970. The night before my departure, all the lights of our house went on again, as if someone had suddenly put on the master switch. I found this strange. And so I started my journey to God.

### **Our First Interview with Swami**

When I reached Mumbai, I saw a newspaper report that Bhagavan Baba was arriving in Mumbai that day at 5.00 p.m. by a special plane from Goa. So, I hired a taxi at 4 p.m. and went to Dharmakshetra to see Swami. At 5 p.m., Swami came out for Darshan. I could not see Him too well as I was quite far in the back and there were thousands of people gathered for His Darshan.

Swami stayed at Dharmakshetra for over six weeks. This was most unusual, since He had never stayed anywhere outside Puttaparthi and Brindavan for such a long time. Now I thought, I should talk to some people and try to meet Swami. Luckily, I was able to send my request to Swami for interview. One day, I was informed that Swami would give me an interview that afternoon. I was asked to go to His residence.

I went and stood under a tree outside Swami's room. Swami came out from His room for Darshan and glanced at me. I saw a halo around His face and head; it was so bright that it dazzled my eyes. He asked me if I came from Delhi. I told Him that I had come from Canada. He then said, "You stay. I will see you after Darshan" I stayed on. At 9 p.m. a messenger from Bhagavan told me that Swami would see me the next day at 9 a.m., and that I should go home. Disappointed, I left for my residence in Mumbai.

When I reached my friend's house where I was staying in Mumbai, I was surprised to see my wife who had just arrived from Bangalore though I had not informed her that I was coming to India. She told me that she came because Swami told her in a dream that her husband had arrived in Mumbai, and she should meet him there. Swami also told her that He had left Rs 500 under her pillow for train fare from Bangalore to Mumbai, as she did not have any money. I was amazed and astounded by the grace of Swami.

I told my wife that we should go to Darshan early because the crowd at Dharmakshetra was very large. So the next morning, we left the house quite early. Swami came out for Darshan at 8.30 a.m., and straightaway went to my wife and told her that He would send a car to take her up the hill to His residence for an interview.

In the interview, Swami told us all about my past and present life, and the death of our three children, my spiritual status and finally said, "You have come because I have called you. You can go home to Canada with My blessings." We were very happy.

### **A Fracture Cured without Medical Treatment**

The following day, I went to Delhi to convey a message to the relations of a friend from Windsor (Canada). That day, my wife went to Dharmakshetra for Darshan by train, not by taxi. A pickpocket on the train tried to snatch her purse, causing my wife to fall on the platform and injure her arm severely. When I arrived from Delhi that evening, I insisted that we go to a doctor for X-ray to check for a possible fracture. My wife said that her doctor was Swami, and no one else, and that she would not go to see another doctor. I argued persistently, but she would not deviate from her faith in Swami. "Tomorrow, Swami will give me Vibhuti," she said, "and I will be all right."

Now I was anxious to leave for Canada. My wife told me that she would stay back and come to Canada later. A week later after I left, my wife got very sick. Swami wrote a letter to Dr.



Jayalakshmi of Puttaparthi General Hospital and asked her to look after my wife, but not to give her any medicine. She went to Puttaparthi where Dr. Jayalakshmi was very happy to serve her. Swami told my wife that He would supply food and money if she needed any, and not to inform me about her illness. My wife remained in Puttaparthi for six months and Swami took full care of her.

After six months, Swami sent her to Canada, making all the arrangements for her travel. When she came home, the first question I asked was, "How is your arm?" "It's okay," she replied. "Just a little bit of pain." I became very much concerned about the continuing pain. My mother was especially concerned about the inconvenience because it was her right arm. I took her to a doctor who told me that she had a fracture which had not healed. She would have to take aspirin all her life to relieve the pain

I felt very sorry for my wife and I started telling her that if she had listened to me she would have been all right. Now the fracture could not heal as it was seven months old. It was too bad. My mother went on to say that if she had not gone to Puttaparthi she would not have fallen and broken her arm.

That very night, Bhagavan came in my wife's dream and manifested Vibhuti which He rubbed onto her arm. He told her, "You will be all right from tomorrow." When we got up the next morning, she told me about the dream and reported that her arm was completely healed and without any pain. I did not believe this and asked her to use the vacuum cleaner to show me that she could use her arm normally without any pain. So she did. Now it is 30 years since that incident and her injured arm continues to be stronger than the other one.

After experiencing Swami's Divinity in the last 30 years, I have come to realise that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the embodiment of all gods - Lord Vishnu, Lord Siva, Lord Ganesha and Lord Rama.

### **Uniqueness of Sai Avatar**

*He counsels, helps, commands and stands by as a friend and a well-wisher of all, so that people may discard the evil, take to the right path and reach the goal.*

A. V. Gokak

An avatar symbolises the descent of God on the earth in human form. The Bhagavad-Gita clearly states that whenever the unrighteous ride on the crest of the wave, God appears on the earth to establish the rule of law and righteousness. The world is becoming a veritable battlefield on account of economic, political and ethnic tensions. Swami has come as an Avatar at this critical juncture in the history of humanity. Bhagavan Baba talks of the role of an Avatar in his own characteristic style: "The Avatar comes to bring the kingdom of heaven to earth as well as to build the kingdom of heaven within the individual human heart."

## **A New World Order**

Bhagavan Baba wants to transform the individual as well as the world with his spiritual revolution based on the five luminous pillars of Sai philosophy—Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence. Bhagavan Baba has innumerable devotees all over the world and these belong to different professions and diverse spheres of life. Ministers, Members of Parliament, diplomats, philosophers, poets, clerks and officials are all devotees of Swami. Bhagavan Baba uses their services for building up various institutions that foster these values for bringing about social and spiritual revolution in society.

Bhagavan Baba wants to re-establish Sanathana Dharma for the transformation of mankind. He is therefore making efforts to educate the people about the greatness of Indian culture and philosophy by interpreting the Vedas and the Upanishads in a manner in which they can be easily understood by modern man. His discourses have an electrifying effect on the audience and are a very important aspect of the spiritual revolution that He is bringing about.

Re-establishment of the Vedas and the Shastras is the most important mission of Sathya Sai Avatar. He says that His task is not merely to cure and remove individual misery. To quote Him, "The removal of misery and distress is incidental to My mission. My main task is the re-establishment of the Vedas and the Shastras and to reveal the knowledge about them to all people."

Bhagavan Baba's message and values are not only for India, but for the whole world. The Sarva Dharma Emblem is the best indicator of the all-encompassing character of his message and philosophy. The symbols of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism, the five major faiths in the world, find a place in the emblem. The most fascinating feature of this emblem is that it is not an indicator of the establishment of a new religion as Bhagavan's goal is not to start another religion but to elevate the level of human consciousness. He never asks devotees to give up their respective religions. He asks them to adhere to their respective religions. He tells the devotees "... Continue the worship of your chosen God along the lines already familiar to you and you will find that you are coming nearer and nearer to Me, for all names are Mine and all forms are Mine."

## **Role of the Present Avatar**

Bhagavan Baba explains the unique role that He has come to play in the present crisis-ridden world. He distinguishes His role from that of Rama and Krishna, who had to kill one or more individuals, who could be identified as enemies of the righteous way of life and thereby restore the supremacy of virtues. In today's world, all are tainted by wickedness and there is a big question as to who will survive if the Avatar decides to uproot wickedness. Therefore, He says that He has come "to correct the intelligence (Buddhi) by various means." He counsels, helps, commands and stands by as a friend and a well-wisher of all, so that people may discard the evil, take to the right path and reach the goal.

Bhagavan Baba makes another important distinction between His role and that of Rama and Krishna. Rama came to establish Sathya (Truth) and Dharma (Righteousness). Krishna came to foster Santhi (Peace) and Prema (Love). However, now, Bhagavan says, "All these four values are in danger of being dried up. That is why the present Avatar has come."

He has given a very clear idea of the worldwide role He has come to play. He says, "I have come to inscribe a golden chapter in the history of humanity, wherein falsehood will fail, truth will triumph, virtue will reign. Character will confer power then—not knowledge or inventive skills or wealth. Wisdom will be enthroned in the councils of nations."

The miracles of Bhagavan Baba remind us of the miracles performed by Jesus. Bhagavan in His discourse on Christmas Day in 1972 referred to Jesus' statement: "He who sent Me will come again" and then declared that Jesus was referring to Bhagavan Baba Himself! In response to a question by a devotee, Bhagavan confirmed that He is what Western Christians call Cosmic Christ.

### **Brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God**

Bhagavan has already become a unifying force in the world and has followers from the Arctic to the Antarctica, thanks to His charismatic personality and universality and catholicity of His outlook. Bhagavan Baba's Mission is to achieve world unity and bring the Golden Age on the earth. He said, in His recent New Year Message, "In a very short time, all the people of the world are going to be united. India, Pakistan, America, Russia and Japan are considered as separate from each other. Very soon, there would be unity among all these countries. Even those whom we consider our worst enemies are going to become our best friends." He said that very soon, we would witness "Brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God."

It is our good fortune that we are born at a time when God has descended on the earth in our midst. Let us all take a solemn pledge on Bhagavan's 75th Birthday to strive incessantly for the ideals that He so lovingly stresses from time to time so that the Golden Age of humanity is ushered in soon and Brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God becomes a living reality.

## **Chaitanya Jyoti**

Bhagavan's 75th Birthday Commemorative Building

*It houses various types of exhibits depicting the Life, Mission and Message of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba to present a glimpse of the Divinity of the Poornavata*

For the first time in human history, an Avatar (incarnation of God) has been recognised as a direct manifestation of Divinity by millions across the globe. This incarnation is none other than Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, lovingly called as "Swami" by his ardent devotees. While in the earlier Yugas, Valmiki and Vyasa were ordained by the Lord to document the glory and achievements of Rama and Krishna Avatars respectively, Swami has taken care of the needs of posterity and history by motivating many to record and document in their own respective ways the life and times of the Avatar.

Mankind was indeed blessed when Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba agreed to lay the foundation stone of a magnificent building in August 1999 depicting "His Life, Mission and Message." The exhibits housed in the building are meant to enlighten the present and future generations of the

world about the experiences of Swami's devotees, who enjoyed His infinite grace and had very close interactions with the Divine Being in human form.

Like all other constructions in Prasanthi Nilayam, this building is being inaugurated within one year of laying the foundation stone. The Bhumi Puja was performed with the Divine Hands on 25th August 1999. A model of the proposed building was placed before Bhagavan when He visited the site on 24th September 1999. The construction work started in November 1999. Bhagavan will inaugurate the building on 18th November 2000 on the eve of His 75th Birthday.

Built adjacent to the hill on which the huge Hanuman statue is located, the building is a landmark in itself and an imposing structure in the Prasanthi Nilayam valley. It is 75 feet in height and has seven levels. It occupies an area of nearly 11,000 sq. ft. at the ground level and a total built-up area of 20,000 sq. ft. It has a very unique Stupa which is 36 feet in height and has lotus at two levels—at the base and nearing the top. It is surrounded by five swans which depict the five human values. From the centre of the lotus at the upper level rises the divine finger supporting the entire universe.

This grand edifice is unique in the history of mankind in many ways. As commented by Bhagavan, this will be a 21<sup>st</sup> century marvel. The architecture itself is a fusion between the East and the West. Although the roof appears like a Chinese pagoda, it has components of European architecture. Two domes of Moorish architecture have been constructed using a high technology material—titanium. The arches on both sides are Gothic, a style followed in the early Christian era. The Koi pool in front is of Chinese origin, but very popular in Singapore and Malaysia.

It houses various types of exhibits depicting the Life, Mission and Message of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba to present a glimpse of the Divinity of the Poornavata. The exhibits are divided into seven sections, each dealing with one aspect of the Avatarhood and bringing out various qualities and contributions of the Avatar, as one amidst us, but beyond us. The exhibits meander through different levels located at different heights and take the visitor from the dawn of creation to the modern age as outlined through the message of Bhagavan Baba.

A brief outline of the exhibits within the building is given below:

#### **1. Unmanifest Manifests**

This section deals with the creation of the universe which arose from the Will of the Divine "To Love Myself." It depicts the various incarnations of the Lord giving a prelude to the present incarnation. The presentation has been done by specialists connected with Hollywood.

#### **2. The Coming of Sai Foretold**

The prophecies on the Advent of Sai Avatar from different parts of the world and different scriptures are laid out in this section.

#### **3. Unfolding Divinity**

This section covers the childhood and various Leelas of the Avatar. The Fullest Beauty aspect of the Avatar (as described in the scriptures) gives the incidents of Swami's childhood which bring out the latent Divinity of the Lord. This divine beauty draws millions to Him.

#### **4. Glory of the Divine**

This section depicts the Fullest Splendour Power of the Avatar—the Mahima Phase of the Avatar as told by Him. Devotees gather to receive Divine Blessings in the form of Vibhuti, rings,

pendants, chains, etc., representing His Omnipotence. His Omnipresence is experienced through the various manifestations in far off places although He is physically not present at those places. His Omniscience is felt even in His access to the subconscious (dream) state of individuals.

#### **5. From Information to Transformation**

The Most Complete Wisdom aspect of the Avatar (the Bodhana Phase of the Avatar). The purpose of all these is to bring about "Individual Transformation", through teachings that transcend the barriers of language, culture and nationality. The universal teachings, presenting the most complex philosophical teachings in a simple language, attract both the "Paamar" (the layman), and the "Pundit" (the scholar) alike.

#### **6. Global Transformation**

This portion deals with the Undiminished Fame aspect of the Avatar. How the teachings can help in individual transformation through Namasmara (chanting Divine Names), selfless service, personal Sadhana, practice of Human Values in daily living, etc., are depicted through Multimedia as well as Models and other presentations.

#### **7. Expansion of Love**

The Infinite Vairagya aspect of the Avatar, "the Viswarupa Darshan", in more common parlance, is presented in His expanding Love through those coming in contact with Him and service to mankind rendered by His devotees all over the globe.

#### **8. International Exhibition**

This is an offering at the Lotus Feet of the activities carried out all over the world by Sri Sathya Sai Organisation.

#### **9. Books Stall**

#### **10. Mini Theatre**

#### **11. Presentation of Different World Cultures with the Help of Exhibits from Different Countries**

Devotees from all over the world will place at His Lotus Feet this unique piece of architecture on the eve of Bhagavan's 75th Birthday and the 7th Sri Sathya Sai World Conference in November 2000. We pray to Bhagavan to shower His Divine Blessings on this project for the benefit of the mankind.

### **The Chauffeur and the Master**

*When a chauffeur is sought for, the owner of the car will select only a person who is an expert in the art, a man of character and a person who will be obedient to his employer. In all respects, he must be a good and useful employee. When such care is taken to choose a driver for the material vehicle, how much more should buddhi, the chauffeur of the vehicle whose master is the atma, be virtuous and skilled! Buddhi has no right to give a ride to anyone without the knowledge and permission of the master.*

—Baba

Lieut Gen. (Retd.) Dr. ML. Chibber

Many people in India and abroad enquire, "Who is Sai Baba? Why are millions being attracted from all over the world to visit Him in ever increasing numbers?" The questioners include

genuine spiritual seekers, skeptics some who are flippantly curious and a few who are plainly hostile to what they call Indian godmen. This article attempts to share with the reader a few random experiences related to these questions and the supplementaries that are raised.

### **The Messiah of New Age**

Those who are not familiar with the Indian spiritual heritage but are genuine spiritual seekers of God are all attention when they are informed that He is a man of infinite wisdom. This is so because infinite wisdom is one of the descriptions of God, and it goes down far better than the word 'Avatar,' with which only a few in the West are familiar.

The teachings of Bhagavan Baba appeal immensely to people because of their universality. A teaching that makes a major impact on everyone relates to His mission of moving mankind to the New Age that He calls the Vishwa Parishad (world community or global village). The blueprint that He articulates for the New Age touches most people very deeply. It does so because in it they find an echo of their own faith. In just four lines, He has distilled the essence of all the faiths and philosophies that have gripped the minds of men since the dawn of history:

*There is only one nation, the nation of mankind,  
There is only one religion, the religion of love;  
There is only one language, the language of the heart;  
There is only one God and He is omnipresent.*

This writer can never forget the reaction of a well-known Muslim clergyman who is deeply involved in the violent unrest in Kashmir. His face became red. He literally jumped up from his seat and said, "General Sahib, this will happen, it has to happen." He felt very happy when the writer informed him that it was already happening at Puttaparthi, where people from more than 150 countries were coming in ever increasing numbers to sit, sing and pray together at Prasanthi Nilayam. Nowhere else in the world are devotional songs dedicated to the founders of all faiths jointly sung by a congregation, as it happens in the presence of Bhagavan Baba. When a serving Pakistani Brigadier heard the above four lines, his spontaneous comment was "But, General, that is the gist of Quran Sharif" It indeed is, as it is of the Bible and the Gita.

### **Energy, Consciousness and Cosmic Power**

In 1997, there was a special team of the British Broadcasting Corporation in India to make a film on the country after 50 years of Independence. The writer happened to meet them when they were filming his regiment. A technical person of the team happened to sit next to the writer at lunch. Someone on the table made a mention of Bhagavan Baba. The BBC man intervened and said, "I had heard so much about Him in England that I specially flew out to visit Him. But I was so put off by His devotees that I returned disappointed. They deify Him as God. How on earth a mere man can be God? It is ridiculous." A few things about Bhagavan Baba that were explained to him that made a visible impact on him are worth recounting.

The one teaching of Bhagavan Baba around which all His teachings and activities revolve is to make us understand that everything in the seen universe including human beings is a temporary form of the Cosmic Power called God. The ancient spiritual scientists of India working in the

laboratories of their minds analysed this Cosmic Power and found that it had three characteristics:

*Sat* meaning Truth which implies indestructible permanence. Energy and love are two facets of it. *Chit* meaning Consciousness. *Ananda* meaning Bliss.

The three characteristics of the Cosmic Power named God are as inseparable as transparency, wetness and liquidity of a pure glass of water. Bhagavan Baba explains this in the following simple words: "In this drama of the universe, there are only two actors, who play a million roles: Jada and Chaitanya (meaning Sat and Chit or Energy and Consciousness)."

It means that everything in the universe that we can perceive is a permutation and combination of energy and needed level of consciousness. The existence of the Cosmic Power called God and the fact that everything we can perceive including ourselves is a temporary form of the same becomes crystal clear when we ponder over the following two explanations.

The first explanation is an extract from Bhagavan Baba's address on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1995 after He inaugurated Laser Laboratory in Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prasanthi Nilayam Campus:

"Students, before trying to understand Divinity, try to understand the universe itself. What is meant by Vishwa Swaroopa (the real form of the universe)? The universe is made up of galaxies, stars, the sun and the moon. The emptiness within that is known as Vishwa Swaroopa. There, in the emptiness, are studded galaxies and constellations. Man, after considerable investigation, has discovered things about matter and energy. But in My view, there is nothing like matter in this universe. Everything is a temporary form of energy and is suffused with it. In one instant, this energy is turned into matter. In another instant, it is energy again. This energy destroys the previous matter. It creates new matter. This is called the nuclear process."

In simple language, Bhagavan Baba had explained the real form of the Cosmic Power called God (in Sanskrit, Vishwa Swaroopa is an appellation for God) as also the great discovery by Einstein that matter and energy are inter-convertible. Now let us examine what an eminent scientist has said about the universe.

The second explanation is given in the following extract from the book titled 'Wholeness and Implicate Order' by Professor David Bohm, in which he discusses the totality of existence including matter and consciousness as an unbroken whole:

"Empty space contains an immense background of ultra high energy (zero-point energy of wavelength  $10^{-32}$  cm), and matter, as we know it, is small, quantised wave-like excitation on top of this background, rather like a ripple on a vast sea. One cubic centimetre of this zero-point energy is very far beyond the total energy of all matter in the known universe.... What we perceive through senses as empty space is actually the plenum (the real universe) which is the ground for the existence of everything, including ourselves. The things which appear to our senses are derivative forms and their meaning can be seen only when we consider the plenum in which they are generated and sustained and into which they ultimately vanish."

If we could see a rock, a plant, a bird or a man through a microscope of quantum physics, we would see only a pulsating mass of protons and electrons and within them quarks, leptons and leptoquarks doing the Tandav Nritya (the cosmic dance) of Siva. After listening to all this, the BBC young man kept quiet but his body language did speak, "Gosh, I never thought of God in those terms" At this stage, another person sitting on the table butted in, "I have heard a lot about the miracles that He performs. Which is His greatest miracle?"

### **Bhagavan Baba's Greatest Miracle**

The greatest miracle of Bhagavan Baba is to transform people and make them realise that not only Service to Man is service to God but it is also the source of great happiness; that it is the simplest way to reach the goal of experiencing our own Reality. Most people who come to His presence experience an inner urge to change for the better, to serve and to share. This miracle is visible in thousands of Seva Dal volunteers around the world who willingly and lovingly give their time and energy to serve.

He changes people by saturating them with boundless love. He comforts and consoles those in distress by taking on their problems; He heals the afflicted who come to Him with faith in God; He offers succour to the poor and lonely. He does all this with a basic purpose. And that purpose is to inspire and to motivate each one to embark on an endeavour to achieve the goal of human birth. This goal is to become worthy of God's grace, to achieve permanent happiness by understanding and then actually experiencing that *I am Divine*.

*The grace of God is like an insurance. It will help you in your time of need without any limit.*

—Baba

**SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER MEDICAL SCIENCES**

### **Super Specialty Hospital at Whitefield, Bangalore**

Bhagavan's overwhelming love and concern for the welfare of humanity has crystallised in one more divine gift flowing from His grace and bounty—the construction of a major Super Specialty Hospital in Whitefield, Bangalore under His divine guidance. This follows the first such hospital in Puttaparthi, which was opened in 1991, and has been providing hope to the distraught and succour to the hopeless. Construction of the hospital at Bangalore commenced in September 1999, and will be completed in all respects by the beginning of November 2000.

### **Equipment, Staff and Services**

This is yet another instance of Bhagavan's infinite mercy and love. The project has been conceived in furtherance of an important humanitarian objective: to harness the benefits of the latest developments in medical science to serve all sections of the population, including the very indigent. The hospital will have state-of-the-art equipment which will match the latest international standards anywhere in the world. The doctors, surgeons and technical staff in the



hospital will be drawn from the best available anywhere in the world: many of them working on an honorary basis out of their spirit of service and dedication.

The hospital will provide out-patient and in-patient treatment as well as surgical intervention where necessary, to patients with cardiac and neurological disorders which have been found to be among the fastest growing menaces to health in the present milieu. The diagnostic, medical and surgical equipment, as well as the high level of skills needed are ordinarily very high priced, and way beyond the reach of the lower income groups in society. The uniqueness of this hospital is that it will bring the highest standards of medical, diagnostic and surgical attention within the reach of all, since all services will be provided totally free of cost as in the Puttaparthi hospital. In fact, the demand for services will far outstrip the capacity of the institution, notwithstanding the fact that it will be one of the largest facilities in the country, catering to 2.4 lakh outpatients and 13,000 inpatients annually by 2002. This hospital will surely find a place in the international list of centres of medical excellence.

### **Infrastructure**

The total built-up area of the project will be nearly 5.5 lakh sq. ft. consisting of:

Main Hospital Building	3.70,000	sq. ft.
Reception Block	11.000	„
Canteens	17,000	„
Residential Complex	1,50.000	„
Total:	5.48,000	sq. ft.

The main hospital building will have three storey in the two front wings and four storey in the rear wing with a central lobby. The surrounding landscaping, the majesty of the building itself and the serene peace in the high domed prayer and meditation hall in the very centre of the structure, as well as the spirit of dedicated service displayed by the staff, volunteers and doctors will be totally conducive to the generation of peace of mind, tranquility, confidence and hope in the minds of the patients, who will be cured not merely in body, but in mind and spirit as well. A separate Reception and Primary Screening Facility will be able to seat up to 500 persons and deal with them effectively. Catering and cloakroom facilities for the patients and their escorts also form part of the support units. A Residential Complex to house about 45% of the staff is also provided. All utilities and facilities will be of high ecological standards, with no danger of pollution from any source. The capital cost of the complete project is estimated at Rs. 200 crores.

The direct benefits will be in respect of the reduction of disease burden of the population, the major beneficiaries being the poor sections. The services provided by the Institution will be a boon to the needy sections of society, where almost every member of the family is a breadwinner, and a disease which puts a member out of work makes the patient a major liability to the rest of the poor family. The vicious cycle can be broken only by providing access to high quality tertiary health care to such patients. The hospital is a boon granted by the grace and love of our dear Bhagavan to humanity.

### **Medical Facilities:**

Description of facility	No. of units	Patients per annum
-------------------------	--------------	--------------------

A.	Cardiac Care:		
	Consultation Rooms	17	1,20,000
	Operation Theatres	8	4,800
	Cath. Labs	4	12,000
	Special Care Beds	76	11,800
	Ward Beds	96	8,000
B.	Neuro Sciences:		
	Consultation Rooms	17	1,20,000
	Operation Theatres	4	1,800
	Cath Labs	1	1,500
	Special Care Beds	38	3,300
	Ward Beds	96	5,000

#### ***BHAGAVAN'S 75th BIRTHDAY GIFT TO MUSIC LOVERS***

### **Music College at Puttaparthi**

Ever since his childhood, music was dear to Bhagavan. The Pandari Bhajan Group that He started at the age of eight years graduated to Bhajan singing in Sai Centres throughout the world. He was one of the greatest exponents of Carnatic music during His youthful years. Fortunate were those who sat at His Lotus Feet then to hear Him sing Thyagaraja Kritis. Today, Bhagavan's singing of Telugu couplets and Bhajans at the end of His Divine Discourses fill the hearts of the devotees with bliss. Bhagavan has been a great musical composer. His spontaneous compositions for plays and musical concerts are even now heard during performances put up by His students. It is a great blessing for Prasanthi Nilayam and for His devotees that Bhagavan has willed the setting up of an institution exclusively for music at Prasanthi Nilayam in the year of His 75th Birthday.

Education (Vidya) is not complete without music (Sangeet). The establishment of an institution and a curriculum for music in Sri Sathya Sai Vidyagiri provides a sense of completeness to the integral education philosophy at Prasanthi Nilayam. Here is a field of knowledge that helps to provide a synthesis between secular and spiritual education. Its mathematical precision and its soul stirring nature provide nourishment to personal growth. It helps provide contentment of the highest order (Atmatruti). This priceless gift of Bhagavan is a benediction to the spiritual education experience at Vidyagiri.

In the beginning, courses will be started in vocal and instrumental music, especially Sitar, Tabla, Mridangam, Veena and Lalita Sangita. Besides these, the college will also help in the revival of folk arts including Harikathas.

The construction of the College was started in August 1999 after Bhagavan blessed this project. The building has a unique architecture as it bears the shapes of several musical instruments. The building was completed in about a year and inaugurated by Bhagavan Baba on the eve of His 75th Birthday.

### **Melody and Harmony**

*Let your whole life be a Bhajan. Believe that God is everywhere at all times and derive strength, comfort and joy by singing the glory of God. Let melody and harmony surge from your heart and let all take delight in the love that you express through that song. —Baba*

### **BHAGAVAN BABA'S 75<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY**

### **Social Welfare Projects**

During the millennium year 2000 the 75th Birthday Celebrations of Bhagavan Baba are being held on a grand scale. To mark this occasion, Bhagavan Baba has been gracious enough to shower His blessings on some of the villages falling in Puttaparthi, Bukkapatnam and Kothacheruvu Mandals by granting the construction of Kalyan Mandapams, extensions of schools and construction and renovation of temples.

There was a long felt need for a Junior College at Kothacheruvu as the classes for both the High School and the Junior College were being held in the High School building in shifts. Bhagavan graciously granted the construction of a full-fledged Junior College building at Kothacheruvu. This two-storied building nearly 300 feet long is being provided with all amenities like classrooms, laboratories for Physics, Chemistry, Botany and Zoology, staff rooms, etc. The building with five domes over the roof and with good architectural features will be the most prestigious building at Kothacheruvu.

Sri Pedda Venkama Raju Kalyan Mandapam (earlier Old Mandir) at Puttaparthi has been enlarged and renovated. Kalyan Mandapams of suitable sizes to accommodate nearly 200 to 500 people have been constructed at Bukkapatnam, Janakampalli, Kovilaguttapalli, Bathalapalli, Locherla, Yenumulapalli and Bukkapatnam (Harijanwada). Additional classrooms in the Upper Primary School have been constructed at Locherla and Yenumulapalli. Bhagavan Baba has also graciously blessed the construction of Shadikhanas (Kalyan Mandapams) at Kothacheruvu and Bukkapatnam.

### **My Sankalpa**

*Whenever there is a languishing of Dharma ...I create Myself, for it is part of My primal resolution or Sankalpa to protect the spiritual structure of the universe. I lay aside My formless essence and assume a name and a form suited to ~the purpose for which I come. Whenever evil threatens to vanquish good. I have to come and save it from decline.*

—Baba

## **Dasara Celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam**

Dasara has been one of the biggest and most important festivals at Prasanthi Nilayam ever since Bhagavan started celebrating it in 1946 in Old Mandir, where first Dasara was celebrated. It has since been a great attraction for Bhagavan's devotees and spiritual seekers because it brings with it manifold advantages in the form of daily Divine Discourses of Bhagavan Baba, Veda Purusha Saptah JnanaYajna and learned talks of scholars in the meetings of Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha.

### **Veda Purusha Saptah Jnana Yajna**

This year, Dasara celebrations in Prasanthi Nilayam started on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2000. One day before the start of the celebrations, i.e., on 30<sup>th</sup> September, Bhagavan distributed silk Dhotis to the students of the Institute who were to take part in Veda chanting during the Veda Purusha Saptah JnanaYajna.

On the morning of 1st October 2000, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 6.55 a.m., where Swami's dear elephant Sai Geetha was waiting fully bedecked for the procession of the Pundits and scholars to start. As soon as Swami came into the Hall, He first showered His love on Sai Geetha by caressing and feeding it. While Bhagavan gave Darshan to devotees, the group of learned Pundits who were to conduct the Veda Purusha Saptah Jnana Yajna came to the Mandir Bhajan Hall. After they were seated in the Mandir, Bhagavan distributed silk Dhotis to them which they were to wear for conducting the Yajna.

At 8.00 a.m., the procession of the Pundits carrying the Kumbha (silver pot), installed with traditional rituals and worshipped daily in the Mandir from 28<sup>th</sup> September onwards, started amidst Veda chanting and Nadaswaram. They were led by Sai Geetha and followed by Veda chanting students to the Poornachandra Auditorium where the Yajna was to start. Swami then came into the Poornachandra Auditorium and blessed the Pundits before the start of the Yajna. After lighting of sacred lamps by Bhagavan, the process of Yajna started in a traditional way when Yajnagni was produced by churning one piece of wood over another. When the fire was lit and sacred oblations were put into it by the priests along with chanting of Veda Mantras, the whole atmosphere was surcharged with Divine vibrations. Yajna thus started with full devotional vigour. While the priests conducted the Yajna, the students chanted Veda Mantras, scholars recited the Bhagavatam, the Ramayana and other sacred texts, and a priest performed Suryanamaskar. Daily Puja of Devi also started simultaneously. Veda Purusha Bhagavan Baba remained seated on the dais surcharging the entire milieu with His Divinity. A few minutes before 9.00 a.m., Arati was offered to Bhagavan before He left the Auditorium. The Yajna however continued up to 11.30 a.m.

The Yajna continued daily in the same manner sending divine vibrations to all directions for seven days and concluded on the auspicious day of Vijayadashami on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2000. On this day, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 6.55 a.m. Soon after this, the Chief Priest brought the consecrated Kalasham from the Poornachandra Auditorium in a procession led by Nadaswaram musicians and Sai Geetha and followed by Veda chanting priests and students. After receiving blessings from Bhagavan, the procession went to Poornachandra Auditorium for Poornahuti (final oblations), the sacred grand finale of the seven-day long Yajna.

Swami came to the Poornachandra Auditorium at 7.50 a.m. and blessed all the priests with yellow rice materialised by Him. Bhagavan also materialised a gold chain for the Chief Priest. At 8.05 a.m. Poornahuti was performed by Bhagavan in the Yajna Kunda by putting in it silk clothes and valuables amidst the chanting of Mantras by boys and girls students besides the Pundits. Mangalavadya also continued during the performance of Poornahuti. After Poornahuti, Bhagavan went into the rows of devotees inside and outside Poornachandra Auditorium and blessed them all by sprinkling Teertham (holy water) on them. Mangalarati was offered to Bhagavan in the end. This brought about the conclusion of the seven-day long Veda Purusha Saptah Jnana Yajna by the Veda Purusha Bhagavan Baba who took honours of the Yajna and blessed all those who were fortunate to be present at this unique festival.

### **Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha**

The deliberations of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha started on the afternoon of 1 st October 2000. Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 2.50 p.m. At 3.15, the programme commenced with chanting of Veda Mantras by the Institute students. Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, two speakers made brief speeches.

The first speaker of the afternoon was Sri Sanjay Sahni, Senior Lecturer in Commerce, Brindavan Campus. Sri Sahni narrated an incident when Bhagavan showered His love even on a street dog and stated that Bhagavan is the embodiment of unconditional, unalloyed supreme love. "We should aspire only for Bhagavan's love, and if we are able to get it, every moment of our life will be a celebration," he observed. The second speaker of the afternoon was a 2nd year MBA student of the Institute, Sri K. Arun. Referring to the auspicious occasion of Navaratri, Sri Arun stated that Bhagavan Baba is the Divine Mother who only gives and gives and is never tired of giving even while distributing food and clothes to thousands of people.

After these two speeches, Bhagavan blessed the assembled devotees by giving His first Dasara Discourse (printed separately in this issue of "Sanathana Sarathi"). The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.00 p.m. Before leaving for His abode, Bhagavan showered His blessings on the huge concourse of assembled devotees by raising both His hands in a blessing posture.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> October, the proceedings of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha started at 3.20 p.m. with Veda chanting as usual. The first speaker of the afternoon was Sri Ruchir Desai (Lecturer in Commerce, Brindavan Campus). Sri Desai narrated an incident when Bhagavan touched the bronze idol brought by a lady and changed it into a golden one, and observed that this was the Lakshmi aspect of Bhagavan. Whatever and whoever is touched by Him gets transformed, he said. The second speaker of the afternoon, Sri S. Sriram (M. Tech, Computer Science), referred to the axiom given by Bhagavan: "Follow the Master, face the devil, fight to the end and finish the game" and observed that we should vanquish the devil in us which symbolised bad qualities like anger, hatred, jealousy, ego and follow the Master (conscience) to gain victory over ourselves. After this, Bhagavan gave His second Dasara Discourse and concluded it with the Bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho..." The second day's programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.05 p.m.

On 3rd October, the programme started as usual after Veda chanting at 3.10 p.m. The first speaker, Dr. T. Ravi Kumar, Lecturer in Chemistry, Brindavan Campus, narrated an incident when Bhagavan waited for the students for hours like a doting mother in Dharmakshetra where the students returned late after performing a drama in Shanmukha Auditorium. Bhagavan's love for his devotees is unlimited, he said. The second speaker, Sri Madhusudan Rao Naidu (a student of M. Sc. Chemistry) also spoke about the motherly love of Bhagavan and said that Bhagavan is the Supreme Mother who is Vishwa Dharini (carries the burden of the universe) and protects us. After this, Bhagavan blessed the devotees with His Divine Discourse. The programme came to a close at 5.00 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

On 4th October 2000 also, two speeches were made before Bhagavan's Divine Discourse. The first speaker was Dr. M. Sainath, (Lecturer in Physics, Prasanthi Nilayam Campus). Dr. Sainath referred to an incident from the life of Sant Tukaram who taught the lesson of detachment and sacrifice to a rich devotee by telling him that even all the wealth of the world could not earn him a few more breaths of life. The second speaker, Sri Ashok Ahuja, a student of B. Com of the Institute, dwelt on the value of surrender by referring to the story of the Pandavas and observed that we should conquer our ego which was the obstacle in the way of complete surrender to God. Thereafter, Bhagavan gave His fourth Dasara Discourse which He concluded at 5.00 p.m. The programme came to a conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan.

On 5th October, Prof. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor of the Institute, was the first speaker. Prof. Venkataraman referred to the Navaratri festival in which Devi was worshipped for nine days and it emphasised the mother aspect of God. He then explained the glory of Bharatiya culture which taught worship of the mother as God. The second speaker, Sri J. Karthik Prashanth, a B. Sc. student of the Institute, stated that it was character which made an individual and character was made by controlling the mind. After this Bhagavan gave His fifth Dasara Discourse. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan.

On the last day of the proceedings of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, Sri S. V. Giri, Vice Chancellor of the Institute, addressed the audience. He said it was a glorious week in Prasanthi Nilayam as Bhagavan's Divine vibrations mingled with the spiritual vibrations of the Vedic Mantras chanted during the performance of the Yajna. He advised the students to divinise their lives by surrendering to Bhagavan. He said, "Divinity is a must for life. We cannot imbibe values without divinity. Wherever values are imbibed without divinity, they are like a house built on sand." The second speaker Sri Shriram Parshuram, a senior student of the Institute, narrated several incidents how Bhagavan imparted His teachings to the students in His own novel ways and observed that without divinity all education was bland and valueless.

The deliberations of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha came to a happy conclusion with the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan. In the end, Mangalarati was offered to Bhagavan.

### **Have Steady Faith**

*This is the human form in which every Divine entity, every Divine principle, that is to say, all the names and forms ascribed by man to God are manifest. Do not allow doubt to distract you. If you fill your heart with steady faith in My Divinity, you can win the vision of My Reality. Instead, if*

*you swing like a pendulum of a clock, one moment devotion, another moment disbelief, you can never succeed in comprehending the Truth and attaining bliss. You are very fortunate that you have a chance to experience the bliss of the vision of the Sarva Devata Swaropa (the form which is the embodiment of all gods) now, in this very life.*

—Baba

## Love is My Only Wealth

### *Embodiments of Love!*

There are many persons who analyse and investigate into the nature of Divinity, but very few understand it in its true spirit. Those who perceive it are truly fortunate ones. In fact, it is not possible to comprehend Divinity in its fullness. However, the man who realises the same Atmic principle in others as he experiences it in himself can understand Divinity, irrespective of the fact whether he is a householder or a renunciant. In such a person, Divinity is firmly established. He becomes Divinity Itself.

A millionaire can eat food only and not gold. This is the principle of equality of mankind. God is in everybody. Divinity is immanent in equal measure in everything—good or bad, righteous or unrighteous, sacred or unsacred. Since ancient times, sages have been trying to investigate this mystery. The Vedic sage declared: *Vedahametam Purusham Mahantam Aditya Varnam Tamasa Parastat* (I know the Cosmic Being who shines with the effulgence of a billion suns and who is beyond darkness). In modern times, scholars investigate into the nature of Divinity according to their own perceptions and propound manifold theories.

### **Divinity Permeates the Entire Universe**

The universe is subject to three processes: creation, sustenance and destruction or dissolution. None can deny this truth; scientists also cannot negate it. This is a universal truth perceived by everybody. That which is born is sustained and is eventually destroyed. This is the direct proof of Divinity. When you enquire into these three fundamental facts, the existence of Divinity becomes evident. In daily life also, this Divinity is experienced. For example, you have seen the dancing lions from Malaysia (a Malaysian troupe presented their traditional lion dance before Swami's Discourse in Hill View Stadium on 23rd November 2000). However, these are not real lions. But on seeing them, you can surmise that there exist real creatures called lions. In a similar manner, almost every object of daily life points towards Divinity. The sweetness in the sugarcane or the hot taste of chillies, the sour taste in tamarind or the bitter taste of Neem, all these are indicators of Divinity. The stars in the sky, the brightness of the sun, the coolness of the moon and the rise and fall of sea waves are also pointers towards the Divine principle. Though all these do not directly show you God per se, they produce positive evidence of the existence of the Divine principle. In society, there are different functionaries like a minister for education, a collector for revenue and the police for law and order, etc., and above all of them is the Prime Minister. In the same way, in the universe, there is Brahma for creation, Vishnu for protection and Siva for dissolution. But, for all these functions, the supreme head is Divinity. The Muslims call this principle, Allah. Every religious denomination has its own name for Divinity. The Bharatiyas and Westerners have a common term in English, God. In this word, G stands for generation, i.e., creation, O for organisation, i.e., sustenance and D for dissolution. Thus in this word God, all these three aspects, namely, creation, sustenance and dissolution are implied.

Taking such evidence, people have been propagating the principle of Divinity. Stated or unstated, truth is truth. God exists. Where is He? He is omnipresent. He is in all forms. The Divinity present in humanity is self-evident. The very fact that lakhs of you have come here



today is the evidence of your love for God. Love is the proof of Divinity. You have filled your hearts with love for Bhagavan. There is no greater bliss than this.

### **Experience your Inner Reality**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Any task undertaken with self-confidence ensures success. Therefore, self-confidence is absolutely essential for every person. If you expect others to respect and love you, you should first respect and love them. Without respecting or loving others, you cannot expect any reciprocal feeling from them. In the same way, if you love God, God loves you. Life consists of reaction, resound and reflection. You get back exactly what you do to others.

What message can I give you for the day? As I see you, My heart overflows with love. (cheers) When I see so many of you expressing your love for Me, there is no limit to My joy. I have not sent out invitations to any of you. My love has drawn you here. Your love for God and God's love for you is the true message. What can one say as a message? I give and you receive, and you give and I receive. This exchange is the true relationship between man and God. Be happy and blissful. Increase your spiritual dimensions. Live with the firm conviction that there is one Divinity resident in all. Why does a Government set up law enforcing agencies like the police and military? It is solely for the sake of protecting the country. The police punishes the guilty. If there is no lawbreaker, there is no need for police at all. In the same manner, your bad actions attract punishment and your good actions, reward. This is the theory of Karma. But one blames God, if one is punished. This is a big mistake. Ensure that there is no trace of evil within you. Then you need fear no punishment. The very persons designated for punishing you will come and protect you.

I have said that man is the embodiment of the Atma. I have also told you that the Atma is imperishable. This eternal entity indicates your eternity. Creation, sustenance and dissolution are all ordained by God. He manifests in all the elements. With this firm conviction, wherever you go, to whatever country you travel, you will attain success. Spiritual precept insists, "Have faith in yourself." That is, first of all, know yourself. Everybody asks the question, "Who are you?" There is none to ask, "Who am I?" When the question, "Who are you?" is asked, a reply that you are so and so or you are from such and such place or you are doing such and such job is not the proper answer. "I am the Atma," is the only right answer. The body and the mind are impermanent. To imagine that you are any of these is a serious mistake. Get rid of the feeling that you are the body and the mind and recognise the Atma, which alone gives power to both the body and the mind to function. Everyone is a manifestation of the Atma. This manifestation has expanded all over. This all-pervading Atmic principle is the Cosmic principle. You should attempt to recognise this Cosmic Power. You may feel that this is very difficult, but it is extremely simple. Your body attachment is what makes it appear difficult. *Sarva Bhuta Namaskaram Kesavam Pratigachhati* (salutations to all beings ultimately reach God) because God is present in everyone. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna says, *Mamaivamsho Jeevaloke Jeevabhuta Sanathana* (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being).

If a bird enters a hall of mirrors, it sees many reflections of its own form. It imagines that there are a multitude of birds and they are its competitors. So, it keeps dashing against the mirrors and the mirrors are broken into pieces. Now, it sees as many birds as there are pieces of mirrors.

When the mirrors are all shattered to tiny bits, no image is visible and the bird flies away. This is a state of ignorance. On the contrary, when a man of wisdom enters the room, he recognises that these are all his own images and feels happy. In the same manner, the one who sees himself in all other persons and looks on them as his own images is a true human being. The manifest principle that is visible in the external world is the same as that which exists in an individual. Names, forms and abilities are cognised as separate, but these are mere reflections. The truth is that you and I are one. Divinity is right inside you and is not separate. Nor is it specially located in a temple or a mosque or any other place of worship. What you try to see in a mosque or a temple is inside you. All Sadhana is undertaken to experience this inner reality.

Every man is prone to birth and death. The period between birth and death is man's life-span. The individual grows and wears away but his inner spirit does not undergo any change. It is only the body which undergoes changes. A child grows up to become an adult and a grandfather. Descriptions are different, but the individual is the same. In the same manner, God has many names and forms but the Divinity is only one. *Ekam Sat Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (truth is one but scholars refer to it by many names). Realising this truth, you should respect and love all and give joy to all. Then you become God yourself. Once you recognise the fact that the Divinity in all is the same, there will be no sense of duality. You may think that it is very difficult but it is extremely simple. Your inability to recognise this truth is due to the fault of your vision and not the fault of creation. Without correcting your faulty vision, you blame the creation. There are no flaws in creation. There is unity in creation; duality is in your perception.

### **Self-confidence is the Key to Success in Life**

With self-confidence, any task can be performed successfully. A small example: Abraham Lincoln was born in an extremely poor family in America. His father was a carpenter. His mother Nancy worked hard to educate him. When Lincoln went to school, other children made fun of him for his dress and poverty. Lincoln could not bear this and told his mother, "Mother, I am subjected to a lot of ridicule by fellow students. Please get me a good dress." Taking him close, his mother said, "Son, you must see our condition first. We are not well-to-do. Feeding all of us itself is a problem. In this condition, how can you expect fancy clothes? Act according to your condition. Sooner or later, you will reach the level of your deservedness. Don't be deterred by other people's taunts. Live with self-confidence. Self-confidence is the source of all success." Thus, she encouraged him. From that moment, Lincoln became a person of great self-confidence and pursued his studies and activities with honest effort. He was never upset over anything. Self-confidence was his armour. Devoid of material wealth and comforts, he was endowed with plenty of self-confidence. His mother passed away after some time. But her words of wisdom were firmly entrenched in his heart. His father married again. It is quite common amongst Westerners. His stepmother was also quite affectionate towards Lincoln and encouraged him to persevere on the path shown by his mother. Life was difficult for him throughout. He wanted to have some employment. However, he thought that self-reliance was better than serving others and started a business of his own. He conducted his business in the most upright manner. But his difficulties went on increasing and his debts accumulated. Lincoln carried on with the strength of his mother's advice regardless of all difficulties. He had a severe setback in his business. Ultimately, he had to sell everything. He worked hard to clear all his debts.

*There is no disease like being a debtor,*

*There is no charity greater than feeding the hungry,  
There are no greater gods than parents,  
There is no greater Dharma than compassion,  
There is no greater gain than the company of the good,  
There is no enemy greater than anger,  
There is no wealth greater than good reputation,  
Bad reputation is death itself,  
There is no ornament better than the chanting of God's Name.*  
(Telugu Poem)

Lincoln strictly lived in this manner. Seeing his upright character, some of his friends felt that he could very easily be elected to the state legislature. They advised him to stand for election and promised their help. Lincoln stood for election and won with a thumping majority. By his honesty and hard work, he rose to become the President of the United States of America. At the moment of his success, he recollected his mother's words. He fully realised the importance of self-confidence.

The slaves were treated in a very harsh manner by the Whites in those days. Abraham Lincoln wanted to ameliorate their condition and secure equal rights for them. He was of the firm conviction that all human beings were equal and any differences on the basis of colour or race were improper. He tirelessly worked for the cause of the slaves. Eventually, he succeeded in the abolition of slavery in the United States. He is still held in high esteem for this noble work. In the world, there is a constant strife between good and evil. There are many people who are jealous of others and subject them to slander. But one should not attach any importance to such criticism. Praise and abuse are common to mankind. In Bharat also, several famous people faced similar difficulties but they overcame these with fortitude. If you live in truth and love, you will not come to harm. The body is bound to fall some time or the other. Merely to safeguard it, one should not take to bad ways. Body is perishable while truth is eternal. Hence, strive for truth. *There is nothing greater than truth. The creation emerges from Truth and it merges into Truth, Is there a place where Truth does not exist? This alone is Absolute Truth.* (Telugu Poem) There are some, who turn away from the path of goodness and start opposing God when their desires are not fulfilled. But the mistake lies with them and not with God. There are four kinds of people who oppose God. The first type of people are atheists, who profess that there is no God. In the second category come those people who speak against God out of jealousy because others are better off than them. The third, those who lament at the high reputation and fame of others which they are unable to achieve themselves. The fourth type are those who are disillusioned when their desires are not fulfilled. They resort to improper and mean ways to attain their ends. They ask, "Swami, I am starting a school or a society and I need so much money." I tell them the truth, "Son, this is a different country from yours. The currency of this country cannot be carried in your country. If you resort to illegal methods and cheat the Government, I shall never permit such a practice." Under such circumstances, they go back to their places and make all kinds of false allegations against Me. Whatever others may say, I will never deviate from the path of Truth. Do not pay any attention to praise or slander.

Divinity is based on faith. Faith is something which cannot be bestowed on you. Everyone has his own faith.

*"There are a few who say that God does not exist. For those who refuse to believe, there is no God. For those with faith, there is God. 'Yes' and 'No' belong to others; for Bhagavan, it is always 'yes, yes, yes'."*

(Telugu Poem)

Each individual's conscience is his own witness. Do not waste your energy on negative criticism. You should never abandon your faith and your self-confidence. Some people become jealous at the growth and prosperity of others. Jealousy is a dangerous pest. If a pest enters the root of a tree full of leaves, fruit and flowers, the entire tree dies quickly. The pest is not visible to the eye and works insidiously. A jealous person conceals his jealousy and harms others like a pest. These are evil ways. However, in My view, there are no evil persons. All evil behaviour changes sooner or later. Bhagavan's truth is one. All belong to Bhagavan and Bhagavan belongs to them. My only wealth is love. I embrace all with love. Even people who come to Me with hatred in their hearts are dear to Me. I do not search for your faults. I go by the principle of love. All should take note of this equanimity of Bhagavan and follow this principle of unity. Purity follows unity and from purity, Divinity is attained. To attain Divinity, you have to cultivate purity and for purity you should live in harmony with all. Only then will you get positive results.

### **Welfare of Humanity is Bhagavan's Primary Concern**

*Embodiments of Love!*

Today marks the 75th year of the Advent of this body. Age does not concern Me. Welfare of humanity is My only concern. More particularly, I am concerned about the welfare of the distressed and the poor. My primary objective of life is to remove the difficulties of the helpless. Irrespective of any comments, adverse or otherwise, My resolve is the same. You should also make a resolution on these lines. Having grasped what ought to be grasped, do not let go of the grip till you succeed. Having desired what ought to be desired, Hold on till your desire is fulfilled. Having asked what ought to be asked, Hold on till you obtain what you had asked for. *Having thought what ought to be thought, Hold on till you succeed. Either God should yield to your prayer Or you should ask wholeheartedly with intensity. This is the path a true devotee should pursue.* (Telugu Poem) Have perseverance until your resolve is fulfilled. This is the vow of a Bhakta (devotee). This is what can be called as true Tapas. Tapas does not mean going to the forest or standing upside down and doing some meditation or the other. Keep your word, adhere to truth, show gratitude where due and stay firm in your self-confidence. These are the true qualities of a good individual. If you adhere to these tenets, you will overcome with ease any obstacle that may come your way. Hold on to your self-confidence and self-respect and be ready for any sacrifice. As I have already reiterated, the Atma in everyone is the same. Therefore, do not be swayed by such considerations as somebody being small and somebody being great, etc. Self-confidence is not related with age. Quantity may vary between individuals, but quality is the same.

### **Unity Safeguards Independence**

*Embodiments of Love!*

If Bharat is to progress in the proper direction, there should be complete unity amongst all its people. Our great leaders made great sacrifices and secured freedom for us. While we have attained independence, we have not achieved unity. What is the use of freedom without unity? It is due to lack of unity that people of this country are reduced to a sorry state of affairs. There is

hatred everywhere. There are ten factions in one party. People in one house go in four different directions. If this kind of disunity persists, how can freedom be safeguarded? People are not going on the right path. You have to adopt the path of complete unity, so that every Bharatiya must be able to say proudly: "This is my beloved country, this is my mother tongue and my religion." You should also uphold the reputation and traditions of your family.

People today have lost faith. A man without faith is verily blind. If you do not have faith in others, at least have faith in yourself. Develop faith in yourself and faith in God. This is the secret of greatness. Only then will you be able to experience Divinity. God does not have a separate form. 'I', the Atma, is God. You must have this kind of faith. Only then can you accomplish spiritual growth.

Bharat is a sacred land. Such sacredness is hardly found anywhere else in the world. That is why many Avatars have taken birth in this land. Bharat is like a mother of all other nations. Rama said, *Janani Janma Bhumishcha Swargadapi Gareeyasi* (mother and motherland are greater than even paradise). You must recognise this truth. There are many who chant the Name of Rama, but is there anyone who actually practises the virtues represented by Rama? People are heroes in chanting but zeros in practice.

The Vedas have given four Mahavakyas: *Tat twam Asi* (That thou art), *Prajnanam Brahma* (constant integrated awareness is Brahman), *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman) and *Ayam Atma Brahma* (this Atma is Brahman). You are constantly chanting these words, but are not putting them into practice. Mere chanting without action is pure exhibitionism. While saying all are Brahman, you hate others. This is sheer hypocrisy. If you have aversion to any individual, quietly keep away from him. Do not hate him; try to develop love for him. Do not criticise or hate anybody. This is My message today. This is the course to be adopted by you. I love everybody. I have no dislike for anybody. All are My devotees, friends and children. For Me, all are one. This universe is a big book. Antaratma (conscience) is your Guru. God is your friend. Time is also the very form of God. Therefore, do not waste time. Time wasted is life wasted. To make your time pure is true Sadhana.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

The love in you and the love in Me are one and the same. But your love is contaminated by desires for material things. I have no desire for any material wealth. My love is the purest. The love immanent in you turns negative because of the contamination of desires. There is no negative quality in Me, it is entirely positive. So, combine the negative 'I' in you with the positive of Bhagavan and attain unity. With this understanding, you will be able to experience indescribable bliss. What sort of bliss? That is Brahmananda. When you experience this Brahmananda, you become one with Brahman. In this state, there is no need for any Sadhana on your part. All the Sadhanas that you do are for your mental satisfaction. Consider all as one and love all. That is the true Sadhana. *Ek Prabhu Ke Anek Nam* (God has many names but He is One). While performing the *Sahasranama Archana* (chanting 1000 names of God), you repeat the various names, Keshava, Madhava, Narayana, Govinda, but it is to the same form that you make your offerings.

While doing Anga Puja, you place the flower on your eye and then offer the flower to the deity in front with the Mantra, *Nethra Pushpam Samarpayami* (I offer the flower of my eye). Symbolically, you are offering a flower in place of the eye. You say eye, but offer a flower. This amounts to cheating God Himself. What is the point of offering to God what has been provided by God Himself? You should pray, "O God, everything is Yours, this whole body is Yours, all the limbs and organs are Yours. I am Yours and You are mine." When this kind of identity is established, there is no further need for any external form of worship. But, for those who have not yet reached this exalted state, these various physical forms of Sadhana such as Japa, Tapa and Dhyana are suitable. All these require constant practice. Gradually remove all negative thoughts and inculcate positive thoughts. Transform negative thoughts into positive ones.

If anybody abuses you, take no note, for the abuser is abusing only the body and not your Self. If somebody calls you a bad man, do you become a bad man by the mere calling? If, in fact, you have something bad in you, try to destroy it. There are a large number of people in this Kali Yuga who abuse God because their wishes are not fulfilled. This is a universal habit common to all countries. You should not succumb to such mean and unholy feelings. Thyagaraja, for example, says that God will reveal Himself to you only to the extent and manner in which you approach Him. Whichever way you think of Him, God assumes the same form. If your feelings are good, you will get good results.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

I have no desire to have such elaborate Birthday Celebrations, not in the least. I go through all these because it pleases My devotees. I am not particularly enamoured of anything. The happiness of the devotees is My happiness. Dedicate your life to Divine love. *Love is the very form of Brahman. Try to merge love in love. If you have steady love, you will achieve the ultimate merger which is true non-duality.* (Telugu Poem) Hatred, jealousy and ostentation have become widespread these days. Get rid of all these and adopt the path of love. Whether your desires are fulfilled or not, think that all that happens is for your good. When you encounter difficulties, always think that better days are ahead. Good and bad always go together. Therefore, take both of them with the same attitude. The Gita says, *Sukhadukhe Samekruthwa Labhalabhau Jayajayau...* (treat happiness and sorrow, loss and gain, victory and defeat with complete equanimity.) Pleasure is an interval between two pains. Reduce your worldly desires. Develop desire for God. Inculcate love for God and thereby increase your happiness. If desires increase, your suffering also increases, and happiness too decreases proportionately.

You cannot attain God by your wealth. He is to be attained only through devotion. Sathyabhama in her pride hoped to possess Krishna all for herself by her wealth. She wanted to weigh Him against the huge amount of gold she possessed. But she failed. Narada made her realise her folly by showing that a single leaf of Tulsi (basil) offered by Rukmini with real devotion exceeded all the wealth of Sathyabhama. Sathyabhama symbolises desire while Rukmini represents devotion. Krishna says that He is pleased with the offering of a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water. Do not take this literally. The body is the leaf, the flower is the flower of your heart, your mind is the fruit and the tears of joy constitute the water which is the acceptable offering to God.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

You will have everything in life if you have love in you. Do not hate anybody. This should be the main ideal of your life. This is My Message for you. Love is My only wealth. All these magnificent edifices are not Bhagavan's; they all belong to the devotees. The only property Bhagavan owns is unbounded love for all of you. Bhagavan will pour forth His boundless love on all of you for the mere asking. Bhagavan is ready to sacrifice even His very body for the sake of His devotees. You live happily and spend your life in a state of bliss. Bhagavan wants only your love. Your love makes Bhagavan happy. Bhagavan's love is your greatest wealth and good fortune. This is Bhagavan's greatest gift to you. Take good care of this precious gift. This is Bhagavan's blessing to you on this day. May you all have steady devotion, and sacred, long, happy life! May you have all this! May all your difficulties be removed! May you experience unalloyed bliss!

Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho..."

*—From Bhagavan's Birthday Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 23rd November 2000*

## **Bhagavan's 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations**

Celebration of 75th Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was a historic event in the annals of Prasanthi Nilayam. Never before had devotees in such large numbers from all parts of the world gathered at Prasanthi Nilayam to take part in a function. It was virtually a sea of humanity surging in all directions in the valley of Prasanthi Nilayam, crossing all barriers of religion, country, caste and community. Another chief feature which made it one of the most outstanding events was the commencement and execution of a large number of social welfare projects reflecting Bhagavan Baba's deep concern for the deprived sections of society. "Sri Sathya Sai Grama Seva 2000" formed one of the most important parts of this programme. Seventh World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations on the theme of "The Journey with Sai" and chanting of the Vedas for seven days by learned Pandits were other significant events of these celebrations. Opening of "Chaitanya Jyoti" (the New Millennium Museum) and Music College, as also the new railway station, "Sri Sathya Sai Prasanthi Nilayam" formed part of these celebrations. Free quality food of many varieties was offered to hundreds of thousands devotees in Prasanthi Nilayam as Bhagavan's Prasadam during the Birthday Celebrations from 20th to 26th November 2000. A summary of some of the major programmes which formed part of Bhagavan's 75th Birthday Celebrations is given below.

### **Deepavali Celebrations**

The joyous Deepavali festival was a precursor to the rejoicings that marked Bhagavan Baba's 75th Birthday Celebrations. This festival of light and joy was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 26th October 2000 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. As soon as Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall on the Deepavali morning and sat in the chair placed on the dais, the students started singing songs in praise of Bhagavan Baba, Shirdi Sai Baba and Sri Rama, filling the entire milieu with piety and gaiety. While Bhagavan went in the rows of the devotees to bless them on this auspicious day, the students began Bhajan singing which was followed by the

devotees in chorus. The distribution of Prasadam also started simultaneously. The morning programme came to a close at 8.15 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

While the morning was sanctified by singing the glories of the Lord, the evening was filled with joy of witnessing a spectacular show of fireworks. Swami came out of His abode a few minutes before 6.00 p.m. and symbolically pressed the remote control button to fire the row of crackers hanging on a wire in a corner of the garden in front of His abode. This was the signal for the students to start the magnificent display of fireworks. While the flowerpots and other crackers illumined the ground, the rockets illumined the sky with coloured lights of various designs. After about half an hour's display of this delightful show, the Deepavali Celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam came to a happy conclusion. Mangalarati was offered to Bhagavan in the end.

### **Rehabilitating the Destitute**

One of the special programmes organised at Prasanthi Nilayam was to provide means of livelihood to the destitute and the poor. In a simple function held in Sai Kulwant Hall on 29th October 2000, Bhagavan graciously distributed 40 pushcarts and 11 wet grinders to 29 ladies and 22 gents belonging to Anantapur town and adjoining villages who were in dire need of this help. The beneficiaries who received wet grinders were mostly ladies who had no other source of income. Among the beneficiaries who received pushcarts were vegetable vendors, fruit and flower vendors, washermen, shoe vendors and eatable vendors. Since they are already doing this type of work, they would need no training for it. But their work would become easier and their income would increase by acquiring pushcarts. Bhagavan also distributed clothes and watches to them as His special gifts.

### **Sri Sathya Sai Grama Seva**

A new era in village uplift and rural service commenced when Bhagavan Baba started "Sri Sathya Sai Grama Seva 2000" on 31st October 2000. This unique programme of selfless service to the villagers covered all the villages of Kothacheruvu, Puttaparthi and Bukkapatnam Mandals in which 2000 students, teachers and many dignitaries took part. Towns of Bukkapatnam, Penukonda and Dharmavaram were also served under this programme.

The enormous work done in less than two weeks was the consequence of meticulous planning and management under the care and guidance of Bhagavan. Students and teachers circumambulated the Mandir while singing Bhajans and chanting Veda Mantras, and received Bhagavan's blessings before the start of Seva on each day. As directed by Bhagavan, tasty fresh food and Laddus were distributed as Bhagavan's Prasadam at every doorstep in each and every house and to all the people in the villages. The students and staff engaged in this work did all this in a spirit of dedication and worship and approached the village people with humility and love as messengers of Bhagavan Baba. Besides distributing food to all the villagers, new clothes were distributed to the needy and the poor.

### **Global Akhanda Bhajan**

A 24-hour Global Akhanda Bhajan has become an annual feature of Sai Organisation which is being held for the last 25 years. This year's Akhanda Bhajan was organised from 6.00 p.m. on 11th November to 6.00 p.m. on 12th November, 2000. This programme has immense significance in Prasanthi Nilayam as it is held in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. Like



previous years, this year also the students of the three campuses of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning took part in the Bhajan in a prominent way and conducted it in a very methodical manner. The programme came to a close at 6.00 p.m. on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2000 with Arati to Bhagavan. At the end, Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees.

### **Sri Sathya Sai Vrata**

Among the new programmes that were conducted as a part of Bhagavan Baba's 75th Birthday Celebrations, Sri Sathya Sai Vrata was a prominent one. This special Puja was performed on 17th November 2000 in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba, in which 1,200 couples and 800 individual devotees took part. The organisers of this Puja not only made perfect arrangements for seating the participants in the Hall, but also provided the necessary Puja materials for them. Bhagavan lighted the sacred lamps at 6.50 a.m. to inaugurate the programme. The Puja began at 7.00 a.m. after the Chief Priest gave a brief introduction and explained the purpose and method of doing this Puja. While the Chief Priest gave instructions for the performance of the rituals, the Pundits chanted Veda Mantras and Swami went in the rows of the devotees to bless them. Thereafter, the participants chanted 108 names of the Lord to earn His grace. At 8 a.m., Arati was offered to Bhagavan. With this, Sri Sathya Sai Vrata came to a conclusion.

### **Rathotsavam**

Rathotsavam is a holy festival which is observed every year as a part of Bhagavan Baba's Birthday Celebrations. The idols of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman as also of Sri Krishna are consecrated by Puja and are decorated with flowers in the Mandir Hall. They are then taken in a procession to the Kalyan Mandapam in Puttaparthi village. This year also this festival was held with full solemnity and piety. After the morning Darshan on 18th November 2000, Bhagavan came to the Mandir Bhajan Hall where Arati was offered to Him. Soon after this, the idols were taken out of the Mandir amidst Veda chanting by students and Pundits. The procession was led by Sai Geetha which was already standing near the Mandir Gate in its sparkling velvet vesture. The procession culminated at Old Mandir (now Pedda Venkama Raju Kalyan Mandapam) where Arati was performed.

Inauguration of "Chaitanya Jyoti" Bhagavan inaugurated the new building, "Chaitanya Jyoti", an architectural marvel of the new millennium, built in the spacious Hill View Stadium at Prasanthi Nilayam on the morning of 18th November 2000. This museum houses rare exhibits which provide a glimpse of the Life, Mission and Teachings of the Avatar of Kali Age, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Bhagavan came to the Hill View Stadium at 8.00 a.m. and was offered traditional welcome at ground floor of the building. Here Bhagavan pressed the automatic switch to open the Main Entrance Door of the building. After entering the building, Bhagavan lighted the sacred lamp near the Ganesh statue. He was then led to the balcony by elevator where Bhagavan released a bunch of balloons to mark the inauguration of the Stupa which is one of the main attractions of the complex. After this, Bhagavan was led to the 1<sup>st</sup> Level Lobby where He pulled the ribbon to open the Chinese Entrance Door. From here, Bhagavan was led to the dais, where the programme started with Veda chanting by Institute students. After this, Mr. Ryuko Hira from Japan made a brief speech explaining the chief features of the building and the exhibition. Mr.

Hira said, "Puttaparthi is the spiritual capital of the world and Chaitanya Jyoti will be the holy bridge between the Avatar and the mankind" In the end, Arati was offered to Bhagavan and Prasadam was distributed to all the assembled devotees, staff and students.

Entry to the Museum is open for public daily except Mondays from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon and 3.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. by free passes available near North Indian Canteen after 4.00 p.m.

Music College at Prasanthi Nilayam Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning achieved another landmark in the field of integral education when Bhagavan Baba inaugurated the Music College at Prasanthi Nilayam on the morning of 20th November 2000. Bhagavan arrived at the newly constructed Music College building at 9.30 a.m. and cut the tape amidst the loud applause of the staff, students and devotees to open the main building of the college. After entering the building, Bhagavan lighted the sacred lamps while the Institute students chanted Veda Mantras and sang Bhajans. Before opening the adjacent building which would serve as a museum of musical instruments, Bhagavan took a round of the main college building. Bhagavan blessed the organisers and materialised a gold chain for one of the ladies from their family. The programme came to a conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.55 a.m. and distribution of Prasadam to all.

### **Ladies Day Celebrations**

Ladies Day was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 19th November 2000. All the programmes on this day were conducted by ladies. The programmes in the morning consisted of some excellent songs and dances by girls besides Bhajans by Sundaram Bhajan Group.

In the afternoon, Swami came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 2.25 p.m. Soon after Bhagavan's arrival, an overseas group of ladies presented a magnificent programme of English songs in praise of Bhagavan Baba. Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, two lady speakers addressed the audience. The programme started after Veda chanting by Primary School girls. The first speaker was Ms. Uma Bharati, Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports. Extolling the role of women in modern society, Ms. Bharati remarked that 21st century belonged to women as they were ahead of men in inner strength and wisdom. The second speaker, Smt. Vasundhara Raje Scindia, Union Minister of State for Small Scale Industries, said that the love she had received from Baba was the most precious gift to her and she would carry the message of Bhagavan's love, harmony and hope to millions of people who had not yet had this opportunity of being in His Presence.

After these two speeches, Bhagavan gave His Divine Message to the mammoth gathering of devotees. The programme of Ladies Day came to a conclusion at 4.00 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

### **Veda Chanting by Learned Pundits**

The precincts of Prasanthi Nilayam reverberated with continuous Vedic recitation from 7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. everyday from 18th to 24th November in Sai Kulwant Hall. The chanting started in the immediate Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba on 18th November. Bhagavan willed this Veda chanting as one of the most important parts of His 75th Birthday Celebrations for universal peace and prosperity. It is said, listening to Vedic chants confers peace, prosperity, devotion and renunciation.

This most sacred and sacrificial ritual was undertaken even in the past by sages like Suka and Sounaka. Devotees were able to witness the same by the benign grace of Bhagavan as a result of meritorious deeds done in past lives. The Pundits divided themselves into small groups and chanted the Vedas on the dais of Sai Kulwant Hall. The recitation of Rig Veda was done in the eastern part of the Hall, Yajur Veda in the south, Sama Veda in the west and Atharvana Veda in the north. The fifth Veda called Shukla Yajur Veda which the sage Yajnavalkya and his disciples received from the sun god was chanted in the north-eastern part of the dais. The Veda chanting concluded on 24th November with Bhagavan blessing the Pundits.

### **Seventh World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations**

The Seventh World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations was held along with the 75th Birthday Celebrations by Bhagavan's gracious permission. More than 18,000 delegates from 148 countries and 19 States of India attended this Conference. The theme of the Conference was "The Journey with Sai."

**Inaugural Function:** The Inaugural Session was held on the afternoon of 20th November in Sai Kulwant Hall. First of all, Sri Indulal Shah, International Chairman, welcomed all the delegates and expressed deep gratitude to Bhagavan on behalf of all the delegates for the permission to hold this Conference during the 75th Birthday Celebrations and for looking after every need of the delegates.

After this, Bhagavan inaugurated the Conference before a mammoth gathering of delegates and devotees in the glittering Sai Kulwant Hall. In His Inaugural Message, Bhagavan clearly defined what true Seva was and exhorted the delegates to see the one Divinity in everyone. Bhagavan graciously permitted the First Session of the Conference on 21<sup>st</sup> November to be held in Sai Kulwant Hall and stayed throughout the session. **First Session:** The speakers in this session were persons who had a personal and long experience of the Avatar's Divinity. They were Sri G. Sathyanarayana of Bukkapatnam who was a classmate of Bhagavan in the school; Sri Sathyanarayana of Anantapur; Major R.P. V. Rayaningar of Chennai; and Dr. Zeba Bashiruddin of the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus.

**Second Session:** There were four speakers in this session. They were: Sri Bhattam Srirama Murthy, noted freedom fighter, legislator and former Minister; Sri Robert Bozzani of the USA; Dr. Jayalakshmi Gopinath of the Anantapur Campus; and Sri Indulal Shah, International Chairman.

**Third Session:** Sri Shivraj Patil, former Speaker of the Lok Sabha; Justice R.N. Bhagawati, former Chief Justice of India; and Dr. Michael Goldstein of the USA addressed the delegates in this session.

**Fourth Session:** Dr. Art-ong Jumsai of Thailand; Sri C. Srinivas, Member of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust; and Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President of Sai Organisations, were the speakers of the last session.

**Valedictory Function:** The Conference concluded on 24th November 2000 in Sai Kulwant Hall after Bhagavan's morning Darshan. The programmes began by Veda chanting by Institute

students. Chairman of the World Council of Sai Organisations, Sri Indulal Shah, requested Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President of Sai Organisations, to present the resolutions passed at the Conference. Sri Srinivasan expressed gratitude to Bhagavan for His love and blessings and read out the resolutions passed at the Conference. After this, Bhagavan blessed the Conference with His Divine Valedictory Message in which He exhorted the delegates to understand the principle of unity to experience Divinity. The function came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 8.50 a.m.

### **Cultural Programmes on Bhagavan's 75th Birthday**

Some excellent cultural programmes presented by the Bal Vikas children of many States of India added cultural colour to the celebrations of Bhagavan's 75th Birthday.

"Twameva Saranam Sai" and "Bhakta Kabi Salbaig". Telugu playlet "Twameva Saranam Sai" was presented by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vihar, Visakhapatnam on 15th November 2000 in Poornachandra Auditorium in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. Just after this, another drama entitled "Bhakta Kabi Salbaig" was presented by the Bal Vikas children of Orissa. The play presented the life story of the 17th century poet saint of Orissa, Salbaig, who was an ardent devotee of Lord Jagannath.

Both the plays were enacted with perfection by the children and were appreciated by the audience which filled the entire Poornachandra Auditorium. Bhagavan Baba went up on the stage in the end and blessed the children. The programme came to a close with Mangalarati to Bhagavan at 7.30 p.m. "Mere To Giridhar Gopal" and "BhaktiVirakti"—Dance Dramas: Bal Vikas children of Rajasthan presented an excellent dance drama "Mere To Giridhar Gopal" on the life of Meera, one of the foremost devotees of Lord Krishna, on 16th November 2000. The talented acting of the children, excellently rendered Meera Bhajans and perfect choreography brought alive the life story of this great devotee of Lord Krishna in a very effective manner.

Another dance drama, "Bhakti-Virakti" presented by the Bal Vikas children of Karnataka, soon after the drama on the life of Meera, depicted beautifully the life story of Purandaradasa, a great poet saint of Karnataka.

The superb performance of the children and excellent direction made this play a magnificent presentation. At the end of these two remarkable devotional presentations, Bhagavan Baba went up on the stage and blessed the children who participated in these two dance dramas and also posed for photographs with them. The programme came to a close at 7.30 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

"Life Story of Sakku Bai" and "Dances of Punjab". The cultural programme on 17th November consisted of two items, which were presented one after the other in Poornachandra Auditorium in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. The first item of the programme was a play, "Life Story of Sakku Bai" presented by the Bal Vikas children of Tamil Nadu.

The play was magnificent not only for its theme but also for the performance of the children. Beautiful poetry, soul-stirring music, appropriate sets, alert and fast stage management added to the effect of the play.

After this beautiful play, the Bal Vikas children of Punjab enthralled the audience with folk dances of Punjab. While the boys performed the Bhangra, the girls showed their great skill in Giddha dance.

Bhagavan blessed the children who participated in these two programmes: "Chaitanya Mahaprabhu" and "Sant Ravi Das". Two playlets were presented on the lives of two great saints of India on the evening of 24th November 2000. While the Bal Vikas children of West Bengal brought alive the life and teachings of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu through a beautiful short play, the Bal Vikas children of Delhi presented a few episodes from the life of Sant Ravi Das, a great saint of 15th century who lived near Benaras.

Lofty theme of devotion, judicious selection of incidents, melodious songs, captivating music, appropriate acting of the children—all these contributed to make both these plays remarkable presentations. At the end of the programme, Bhagavan Baba came up on the stage and blessed the children. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan.

### **Grand Birthday Function**

The glorious day of 23rd November 2000 will long remain enshrined in the memories of hundreds of thousands devotees who were fortunate to be present at Prasanthi Nilayam to take part in the Birthday Celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Not only Prasanthi Nilayam and Hill View Stadium were beautifully decorated for the grand occasion, but in fact the whole of Puttaparthi and adjoining areas bore a festive look with decorations of various types. Sai Kulwant Hall was specially decorated with velvet hangings, besides buntings, festoons and flower arrangements of different designs. Swami's abode in Poornachandra was decorated with magnificent fresh flower designs. The entire Prasanthi Nilayam premises, Vidyagiri Complex and Hill View Stadium had beautiful arches on thoroughfares with Bhagavan's teachings written on them in beautiful letters.

The venue of the Birthday Celebrations on 23rd November 2000 was the newly renovated and enlarged Hill View Stadium. Even before 4 o'clock in the morning, it was full to its brim with all the seats fully occupied by the devotees, guests and dignitaries. All eyes were on the northern side of the Stadium where Bhagavan was due to arrive and ascend the chariot. Bhajans started at 6.45 a.m. Soon after this, Bhagavan's chariot started which was led by Sai Geetha. Veda chanting group of students, Institute band and Bhangra dancers formed part of this grand procession. Gradually, the chariot came near the Santhi Vedika. Bhagavan in His white robe alighted from the chariot at 6.55 a.m. to the delight of hundreds of thousands devotees and sat in His beautiful chair at 7.00 a.m.

At the outset, Sri V Srinivasan, All India President of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, welcomed Bhagavan on behalf of all the devotees and remarked that not only the devotees of Bhagavan in all parts of the world but even gods in heaven were celebrating the Birthday of the Avatar of Kali Age, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Sri Srinivasan then announced the items of the day's programme.

The youth of the world offered their felicitations to Bhagavan on this auspicious occasion through a beautiful song. While this song continued in the background, International Youth Rally offered greetings to Bhagavan from all the countries of the world. Groups of ladies and gents in the traditional dresses of their countries holding the flag of their country and the placard with name of the country came one after the other and offered greetings to Bhagavan from the people of their country. This was followed by the troupes of ladies and gents from all the States of India in their traditional dresses who offered their salutations to Bhagavan. Thereafter, a Malaysian troupe presented a marvellous programme of Lion Dance and expressed their joy by dancing to the beat of the drums.

Before the Divine Birthday Message of Bhagavan, the Chief Guest, Dr. Murali Manohar Joshi, made a brief speech. "Bhagavan", Dr. Joshi said, "is above all worldly felicitations because He always remains in bliss. We celebrate Bhagavan's Birthday for our own happiness." He expressed gratitude to Bhagavan that He was transforming the lives of men on this planet earth and was doing for the people what no Government had been able to do.

After this speech, Bhagavan showered bliss on the devotees by giving His nectarine Birthday Discourse (printed separately in this issue). While Bhagavan showered nectar by His speech, a helicopter in the sky showered flower petals on the entire gathering. The programme came to a happy conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 8.55 a.m. Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees in the end.

The Birthday Celebrations of Bhagavan had a befitting finale with a marvellous cultural evening and a magnificent display of fireworks on the evening of 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2000. The spacious Hill View Stadium was completely jam-packed before Bhagavan Baba's arrival at 4.30 p.m. With the gracious permission of Bhagavan, the artiste who enthralled the audience was the renowned singer Ms. Parveen Sultana. She sang four Bhajans in her mellifluous voice and sent the audience into raptures. This was followed by another delightful programme of Bhajans in English and Hindi by the famous singer Dana Gillespie. During this programme, fireworks illuminated the skies of the Hill View Stadium. Thus, grand and delightful programme of Bhagavan's Birthday concluded on a happy note. In the end, Arati was offered to Bhagavan at 6.00 p.m.

**GURUDEV VANI**

**CONVOCATION DISCOURSE**

## **Education for Supreme Bliss**

*True education is that which teaches us the way to achieve world peace by removing narrow-mindedness and inculcating unity, fraternity and equality.*

(Telugu Poem)

*Embodiments of Divine Love, Students - Boys and Girls, Patrons of Education and Educational Administrators!*

Today what the world needs is neither wealth nor any materialistic advancement. It needs students who are ideal and who work for the welfare of society. The field of education today is

plagued by problems which confuse everybody. We rarely find students working for the welfare of society and strengthening its moral fabric. Today students struggle to acquire power, position and wealth. They do not put in any effort to inculcate virtues in themselves. It is a mistake to think that service done to society is for someone else. In fact, it is service to oneself and to God. *Sarvata Pani-padam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvata Sruthimalloke Sarvamavruthya Thishthathi* (with hands, feet, head mouth and ear; pervading every thing, God permeates the entire universe).

### **Recognise the Truth of your Divinity**

There is one power that pervades both microcosm and macrocosm. That power is the Cosmic Divine. The divine consciousness present in you is the same as that present in all. The whole world is filled with this divine consciousness. People who realize this eternal truth will not tread the wrong path. Forms are many but the divine power is one. Therefore, man should endeavour to recognise his innate divinity. Today there are millions of scholars and intellectuals. Have they done anything good for society? They promote only their selfishness and self-interest. Rarely do we find such people working for the welfare of the country. Only when selfishness is removed completely from the nature of men will there be purity in the country.

The body, mind and intellect alone do not make a man. They are the vestures put on by man. The body is inert. The mind is negative. Man considers himself to be a combination of the inert body and negative mind. But man is eternal and changeless. 'Man' lives eternally at all times and in all states of existence. Whatever you hear, talk, think and act is the reflection of the inner being. You may consider yourself to be highly educated. It is merely the reflection of the inner divine. The studies you undertake are merely reflection, reaction and resound and cannot be considered as true education. All these shall diminish in their value in course of time. Humanness is permanent and has no birth or death. This body is bound to change but the 'man' never dies. You take man to be the embodied being who is subject to birth and death. The permanent man lies in humanness and is imperishable. The other name of man is 'Nara' (one who does not perish). The Atma does not change. Why then do you fear death when you are the embodiment of the Self? You are the eternal truth. Being the embodiment of truth and eternity, why do you go after these changing and temporary things? Today's education can confer only worldly comforts. Besides secular education, one should acquire the knowledge of the Atma. You can experience the divine power which is all-pervasive. This is called the Cosmic Divine. Many scientists have experimented a lot to discover this power. But what is the outcome? They tend to discover what is transient and worldly. You should try to recognise the oneness of the divine power that pervades the entire universe. Once you recognise this truth, you will never be subjected to worries. The power that pervades the whole universe is also in your little finger. You doubt this fact, go by the name and form and enfeeble yourself. Once you transcend the name and form and realise the divine energy, you get enormous strength.

### **Divine Energy is the Basis of Life**

*Embodiments of Love!*

Love is the basis of life in this world. There is nothing which you cannot accomplish with love. *"It is the power of love that makes the earth revolve without the support of any axle. It is the power of love that holds the stars in their positions without falling down. It is the power of love that withholds the oceans from submerging the earth. It is the power of love that makes the wind*

*blow over the seven worlds. This sacred love is eternal, most amazing and indivisible. That love is the life-breath of man."* (Telugu Poem)

Without love, mankind cannot exist. Humanness is not based on the form alone. In fact, we can consider all beings to be divine. But man is carried away by the differences in form. When you realise the oneness of all these forms, you can enjoy eternal bliss. Therefore, it is important to start practising this principle of unity in your lives. *"What is the use of all your learning when it does not help you to change your destiny? When bad thoughts enter your mind, all your education and intelligence become futile and meaningless."* (Telugu Poem)

Therefore, you should never entertain bad thoughts. You should recognise the purity present in humanity. Fire burns everything. Cosmic Divine is like fire. It is present everywhere and incinerates all evil to ashes. Mind makes the man. But man can be transformed into the divine. Thus, there is no difference between Manava (man) and Madhava (Divinity). The power latent in you is the same as in God. Because of his physical form, man appears to be different. Never be carried away by these forms. Put your faith in the divine power. The Manas (mind), the Buddhi (intellect), the Chitta (limited human consciousness) and the Antahkarana (inner instrument) appear to be different. But the energy that activates them all is one. All are nothing but consciousness. Because of his narrow vision, man is unable to perceive these verities.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Never hate anyone, because the principle of love is immanent in all. Divine energy too is present in all. Never criticise or denigrate anyone. Love all. That itself is divine consciousness which transforms into divine power. Therefore, never give scope to bad thoughts. With pure conviction declare that you are the Cosmic Divine present in all. Many people take recourse to many spiritual practices without understanding their own innate divinity. *"Neither by penance nor by pilgrimage nor by study of scriptures nor by Japa can one cross the ocean of life. One can achieve it only by serving the pious."* (Sanskrit Verse) So, enter the path of service. Divinity is the same in all. There is no duality in the universe. The Vedas proclaim: *"Ekam Sat Viprah Bahudha Vadanti"* (truth is one, but scholars refer to it by many names). Though the bulbs are many, the current is one. Dresses may be many but the cloth is one. Men are many, but the consciousness is one. This is universal consciousness or the Cosmic Divine. Universal consciousness gets limited to individual consciousness by man's attachment to the physical form. Consciousness is one, but man is cultivating differences on the basis of forms.

Jewels are many but gold is one

*Cows are many but milk is one*

*Beings are many but the breath is one*

*Castes are many, humanity is one* (Telugu Poem)

Science has also to recognise this oneness of universal consciousness. There is only unity in this universe. Man sees plurality on the basis of names and forms. Once he transcends names and forms, he can experience unity. Since he has been experiencing duality on the basis of names and forms, he sees plurality and gets deluded. There should be no scope for doubt, hatred or anger. Realise that everything is love. Imbibing in yourself this principle of love, you should serve



others with the feeling that you are serving God Himself. Lead your life inspired by such sacred ideals.

### **Transcend the Mind to Attain Equanimity**

There is an inner being in man which is his subtle body. Body consciousness is related to the gross body; 'it can overshadow the inner subtle body which comprises the mind, the intellect, the Chitta and the Antahkarana. One has to transcend this body consciousness and rise to the level of Higher Consciousness which is also termed as Over Mind. This Higher Consciousness experiences everything but is not attached to anything. As long as the mind exists, it is not possible to enter the realms of Higher Consciousness.

It is said, "*Mano Moolam Idam Jagat*" (the mind is the basis for the universe). The mind pervades the entire universe. It sees names and forms and the duality of the material world. If you go beyond the material life, you can experience what is called 'vibration life'. This higher state is also termed as Super Mind. In this state of Super Mind, you experience equanimity. The state of equanimity is true Vedanta. There can be no happiness without equanimity. The Vedas declare:

*Saha Navavathu  
Saha Nau Bhunakthu  
Saha Veeryam Karavavahai  
Tejaswi Navadheethamasthu  
Ma Vidvisavahai*

(May the Lord protect and nourish us! May we grow in intelligence and valour working together! May we live in friendship without hatred!) The primary teaching of the Vedas is cultivation of unity. The Vedas teach the principle of oneness. But there is no unity in the world today.

*Students!*

Today is the day of Convocation when you all receive degrees. These degrees are also some kind of titles. Of what use are such titles if you have to beg in order to live? Your education is not for this. Secular knowledge is for earning your livelihood. It is through spiritual knowledge that you attain the supreme bliss. But as long as you live at the level of the mind, you have to pursue secular studies. The moment you transcend the mind, this education can be overlooked. Man ascends to the Divine by transcending his mind.

One should cultivate the Cosmic Mind. Westerners refer to it as the Cosmic Power. They have come upon this truth now, while the Bharatiyas have known it for centuries. But having known the truth, they have not been able to put it into practice. Man has become zero in practice. Only through practice can you realise the Atma.

### **Divine Energy Pervades Everything**

Everything is governed by the Divine Will. Whatever happens in this world is only the Divine Drama. He who understands this is truly a man of wisdom. The Atma is the true nature of man. What is the Atma? What is Chaitanya? They are all aspects of energy which has no form. While the current is without any form, a bulb, a fan or an electric stove has a definite form. In each appliance, it does have a different function. If you say, "Oh current, how helpful you have been to me!" and touch it, you get a shock. Current has that energy and hence it is a form of the

Cosmic Divine. This is also illustrated in the story of Bhasmasura who could reduce anything to ashes through the power he had acquired from the Divine by penance. This inner energy expresses itself in the form of knowledge. Knowledge has to be transformed into skill to achieve balance in life. But people today are killing this knowledge thereby losing their balance. By losing balance in their lives, they acquire only outward vision and do not cultivate inner vision or insight. When your outlook is projected outwards, your mind starts wavering. You should maintain balance in life. It is possible only when you transform your knowledge into skill. For this, you should get rid of all bad feelings and shun body attachment. All the suffering in the world is due to body attachment. You should cultivate attachment to the Atma. Many people may feel why Bhagavan teaches all these to the youngsters. Actually, it is very important to everyone—be it a youngster, middle-aged man or an old one. *"Man wastes his childhood in fun and frolic. In youth, his life is wasted by indulging in sensual pleasures. In middle age, man submerges himself in materialistic pursuits and struggles all the time to earn wealth. In old age, he laments over the lack of this or that and does not think of God. Without any interest in the path of devotion, he is bogged down in the cycle of cause and effect and thus ruins his life."* (Telugu Poem)

Start early, drive slowly and reach safely. Start making efforts even when you are still young. What will you gain if you waste all your energy in your youth and then start thinking about God in old age?

*Students! Boys and Girls!*

Realise that the cosmic energy present in everyone is the same. Everything is Universal Cosmic Energy. This is referred to as Divine Cosmic Power. This Divine Cosmic Power is present within ourselves and we need not seek it outside. In this world, all the energy that we see, all the energy that we study and all the energy that we hear of is within us. Anything that you do not have within yourselves does not exist anywhere else. Everything is reflection, reaction and resound. Every human is divine. When you realise this truth, all your troubles and worries vanish. When body attachment increases, worries also increase. On this basis it is said—'Less luggage, more comfort, makes travel a pleasure.' Vedanta refers to this as 'renunciation'. Renunciation does not mean giving up home and hearth and going to forest. It means experiencing the unity of all beings. You imagine all the differences. They do not exist really. All that you study is borrowed knowledge. All this education is required in the material world. You should acquire it only as much as is necessary.

Can you call a person educated just because he knows how to read and write? Are you an educated person just because you have acquired a college degree? No. Can education without good feelings and good mind be called 'true education'? If education is merely for a living, then are not the animals and birds living? Education is for life, it is not for a living. Without realising this truth, men put themselves in many snares for the sake of eking out a livelihood.

### **Secular Education vs. Spiritual Knowledge**

*Embodiments of Love!*

Being born as human, we should recognise the divine energy within us. We should experience this divine energy. Today what we have to share and spread is bliss and not misery. Human life

is highly sacred. Secular education is also important. You should try to acquire it within certain limits. Otherwise, why should we establish colleges and educational institutions?

Secular knowledge is essential for your welfare in this world. But for the welfare hereafter, the knowledge of Brahman is essential. Secular education is merely for the body and not for life. It cannot help you to understand the nature of the Atma. There is no greater education than the one which helps you to understand the nature of the Atma.

Why can't you recognise your own truth instead of knowing so much about others? You enquire of others 'Who are you?' Instead of that you should enquire 'Who am I?' Of what use is knowing about others when you do not know who you are? When you know yourself, you will easily understand others. The same principle is immanent in you and others. It is the all-pervading universal consciousness. You should recognise this divine energy. Then you will not have any suffering or misery. Bhagavan states this from His own experience. My life is My message (*cheers*). Bhagavan is always blissful. Bhagavan has no worries. People greet Bhagavan 'Happy Birthday'. Greet others who are not happy. Worries come and go. These are like passing clouds. Why then do you fear? Body is bound to perish one day or the other. It is like a water bubble. Mind is like a mad monkey. Why do you follow it? Follow the conscience which is eternal. That is the goal of your life. Everyone in this world seeks happiness. This bliss is within you. Human body is made up of five sheaths. Annamaya Kosha (food sheath) relates to the physical body. The subtle body comprises Pranamaya Kosha (life sheath), Manomaya Kosha (mind sheath) and Vijnanamaya Kosha (wisdom sheath). The ultimate sheath of bliss (Anandamaya Kosha) is one's goal of life. The Vijnanamaya Kosha should not be confused with science.

The body undergoes changes in four stages—childhood, youth, middle age and old age. But you remain unchanged. You introduce yourself as 'I' when enquired by others in all the stages of your life. This 'I' is a single letter. You attach many decorations to it. Cross the 'I', i.e., feeling of body consciousness or ego. The Christian Cross is a symbol for the elimination of ego. When the feeling of 'I' is eliminated, the ego vanishes and you become God. You should understand and experience the real nature of 'I'.

Your life is full of love. Anything may change but love does not change. Being born and brought up in love, we are full of love. Cut your ego and cultivate love. When ego enters, love vanishes. Do not give any scope for ego to enter. When you recognise the purity of love, you will get rid of your faults. Everything is based on pure and selfless love. In fact, love is Divine. But you ignore this divinity. This is the biggest mistake.

Human body will perish one day or the other. Don't go by the body. It is only an instrument. The strength that lies in the body is yours. When you recognise this power, you will become divine. "Master the mind and be a mastermind." Do not become a slave, but become the master. Students have to pursue secular education as it helps them to earn their livelihood. You also have to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of your parents and make them happy. Along with secular education, spiritual education is also necessary. This type of education confers happiness and peace upon you. Develop sacred and good feelings and live a noble life. Make your parents happy. Never trouble them. It is they who gave you life and brought you up. If possible, try to explain to your parents the noble and good things you have learnt here. The Vedas say, "*Matru*

*Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava...* " So, consider your parents as God. Follow their words and keep them happy. With good conduct and behaviour earn a good name in this world.

The knowledge acquired by you should make you recognise your inner being. Secular education is like a passing cloud. It comes and goes. The reality which is within is eternal principle. Hold on to it and strengthen your faith. You have already acquired good and high education. On this Convocation day, Bhagavan's only advice to you is to put it into practice. Share with others what you have learnt and derive happiness there from. The Union Minister, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, is a highly educated and knowledgeable person. He has told you many good things. How far have you understood them? If you are able to understand even one principle mentioned by him, it will transform your life. A single matchstick is enough to burn any quantity of matter.

There is only one reality that exists. If you realise this, you can achieve anything. It is only the body attachment that obstructs your vision. In a house you have different rooms like drawing room, dining room, bathroom, kitchen, etc. Each room is separated from the other by a wall existing between them. If you remove these walls, you will find only one big hall. Similarly, when you remove the walls of body consciousness, you will develop a broad mind.

### **Education should be Free**

You have studied in this institute for many years. When you go out, teach others what you have learnt here and be a role model. Lead an exemplary life and be happy. Your happiness is My happiness. Bhagavan does not expect anything other than this from you.

The Minister has said that there is only one way to keep the students on the right path. Bhagavan too agrees with him. That is purity. It alone guides you in the right way. Our students are not paying any tuition fee, laboratory fee or examination fee. They come here empty-handed and go out with immense wealth of education (*cheers*). They learn here humility, discipline and faith. Education should confer humility. In other institutions, many students do not possess this quality of humility. Those students pay fees. So, the teachers and authorities are not able to question the students and correct them. Since the authorities are collecting money for providing education, they are afraid of taking any disciplinary action against the students. Educational institutions, which are supposed to be Saraswati Mandirs (centres of learning) have turned into Lakshmi Mandirs (centres of money). Money is able to purchase even degrees. Admission, attendance and, it is said, even promotion to a higher class is possible on payment of money.

In My opinion, Government should provide free education to all students (*cheers*). It is spending crores of rupees on many programmes. Collection of fees from students cannot add to Government revenue much. Provide free education to the children and they will be good. Education which is purchased can lead only to agitation. Unable to secure jobs with purchased degrees, some students even put an end to their lives. The Government is responsible for this. Only free education will develop good relationship between the people and the Government. We at Prasanthi Nilayam do not collect even a paisa from any student in our institutes. Not only do we provide free education, scholarships " are also given to our students as an encouragement and reward. Our students develop an unwavering mind and make their parents happy. They lead a happy life. They are pure at heart. They do not possess any evil feelings. Leaving aside a

negligible minority, they are like pure unalloyed gold. (*Cheers*) They do not like to leave the Institute and Swami even after they finish their education.

But some students have to leave the Institute after finishing their education. Parents wish to live with their children. So, they have to obey them and fulfill their wishes also. Many of our students, even after completing M. Sc. or MBA, again apply for Ph.D. Their intention is to stay with Swami for a few more years. They desire all these degrees only to be with Swami. On the other hand, those students who purchase education (in other places) long to leave their institutes and go in search of jobs as soon as they receive a degree. Our students are not like that. Along with degrees, they also possess good character. They conduct themselves in a befitting way. (Revered Chancellor's Discourse was followed by National Anthem).

***—From Bhagavan's Convocation Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 22nd November, 2000***

***19th CONVOCATION OF SSSIHL***

## **Make Education Free**

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, exhorted the Government to make education free for all in His Benedictory Address on the 19th Convocation of the Institute.

The Convocation was held on the 22nd November 2000 in Sai Kulwant Hall, which was beautifully decorated. The Academic Procession was led by the Institute band. As it came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 2.55 p.m., the students, devotees and guests welcomed it with a thunderous applause. Besides the Chancellor Bhagavan Baba, the Chief Guest, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Sri Chandrababu Naidu, former Chief Justice of India, Justice R. N. Bhagawati, the Vice Chancellor, Sri S. V. Giri, many renowned scholars and dignitaries and Members of the Academic Council and the Governing Body of the Institute formed part of the procession. The function started at 3.00 p.m. with Veda chanting by the Institute students. Soon after this, the Vice Chancellor prayed to the Revered Chancellor to declare the Convocation open, which He did.

### **Vice Chancellor's Introductory Address**

The Vice Chancellor, Sri S. V. Giri, extended hearty welcome to all, especially the Chief Guest, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, Union Minister for Human Resource Development, who, he said, was "an acknowledged thinker, scholar and crusader for social justice and human rights." Giving a brief account of the significant achievements of the Institute during the last year, Sri Giri made special mention of the Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality organised by the Institute in May 2000 and Sri Sathya Sai Grama Seva conducted by the Institute in the month of November 2000 as a part of Revered Chancellor's 75th Birthday Celebrations. Sri Giri also mentioned how Sri Sathya Sai System of Integral Education had attracted the attention of educationists and policy makers at various levels. Expressing his gratitude to the Revered Chancellor who had shown the path of Yoga and Tyaga to the students, Sri Giri hoped: "The students of this institute would be able to make a difference, and as the Golden Age of Sai

Mission unfolds, put their great country back on the path of a humane society, vibrant culture and hoary philosophical traditions."

### **Graduates Presented to the Chancellor**

After these introductory remarks of the Vice Chancellor, the candidates for the various degrees of the Institute were presented to the Chancellor. They were administered the pledge to uphold the prestige and honour of the Institute. Gold medals were then awarded to the meritorious students by the Chancellor.

### **Convocation Address by Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi**

While delivering his Convocation Address, Dr. Joshi had a special word of appreciation for Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning which, according to him, "had shown a new path of Integral Education in the area of higher education which lays equal emphasis on character building and academic excellence."

Commenting on the ills of the present day society, Dr. Joshi observed, "It is important to scientifically understand the reasons for disharmony and chaos, violence and exploitation, poverty and ignorance in the world. This is primarily because of the materialistic approach to life and its problems" Dr. Joshi lamented that "globally 20% of world's people in the highest income countries account for 86% of total private consumption expenditure whereas the poorest 20% live on a mere 1.3%" He observed, "The consumption trends in affluent nations are assuming unsustainable high levels..." Dr. Joshi remarked that the world was in the midst of moral chaos due to rank materialism and consumerism. Yet people in India, he said, were fortunate that for centuries great and realised Rishis, saints, savants and great men had been incarnating in this land who experienced the Truth, the Brahman, and proclaimed Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahman).

In the end, Dr. Joshi quoted the message of Buddha "Appadipo Bha" (be your own lamp) to advise the students to become self-reliant and self-illuminated. He concluded his Convocation Address by offering salutations to Bhagavan Baba.

After this, the Revered Chancellor, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, delivered His Benedictory Address (printed separately in this issue). The function came to a close at 5.00 p.m. with singing of the National Anthem by all. "Divine Transformation"—Drama by Institute Students.

The students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning presented their annual convocation drama entitled "Divine Transformation" in the Poornachandra Auditorium on the evening of 22nd November 2000 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba.

The drama presents the story of transformation of a rank materialist into a spiritualist and a servant of God through the life story of a successful modern lawyer, Santosh Gupta, who is proud of his success and achievements in life, and does not bother himself about spirituality and God. But when he is caught in a difficult situation, he comes face to face with disaster. Then only Bhagavan Baba's invaluable teachings of service, sacrifice and devotion to God, reinforced by the episodes from the lives of great devotees like Dhruva, Markandeya and King Prahlada

come to his rescue. He is not only saved from sure disaster but is totally transformed into a servant of the Supreme Lord instead of a servant of the Supreme Court.

Powerful story, meticulous direction and superb acting of the students made it one of the most remarkable presentations. In the end, Bhagavan came up on the stage, blessed the students and posed for photographs with them. He also materialised a gold chain for the child who enacted the role of Dhruva. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan.

***Contemplate on Christ's Virtues***

*The birthday of every great person is celebrated by those who adore and follow him. Christmas being the birthday of Jesus is a holiday when offices and factories do not work. People attend the church and join the rituals but return home to revel, drink and dance. The Cross is forgotten when the Christmas season is on. But Christmas should be sanctified as a holy day and should be dedicated to the purification of one's passions and emotions through contemplation on the virtues and values that Jesus held dear.* —**Baba**

*“The knowledge acquired by you should make you recognize your inner being.”* —**Baba**