

## **Treat Patients with Love**

The first message conveyed by Bharatiya culture to the whole of Mankind is this "Let all people live happily, in good health and cheer." It desired that no one should experience suffering or misery in this world.

Health is the English term for "Aarogyam" in Sanskrit. The word health is derived from the Latin word "Healy" "Aarogyam" has several meanings. One is "sacredness." Another is "Wholeness" (Paripoornam). The term thus indicates that all the organs of the body should be perfect and holy. If any organ is afflicted, the body cannot be said to be "Whole."

Hence men should aim at achieving perfect health and help others to do so. "KARMAATH JAAYATHE NARAH." "KARMANYEVA PRABODHATHI." "Every man takes birth as result of Karma (past actions). Karma is the cause of death." Thus Karma is the cause of birth and death.

Every action has an effect. In any action done by man, its consequence is present in a subtle form. Action thus is related to its fruits. Moreover, time is also related to action. Action and time are inextricably inter-related.

Every action has its own course (Marga). One object is separated by space from another. Likewise, time is the measure of the duration between one action and another. Here is a tumbler. Beneath it is a plate. The space between the glass tumbler and the plate is termed "dharma". There can be no separateness between one object and another without this "dharma". Dharma defines the inter-relationship between two objects.

Now regarding time: A doctor fixes 8 AM as the time for performing an operation. By 11 AM the operation is completed with the stitching of sutures. The three-hour interval between the commencement of the operation and its completion indicates the time taken for the surgery. In reckoning time, action is also involved. Action is the interval between two points of time. Thus time and action go together. Hence everyone should recognise the intimate relationship between action and time.

Every action, whether good or bad, has its consequence. There is no action in the world which is devoid of consequences. This is law of nature. For instance, a finger is cut by a knife. Immediately the finger starts bleeding. The result of the cut is instantaneous. When man slips on a step while walking, he sustains a fall and a limb is fractured. Here again, the result of the fall is instantaneous. Take another example. You had your breakfast this morning. It takes two hours to digest the food you have consumed. In the two earlier examples the results of the actions were instantaneous. But in the case of digestion of food you have consumed, it has taken two hours.

Another example: You sow a seed. It becomes a sapling after some days. To bear fruit it takes some years. Thus every action has a consequence, but the time interval between action and result

varies from case to case. Bharatiya culture recognised the truth about action and consequence. Others have also got to realise this truth.

One who is aware of this truth is unlikely to commit any wrong action because he knows that good actions produce good results and bad deeds have bad consequences. Recognition of the law of Karma will make men lead proper lives. Man today takes to wrong paths because they have not realised this truth.

Health is essential for the body. A healthy mind can exist only in a healthy body. Only a man with a healthy mind will take part in joyous activities.

This conference is concerned mainly with the heart. Many consider the heart as the most important organ. There is a way to maintain the heart in good condition. Most of the organs in the body are in an immobile state. But the heart is continually active. It is difficult to perform an operation on an organ which is ceaselessly at work. If the heart has to be stopped beating for performing an operation, this cannot be done for more than two or three minutes. No operation can be done in such a short time. Hence heart specialists investigated the methods by which the heart could be kept inactive for a few hours so that cardiac operations could be performed. The heart-lung machine was designed to enable heart operations to be done.

The heart is the primary organ for keeping the body well. Only when the heart is sound there can be proper blood supply to the whole body.

Who invented the heart-lung machine? It is a product of human intelligence. This shows that intelligence is even superior to the heart. It is this intelligence that has been responsible for the discovery of numerous devices.

It is by the use of intelligence for a practical purpose that Doctors have found the technique of carrying out heart operations. The intelligence is as important as the heart. It is the combination of the intelligence and the heart that helps to keep a person healthy. A doctor maybe extremely intelligent in performing operations. But if during an operation his mind wanders, the operation will not be successful. The combination of qualities required for success should be properly understood.

The relationship between time and action should be recognised. Modern man tends to ignore the consequences of his actions. Purely for the sake of worldly pleasures, he considers wealth as the most important thing. The Chinese were accustomed to a certain traditional practice. Every morning on waking up they used to remember the saying: "Difficulties are our friends; let us welcome them." Today people regard difficulties as enemies. Without difficulties you cannot obtain a comfort.

People consider wealth as essential for physical comforts and thereby become slaves of wealth. As long as they remain slaves of wealth, they will have no respite from troubles.

"SARVE BHAVANTHU SUKHINAH. SARVE BHAVANTHU NIRAAMAYAH." "All should be happy. All should be free from sufferings." If you are to pray in this manner, you must have these feelings in you.

Dr. Bhatia urged that Swami should indicate to them (the doctors) the right path and give them strength to pursue it. You are not lacking in strength. God has endowed you with strength, but you are not using it on right lines. Every human being is endowed with a divine energy, which has to be used for proper purposes. It has to be used righteously according to the dictates of one's conscience. When the conscience is satisfied the energy gets sanctified. Man today misuses the Divine energy for selfish purposes.

Men should realise the sacredness of action and time. The presiding deity of Karma is all-powerful. Hence a prayer addressed to the deity requesting him to see that one's actions are good.

Men claim that they belong to "mankind." But unless they develop kindness given by sage Vyasa as the quintessence of all the Puranas he wrote. "It is meritorious to help others; it is sinful to cause harm to others." To put it more succinctly, the message is: Help ever; Hurt never.

This is the duty of doctors today. They have acquired valuable knowledge. This should be used for public good. The more it is used this way, the more it will grow. Always be prepared to serve a patient when he comes to you. It is a sign of weakness to turn away a patient on a plea of inability. You have the God-given power. Be conscious of your power.

Doctors should recognise the importance of the five human values: Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence. Love is the basis for all the other values. Doctors can infuse courage in patients by the love they show towards the patients. If doctors carry out their duties with love they will be crowned with success.

In the discussions at the conference, several conflicting views were expressed by the participants. One of the issues was whether the latest technique should be preferred as against earlier techniques. Swami was of the view that the older techniques had much to be said in their favour. The older technique, though they may not produce quick results, are slow and sure. The latest techniques appear successful momentarily but their long term results are not always good. While the latest technique should be employed where necessary, the earlier techniques should not be rejected out of hand. "Old is Gold." The old techniques have the merit of proven value.

A caveat should be said about heart transplant. The operation may be easy, but how easy is it to get a heart for transplanting? A transplanted heart may serve for a time, but cannot serve as long and as well as the God-given heart.

A word of caution has to be uttered with regard to heart transplant or transplanting the cornea for the eye. The character of the person from whom the transplanted heart or cornea has been got should also be taken into account. The practitioners of medicine in ancient times considered these factors in treating patients.

The antecedents of families were fully examined in the past before marital alliances were concluded. But today these factors are ignored. People are indifferent to family backgrounds, while they are concerned about the pedigrees of dogs in dog show! This indifference to lineage accounts for the breakup of many marriages after a short time. This should not happen. Marriage should be a life-long partnership.

It is better to remedy the original heart of a patient than to try to replace it with another heart of a person whose antecedents may not be good. The heart is the most vital organ in the body. To keep it in a healthy condition, one's thoughts should be healthy. Good thoughts are more efficacious than drugs.

The doctors who have gathered here are estimable persons. They are broad-minded, gentle and kindhearted persons. You may receive fees from the rich patients. But you should treat the poor free. Dedicate one day in a week to render free medical service to people, irrespective of creed or nationality. Such service will give you spontaneous joy and enable you to experience the Divine.

Make love the capsule you offer to your patients. When a weak patient comes to you do not be content with offering him glucose or some other thing. Give him the injection of Love. That will give him instant strength. Speak to him with love, offer medicines with love and keep him in good humour. That is the way to make him happy. Happiness is union with God. Anything you do with love will be rewarding.

The participants have stood for great ideals. Their experiences are beyond praise. As they related their varied experiences, it was thrilling to hear them. They are all experts in their field. Your presence at this conference and the encouragement you have given to our doctors are deeply appreciated. Symposia and conferences are held all over the world. But at this conference everyone was deeply involved. Everybody experienced Divine vibrations wherever they met. I bless you all that you may return to your countries enriched by your experiences here and serve your respective countries well (cheers). Wish you all peace and happiness, which you should share with your people (cheers).

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Prema muditha manase kaho; Rama! Rama! Ram!*"

**From Bhagavan's Valedictory address to the International Conference on Cardio-Vascular Diseases to the Institute Auditorium, Prasanthi Nilayam on 18-12-95**

AVATAR VANI:

SIXTH WORLD CONFERENCE ADDRESS:

## **Spiritual Significance of Loving**

### *Embodiments of Love!*

A pure, unwavering, compassionate heart, truthful speech and use of the body for dedicated service to others are sublime qualities in a human being (Sanskrit poem).

Mankind has been engaged in the quest for Truth from the earliest times. Bharat is the birthplace of many sages who explored the realms of the spirit, discovered the highest truths and proclaimed them to the world. In more recent times others have been engaged in pursuing scientific investigations to discover a different set of truths. Whatever the truths discovered by science or spirituality, the ultimate reality is the energy of the atom. All that is perceived or experienced in the manifested Cosmos is the combination of atoms. The five basic elements are made up of atoms. The food you eat, the water you drink, the air you breathe, the sounds you hear are all expressions of atoms. The Cosmos is made up of atoms.

It has taken science a thousand years (of investigation) to discover this truth. But many millennia ago, a young child, Prahlada, proclaimed this truth. He told his father: "Do not have any doubts as to whether Hari (the Supreme Lord) is at one place and not at another. Wherever you search for Him, you will find Him." (Swami recited a poem from the Bhagavata). Prahlada taught that the Divine permeates the entire universe in the form of atoms. This omnipresence of the Divine was also proclaimed in the Gita.

### **See the divine in all**

What pervades the entire universe is a manifestation of the Divine Energy. To experience this omnipresent energy, certain spiritual processes have been indicated. One of them is to see the Divine in whatever you do, whatever you perceive and whatever you experience.

"Love and Service represent the same truth" (Telugu saying). For man, love and service are like two wings with the help of which man should strive to realise the Spirit. The quest for Truth really means discovering one's own inner reality. This eternal Divine Principle is in one and all. To experience this Divine, one has to develop certain sacred qualities.

Morality is a mark of a human being. Truth is the rule. Righteousness is the path. Sacrifice is the glory. These three are the hallmarks of humanity. Mankind is distinguished by these three qualities. Man today has lost the spirit of sacrifice. Morality has been undermined. There is no concern for truth. He is lost totally in mundane pursuits, forgetting his divinity. The Sai Organisations were set up to make people realise their true divine nature.

What is the primary purpose of the Sai Organisations? It is to make the people realise that they are sparks of the Divine and not embodiments of the physical products of Nature. The inherent divinity of man has been clearly proclaimed in the Gita. This truth is not the opinion of any person, subject to changes.

### **Spiritual value of service**

Some of the speakers at the Conference have stated that Swami is bringing about transformation in individuals. When does transformation take place? After a person has received information.

Therefore, the first requisite is to get the information about the presence of the Divine Principle in all. The Sai Organisations have been engaged in propagating this "information." "Seva" (Service) is the ideal means by which this message can be conveyed. You should all realise that the human body has been given to you solely to render selfless service. Such service broadens the heart, destroys the ego and generates bliss. Service also helps to promote consciousness of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. Your task does not end there. You have at the same time to propagate the idea of the Spiritual oneness of all mankind (Ekatma-Bhaavam). Mankind has to be led from dualism to non-dualism.

### **Love the basis for all actions**

Arguments over the existence or non-existence of God are entirely futile and foolish, as Buddha pointed out. According to the minds of different persons, views and beliefs are bound to differ. But irrespective of these controversies, the Truth is one. That Truth is God. Dharma is God. Ahimsa is God. Adhere to these three: Truth, Righteousness and Non-violence. Follow the path of Truth. There is no greater virtue than truth. The truth you speak must emanate from the heart and should be filled with love. Where there is love there is truth.

Stick to truth in whatever you do. This may not be easy. But through persistence truth will become a natural habit. Act according to the dictates of your conscience and not the promptings of your senses.

Make love the basic impulse for all your actions. Share your love with others. Be unselfish. Self lives by getting and forgetting. Love lives by giving and forgiving (Cheers). Develop confidence in your self. Through self-confidence you can achieve self-realisation.

The Sai Organisations have been enjoined to carry out a programme of ceiling on desires. Everyone should try to control desires as much as possible. The promotion of human values is another item in the programme. These human values are inherent in every person. All that is needed is, for everyone to manifest them in his daily life. Truth, Righteousness and Peace are all in you. You are the embodiment of Truth, Peace, Love and God. Recognise this fact.

### **Four evils**

Members of Sai Organisations should cultivate certain desirable practices. For instance, they should regulate their diet, because one's food influences one's thoughts. Smoking and intoxicating drinks have to be given up. They are ruinous for the health. Meat eating should also be given up because eating animal food promotes animal tendencies (cheers). The fourth evil that has to be got rid of is gambling. Those who take to the Spiritual path should avoid as much as possible these four bad practices. It is sinful to slaughter poor animals for one's food. Sai members should follow the motto: Help ever; Hurt never. There is no meaning in professing to respect human values without observing the rule that you should cause no harm to others in any form whatsoever.

God loves those who serve others because He is in all of them. Whomever you may serve, consider it as service to God. Divinise all your actions. Treat every action you perform as God's work.

### **"Love to love"**

Sai Organisations have not been set up for propaganda purposes. We do not need any publicity. Who invited all of you here? You came out of your love. It is an outpouring of your love for Swami (cheers). What is the nature of your relationship? Love to love; heart to heart. It is your love for me and my love for you, which has brought about this enormous gathering here today (cheers).

You have to bear in mind yet another fact about our Organisation. The services rendered by the Seva Dal to maintain cleanliness and security in the Nilayam Campus are beyond praise. They are true sevaks (cheers). In our seva organisations there are hundreds of thousands of workers who are rendering service of various kinds. The office-bearers should not feel that they are apart from the workers. All are workers. No one can consider himself a master. Service can assume any form. What a mother does for her child is service. A husband and wife render mutual service. In this sense all are servants. God is the only Master. All others who call themselves "masters" like post-master, stationmaster etc., are not masters at all.

In rendering service, see that you do it for the satisfaction of your conscience and not to impress others. Treating service as an offering to the Divine do it perfectly. Remember that God is watching every one of your actions. Be your own watchman to scrutinise what you do. When you do everything to satisfy your conscience, you are well on the way to Self-Realisation.

### **Overseas devotees' sadhana**

I am well aware that our Sai members are doing excellent work. Without boasting about it, we can claim that there are no organisations in the world like the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. The way the sevaks have been serving food and water to lakhs of people is inconceivable elsewhere. Moreover, you have to appreciate the patience shown by overseas devotees. They are used to living in spacious houses with all amenities. Here they have been living in sheds adjusting themselves to the lack of many amenities. That adjustment is an index of their devotion (cheers). This adjustment is itself a form of spiritual sadhana. Adjustment is possible when there is understanding. It is because they cherish the feeling. "Here is our Swami, our God", they are able to adjust themselves (cheers). This understanding is also a form of sadhana. Acquire this understanding and then act on that basis. Then you will experience bliss.

### **Practise what you preach**

There is no use merely going on reading books. Practising what you have learnt is more important than filling the mind with book knowledge. In our organisation all are well-read persons who are keen to practise what they have learnt. You are all treading the path of Truth. The whole world is one. Respect all faiths alike. The world is like a veena with many strings (cheers). When the strings are in harmony, the world will be happy. All should behave fraternally towards each other. There should be no differences on grounds of religion. All worship the same

God. No religion preaches hatred. Truth and Righteousness are common to all religions. Adhere to them. Observe morality and integrity in daily life.

### **Love for Swami**

Today everyone in Prasanthi Nilayam is living as a member of one family. Whatever your language, religion, nationality or custom, you feel as one here. This is great spiritual sadhana. No one brought about this transformation. It was an individual transformation, each by himself or herself. How did they effect this transformation? Out of their love for Swami. That love accounts for this prodigious transformation.

In the Sai Organisation, because it functions in the workday world, some regulations have been laid down. Rules and regulations are essential. First of all, whatever resolutions have been passed at this conference, they should be carried out whole-heartedly. All sorts of conferences are held all over the world. Resolutions are passed. But they are ignored after the conference is over. In the Sai Organisation, this should not happen. Having passed resolution, you must "pass" in it! You would have scored a "pass" only when you implement the resolution. Therefore, you must carry out the decisions you have taken. That is the meaning of discipline. Discipline grows out of devotion. Devotion stems from duty. Observe the three D's: Discipline, Devotion, and Duty. This is true spirituality. In the performance of every duty there should be devotion. There should be devotion and not diversion!

Devotion signifies love. Love for the Divine is the only true love. All other expressions of "love" are merely attachments of one sort or another. Love is God.

Live in love. Start the day with love. Fill the day with love. End the day with love. That is the way to God (cheers). This love should be considered Divine by people of every faith. Manifest your love regardless of how others behave.

Cultivate this love. I am not concerned about the numerical growth of centres or devotees. I want only quality. Increase in quantity should be accompanied by improvement in quality. This is the service you have to render. The bliss which you experience should be shared with others.

Do not violate the rules of the organisation. Thereby your love will grow. It is that love, which is responsible for your putting up with all inconveniences and discomforts. Develop the spirit of sacrifice.

Realise that true happiness consists in union with God. You need not wish me "Happy Birthday." I am always happy. I am a tank of happiness. Draw from it as much as you wish. Drink that water and sanctify your life. It was the thirst for Divine bliss that drew you here. Drink deep and experience that bliss. Live in peace in Prasanthi Nilayam, ignoring the attractions of the outer world. When you return to your respective countries, share your experience with your countrymen.



Enjoy the love I confer on you. It is totally free from self-interest. Receiving selfless love, make your love unselfish.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with: "*Prema muditha manase kaho! Rama! Rama! Ram!*"

**From Bhagavan's address to the Sixth World Conference of Sathya Sai Seva Organisations  
on 21.11.95**

*You have to make your love pure. To do so, you must develop forbearance, which is a serene patience and self-restraint under all circumstances, giving good to all, even to those who may want to harm you. There is nothing greater than having this quality of forbearance.*

*Forbearance is equivalent to truth itself. Forbearance is the heart of righteousness, forbearance is the very essence of the Veda, and forbearance is non-violence in practice. Forbearance is contentment, it is compassion. Truly it is everything in all the worlds. Only when you have developed patience and forbearance will you be able to obtain the Lord.*

—Baba

AVATAR VANI:

CONVOCATION ADDRESS

**Cherish Bharatiya Culture**

*Embodiments of Love!*

Education lends beauty to man. Education is man's secret wealth. Education is the source of fame and happiness. It is the teacher of teachers. Education is the true kinsman for one going abroad. It is the third eye for man. Rulers honour the scholar more than the man of wealth. One without education is an animal. This is the message of Bharatiya culture.

Life goes on whether a man acquires culture or not or pursues studies or not. But the life-span melts like ice from day to day. Even before he realises his duties, his life comes to an end. In the sphere of education, every thinking man is confronted with baffling problems. Educational institutions have forgotten their obligation to make education a source of strength and happiness in daily life. Educational ideals have lost their appeal. Education has ceased to be creative. It has become a destructive force. Respect and reverence are down in the dumps. Education has been commercialised. Students are keener to make money by means rather than to acquire knowledge. Educational institutions, which ought to be citadels of morality, integrity, sacrifice and character, have ceased to foster morality.

Students don't make any attempt to develop good qualities, while cultivating friendships and participating in common activities. All associations without good qualities are valueless. Character is most important for a student. It is the essence of Bharatiya culture.

Without cultural refinement, can anyone hope to earn honour? Without morals, can you acquire the esteem of others? If you preach righteousness without practising it yourself, will anyone respect you? Without fear of sin, with sinful thoughts, you commit sinful acts. At least from now on, recognise the truth and live up to the name of sons of Bharat.

It is not a good index of pure education, if having been born in Bharat, you do not live up to the ideals of Bharat and lead a mundane existence.

### **Bharat Mata's lament**

Students! Awake! This is not the time for slumber. Don't you see the tears Mother Bharat is shedding? Why is she shedding tears? Because her sons have forsaken the sacred path and are leading a sub-human existence. Morality and integrity have been given up. To wipe the tears of Mother Bharat, every Bharatiya should cherish the culture of Bharat.

Every student should observe the three principles of equality, unity and co-operation. The nation is going to pieces because of the lack of mutual respect and unity.

Education is not confined to reading, writing and listening. Degrees do not constitute true marks of learning. Without wisdom and spiritual knowledge, can there be real education?

Education is not for earning a living but for leading the good life. All education which imparts worldly knowledge and develops intellectual activities without promoting character is utterly worthless.

True education should promote morality, character and spirituality. Science and Technology are undoubtedly necessary for comfortable living. But there is an unseen power which underlies the physical world. Today students should acquire both physical knowledge for living and spiritual knowledge for understanding that which sustains life. The two together help to make humanness blossom.

It is morality that imparts value to human life. "Morality and Integrity are today confined to books. The heart is utterly polluted. Hands are engaged in selfish pursuits. This is the progress of modern education" (Telugu Poem).

Man has progressed in science and technology. But morality and integrity are going down from day to day. The immediate task is to promote moral values.

There are ninety crores of Bharatiyas, but few who will assuage the agony of Mother Bharat. Of what use are these myriad sons?

There was a time when Bharat stood out as the example for the world in holiness and purity. The ancient sages enthroned righteousness and gave the highest place of honour for the spirit of sacrifice. They adored justice and revered truth. In this way, they bequeathed to the nation its greatest cultural heritage.

**Lessons of history**

Students! Recall for a moment the past history of Bharat. There is no record at anytime of Bharatiyas having invaded other countries. Bharatiyas always adhered to justice. They protected Righteousness. They esteemed truth as their life-breath. They took to arms only when foreign hordes invaded the country. Otherwise they never committed aggression on any country.

Many foreign nations plundered the wealth of Bharat, but Bharat never coveted the wealth of any country. Not only did they loot Bharat's wealth, but they desecrated the sacred culture of Bharat. They created divisions between persons. They set at naught the sanctity of the plighted word. They undermined human relationships. It is because of these outrages that Bharat is in a deplorable plight today.

Reflect for a moment on the glorious record of Bharat's past history. Bharat has always cherished noble virtues. Unable to recognise the purity, sacredness and spiritual heritage of Bharat, students treat it with levity. They consider it as uncivilised. This is totally wrong. Bharat has been the home of prosperity, morality, sacrifice and fraternity. But modern education has polluted all these qualities. Evils like corruption, dishonesty, injustice and falsehood were unknown to Bharatiyas in ancient India. Today the people have become victims of exotic modes of living and have no respect for the traditional culture.

**The collectivist spirit**

Bharat has upheld the collectivist ideal as against the concept of individualism. Community singing of Bhajans was preferred, not individual singing. Collective action was promoted. The Vedas also glorified the collective spirit. It was Guru Nanak who initiated the practice of congregational bhajans.

Students today should take a pledge to go to the villages and serve the rural population. Most students soon after they get their degrees, either wish to go abroad or desire well paid jobs. Students should realise the importance of our villages and try to improve them. Money is not important. It is character that counts.

**Dharma and moksha**

The ancients attached value to the four goals of life—Dharma (Righteousness), Artha (Wealth), Kama (Desires) and Moksha (Liberation). They followed righteous means to acquire wealth and transformed their desires into yearning for liberation. Thus they gave primary importance to Dharma and Moksha. Today people have given up Dharma and Moksha and are pursuing only Artha and Kama.

Students! Examine your hearts. Rectify your thoughts and earn money by moral means. Our ancients considered Dharma as the basis for the world. Today Dhanam (wealth) is esteemed as the basis for everything.

The achievements of our ancients and the greatness of their qualities are beyond praise. Emperor Sibi was prepared to offer his own flesh to save the life of a bird (pigeon). Many sacrificed their lives to protect the lives of others. Harishchandra gave up his kingdom and even his wife and son to honour his word. Students today do not cherish the lives of these heroes.

The educational system should not be subject to changes according to changes in Education Ministers. Education, like Justice, should be free from governmental interference. Students should realise that what matters is not the religion they profess, but how far they are truly human in their life. They should realise the sacredness of their Motherland, Bharat. It is a name which is anterior to either Bharata, Sri Rama's brother, or Shakuntala's son, Bharata.

### **H-I-N-D-U**

Foreigners should understand the precise meaning of the word Hindu, the name which they associate with India. The five letters in the name HINDU represent five qualities. Humanity, Individuality, Nationality, Divinity and Unity. Unity is essential not only for Bharatiyas, but for the entire world.

Today students tend to migrate from villages to cities after their education is completed. Students who come from villages should stay on in their villages and improve the quality of life of the villagers. Students should learn three essential things: Cultivate the company of the good. Avoid evil associates. Do ceaselessly meritorious deeds.

Students should dedicate themselves to social service, striving always for public welfare. Social service leads to the ripening of wisdom. Wisdom is the source of good qualities. Develop good qualities and good conduct. Realise that service is the means to overcome the ego, broaden the vision and promote love. Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached!

Mother Bharat is shedding tears. Find out the cause, as Lava and Kusa did when they found their mother Sita was in tears. They asked their mother: "Oh Mother! Why are you weeping? Here we are, more valiant than Sri Rama. We can bring for you a Golden Mountain if you desire it." (Bhagavan sang a Telugu song which was both sweet and deeply moving). The boys held her feet and declared that they would not leave until she revealed the cause of her grief. See what the children of Sita, the daughter of the Earth Goddess, did to assuage the grief of their mother. Which son of Bharat today is trying to wipe the tears of Bharat Mata? This is deepening her grief. She laments: "I have ninety crores of children but of what use are they? They are not relieving a mother's sorrow." Mother Bharat's grief affects the whole world.

The Motherland should be revered as divine. Only then there will be worldly peace. Make your studies useful to the country. Values are necessary for acquiring education. Education is for life. Life is for love. Love is for service to the nation and the world. Then there will be peace. Starting with values you end up with peace. There can be no peace without values (cheers).

### **What Sai expects**

When students acquire education in this manner, they will promote the wellbeing of the country and the world. Students should take a resolve to develop their native places and make their lives meaningful. This is what Sai expects from you. This is what you should offer to me. Be good and make the country better. Be ideal students. Ensure security and prosperity in the country. Experience bliss by taking to the spiritual path (cheers).

The convocation came to a close with the singing of the National Anthem in which Bhagavan and the entire gathering participated.

**(From Bhagavan's Discourse to the Fourteenth Convocation of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at the Vidya Giri Stadium on 22-11-95)**

AVATAR VANI:

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

### **Realise God through Love**

*All the objects in this visible universe  
Are extremely beautiful, attractive and pleasing.  
The divine is immanent in the entire cosmos.  
The cosmos is filled with love.*

*(Poem)*

*The Supreme Self is the embodiment of Love;  
When love encounters love they merge;  
Hence if you develop your love  
You become eligible to achieve oneness with the Divine*

*(Telugu poem)*

Love exists for love and nothing else. It is spontaneous and imparts delight. Everything is permeated by love. Love sees with the heart and not the eyes. It listens not through the ears but by the tranquility of the heart. It speaks not with the tongue but out of compassion. Compassion, kindness and love are separate words which mean the same thing. Love has many synonyms.

### **Divine love**

Love can emanate only from the heart and not any other source. Love is immortal, nectarine, blissful and infinite. A heart filled with love is boundless. Just as rivers with different names and forms merge in the ocean and become one with it, love in many forms enters the ocean of the heart and gets identified with it.

Love can conquer anything. Selfless, pure, unalloyed love leads man to God. Selfish and constricted love binds one to the world. Unable to comprehend the pure and sacred love, man

today is a prey endless worries because of his attachment to worldly objects. Man's primary duty is to understand the truth about the Love Principle. Once he understands the nature of love, he will not go astray. The various contexts in which the word love is used today have no relation to the true meaning of love. The affection between a mother and child or between a husband and wife is incidental to a certain temporary relationship and is not real love at all. True love has neither a beginning nor an end. It exists in all the three categories of time—past, present and future. That alone is true love which can fill man with enduring bliss.

One's thoughts, one's words and looks should be filled with love. This is divine love. One who is saturated with this love can never be subject to suffering. Men today are affected by praise or blame. But one who is filled with divine love transcends praise or censure. He is unaffected by criticism or flattery. He treats alike joy and sorrow, profit and loss, victory and defeat.

It is not easy to experience such love. It is easy to blame God but difficult to realise God. Men today prefer the easy path to the rough one. They should realise that there can be no pleasure without pain.

### **The mission of Jesus**

It was to teach mankind the greatness of divine love that Jesus came. His father passed away when Jesus was ten years old. Thereafter, with the permission of his mother, he embarked on his ministry of service to the people. He resolved on three tasks: one, to be filled with Divine love and to share it with others was the main purpose of his life; two, he should not succumb to praise or censure in carrying out his mission; three, to inspire in others the conviction that the Divinity within is omnipresent. Jesus considered spreading the gospel of love as his foremost task. He encountered many ordeals in carrying out his mission, but he regarded them all as challenges to be overcome. He was determined to treat pleasure and pain, sickness and failure with equanimity. He could not bear to see any one suffer. He was opposed to the traffic in birds going on in the temple in Jerusalem. The affected persons turned against him. But Jesus carried on, regardless of their hostility. In the end he sacrificed his life for the sake of others and out of his love for all.

### **Be messengers of God**

Every human being is potentially a messenger of God. But, today, men have become messengers of the Lord of Death. They are traitors to their true human state. Humanness demands that everyone should manifest the Divinity within him. Everyone should be a real messenger of God and strive to promote peace and security in the world. There is no other path to be followed. God's message is sacred and totally free from self-interest.

When Christ was born, three kings came to see the infant. One of them declared that the child would be a lover of God. The second one said that he would be the beloved of God. The third one declared that he was God. A lover of God is a messenger of God. The one whom God loves is a "Son of God." When one experiences both of these, he becomes one with God. "Father and Son are one."

Therefore, at the outset you must prepare yourselves to be messengers of God. This means that you should live up to the message of God. The message calls for service to all. Compassion, morality and integrity are essential elements in the message. In propagating this message faith in God should be promoted. Love should be the watchword. The absence of love gives rise to hatred. Today there is no unity among the people. Without unity how can there be bliss? Without bliss how can anyone experience God?

Men should lead selfless lives. This may seem difficult. But, in reality there is nothing easier. It is selfishness that creates all kinds of difficulties for mankind. Selfless love will give no room for any evil. Unselfish love may meet with opposition from one's kith and kin and from worldly persons. But one should not be deterred by such opposition. Love should be cherished as one's life breath.

### **The elements and the Divine**

It is essential to have faith in God. The five elements are manifestations of God. They are: the earth, water, fire, air and ether (or space). In the earth God exists in the form of Prajna (Awareness). In fire, God is in the form of wakefulness (Jagrata-Swaroopa). The Vedic warning is, "Be awake". In air, God exists as the vital breath (Prana). In ether (or space) God pervades it as the primal sound, Omkara. Every element thus proclaims the manifestation of one aspect of God.

All beings experience the presence of the Divine through the five elements, the five senses, and the five life breaths. Some may ask, "When the Divine is omnipresent and is in all beings, why is He not visible to us?" If investigation is made on right lines, God can be perceived. Some human effort is essential to get this perception. Just as the reflection of the sun can be seen in all its purity only in clear and still water, though reflections may be noticed in ponds, wells and oceans, God can be perceived only when the heart is pure and unselfish. How can God be expected to appear before a person whose mind is wavering and whose outlook is self-centered? The wavering mind will experience only a hazy figure. In a steady mind, God will present a clear image.

The mind, according to the scriptures, is the cause of man's bondage or liberation. The mind has three qualities: Tamas, Rajas and Satwa. The Tamasic quality makes the mind ignore the truth, pursue the false and impels man to indulge in what is unholy and improper. It is necessary to correct this tendency of the Tamo-guna. The Rajo-guna is responsible for a person living in a kind of dream-state and treating it as real. The Satwic quality makes a person see good even in a bad person or object. The Satwic person sees God in the whole cosmos and fosters the godly approach to creation.

Today people all over the world are racked by fears of various sorts. There is no peace anywhere. But people should not give way to despair. They should face the situation with courage, without bothering about the results.

Make love the basis for all your actions. The Gopikas prayed to Krishna to play on the flute and fill their barren hearts with love so that love may grow and ripen in their hearts. The love of God should be free from any desire for favours. God judges the devotee's love by the intensity of the feeling and not by the number of ways in which worship is offered.

Love of God does not mean giving up your normal duties. In the performance of these duties, every action should be done as an offering to God ("Bhagavat-prityartham"—for the sake of pleasing God). Look upon the body as a moving temple, wherein God resides. Recognise that God is always with you and around you.

### **Messengers of Sathya Sai**

The Messengers of Sathya Sai are doing excellent work. They are helping to build dwellings for the poor in the villages. They also arrange for the marriage of poor villagers, raising the money from among themselves. Many old students of the Women's College (at Anantapur) are living in overseas countries like Germany, U.S.A., Australia and Japan. It is an index of their devotion to Swami that they have come from these distant places for this annual meeting of "the Messengers" at great expense. I asked the President of the Association why the members are wasting money in this way. Why should they not use it for helping some poor people in their places? Every trip costs about a lakh of rupees per person. Her reply was: "Swami! We are not concerned about the expense. We come to Swami to get our spiritual batteries recharged so that we may render better service. Money comes in one-way or another. But we have to develop our spirit of sacrifice. It is for this reason that we are coming here. Even the money we earn is not really ours. We are merely agents. We are a kind of trustees for our incomes."

This attitude has to be appreciated. People should regard all wealth as coming from God to be used for sacred purposes. No one brings anything with him at birth and carries anything with him at death. All relationships in between are transient. Treat all alike. Even bad people will be transformed if you treat them with love.

St. Paul was an example of one who originally hated Christ but later became his foremost apostle. When you show love towards all, even to those who dislike you, God will love you. Then you become a "Son of God." You earn the right to inherit the Kingdom of God. You can become one with God.

Among the Messengers of Sathya Sai, consisting of men and women, it is the women who are carrying on more service activities. This is all the more commendable because of the handicaps they labour under as housewives with in-laws and others who dominate over them. Nevertheless they are persuading their husbands to come to Swami. This is true seva because they are converting sceptics to believe in God.

The male old students have more freedom but are not equally zealous in rendering service. They should realise the true meaning of freedom, namely, carrying out the dictates of the Spirit.



As a nation we have achieved freedom, but we have not achieved unity. Unity can be achieved only through love. This was the message of Jesus.

Students! When you are observing today the birthday of a divine personality you have also to follow his teachings. You have to remember what constitutes the greatness of the person whose birthday you celebrate. We celebrate Sri Rama's birthday, but how many respect the words of the father as Rama did? How far are you prepared to sacrifice position and power as Rama did? People insist on rights to which they have no claim. How can they call themselves devotees of Rama? You should follow the ideals of Rama.

What is meant by calling yourselves devotees of Sai? You have to foster love and develop unity. You must consider yourselves as members of one family, the children of one God. Only then you are entitled to call yourselves Sai devotees. Whatever others may say, do not bear any ill-will towards them. Welcome everything as for your good.

The more you serve God, the more the bliss you will experience. Hence, fill your life with love, grow in love and end your life in love.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema muditha manase Kaho: Rama! Rama! Ram!*"

**From Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on 25.12.95**

### **Students Greet Bhagavan on New Year Day**

“Swagatam! Swagatam! Swagatam!”

What a thrilling greeting to Bhagavan by the students' band troupe as Swami entered the Sai Kulwant Mandap on a beautiful cool morning on New Year Day. The boys played on their trumpets with professional ease. They had been well trained by the American trumpet maestro Maynard Ferguson. Here is an account of the morning's programme by one who was intimately involved in training the students:

#### **Unforgettable music**

The students who play in the Institute's band had been working so hard under the guidance of Maynard Ferguson and David Bailey that Swami gave his permission to them to perform a music programme on New Year Day.

They started with a lively arrangement from Maynard's Album of Gospel Music called "Gospel John", followed by a classical piece with David at the piano, accompanying the band with Chorale and Allegro. "Rockin' on home" was the next piece which showed their ability to play

modern music as well as the classics. They played with a lovely rich tone in their offering to Swami of the Theme from the New World Symphony by Drovak. There was a lovely moment as the last chord of this arrangement faded into the silence of the Mandir.

"Ragtime" resounded with the last piece called "Five foot two." The Band impishly got into the neat swing of it with Maynard adding his superb trumpet playing and David's Ragtime Piano.

During the programme Maynard and David played a duet of the old Nat King Cole hit which summed up everyone's sincere thoughts for Swami "Unforgettable....."

### **Another Glorious Christmas in Prasanthi Nilayam**

Given the auspiciousness of Christmas in the Christian calendar, it is befitting that celebrations take place in Prasanthi Nilayam. And every year Bhagavan Baba energises and illuminates this programme.

In just seven days from Swami's Blessing, a miracle of love and cooperative effort occurred as brothers and sisters from around the world joined to present a festival of joy and light.

First, decorations began to take shape in quiet places, ready to emerge and delight the eye on Christmas Day. Thus, angels knelt in adoration on either side of Swami's chair, placed centrally under the glittering crystal chandeliers on the Mandir porch and they flew joyfully around the recessed walls and on the marble columns. Huge green advent wreaths hung on either side of the silver doors, garnished with candles, multicolored orbs and golden stars, which danced in the breeze. Tinsel and hearts, Christmas tree motifs and more stars highlighted the multicoloured bunting and beautiful rose-bedecked wreaths adorned the gates. The stage was set for Christmas.

Meanwhile, international choirs were formed. A large one, with 410 members, created a programme of both traditional carols and songs of adoration of Swami. They practised all day to reach the excellence associated with this event. A smaller choir wove itself into the Christmas play rehearsals.

One hundred and twenty Bal Vikas children from sixty three countries came together under loving hands, to learn their lines, their dances and their positions on stage.

In a distant shed, costumes grew from pieces of cloth as ladies from far-flung countries enjoyed their busy satsang while making the costumes. Scenic arrangements went on. Innovative concepts such as ceiling drops were added and brilliant visual effects were practised.

One hundred and twenty foreign seva dal members took over Darshan duties and excitement and anticipation grew daily as rehearsals were given the Divine Grace of Swami's unannounced Darshan.

Christmas Eve arrived. At 4 PM Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Mandap and sitting in His swivel chair listened with evident pleasure to the choir as they poured their love in song. Every face gazing at Swami glowed with His reflected light, as hearts swelled with peace and goodwill—a precious moment in time.

Bhajans, Arati and prasadam concluded the performance. The gathering reassembled in the Poornachandra Auditorium to witness the children's play.

### **The children's play**

Telling of a family's sojourn in Prasanthi Nilayam at Christmas and the transformation in a boy's awareness, the play was also memorable as a spectacular show. Children danced and sang, a demon dropped from above (mortally wounded by Rama's arrow), firework stars cascaded and the Avatar gave a compelling message. The final scene was a grand finale. Huge bunches of helium balloons, trailing silver red streamers, were released on the stage, smoke billowed and multicoloured glitter fell from above as the children and choir sang their love to Swami. He then came on the stage and gave prasadam to every child, smiling amidst the colour and laughter and love.

### **Christmas darshan**

Next morning the festival continued. Carol-Nagarsankirtan (a river of candlelight) flowed into the Mandap to await Bhagavan's silver door Darshan and the soft carol singing expressed the heart yearnings from every soul. All the devotees felt doubly blessed as Swami, wearing a white robe, gave his double hand blessings, pouring love on one and all.

A gentle gesture, indicating Arati, announced His leave taking and then all sat in bliss reluctant to extinguish candles. At that moment of offering all were indeed one, hearts united by love for Bhagavan Baba.

Bhagavan returned in vibrant orange to sit on the porch for the student's concert. This year there was an added ingredient. Maynard Ferguson, world famous jazz trumpeter, led the student brass band in an up-tempo caroling which brought hand-clapping involvement from the crowded mandap. As Swami sat, the trumpeters stood with Santa hats on, and His evident enjoyment of this added to every one else's. The jolly U.K. pianist, David Bailey, dressed in black tails, added a salubrious touch as his fingers danced joyfully over the keyboard, and the energy field of love and happiness was reflected in every face.

Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan was distributed to the entire gathering.

The afternoon programme was in the Poornachandra Hall. First, their Annual Report was presented by the "Messengers of Sathya Sai." These exemplary young women spoke with

humility of the seva they selflessly perform. Then Arthur Hillcoat gave an address before Bhagavan Baba rose to give His Christmas Discourse.

Swami's message of love gently reminded all to practise Divine, not worldly love, and He spoke of the compassion of Jesus who was God's messenger and son, just as all are.

He enjoined each devotee to search for his/her own faults and to resist criticising others and ended by saying: "The more you love the happier you will be, Live a life of Love."

Then the "Messengers of Sathya Sai" presented a dance drama of Ganga's descent to the earth through Siva's matted locks and Swami's drawing it out of the netherworld to benefit mankind via the Water Project. It was a beautiful display of classical Indian dance by 7-12 years olds (who had never seen Swami before)—a fitting finale to the Christmas Festival,

—Faue Mclean, Australia

### **"Swami's Christmas Gift"**

Describing the children's drama staged in the Poornachandra Auditorium on December 24, Mrs. Rita Bruce writes:

The Children's Christmas Drama began at 6:30 p.m. The name of the drama was "SWAMI'S CHRISTMAS GIFT." Each day of rehearsal was for the children a Christmas gift from Swami. His love and grace flowed like the holy river, Ganga, falling from Siva's head. Never before had Swami given the children so much darshan.

There were 120 children from 63 countries whose ages fell between 2 and 14 years. Everyone who wanted to be in this drama was accepted, even those who came two days before the performance. This was a profound learning experience for all who attended.

#### **Sweets for the children**

Swami gave the children many darshans every day. He brought them apples one day and played the game of "Catch if catch can." Another day Swami gave them big chocolate biscuits as prasad. He coached their performance, reviewed their costumes, looked after the props, and even fixed an angel's wing.

One day He asked, "How many drama choir women and workers?" They told Him a number and soon after Swami returned with students carrying white saris for all. The number they gave was incorrect, but Swami had the correct number with Him, 119. "Joy to the World, the Lord has come" was reflected in the eyes and smiles of each lady. Bhagavan didn't stop giving. He gave the men white material for stitching suits.

One day there was a beautiful Christmas table with a decorated cake in white, red and green frosting next to Swami's chair, a box of prasad, and a Christmas tree.

Swami picked up a matchbox, lit the candle and while He cut the cake, He read out loud the writing on the frosting, "Holy Christmas," and blessed the prasad for the children.

Everyone was trying to please Swami. Speaking about service, Bhagavan said, "Help as much as you can, as efficiently as you can, as silently as you can, as lovingly as you can; leave the rest to God, who gave you the chance to serve."

A few children did not need costumes because they wore white, but there were 100 costumes to be sewn. I asked the costume co-ordinator, "how is this possible in so short a time?" She told me, "Baba's Divine helping hands reached out to the ladies who worked on the costumes for the children. He supplied five sewing machines, and a hall to work in. The one hundred children were chosen by the 20th of December. They were measured, material was brought from Bangalore, and the making of the costumes began in earnest on the 21st of December.

### **Swami at rehearsal**

A huge amount of work had to be done by the morning of the 24th when Bhagavan would inspect the dress rehearsal. The ladies worked from dawn to late in the night to get the costumes ready. When there was still much work to be done, on the night of December 23, a blackout occurred, making sewing impossible. Baba must have known that the ladies all needed a rest. It was only through Baba's Divine help that the costumes were completed in three days and ready for the Lord to see on the morning of Christmas Eve."

The first thing He asked, "Where's Mary?" She was brought before Baba. Baba then wanted to see Jesus and the boy playing the role of Sai Baba. When He saw the three of them together He said, "Very nice costumes, very happy. You've got Jesus' mother, Jesus and Sai Baba here now!"

The drama director was a Hollywood film director. Under his direction, the children had to stretch their ability a little beyond what they thought was possible. They practised for about eight hours a day. The result of their efforts was acknowledged on the night of the performance.

The drama was about a western family planning to spend Christmas with Sai Baba. The young teen-age boy, Mathew, was confused about who Baba was and hoped that he could find the answer on his trip to Prasanthi Nilayam. He had some dreams in which Sai Baba showed him scenes from Jesus' life and taught him who he really was. Swami said to him, "You are God, I am God, We are God." In the finale, Swami's Christmas gift to Mathew was the answer to the proverbial question, "Who am I?" "I am I."

And Swami's gift to the children who were lined up according to their height, all 120, some holding coloured balloons with shiny long tail streamers and sparkling confetti showered down on them, was His unprecedented long stage darshan. Swami gave all the children padanamaskar and handed each of them a beautiful packaged gift of a Christmas cake. Swami's hair had the

sparkling confetti shining on it. Balloons with helium were floating in the air with the long tail shiny streamers dancing in the light, while the children were at His Feet. Swami even held a balloon. It was verily a Holy Christmas Festival and Swami's Christmas Gift to us all.

### *THIRD INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CARDIO-VASCULAR DISEASES*

## **Doctors Duty to Serve the Poor**

A clarion call to the medical fraternity to recognise that it was their duty to provide medical care to poor persons, was given by Bhagavan Baba, in His address to the inaugural session of the third International Symposium on Cardio-Vascular Diseases, held in the Sathya Sai Institute Auditorium at Prasanthi Nilayam on December 16th.

The three-day symposium was formally inaugurated by Dr. Karan Singh, former Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare. The keynote address was delivered by Dr. J. S. Bajaj, Member, Planning Commission and President, National Board of Examinations.

Excellent arrangements had been made for the symposium, which was attended by 201 delegates, including 48 delegates from overseas countries, and 107 special invitees. Among the foreign delegates were many outstanding specialists in their respective fields, including Dr. Ronald Ross from U.K., Dr. George Reed, U.S.A. Dr. Lawrence I. Bonchek, U.S.A., Dr. Bruce Davis, Australia, Dr. Carlos Mestres, Spain, and Dr. H. S. Saw, Singapore. Several distinguished Indian doctors were among the overseas delegates. The Indian participation was also at a high level.

The valedictory function on December 18th was presided over by Sri. A. R. Antulay, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, who commended the unique service rendered by Bhagavan's Super Speciality Hospital, which had no parallel anywhere in the world.

The inaugural function began precisely at 8 a.m. when Bhagavan Baba arrived at the Auditorium accompanied by Dr. Karan Singh and Dr. Bajaj. After they had taken their seats on the exquisitely decorated stage, there was invocation by students.

Dr. Karan Singh lighted the sacred lamps on the stage to mark the inauguration of the symposium.

Dr. Safaya, Director of the Sri. Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, welcoming the delegates and invitees, spoke about the work of the Super-Speciality Hospital and the record of the three departments in the Hospital Cardiology, Urology and Ophthalmology. All the achievements of the Hospital were due to the grace of Bhagavan Baba and the dedicated service of the staff and the devotion of the patients to Bhagavan. The Institute was planning to hold a symposium on kidney diseases. It had been recognised as a centre for post-graduate studies by the

National Board of Examinations. He extended hearty welcome to Dr. Karan Singh and Dr. Bajaj and to all the eminent doctors who had come from distant countries. He conveyed to Bhagavan the Institute's gratitude for making this symposium possible.

### **Dr. Karan Singh's Address**

Inaugurating the symposium, Dr. Karan Singh began his address with a quotation from the Vedas which proclaimed liberation of the soul and welfare of the world as the two goals of humanity in the spiritual and material spheres respectively. He said: "Bharat is a land of religion and the four Purusharthas—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha—have been prescribed as the goals for every human being. Of these, Artha and Kama (wealth and desire) are external, while Dharma and Moksha (Righteousness and Liberation) are internal. We need spiritual leadership now, and here Baba is a shining example of how we should live. The establishment of this marvellous Super Speciality Hospital here is an example of spirituality in the service of humanity. I am astonished to see the atmosphere at this Hospital, especially because of the absence of 'tension' which is the common feature in any Hospital. Treatment is given with the highest professional standard, entirely free of cost with the latest equipment. There is no other place in the world where such treatment is given free. It is practical evidence of Baba's sympathy for suffering humanity especially of the poorer section. This is service to Daridra Narayana. As I was incharge of the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences as Health Minister at the Centre for three years I see many old acquaintances here.

### **Three types of hearts**

We can say that there are three types of hearts. The first one is the physical, which causes problems of diseases that are mainly due to overeating and sedentary habits. By regulating the diet and by proper exercises, the heart disease can be prevented. It is necessary to keep the body in a fit condition to do service (Sareeramadyam Khalu Dharma Sadhanam). In China people follow certain type of yoga called 'Taichi'. They get up early in the morning and do this exercise. We can see thousands of citizens practising this in the open. India has a rich tradition of yoga which relates to breathing, sitting and walking. A massive educative campaign is needed, especially in the rural areas, to prevent heart diseases, by propagating such Yogic exercises.

"The second heart is that of the Chakra, which is the seat of emotions, radiating love, compassion and hatred too. This accounts for the psychological aspect of diseases of the heart patient. That is why they administer holistic medicine nowadays.

"The third one is the spiritual heart. The 'Purusha' or Supreme Power resides in the innermost recess of this spiritual heart.

This is referred to as the many-splendoured effulgent Jyoti. The three-dimensioned (Physical, Emotional and Spiritual) heart is the secret of human consciousness, which is the direct link with the Divine. This is what the great sages of the Upanishads proclaimed when they had a vision of the Divine. They experienced the Supreme Purusha as the effulgent one shining with the brilliance of thousand suns.

### **Holistic treatment**

"Here several eminent experts in the medical profession have assembled to discuss the latest advances in the technology of treatment of heart diseases. I am sure you will return with a lot of additional information. This may be the forerunner of a new holistic health paradise in the world. In this Hospital, Bhakti, Jnana and Karma combine to afford holistic treatment and medical care. I conclude my talk with a prayer to Lord Shiva, the Master of Yoga and Nrithya: May His Grace pervade this Institution and may Baba's inspiration give a new turn to human society."

### **Dr. Bajaj's address**

Dr. Bajaj, in his keynote address, quoted Bhagavan Baba's exhortation to doctors in a previous symposium to render selfless service to the people, taking a lesson from trees, which bear fruit for others, rivers, which flow for the benefit of others, and cows which yield milk for the benefit of others. "Baba has always been showing the way of doing service to humanity, the latest being the drinking water project carried out at great cost for quenching the thirst of millions in the dry villages." He commended moderation in food habits, work and sleep to prevent heart diseases. He spoke of the relationship between time and space and how every Yuga has had its toll on the longevity of human life, bringing it down from 300 years in Treta Yuga to 100 in Kaliyuga. Baba told a person at an interview that time had not changed but only man had changed. The Vedas lay down the span of human life as divided into only three parts, childhood, youth and old age. Old age is said to start from only 70 years. A healthy life-span of 100 years can be achieved by anyone if only discipline is observed in the regulation of diet and other habits. He mentioned that arogya or good health is not only absence of "roga", disease, but positive physical, spiritual, social and mental well-being. This is termed as 'Swastya' in Ayurveda.

### **The heart and the trinity**

Dr. Bajaj then dealt with the genetics of the human system, with special reference to DNA source of energy. Half of the genes are inherited from the father while the other half are from the mother. He further analysed the energy pattern in the human system and stated that the male part had the Trinity- Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara as its presiding deities while the female part had Saraswati, Lakshmi and Durga' This Lakshmi is again sub-divided into eight different types of which Dhairya Lakshmi and Veera Lakshmi are the prime energy or myocardial DNA. When this is affected, degeneration in health sets in. These things should be taught to the students, stressing the spiritual basis of health.

The speaker then referred to the introduction of Vanaspati as the primary cause of heart diseases and commended the use of mustard oil and rapeseed oil which do not cause damage to the system. The use of noodles and maggi has spoiled the health of children. He said that the body is a gift to the human being by God and it is the duty of everyone to safeguard it.

### **Message of the sages**

The speaker emphasised the importance of the pineal gland in the brain which is the pacemaker and time-keeper. The ancient Rishis grasped the wisdom of keeping the alignment of the intricate molecular system of the body and maintaining the biological clock in good trim. By meditation and diet control, taking only fruits and vegetables, the ancient Rishis maintained the system in



perfect condition. Lacto-vegetarian diet (milk and vegetables) is the best to adopt. Concentration has to be practised as detailed in Patanjali Yoga, Sutra. The ancients were not afraid of death and they were happy to establish communion with Bliss. Referring to his being described as guest of honour, he said, "It is due to the Divine Grace that any honour comes to person and we are but servants of the Almighty." *Bhagavan then delivered His discourse.*

### **Conference sessions**

There were altogether 17 sessions spread over three days. The first session (on the 16th) was on Coronary Artery Disease. The other sessions were on the interventions in Coronary Artery Disease, Coronary Artery Surgery, transplantation and Assist Device and on Echo Cardiography.

The sessions on the 17th were devoted to topics on Cardiac and Valvular Diseases, Congenital Heart Diseases. Tetralogy of Fallot, Transposition of Great Arteries and Surgery for other Congenital Heart Diseases.

There were two sessions on the 18th on the Cardiac Arrhythmias and pace-makers. The concluding session was on current status topics: "Long term results of "Angioplasties" by Dr. V. S. Mathur; "Current status of Interventional Cardiology in India" by Dr. U. Kaul; and "Current status of Cardio Thoracic Surgery in India" by Dr. P. Venugopal.

At the valedictory function, several speakers expressed their appreciation and gratitude for the excellent arrangements made for their stay and extraordinary interest that the symposium had created in every participant. Dr. Ross said he came, saw and was conquered by the wonderful atmosphere of peace and tranquility and the Divine Grace of Bhagavan.

### **Mr. Antulay's resolve**

Sri A .R. Antulay said he had been longing to have darshan of Baba for thirty years and he had that golden opportunity now. He said he was so much overwhelmed by Bhagavan's compassion and love for humanity that he had taken a pledge to spend the rest of his life in serving society.

Bhagavan then delivered His valedictory discourse (published separately).

The symposium came to a close after the vote of thanks proposed by Dr. Jagadish Chandran, Deputy Director S.S.I.H.M.S., to all those who had contributed to the success of the symposium. He concluded with a special reference to Bhagavan Baba and the duty of doctors. He said: "During the Mahabharata war Lord Krishna exhorted Arjuna to do actions without attachment to the fruits of actions. The Gitopadesh ends with the benediction "Yatra Yogeshwarah Krishno Yatra Partho Danurdharah, Tatra Srtvijayo Bhuthihi." "Where Krishna is present to guide, where Arjuna is ready for action, victory is certain." Today Sai Krishna has given His call. It is for the Arjuns of the world who carry stethoscopes and scalpels and possess ultra-modern equipment for diagnosis and treatment, to rise and respond to the call and say "Nashto Mohah". "Our delusion is destroyed. We will stop pursuing worldly gains and we will henceforth dedicate our skills and knowledge for Manav Seva—for service to Humanity. 'Sthithosmi Gatha Sandehah, karishye vachanam tava'. We shall obey your command."

The symposium concluded with the singing of the National Anthem, with Bhagavan leading the whole gathering.

### **The 70<sup>TH</sup> Birthday**

He has made it so easy to see who HE is –  
He has removed the veil and shown Himself so clear

As each looks at the sheer grandeur  
The discipline of the bhakta  
The pure magnitude of it all  
The exquisite charm and infinite beauty  
The international flavour and Atmic explosion

He has made it so easy  
How he moves- and never has missed a beat  
How he smiles - and never once tasted defeat  
How he guides - and never once had to think  
How he loves - and entices each to surrender at His Feet

He has made it so easy  
Watch Him and see the Cosmos;  
Examine Him and see the Planets changing;  
Know Him and understand life's meaning;  
Have Him and have everything

On the 70th Birthday - to see God has been so very easy

—**Michael Hollander, U.S.A.**

## Triple Transformation: Sankranti's Call

*The sun appeared cool and serene;  
The day started getting shorter;  
The chill wind blew fiercely;  
The fields were filled with golden harvest.  
The farmers rejoiced in singing at night  
With the moon shining bright  
The buds of flowers blossomed  
like garlands of pearls  
On the banks of rivers;  
Farmers were bringing home  
The newly harvested grain,  
Hailing the advent of  
The Joyous festival of Sankranti.*

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Bharatiya festivals are full of inner significance, imparting bliss, and not ostentatious shows. Every festival has a unique significance of its own.

The sun moves into a house of the zodiac every month. In a year he goes round the twelve houses of the zodiac. Of these, the main houses are four. The first is Makara Sankramana (the zodiacal sign of Capricorn). The second is Karkataka (or Cancer). The third is Thula (Libra). The fourth is Mesha (Aries). Of these four, the most important is Makara (capricorn).

The entry of the sun into Capricorn has physical, ethical, social and moral significance.

### **The northward journey**

From today the sun starts on his northward journey. What does the north signify? It is considered the direction leading to Moksha (Liberation). The sun is said to move towards Himachala. Himachala is made up of two words: Hima + Achala. Hima means that which is white as snow. Achala is that which is firm and unshakeable. What is the place to which this description applies? It is the region of the heart. In a heart that is pure and steady, the sun of Buddhi (the intellect) enters. There is no need to undertake a journey in the external world. The Uttarayana (or the Northward Journey) means turning the intellect inward, towards the heart. The bliss that is experienced within alone is true bliss for man. All other external and sensory pleasures are ephemeral. Only the Atmic principle is pure permanent and infinite. This has been termed the abode of Moksha (Liberation). The journey to Moksha is called the quest for liberation.

as the sun embarks on his northward journey, Sankranti is the day on which the intellect should be turned towards the Atma for Self-realisation.

The Veda has declared the Uttarayana as a sacred period. The great warrior Bhishma, lying on a bed of arrows, waited for 56 days for the advent of Uttarayana to end his life. The Puranas have stated that whoever passes away in Uttarayana will attain liberation.

### **Inner meaning of festivals**

In the movement of the sun from house to house in the Zodiac, the entry into Capricorn is most important. Capricorn is a sign of peace and contentment. According to the Gregorian calendar, Sankranti begins on January 13 or 14. This confers a kind of mental and physical peace.

In this period, farmers and others labouring on the soil enjoy a period of rest. The farmers are at ease enjoying the fruits of their labours. Their granaries are filled with grains of all kinds. Farmers have no other period of rest. During this month, farmers enjoy peace of mind and body.

Few people understand the true significance of festivals like Sankranti. Man cannot secure enduring bliss through physical pleasures. He has to discover that the source of this bliss is within himself. Sankranti enables man to make this discovery, like a man who carrying his spectacles on his forehead searches for it everywhere and discovers to his joy that it has been with him all along.

The Divine is not anywhere else. It is enshrined in one's heart. Hence, the man who seeks the Divine within his heart redeems himself. He then attains liberation. All external spiritual exercises are of temporary value. They should be internalised to experience lasting bliss. All mental exercises also leave the heart unaffected. In the nine paths of devotion, beginning with listening to sacred things and ending with total surrender of the self (Atmanivedanam), the last is the most important. After "Atmanivedanam" (total surrender) there is no need for any other effort.

### **The call to surrender**

"Sankranti" gives the call for this total surrender. Dr. Subba Rao (in his speech prior to Swami's discourse) said that Sankranti is a kind of family festival. Yes. This is so. But the whole world is one family ("Vasudaiva Kutumbakam") (cheers). The festival relates to the entire world. It is not confined to one's kith and kin. Sankranti is related to the entire mankind. Whether people realise it or not Sankranti promotes in one and all a feeling of happiness.

Sankranti promotes mental transformation. It illumines the minds of people. It induces the unfoldment of inner feelings. It brings about the manifestation of the invisible Atma within everyone. Sankranti is pregnant with such immense significance. It influences not only the mind but also the powers of nature. Nature is a projection of the mind. The world is rooted in the mind ("Manomoolam idam Jagat"). When the mind is turned towards the heart and the heart is filled with the Divine, the mind will cease to be a source of trouble. The mind is the master of the

can attain Madhava (the Divine).

### **Lessons for youth**

Young people should realise that the root cause of all their bad thoughts and bad actions is the food they consume. The nature of the food determines the state of the mind. Food does not mean merely what is eaten, but includes all that is received through the senses and stored in the mind. The mind, as Dr. Subba Rao said, has the power of attraction. It attracts impressions of all kinds from the external world. What do we find in every home today?

There is a television set. T.V. sets are installed in every room in the houses of the rich. From the moment television made its appearance, the mind of man has been polluted. Before the advent of T.V., men's minds were not so much polluted. Acts of violence were not so rampant previously. Today T.V. is installed in every hut. People watch the T.V. even while taking food. The result is that all the foul things seen on the T.V. are being "consumed" by the viewer. Concentration on the T.V. affects one's view of the world. The scenes, thoughts and actions displayed on the T.V. set fill the minds of the viewers. Unknowingly, agitations and ill feelings enter their minds. In due course they take root and grow in the minds.

### **Harm done by TV**

Hence, while taking food, you should not discuss dreadful incidents. No room should be given to subjects which excite the mind. Silence should prevail during eating. Even sound waves enter into us and affect our minds. Hence people should avoid seeing T.V. while taking food. There is now what is called "Star TV". It is doing great harm to human life. The temporary satisfaction given by it is followed by lasting damage. It is like a sword coated with honey. As you lick the honey, the sword will cut your tongue.

Not Bharat alone, but the whole world is suffering from the consequences of T.V.. The world is racked by disorder, discord and frustration.

Men today are plagued by a whole battery of troubles from birth to death. How can they hope for happiness amidst this sea of troubles?

They have to change their vision, their thoughts, their words and their conduct. This is the meaning of "Sankramana". Unless you purify yourself, what can any number of Sankrantis mean to you? You tasted sweet prasadam this morning. After some time, its taste is gone. It is not sweet food that is important. You must fill your life with holy thoughts. That is the purpose of sacred festivals.

### **Freedom and human values**

Young people ask why they should not enjoy freedom as the fish, birds and animals do. They should understand that each of these creatures are enjoying freedom in accordance with their own sphere of life. Similarly man should enjoy freedom related to his human condition. You

being. To be free like an animal is to become an animal yourself.

What is the freedom a man can enjoy? Man is governed by certain restraints. He has to adhere to truth. He has to follow righteousness. He has to cultivate love. He has to live in peace. He has to observe non-violence. Sticking to these five values, man can exercise his freedom. These five values are associated with the five elements which make up the cosmos. These five elements may be used in different ways, but they are the basic substances constituting the universe. Beyond these five, there is only one-sixth element, that is, the Antahkarana, the Inner Motivator, which is identical with the Atmic Principle.

To exercise freedom in its true sense, man has to respect the five basic values. It is in that freedom he will find true bliss.

### **No imitation**

In exercising freedom you should not merely imitate others. Imitation has become a deadly disease among modern youth, in matters of dress or other behaviour. They should consult their conscience in all matters rather than copy others. Films and TV have totally demoralised the people. People have become completely oblivious to Divinity within them.

People today have lost the quality of forbearance. The sages in the past allowed even anthills to grow over them while they were immersed in penance. Today people cannot tolerate the slightest disturbance by a fly or a mosquito.

Young people should cultivate forbearance and tolerance. Without peace of mind there can be no happiness. Peace can be got only through sacred thoughts.

Youth today have lost confidence in themselves. They are affected by criticism leveled against them. They should see that if the criticism is justified, they should correct themselves. If it is not justified, they should ignore it. Taking myself as an example, I may tell you: if somebody somewhere says "Sai Baba has a mop of hair" I accept it, as it is true. If someone were to say to my face, "Sai Baba is bald", I will ignore it, as it is not true. Why should I bother to quarrel with him? If you are criticised for a fault that is not in you, you can ignore it even if the whole world joins in the criticism.

When we pronounce "Santhi, Santhi, Santhihi", three times, it is a prayer for peace of body, mind and the spirit. Though people have been mouthing this prayer for thirty years, they have not found peace, because they have not enshrined peace in their hearts. They must learn to speak sweetly and softly.

### **Students' duty**

Students! Apart from educational programmes, do not look at T.V. at all, especially while taking food. Concentrate on the work on hand, whether it be eating or anything else.

knowledge to make the world better. Students (boys and girls) must pledge themselves to rid the world of its ills. Earning incomes is not a great thing. To ensure peace and prosperity in the world is the highest achievement. You have to strive for peace in the nation, starting with peace in the home.

Above all, unity is important. Young people should promote unity and serve the nation. They should be a power for peace wherever they go. Educated young men should be examples of discipline and good behaviour. Revere parents and elders, love the Motherland and uphold its greatness.

Sankranti should be hailed as the harbinger of unity and peace. This was the immemorial message of the Vedas. "Let us live together in harmony and strive together".

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Bhajan bina sukhaa santhi nahi*".

**—From Bhagavan's discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on January 15, 1996**

AVATAR VANI:

SIXTH WORLD CONFERENCE

## **From the Individual to the Divine**

### *Embodiments of Love!*

All over the world, mankind is racked today by various difficult problems. When one problem is solved, another series crop up. The reason for this situation is the absence of right relationship between the individual and the society.

At the very outset, we have to take note of four entities: The first is the power that can solve any problem in a moment. This is "PARAMESHTI" (the Supreme Self). The second entity is "SRISHTI" (the created universe). The third is "SAMASHTI" (the collective entity-society or community). The fourth is "VYAKTI" (the individual). These four are not separate entities. A body consists of different organs performing different functions but they are integral parts of one body. For instance, the hand has a palm, which has fingers. All are integrally related.

### **The Divine and creation**

Similarly, the primary role of "PARAMESHTI" has to be recognised. It is only when "Parameshti" is understood that the secret of creation can be grasped. When this secret is understood, the significance of society will be evident. Then the individual's role can be understood.

("Parameshti") the individual understands the secret of creation (Srishti) and the importance of society. Today if you want to understand Prakriti (Nature or the phenomenal Universe), you have to understand "Samashti" (Society).

The term "Samashti" encompasses all social organisations. A community ("Samashti") is made up of individuals coming together. This union of individuals is essential for realisation of the Divine.

### **The true and the pleasing**

Take, for instance, the present conference. Here people from different countries, professing different faiths and belonging to different cultures, have come together. But what is their common unifying factor? It is the belief in the Sai Principle that has brought you together (Cheers). All of them are trying to find unity in diversity. To promote unity the concept of "Samashti" (collective action) has to be understood. There are three rules to be observed in promoting collective action. "Sathyam bruyaath" "Speak the truth." "Priyam bruyaath" Speak what is pleasant". "Na bruyaath Sathyam apriyam" "Never speak what is true but not pleasing". Truth is of the highest importance, whether we consider morality, worldly life or spiritual progress. From the ethical point of view you have to speak the truth. In the context of worldly life, you have to speak what is pleasing. From the spiritual point of view you have to avoid what is not pleasing even if it is true. The Gita also teaches that one should not utter words that cause excitement, but speak the truth which is both pleasing and wholesome.

### **Three faces of reality**

There are similarly three concepts in Vedanta relating to what constitutes truth: "PARAMARTHIKA", "VYAVAHARIKA" and "PRATHIBHASANA". "Paramarthika" relates to the Supreme, "Vyavaharika" to Worldly existence and "Prathibhasana" to the superimposition of the physical on the spiritual. These three are not at variance from each other. They are the same thing in three different forms like the ocean, the waves and the foam. The same coolness and taste that exist in the ocean are to be found in the wave and the foam.

When you are considering matters relating to the world, you use the term "vyavaharika". When you are considering experiences relating to the mind, you call them "Paramarthika" (concerning the Divine). When you consider matters relating to thoughts, you describe them as "Prathibhasana". While the epithets are different, the underlying truth is one and the same.

To know the nature of the Divine, the first step is to understand the social process. Starting with "Parameshti" (the Divine), you understand "Srishti" (creation) and become aware of "Samashti" (the society or community) and realise the role of "Vyakti" (the individual). The process of understanding is an integral one related to each other. Without the individual there can be no society. Without society, creation has no meaning. Although different terms have been used in Vedantic parlance to describe the different levels of awareness, the entire process is an integral one. It is by understanding this unifying process that the individual proceeds from the social to the cosmic and then to the Divine.



## **Man and God**

The relationship between the individual and God should be properly understood. God is the all-embracing whole ("Samashti"). The individual has to experience his oneness with the universal. This universal has been called the Cosmic form of the Divine (Vishwa-Viraat-Swaroopam). All the beings you see here are manifestations of the cosmic form. This means that all are inherently Divine. By obsession with the separateness of the individual, one fails to see his cosmic essence. Forget the ego in you and recognise your spiritual essence. It is attachment to the body that is the cause of man's loss of peace.

Man has explored everything in the external World but has failed to know his own true nature. As a result he has created divisiveness (Bhinnatvam). Once he knows his true self, he will have no feeling of divisiveness. He will recognise the oneness of all life.

## **Role of Sai sevaks**

Why is this conference being held? In this context three things are highly significant. First, what should be the characteristics of persons in the Sai Organisation? Their hearts should be cool like the moon. Their minds should be pure like butter. Their speech should be sweet like honey. It is only when you have a heart cool as the moon, a mind pure as butter and speech sweet as honey, will you be a worthy member of the organisation. When these three qualities are present, there will be Divinity.

In the Gita Krishna advises Arjuna to give up all "Dharmas" and take refuge in Him. The Dharmas that are to be given up are related to the body and are the cause of innumerable worries. Sai love is the sure solvent for all these worries. (Bhagavan sang a Telugu poem describing all the different worries from birth to death to which men are subject). As long as you do not understand the workings of Nature, everything will be worry. But once you understand them, you will be always happy. That understanding will lead you to awareness of the Divine ("Parameshti"). Once the nature of the Divine is understood, all experiences will be blissful like the sweetness of sugar which is present in different kinds of sweets.

## **Vedanta and science**

Recognise that the Divinity that is present in everyone is the same. This was the truth proclaimed by Vedanta. Scientists are now coming to the same view through a different approach. The ancient sages proclaimed the omnipresence of God, many millennia ago. Ramadas and Pothana also gave expression to this truth in their poems. Scientists are now declaring that the entire Cosmos is composed of energy.

(Swami recalled an incident some years ago when at a meeting in the Institute of Science, Bangalore, one scientist referred to the age of the sun, giving a figure running into billions of years. The ancients referred to the sun as "anadi", meaning that its origin is indeterminate). By merely assigning a definite number running into billions, has science made the fact more meaningful than what the sages said? "Anadi" (Beginning-less) is a truer description of the age of the sun, than the scientists reckoning in billions of years.

The ancients understood the secrets of creation by seeking to understand the Creator ("Parameshti"). Through understanding creation, they realised the truth about society and the individual.

Self-enquiry is the means to Self-Realisation. Self-enquiry reveals that you are not the body, the senses or the mind. You are their master. You are the Spirit (Atma). The knowledge based on the body is worldly knowledge (Bhoutika Jnanam). The knowledge based on the mind is "Sujnanam" (rational knowledge). The knowledge based on the heart is "Atma Jnanam" (Spiritual Knowledge).

### **We are one family**

The most important concern of this conference should be how to enable members to realise the Divine ("Parameshti"). The first requisite for this purpose is good company. Good company is conducive to good thoughts. Anil Kumar referred to the "Latest God" (in his speech preceding Bhagavan's discourse). This is a misconception. There is only one God and He is eternal (cheers). Dr. Safaya expressed "thanks" for the gift of blankets (by devotees from Korea). In spite of proximity to Swami over many years many have not understood Swami's teachings even on minor matters. When do you express thanks? You thank a third person. But you don't thank your own people. When you go out for a dinner you express thanks to the host, but does anyone thank the mother for serving food? There are no "others" in the Sai Organisation. We are one family. The word "thanks" should not be used in the Sai Organisation. It is purely a conventional expression in the ordinary World. The member of a family who works for the family is different from a worker who labours for wages. Members of the Sai Organisation should render service without expectation of any reward or recognition.

Members of the Sai Organisation should endeavour to improve themselves to some extent at least as a result of their participation in this conference. Don't bother about the past. Concentrate on the present. From now on, all of you should tread a sublime path. Don't give room for mutual jealousy, hatred or ill-feeling. Follow the rule: HELP EVER, HURT NEVER.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the Bhajan: "*Bhajan bina sukha santhi nahi*".

### **From Bhagavan's discourse to the Sixth World conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on November 20th, 1995**

*"Service is God. Why has God endowed man with a body, a mind and an intellect? Feel with the mind, plan with intelligence, and use the body to serve those who are in need of service. Offer that act of service to GOD; worship HIM with that flower. Put into daily practice the ideals that Sathya Sai has been propagating to make them known all over the world, by standing forth as living examples of their greatness."*

—Baba

## Self-confidence

*"Without self-confidence, no achievement is possible. If you have confidence in your strength and skill, you can draw upon the inner springs of courage and raise yourselves to a higher level of joy and peace. For confidence in yourselves arises through the ATMA, which is your inner reality. The atma is peace, it is joy, it is strength, it is wisdom. So it is from the atma that you draw all these equipments for spiritual progress.*

*The first thing to do is to acquire confidence in yourself. It is only when you have self-confidence that you will have self-satisfaction. When a small bird perches on a small branch of a tree, on account of the weight of the bird, that branch shakes, but the bird is not going to be upset-by such movement. What is the reason? The bird which is sitting on the branch is not depending for its safety on the branch. It is depending on its own wings. Even if the branch moves up and down or even if the branch breaks, because the bird is depending on its own wings, it can fly away. It does not worry at all. Even the small bird which is sitting on the branch has got so much confidence in its own wings and in itself, that it is fearless.*

—Baba

AVATAR VANI:

### Learning a Lesson from a Child

The example of a five-year old child who continued to dance on the hood of a serpent, playing his role as the child Krishna, while around him there was fire and smoke, was highlighted by Bhagavan in His discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on January 14th after the distribution of prizes to winners in sports and games. Bhagavan said: "Owing to the firing of crackers, the cloth on a platform on which the child was dancing caught fire. As the flames rose, the police, students and others rushed to the spot with buckets of water to put out the fire. But the child Krishna went on with his dance, totally indifferent to what was happening all around. His entire concentration was on the role he was playing. The child went on with the dance, with his concentration on Swami." Bhagavan said that nothing untoward can happen when one's look is centred on the Lord.

The Poornachandra Auditorium was filled to capacity with students, staff, parents and devotees from all parts of the world.

After the distribution of prizes, Bhagavan began His discourse with a Sanskrit sloka:

*The farmer has no fear of going without food;  
One who chants the Lord's name has no fear of worries;  
The silent man has no fear of discord;*

### *Embodiments of Love!*

The hard-working farmer has no fear of starvation. The one who chants the name of God has no fear of worldly worries. The man of few words will be free from enmity. Through excessive talk man falls a prey to quarrels. Everyone should cultivate moderation in speech. Restraint in speech is conducive to friendly feelings. The one who is careful, in his behaviour, doing all actions after due deliberation, will have no fear of danger.

All these precepts are related to education. True education consists in knowing how to lead a peaceful life. This means that in embarking on one's educational career, one should aspire for world peace. The reason is, he is a part of the world community. His well-being is intimately bound up with the well-being of the world. He should give up all narrow feelings. Students have also got to acquire unity and fellowship.

All these qualities cannot be taught by teachers. For every individual, Nature is the best teacher. Nature is teaching all lessons to man all the time.

### **The body and the mind**

What lends beauty to sports and games is the spirit of unity with which the participants play in them, eschewing feelings of envy and hatred. The supreme virtue in a man is to forget his individual differences with others and move with them in a spirit of equality and harmony.

Today people derive only physical fitness and strength from taking part in sports and games. But man is not the body alone. Fulfillment in life is not attained by physical health and strength alone. Even when the stomach is full, the mind must get satisfaction. Hence, efforts should be made to promote mental health also. Only when both the mind and the body are hale and well can one experience happiness.

However, young people today are concerned only about physical appearance and fitness.

Man is endowed by Divine grace with physical, mental and spiritual potencies of many kinds. Unfortunately young people tend to misuse these powers and come to grief. They do not recognise the magnitude of their internal powers. The mind is the source of all powers. Only when the mind is subdued can man realise the Divine.

### **Use and abuse of energies**

For achieving anything, strong determination is necessary. Young people in particular should take note of the powers in them. It is comparable to a kind of electrical energy. This energy enables them to see things through the eye (which is like a bulb). You must ensure that your vision is pure, sacred and pleasing. Do not taint or pollute your sight by looking at undesirable objects. Do not look at anything with bad thoughts. The eyes are spoilt by misuse.

throughout the body, its presence is conspicuous in the hand. Hence, the hands should be employed for good purposes. They should not be used for doing harm to others or hurting them.

Moreover, there are in the body rays emitting light. The electrical energy in the body serves to transmit these rays throughout the body like radio waves. People do not use these energies for right purposes. The ears listen to gossip, slander and evil talk the result is the power of hearing gets polluted.

Then, you have the power of speech. This power finds expression in sound waves. This power has to be used with great care. The words one utters should be examined to see that they do not excite, irritate or anger others. Bad words come back to the speaker with double strength. Hence one's speech should be soft and sweet.

The major weakness of young people is the tendency to misuse their boundless potencies. This degrades them as human beings.

### **The men of God**

Young people, failing to exercise control over their actions, tend to become unruly and ungovernable. You may be great scholars or intellectual giants. There are many Nobel Laureates. How many remember them? But the great benefactors of mankind, the men of noble qualities, are cherished by all mankind. For instance, there is the example of a noble soul from Calcutta. Calcutta produced many great intellectuals. After a time they are not remembered at all. But if today Ramakrishna Paramahansa, an illiterate person, is enshrined in the hearts of millions all over the world, is education responsible for it? Likewise, if many noble persons are enshrined in the hearts of people, what is the reason? They have earned their good name by their faith in God, their character, magnanimity and spirit of sacrifice. God has been the prime factor in their lives.

### **A child's faith in God**

The other day you witnessed in the sports festival a young child dancing as Krishna on the hood of a serpent. Owing to the firing of some crackers the cloth on a platform where the child was dancing caught fire. As the flames rose, the police, the students and others rushed to the spot with buckets of water to put out the fire. There was great commotion. But the child Krishna went on with his dance, totally indifferent to what was happening all around his entire concentration was on the role he was playing (cheers). The child went on with the dance with his concentration on Swami. His eyes were centred on Swami. When one's look is centred on the Lord, nothing untoward can happen (cheers). All around the child, the decorations had been prepared with paper. Behind the decorations five hundred children were seated. What disaster might have happened if the fire had spread towards them? But, even a mountain of danger will melt away like ice if one's thoughts are centred on God. (cheers) This means that together with concern for worldly things, there should be devotion to God. Together with education refinement of character (Samskara) is essential. What is meant by Samskara? **“Samyak Kriti iti Samskara”** "Refinement of action is culture" The true implication of the benediction, "Lokas Samasthas

the Divine.

### **Valmiki, Vyasa and Pothana**

How did a highwayman like Ratnakara become the immortal author of the great epic Ramayana? By continuous chanting of the name of the Lord, as taught to him by the seven great sages (Saptarishis), his face acquired a new effulgence and he could become the sage Valmiki, who is immortalised as the author of the Ramayana. He composed his work to please the Lord. He did everything in a spirit of dedication to the Lord.

Take the case of Sage Vyasa. He was the author of eighteen Puranas. He wrote the Mahabharata and many other great works. But it was only when he was filled with divine fervour (and wrote the Bhagavatam) that he became enshrined in the hearts of the people. Valmiki and Vyasa have become immortal through their devotion.

We have Pothana, the author of the Telugu Bhagavatam. He began writing his Bhagavatam with an invocation in which he declared: "What is being composed is Bhagavatam. The one who inspires the writer is Ramchandra. What is written by me will be redemptive. I shall write, as there is no greater story to tell." Pothana began composing his magnum opus with the feeling that everything he was doing was by the will of Sri Rama. So, when you think of Bhagavatam, you are reminded of Pothana. By his great work he has installed himself in the hearts of the devout.

Studies should not end with mastery of books. The hearts should be filled with right knowledge. The students should see that the darkness which envelops the mind is dispelled. This was the prayer which the Gopikas requested Uddhava to convey to Krishna: "Oh Krishna! Dispel the darkness in our hearts and fill them with your effulgence. Pour your love on the parched fields of our hearts so that devotion may sprout from them."

The Gopikas and Gopalas prayed to Krishna that they could not live apart from Him and that therefore they should be endowed with forms related to whatever forms He took so that they could stay with Him. Separation from God is the cause of men's wallowing in sensuous pleasures. The mind is the cause of man's pleasure and pain. It should be directed towards God to secure freedom from pleasure and pain.

### **God will not give up devotees**

People today speak about God having forgotten man. This is not true. God can never give up the devotee. It is the devotee who gives up God. God can never forget the devotee. (cheers) It is the devotee who forgets God. God is never away from you. Only the devotee is away from God. You think that God is moving away from you. Not at all. You forget God and declare that God has forgotten you. Your own feelings are reflected in your utterances. What is the result of education? You find that in any conference, the members criticise one another in unspeakable terms. The critics are invariably petty-minded persons. Many leaders today indulge in mutual mud slinging, which is totally unbecoming. Indulging in abuse of others is a grievous sin.

correct yourself rather than to criticise others.

Most young people today indulge in slander, instead of cultivating qualities like devotion to God, service to society and sympathy for fellow-beings. They should realise that they have to lead exemplary lives and serve their fellowmen. Every individual should dedicate himself to social service.

The spirit of sportsmanship which you display in sports and games should be displayed in other fields also. The determination displayed in sports should also be shown in the game of life.

### **Advice to the young**

You young people have to learn many things. First and foremost, get rid of arrogance (Ahamkara). Earn a good name as a scholar, a man of character, endowed with a spirit of sacrifice. Realise that if you please God, you can please the whole world. You saw the film about the saint Gora Khumbar. In his total absorption in God, he forgot the presence of his son and unwittingly caused the child's death. When he realised what had happened, he did not mourn the death of the child. He declared that God took away what God had given him. Such was his total faith in God.

While pursuing your studies, remember that you have also to strive for the well-being of the world ("**Loka hithe rathaha**").

### **Salaries and service**

Make use of your education for public welfare. You have no doubt to take up a job for earning a living. See that the work you do justifies the emoluments you get. It is treason to the nation to receive thousands by way of salary and do hardly a few hundred rupees' worth of work (cheers). Today such disloyal employees are increasing in numbers all over the world. High salaries and poor output are the rule today. This accounts for the deplorable condition of Bharat today. The public debt is growing alarmingly. Who is responsible? If public servants rendered service according to the salaries they received the country would not be in such a bad plight.

Discharge your duties according to your conscience. Our students should live up to this ideal. There is nothing wrong in receiving a high salary provided you do the work to deserve it. Now young people are concerned only about the pay packets and not the work they have to do in the service of society to deserve the pay. Think more about what you owe to society than what you can get from it. It is sheer selfishness to be concerned only about your earnings.

The Veda has declared that immortality can be attained only through sacrifice. Students! Boys and girls! Wherever you may be, wherever you may live, serve the elders at home, serve the society and bring a good name to the institutions which have educated you. Observe discipline all through your life. Do your duty.

the times when a bag of rice could be got for four rupees, when people could go about without any fear of attack and houses could be left unlocked. Today fear stalks the country. No one is safe. For all these evils the insatiable craving for money is responsible. The evil began in a way in the Dwapara Yuga. Today it has reached frightful limits. The craving for wealth has led to many other evils like jealousy and pride.

**“Students are my only property”**

The money that comes from the people should be given back to them in one way or other. This is Bhagavan's will (cheers). People say that Sai Baba is spending crores of Rupees on the drinking water project. There is not a single rupee of Sai Baba in all this. What has been received from the people is being given back to them. I do not want anything. I have only one properly, my most valuable property. My students are my only property (cheers). It is enough for me if my students conduct themselves well.

I bless you all that you should carry on your lives in the same spirit in which you have distinguished yourselves in games and sports. Win prizes in the game of life, carry out the injunctions of God and stand forth as ideal citizens. Never forget the supremacy of love as the ruling principle in life.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema muditha manase kaho Rama! Rama! Ram!*"

**From Bhagavan's Discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on January 14, 1996**

**VIDYAGIRI SAMACHAR:**

**Spectacular Sports and Cultural Meet**

The Spectacular Sports and Cultural Meet of the three campuses of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute and the Higher Secondary and Primary Schools at Prasanthi Nilayam was inaugurated by Bhagavan Baba on 11th January. Long before sunrise thousands of men, women and children filled the galleries of Sri Sathya Sai Vidyagiri Stadium to witness this extravaganza.

Bhagavan entered the stadium at 7 a.m. and came in procession in His decorated motorised chariot accompanied by the Vice-Chancellor and the Sports authorities of the Institute. Sai Geetha, the gaily-caparisoned elephant, headed the procession, followed by students of the school performing vigorous Bhangra dances and the Institute Band playing catchy tunes. The flag-bearers of the Institute provided a guard of honour to Bhagavan Baba.

Bhagavan Baba lighted the lamps on the Santhi Vedika, marking the start of the Meet. An impressive ‘March Past’ of the students of different campuses and the Higher Secondary School



released pigeons and balloons over the stadium.

The day's events began with presentations by students of the Brindavan Campus. The Go-kart rally was the first item. Various acrobatics and formations on Motorbikes delighted the audience.

Thereafter, girl students of the Anantapur Campus took over. They began with it colourful dance by the Junior College Student. Aerobics, Pyramids on the ladder and various kinds of self-defence practices like Karate followed. They concluded their events with different feats and formations on motorbikes. The motorbike jump beyond a ramp of 21 girls was breath taking.

Demonstration of Fire Rescue Operations organised by the Brindavan Campus students brought the morning programme to a close. For demonstrating the rescue operation a 60-foot high structure was specially erected. From different heights of this structure, through various rope devices, the simulated victims were brought down to safety. Fire fighting with the help of fire engines was also demonstrated. There were life-like demonstrators of how to help persons involved in fire mishaps.

In the evening, the Primary School Children of Prasanthi Nilayam in their colourful costumes made their presentations first. They were followed by the girls of the Higher Secondary School. Then the boy students of Prasanthi Nilayam belonging to the Higher Secondary School and the Institute made their presentations. Aerobics and drills were followed by display of Gymnastics and Yogasanas, Japanese Wushu Sword drill and Tamil Nadu stick fights. Some of the Gymnastics and Yoga exercises were performed on a 40-foot high ladder and on sloping platforms. With BMX bicycles students exhibited different formations, breaking through a tube-light wall, jumping through fire, riding on drums and riding down a staircase of thirty steps. One blind-folded student passed through the stairs set on fire.

On January 12 and 13 the final events of intra-mural sports and games were held. On the 14th the three-day meet concluded with the prize distribution function in the Poornachandra Auditorium. Bhagavan Baba gave away the prizes to the winners in the various events and presented medals, cups and shields to those whose performance was outstanding.

Speaking on the occasion, Bhagavan Baba expressed His appreciation of the performance of the students in sports and athletics and urged that they should carry the same spirit of dedicated application to their various activities in later life. Efforts put in with the sole intention of pleasing God, without any selfish motive, would make their lives sublime. (Details of Bhagavan's discourse are published separately).

—R.N.R.K.

## **Duty**

"What exactly is your duty? Let ME summarise it for you.

FIRST, tend to your parents with love and reverence and gratitude.

SECOND, speak the truth and act virtuously.

THIRD, whenever you have time repeat the Name of the Lord with the form in your mind.

FOURTH, never indulge in talking ill of others or try to discover faults in others,

FINALLY, do not cause pain to others in any form."

—Baba

*AVATAR VANI:*

*NEW YEAR MESSAGE:*

### **The Triple Purity**

Devotion alone bestows the supreme good;  
Devotion alone is the destroyer of the disease of the cycle  
Devotion alone is the means of recognising Divinity;  
Devotion alone is the means of Liberation.

(Poem)

*Embodiments of Love,*

Only through devotion does man attain the supreme Truth. Through devotion alone does man get release from the disease of birth and death. Through devotion man seeks to realise God. Through devotion alone he achieves Liberation.

Esteeming devotion (Bhakti) as the supreme end and the highest goal of life, Bharatiyas have been pursuing the path of devotion from ancient times.

The term Bhakti (devotion) has been interpreted in many ways. The word "Bhakti" is derived from the root "Bhaj". "Bhaja Sevayam" declared Sankara. "Service is devotion", according to Sankaracharya. Whom do you serve? What is the form of service? Service to God is true form of service.

"Viveka Chudamani" (of Sankaracharya) expounded the meaning of Bhakti in a different way. **"Swaswaroopa darsanam Bhakti"**. "The recognition of one's own true self is Bhakti."

Narada, who was a great exponent of devotion, declared: **"Bhaja Paramabhakti."** Narada defined Bhakti as the ceaseless flow of devotion arising from dwelling on the Lord's name.

He also declared that one who is filled with "Paramabhakti" (supreme devotion) is in a state of intoxication, forgetful of the body, totally immersed in the love of the Divine. This means that true devotion consists in obliviousness of the body and total absorption in the love of God.

### **Radha and bhakti**

Ramanuja (the exponent of the Visishtadvaita philosophy) derived the meaning of Bhakti from the name of Radha and interpreted it as the continuous flow of love for God. The word Radha contains four syllables: Ra, aa, dh and aa. If you read the word starting from "Ra", you have "Radha". Starting from "aa", you get the word "Aadhaara". Starting from "Dh", you get the word, "Dhaaraa". Starting from the second "aa", you get the word "Aaraadha". "Aadhaara" means "basis". "Dhaaraa" means "continuous flow". "Aaraadha" means worship. Thus Radha signified for Ramanuja the continuous stream of worship of the Divine.

Vallabhacharya gave a different interpretation of devotion. He made a distinction between the continuous flow of devotion and devotion falling in drops. When a devotee's heart is completely filled with the love of God, he ceaselessly chants the name of God. This state of mind of the devotee was described thus: "Sarvada Sarvakaleshu Sarvatra Harichinthanam" ("ceaselessly thinking of God at all times and all places").

### **God as friend**

Madhvacharya described true devotion as regarding God as the only unfailing friend. All others may be friends for some time and turn inimical later. Thus all worldly friends may turn into enemies some time or other. God is the only true friend. Madhvacharya defined true devotion as the manifestation of the love for God, considering Him as the greatest friend.

The Vedas have proclaimed a truth transcending all these interpretations. The Vedas repeatedly harked upon two words: "Nityam" and "Swagata". "Nityam" is that which remains unchanged through all times. This has also been described as Truth which remains the same in all the three categories of time—past, present and future. "Swagata" refers to that illuminating power, which remaining alone spreads its effulgence all around. This is illustrated by the sun, who is one entity that is unchanging and spreads his light all round. The permanence of the sun indicates the attribute of "Nitya" and the dispersal of his light indicates the quality of "Swagata". Both the qualities are rooted in a single entity. The smriti referred to this characteristic as "Swaroopa-Swabhava"—the combination of form and quality.

The sun has two qualities: One is shedding light; the other is transmitting heat. Likewise, the Atma has two qualities. One is: "Prabhava" or effulgence. The other is: spreading the light all around. You have the example of a lamp in your home. The lamp is one, but its light illumines the whole house.

Likewise, the Spirit (Atma) is one only in its form. It is eternal and unchanging. The Smriti described it as: Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma ("The Supreme Self is Truth, wisdom and infinite"). It is the nature of the Self to spread Jnana (wisdom) everywhere.

The Smriti declared that the Self has the form of "Anu"(the atom). The implication of this is that there is nothing in the universe without atoms. All material objects are made up of atoms. The scripture declared that God is omnipresent (as "Anuswarupa"). God is present also as the macrocosm.

### **"Dharmee" and "dharma"**

The microform (Anuswaroopa) of God is termed, "Dharmee". In this form, "Dharmee" is present in all objects in creation, but none of them is present in "Dharmee". All objects in the universe appear as different from each other, but the Divine principle in all of them is one and the same. That Divine principle, which manifests the oneness underlying all objects, is called "Dharmee". This means that "Dharmee" is what unifies all apparently manifold objects.

"Dharma" demonstrates the diversity in the forms of objects. The underlying principle which reveals the oneness of all these objects is "Dharmee". This "Dharmee" is described by the Veda as "Mooladhara padartham"—the thing that is at the root of all things. This primal basic substance is the basis for everything else. Today the significance of this "Dharmee" is being forgotten. It is also forgotten that this "Dharmee" is all pervading.

As the all-pervading divinity (Dharmee) is present in all objects as the subtle atom, man is regarded as "Dharma-Swaroopa", the embodiment of Dharma. What for has man been given a body? What for does he exist? The scriptures say: "Sareeram aadyam khalu dharma sadhakam" ("The body verily is primary for realising Dharma"). The body has been given to man to practise righteousness (Dharma).

Today men tend to forget the purpose for which they have come into existence. They ignore their duties. They go after meaningless fancies. Hence they are not able to understand their true nature

### **Role of festivals**

In order to make people understand their real divine nature, festivals were designed. Today is Vaikuntha Ekadasi. What is Vaikuntha? The Lord's abode is described in various ways as Vaikuntha, Kailash, Swarga etc. All these are crazy fancies. What is the abode of God? The Lord told Narada: "I reside wherever my devotees sing my glories". The Lord dwells in the hearts of devotees. This is His main address. All other places are "branch offices". Any message addressed to the Divine Indweller in the heart is bound to reach God.

"Vaikuntha" as the abode of God means a place which is changeless. Many things may change in a man, but his heart is changeless.

What is meant by Ekadasi? This should not be regarded as some special place or time. The form of Ekadasi Rudra is made up of the five organs of perception, the five organs of action and the mind. Rudra is a resident of the human body, which is full of numerous potencies. Men today are forgetful of these potencies and the Divinity that dwells in the heart.

New year days come and go. Of what use are they? "Samvatsara" (the year) is one of the names of the Lord. Every moment is new. Why wait for a whole year to make the change in yourselves? As long as you are caught up in worldly celebrations of New Year, Vaikuntha Ekadasi and the like, God will elude you. You can realise God only when you forget the phenomenal world and the body-consciousness.

### **Trikaranas**

Turn the love that arises in you towards God. Dedicate your body to the Divine. This is the true mark of devotion. There are three constituents in man: the mind, the power of speech and the body. These three are called "Trikaranas"—the three active agencies in man. It is when all three are used for sacred purposes, man becomes sanctified.

Every human being needs to cultivate the spirit, irrespective of his beliefs. All need devotion. It is only spirituality that can purify the heart (and mind) of man. The second requirement is morality. Morality helps to purify speech (vaak). The third is "Dharmikam". All righteous deeds done by the body (or hands) sanctify a man. It is through spirituality, morality and righteousness that the three instruments get purified. Only the one who has achieved this triple purity can realise the Divine. If any of these instruments are impure, he cannot realise the Divine.

To comprehend the Divine, man has to understand the subtle atomic principle that pervades the entire cosmos. The difficulty in comprehending the Divine was recognised by the Gopikas who declared: "How can we know you, oh Krishna! You are the subtlest among the subtle and vaster than the vastest among the 84 lakhs of species in the cosmos."

With faith in the omnipresence of the Divine, man should engage himself in good deeds, cherish good thoughts and dedicate his life to good practices. His words should be words of truth. The ornaments he should cherish are truthfulness in speech, charity for the hands and listening to sacred lore for the ears.

Develop faith in your divinity. Then you will redeem your life. Follow your conscience. Make your heart pure.

### **Names and forms**

You cannot realise the Divine by immersing yourself in worldly concerns. There are two kinds of knowledge: "**Dharmeebhootha Jnanam**" and "**Dharmabhootha Jnanam**". "Dharmeebhootha

difference between the two kinds of knowledge. Name and form are interrelated. This truth has to be understood. The awareness that shines within all beings is the form and nature of the Divine. This oneness of form and name has to be properly understood. Every such concept has an external and an inner meaning. You have to grasp the inner meaning. For instance, the mike here rests on the table. The table is the base. The table stands on the earth. The earth is the base and the table is supported by the earth. The base is called "Aadhaara" and the object supported by the base is called "Aadheya". Today people tend to forget the "Aadhaara" and think only of the "Aadheya".

### **Need for change**

Embodiments of Love! The New Year comes regularly year after year. But do you have any new thoughts? You do not shed your old, mistaken ideas. They should be given up, yielding place to new, sacred and sublime thoughts. Of what use is it to celebrate new year days if you do not change your old ways of thinking and behaving? Make proper use of time which is both precious and sacred. Do not indulge in useless gossip. Develop good qualities like compassion, love and sympathy. Act as your own monitor and correct yourself by self-punishment. By a simple method you can control your wandering mind or your anger. Moreover, place your reliance on God. With the power of the Divine to sustain you there is nothing you cannot accomplish. Karna and Ravana are examples of powerful men who were destroyed because they did not have the power of the Divine behind them. The Pandavas were saved because of their faith in the Divine and their unity. Happenings in the world show how some families have prospered because of unity and how others have suffered because of divisions within the family.

### **Unity through God**

Today the nation needs unity above everything else. It is through faith in God that unity can be promoted. Look at the diversity of people in this hall, the different creeds they profess, the different nationalities to which they belong. All are united in their common allegiance to Swami. By this single feeling of faith in the Divine, unity can be achieved. It is the absence of this faith that is the cause of division.

All of you are embodiments of the Divine. All of you are embodiments of love and peace. You are the Divine in human form. Develop that conviction. Immerse yourselves in Divine love. Offer that love to the Divine. Thereby you will have love for all. It is only when you develop this love principle you will be realising the meaning of festivals like these. Stand up for your belief in God, even as you stand up for your father or mother.

Render service to society, without which you cannot exist. Your welfare is bound up with that of society. Develop the feeling of oneness with all, loving all as members of one Divine family.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema Muditha manase Kaho! Rama! Rama! Ram!*"

**From Bhagavan's discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on January 1, 1996**

## Spiritual Significance of Sivaratri

*Moham hithva priyo bhavathi  
Krodham hithva na sochathi  
Kamam hithva arthavan bhavathi  
Lobham hithva sukhi bhavathi*

### *Embodiments of Love!*

As long as one is proud, men will not like him. Only when he suppresses his pride will he be liked by one and all. "Krodham hithva na sochathi." The man filled with anger will have no happiness. He will be immersed in misery. When he subdues his anger, he will be free from grief. "Kamam hithva arthavan bhavathi." When a man has insatiable desires he will never feel contented. When he controls his desires, he will be truly rich. "Lobham hithva sukhi bhavathi." A miserly person will never feel happy. When he gives up greed he will realise happiness.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Divinity is not easily perceived or realised. It is easy to talk about the Divine. It is easy to comment on the miracles and sports of the Divine. But to understand them in their fullness is very difficult. To look at something evil and shout about it like crows is not a good thing. It is better to sing like the cuckoo over something good. Tastes differ from person to person. One man's sweet is another man's poison. With such diverse tendencies, how can men recognise the Divine? The ancient sages of Bharat carried out many spiritual investigations and through the study of the scriptures proclaimed their experience of the Divine. The Upanishads declared: "Raso vai saha". That is, the Divine is present in all things as their essence like sugar in sugarcane and butter in milk. God is present both in the good and the bad, in truth and untruth, in merit and sin. That being the case, how is one to determine what is false and what is unrighteous? The Gita declares: "My Spirit is the indwelling spirit in all beings." The individual who realises this truth will experience equal mindedness (samatwam).

### **Duality in life**

But, for people living in the mundane world and concerned with worldly affairs, right and wrong, truth and untruth and similar opposites are unavoidable. Hence, as long as one is involved in leading a worldly life one cannot escape from duality. One's peace and security have to be found in the context of pleasure and pain. One's joy is linked with suffering. Pleasure is an interval between two pains. Life is a combination of light and shadow. Without sorrow there can be no happiness. Only when you walk in the hot sun can you experience the pleasure of a shady place. In such a life, it is not possible to experience pleasure alone all the time.

### **The cosmic process**

The entire cosmos is governed by three states: creation, sustenance and dissolution (srishti, sthithi and layam). The truth of this is beyond dispute by anyone at any time. A Divine truth is conveyed by this concept. "Srishti"(creation) is the expression of the will of God (Easwara

Sankalpa). It is called Prakriti (Nature). Every object in creation should have the characteristics of Nature. Man has come into existence to manifest the powers of Nature. The powers of Nature are not present in all in equal measures. The man who is conscious only of the physical has a perverted view of these powers. The spiritually-oriented person sees their benign nature. Nature (Prakriti) and Spirit (Chaitanya) are one. But in accordance with their varied feelings and attitudes, things appear good or bad to men.

"Loka" is one of the names applied to the world. "Loka" is that which has the power of thought ("aalocharri"). In this assembly there are a large number of persons. They are all gathered in one place. But each lives in a world of his own. What is the reason? One will be thinking about an educational problem. Another will be thinking about a job. Yet another may be worried about his business. Another may be concerned about agriculture. Others may be thinking about some scientific problem. All these different realms of thought are all exercises of the mind.

### **The trinity in man**

Thus the cosmic process (srishti) creation, (sthithi) sustenance and (layam) dissolution goes on in every human being. Creation (srishti) is the outcome of thought (sankalpa). "Sthithi", (sustenance) is protection of creation. "Layam" is the merger of creation in its source. Srishti, Sthithi and Layam are also identified with the three qualities Satwa, Rajas and Thamas. Man is the embodiment of the three gunas. The three gunas represent the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara). The Trinity represents the three worlds (Trilokas). The three worlds and the Trinity are present in every human being. The three are to be regarded as one and worshipped as "Sivam." What is "Sivam"? It is the embodiment of Auspiciousness. When man recognises the unified form of the Trinity his humanness acquires auspiciousness. In a government there are different departments like education, finance etc. Likewise in the spiritual field also there are different departments. They are: Srishti, Sthithi and Layam. Each department has a head. Each head has to govern his department on right lines. There is an overlord presiding over all departments. He is like the Prime Minister in a Cabinet. He is God. He is called Allah. By attributing different names and forms to God, Divinity is fragmented in various ways. The one Divine is responsible for the threefold cosmic process. This three aspects of God can be seen in the English word GOD. **G** represents generation (Srishti). **O** represents Organisation (Sthithi). **D** represents Dissolution (Layam). GOD represents the unity of the three aspects.

There is a misunderstanding about these three. "Layam" is considered as destruction or dissolution. Its real meaning is mergence. **O** represents Organisation. It means protection. **G** stands for Generation (or creation). Brahma, Vishnu and Easwara are three potencies immanent in man. To understand this it is essential to follow the spiritual path. Spirituality does not mean leading a lonely ascetic life. Spirituality means getting rid of attachment and hatred and looking upon the whole humanity as one. Every one should understand this inner meaning of spirituality.

### **Sivaratri**

Man is endowed with infinite potencies. All that you experience by way of seeing, hearing and the like are reflection of the inner being. The significance of this experience has to be properly understood. For instance, today is Sivarathri day. You experience the night every day. These are



ordinary nights. They are nights of darkness. But Sivarathri is an auspicious night. How is it auspicious? There are sixteen aspects for the mind. The moon is the presiding deity for the mind. Of the sixteen phases of the moon, today in the fourteenth day of Margasirsha month, fifteen of the phases are absent. On this day it is possible to get full control of one's mental faculties. Hence it is considered an auspicious day. Auspiciousness consists in diverting the mind towards God. This calls for getting rid of the inherited animal tendencies in man. This is the occasion to recognise the omnipresence of the Divine in all beings and in all objects. It follows that whomsoever you adore or condemn, you are adoring or condemning God. You must follow the injunction: Help ever, hurt never.

Every human being has sacred qualities, based on his Divine essence (Sivatvam). Hence man should realise his inherent divinity, though his body is made up of the five elements. Thereby humanness is transformed into divinity. The human birth is intended for the pursuit of Dharma. Dharma (Righteousness) implies harmony in thought, word and deed. When every person realises his essential divine nature, the entire world will be transformed. The body and the mind are mere instruments. Man's reality is the Self (Atma). Man should use the instruments given to him to perform his duties well and realise his oneness with God.

### **Unity in diversity**

All the phenomena in Nature proclaim the glory of the Divine. Why foster religious differences? Let everyone carry out the dictates of the Divine, who governs the universe. (Swami sang a poem in Telugu to convey this message). Everything that happens is by the will of God.

The principal teaching of the Vedas is that all men should strive together in harmony and share their joys together in amity. Through unity humanity can achieve purity, leading to divinity. The three great enemies of man are: lust or desire, anger and greed. These have to be eliminated. The greatest quality in man is love. Love is God. Live in love.

Bharat has been hailed as the teacher for all lands. It is the country which regarded God as one and recognised the unity that underlies all diversity. God is one, the goal is one and all life is one. This unity underlies all diversity. This basic Divine unity is missed in the perception of diversity.

### **The godly life**

Embodiments of Love! At the present moment, in the prevailing situation, what is most essential is the cultivation of love. Losing love mankind has lost its humanness. Love is the supreme human value. Truth, righteousness, peace and non-violence are other human values. Knowing these values, men are foolishly leading valueless lives. What a pity that men in human form do not behave like human beings. Rivers, trees and cows teach the lesson of living for the benefit of others. Man should also share the divinity in him with others. Men today are steeped in selfishness. Who ever remembers the names of scholars and scientists? But millions adore the names of realised souls like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Tukaram, Kabir and Ramdas. Bear in mind four dicta to be observed: Run away from bad company. Welcome association with good people. Do meritorious acts continually. Remember what is transient and what is permanent. Be with God, think with God, see with God and dedicate all actions to God. Consider all as

members of one Divine family. Regard yourself as a trustee and use your wealth and talents for the good of others. Use every opportunity to help others. Be compassionate at all times. Students in particular should always be ready to go to the help of people in distress. God today is in search of good men. Every one should strive to be sincere in thought, word and deed. Then you need not go in search of God. God will discover you.

### **A lesson in fraternity**

You have to develop fraternal feelings towards everyone. Here is an example from the Ramayana. Once the four brothers as young lads were playing a game with a ball. After the game Rama ran to Kausalya and rested on her lap. He was full of joy. When Kausalya asked him why he was feeling so happy, Rama said that Bharata had won in the game that day and that made him so happy. Kausalya remarked that an elder brother rejoicing in the success of his younger brother is a great example of brotherly love. Shortly thereafter Bharata came to Kausalya with a sad look. Kaushlaya asked him why he was feeling sad when he had won in the game. Bharata said: "When I was about to lose the game, Rama managed to lose the game and made me the winner. I am feeling unhappy because of the defeat of my elder brother. Is it not sad that on my account my elder brother should lose the game?" What an example of fraternal love! The elder brother should rejoice in the success of the younger, even by losing the game himself. This is the lesson taught by the Ramayana. In those days the four brothers were in a supreme state of fraternal love. Today brothers go to the Supreme Court for settling their disputes! This is not proper. Brothers should be united and live in amity. The ideal of fraternal unity upheld in the Ramayana should inspire the people today. Students! Strive for the welfare of society as a whole. Experience God through love.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema muditha manase Kaho! Rama! Rama! Ram!*"

**From Bhagavan's discourse in Poornachandra Auditorium on Feb 17, 1996**

*GURUDEV VANI*

### **Spiritual Basis of Human Values**

Born as human beings, growing as human beings, men have forgotten the value of human existence. Developing religious differences, fostering demonic tendencies, they are destroying peace. What is the state of human life today? The foremost thing that should exist is respect for human values. However great an intellectual may be, however great one may be as a scholar or a man of learning, one has also to acquire humanness. Without humanness, scholarship and intellectual eminence are of no value.

It is only when men cultivate humanness that society will shine with radiance and the nation and the world will progress. Humanness can be promoted only through spirituality and not by any other means. Just as a seed can sprout only when it is planted in the soil and watered, human

values can grow only in a spiritual soil. If a man wants to cultivate human values, he has to apply the manure of spirituality to his heart, water it with love so that human values will grow.

Human society needs essentially fellow feeling and unity. When these two are present, humanness will flourish.

### **The five principles of yama**

Wherefrom are human values to be derived and how are they to be developed? Human values are born along with human birth. They exist in union. Unfortunately, man today separates himself from human values and yet wants to live as a human being. To recover human values, man has to take the spiritual path. In spiritual sadhana, there are eight disciplines to be observed: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dhyana, Dharana and Samadhi. Of these, the first is Yama. It is enough if this single discipline is observed. All human values are comprised in it. Humanness is embedded in it. "Yama" includes the five life-breaths (Pancha Pranas), the five elements (Pancha Bhutas), the five sheaths (Pancha Kosas), the five basic principles (Pancha Tatwas), and five forms (Pancha Roopas). The five forms are the form of Gayatri. The five basic principles are: Ahimsa, Sathya, Brahmacharya, Astheya and Aparigraha. These five constitute "yama." The first is Ahimsa. Buddha attached the greatest importance to Ahimsa. He considered it the foremost duty (Dharma). "Ahimsa Paramo Dharmaha", declared Buddha.

### **Wider meaning of ahimsa**

What does "Ahimsa" signify? It is not merely refraining from causing harm or injury to others. It implies also refraining from causing harm to himself. One who harms himself cannot avoid harming others? Whoever desires to observe "Ahimsa" must see that he does not do violence to himself. How is this to be ensured? By constantly examining whether his conduct is right or wrong. For instance, in the matter of speech, he must examine whether his words are causing pain to others or not. He must see that his looks are not tainted by evil intentions or thoughts. He should not listen to evil talk. All these cause harm to the individual. Hence, everyone should see that he gives no room for bad looks, bad hearing, bad speech, bad thoughts and bad actions. How do you determine what is bad? By consulting your conscience. Whenever you act against the dictates of your conscience, bad results follow. The conscience is the form of the Divine within everyone. Whatever you do, the conscience tells you whether it is right or wrong. However, to ascertain the directive of the conscience you have to wait for some time. You should not be in a hurry. When you want to say something, you must consider for a moment whether it would be proper or not and then speak. When you want to listen to something, you must examine whether it is good or bad to listen and then decide what is proper.

You should be careful not only with regard to how you react to the five elements, but also with regard to your food. Excessive eating does violence to the body. Moderation in food is conducive to happiness. Ahimsa (or non-violence) is thus what confers happiness on you. That which hurts you is violence (himsa). Nor is that all. Even in drinking water, you should observe restraints. Likewise, one's entire life should be governed by the principle of non-violence. Many germs die when one takes a bath or walks or does any other action. Even in the process of breathing many germs die. Violence is present in all these activities. Therefore, to avoid the consequences of

such involuntary violence to living creatures, one is advised to dedicate all actions to the Divine. But there is no meaning in dedicating to the Divine conscious acts of violence. The conscience will not approve of such conduct. In Vedantic parlance, the conscience is called "chit." It is also called Awareness. Awareness is total understanding. This total understanding is within the capacity of every human being. Everyone must strive to express this awareness. Thus, Ahimsa is the primary duty of man.

### **Adherence to truth**

The second duty is Sathyam (Truth). Truth is not merely telling the facts about what you see or hear or know. These are temporal truths. In its full sense truth can be applied only to what comes out of your heart in its pure and unsullied form as the voice of conscience. This truth (Sathya) is also called "Ritham." It is true for all time-past, present and the future. It is not affected by changes in time or place. It is unchanging and cannot be suppressed. Truth is its own proof. It is the form of the Divine as declared in the Vedic saying: Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma (Truth, the highest wisdom and Infinite-that is the Absolute Self). Truth is thus the second human value.

### **Non-stealing**

The third is Astheyam (non-stealing). Astheyam means not stealing the properties of others. Property should not be confined to physical objects like a book. When you need anything, there is nothing wrong in your taking it with the permission of the owner. To take or use any object without such permission amounts to stealing. Even to criticise someone in a way that harms him also amounts to theft (of his good name). It is common among students to borrow a friend's camera and use it. When the camera is damaged, the responsibility for getting it repaired is that of the user. In this manner, you can understand how the concept of stealing applies even to trivial incidents in daily life. This is the third duty.

### **Brahmacharya**

The next duty is Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya is interpreted in many ways. One meaning is remaining unmarried. This is not the correct meaning. The true meaning of the term is "Moving in Brahman." Brahmacharya means ceaseless contemplation of God. "Charya" means "moving" (or "treading") "Brahmacharya" means "moving in Brahman (the Supreme Self)." Mere bachelor-hood is not Brahmacharya. A married man is called "Grihasta" (house-holder). There is Brahmacharya even in a house-holder's life. This consists in his leading the conjugal life with the wife alone ("Ardhangi"). If a married man leads a promiscuous life he is not observing Brahmacharya. Even in thoughts and looks, one should observe continence. Brahmacharya acquired its importance because of its strict observance by our ancient sages.

Unconsciously or otherwise men tend to waste their energies. All these are lapses from Brahmacharya. Sense control is vital in practising continence. It is easier to conquer Indra (the Lord of gods) than to subdue the senses (Indriyas). Control of senses is an important human value. It is because these vital disciplines were observed by the sages and others since ancient times, they continue to be cherished to this day. Bharat has passed through innumerable

vicissitudes in its long history, including foreign invasions. Nevertheless, by and large the people have managed to foster the human values.

### **Aparigraha**

The fifth discipline is: Aparigraha. This means not accepting things from others. You have every right to receive gifts or other things from your parents. You are the product of your parents and hence you can accept from them whatever they give. "Aparigraha" has certain subtle implications. For instance, it is not proper to accept gifts even from one's uncles or in-laws or even from one's brothers. When any gifts are received from these relatives, you have to requite them by equivalent presents. Today the Aparigraha rule is blatantly violated. For instance, boys when they get married after their education, receive dowries at the time of marriage. This is very wrong. It even amounts to a sin. A girl who has been brought up well is offered to a young man in marriage. That itself is a great gift. Why should one ask for money along with the bride? The parents of the girl may give her whatever they choose. But the bridegroom should not expect or accept anything.

This is the attitude one should have towards gifts from others. It is because many of these immemorial injunctions have been given the go-by that today Bharat is experiencing various troubles.

### **Gifts from God**

Gifts can be accepted from parents, the preceptor and God. These are the exceptions to the rule of "Aparigraha." From these four, you can receive anything. But even from the parents you should not seek to get anything by compulsion or litigation. What is offered by the parents with love should be received with love. There are limits to what you can receive from the parents. But there is no limit to what you can receive from God. You can accept anything from God because He is the Lord of everything. He can free you from sin and redeem you from the consequences. God encompasses all relationships and hence one should identify one's self with God. "You and I are one." Attributing relationships like mother and father to God sets binding limits to the association between God and man.

### **Quest for the Divine**

In the vast ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss), the myriad human beings, with different names and forms, are like waves. But as the waves are made up of the same water as the ocean, all human beings are sparks of the Divine.

Sat-Chit-Ananda is present in every human being. People out of their ignorance go in quest of Sat-Chit-Ananda elsewhere. Ignorance (Ajnana) is the cause of Aviveka (stupidity). Stupidity is the cause of egoism (Ahamkara). Egoism gives rise to attachment. Attachment leads to hatred. Hatred gives rise to action (Karma). Karma is the cause of birth. The original cause of the chain of processes leading to birth is ignorance. What is ignorance? It is the state of divisiveness (bhinnatvam). To regard "That" as different from you is ignorance. To differentiate God from yourself is ignorance. All are fragments of the Divine, sparks from the same flame. When the sparks are near the fire, they retain their heat and light. But when they are away, they turn into

charcoal. Likewise, when one is near God, Sat-Chit-Ananda will be in him. When he is remote from God, he will lose the attributes of the Divine. He will be immersed in ignorance. It is not mastery of books and scholarship which makes a person a Jnani (a knower of the Supreme Truth). "Advaita darshanam Jnanam" "To perceive the One without a second is Knowledge."

It is only when you manifest the bliss that is in you (Sat-Chit-Ananda) that you can call yourself "Vyakti", the manifested individual. The term vyakti cannot be applied to all and sundry. He alone can be called vyakti who manifests the invisible divinity within him.

### **Union with God**

What is meant by Sat-Chit-Ananda? Sat is "Being", that which is eternal and unchanging. Sugar has the quality of sweetness, which remains in whatever form it may be used. For purposes of analogy, sugar may be described as "Sat." "Chit" may be compared to water. It has the quality of mobility. When sugar and water are mixed, you have neither sugar nor water as such, but a new product, syrup. When "Sat" and "Chit" come together, you have Ananda (Bliss). People imagine that this bliss is to be found in jobs, marriage, property or progeny. That is not the case. You hope for happiness in one thing after another: education, jobs, marriage, children and so on. But happiness eludes you. The only enduring happiness is got by oneness with the Divine. The answer to the question, "Where is happiness?" is: "Happiness is union with God."

Students tend to forget this, in the pursuit of worldly pleasures. It is only through the ripeness of experience that this realisation can come. For instance, you see a barren field in the summer. After a night's rain, you find grass coming up. Wherefrom did it come? It is from the field. What was present in the form of seeds in the earth came up as grass after the rain. Likewise the bliss within you will sprout when you water your parched heart with the rain of divine love.

Scientists today have made many astonishing discoveries. But they lack peace. They have failed to understand the Vedantic truth about their true nature. Hence they are unable to experience the bliss of the Spirit that is in them. People should not underrate the powers present in the atmosphere. For instance, it is filled with radio waves coming from different broadcasting centres. But the waves maintain their individual wavelength and do not collide with the others. This electrical energy is divine. It is one of the secrets of creation. The body is like a radio set. When you do not tune in properly by concentration you will not get the right station. Concentration is essential for every kind of activity in life. Students should realise how much can be gained by reducing one's desires. They may experiment in a small way with reducing the consumption of coffee. They will find that their memory power increases. As desires are reduced, their will power will grow. This will power ("Iccha Shakti") is being undermined today. The result is their ability to act is also reduced. Consequently, even the Jnana-shakti, the power of wisdom, is also lost.

### **Rely on God**

Students! Understand that there is no free will for individuals. They are constrained by various limitations. God alone has total free will. All others are bound in one way or another.

Whatever one's efforts, the ultimate outcome lies with Providence. Therefore, place your faith in God and do your duty, wherever you may be. Do not cause any harm to others. Observe continence, avoid covetousness and lead a good, righteous life. A bad habit, which may seem trivial in the beginning, may develop into a menace in later life. Correct such faults in the initial stages. Pursue spiritual exercises with the same enthusiasm you have for sports and studies.

(Bhagavan related at length the story of Ghora Kumbhar and his final merge in the Lord of Pandharpur, Panduranga. Bhagavan pointed out how God's grace was needed for the rishis to obtain a vision of the Divine, or get the opportunity to speak to God. The rishis later took birth as monkeys to converse with God and again took birth as Gopikas and Gopalas to have contact with God. Bhagavan told the students the purpose of the Sai avatar was different from that of Rama and Krishna because the forces of good and evil were now present in every human being and the process of transformation had to be effected in a context very different from the previous yugas). In the Kaliyuga, the process of transformation has been individualised. Everyone has to correct himself. "Child! you have to punish yourself. You have to save yourself. I am present within you as a witness." This is the Lord's message. Hence, everyone should try to reform himself. You have to decide what is right and what is wrong and give up what is bad.

### **Hopes in students**

The ways of God are inscrutable. You should not ascribe to God motives which are a reflection of your own feelings. Hence, self-enquiry is essential. Embark on the Divine path with sincerity. You will emerge as leaders in the world. I have high expectations regarding your future. Revere your parents, serve society and protect the nation. It is to produce such students that I am devoting three-fourths of my time to them. Carry out Swami's injunctions. Earn a good name. Uphold the prestige of the Sai educational institutions. That is the gratitude you can show to Swami. Do not think of the pens and other gifts you received. Remember only that Swami gave you good sense.(cheers). Develop both goodness and godliness. Beyond these two, there is nothing greater which education can do for you.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan "*Govinda Krishna Vitthale, Venugopala Krishna Vitthale.*"

**From Bhagavan's discourse in the Secondary School Hostel on January 18, 1996**

### **Sickness**

*"Illness is caused more by malnutrition of the mind than of the body. Doctors often speak of vitamin deficiency; I will call it the deficiency of vitamin 'G', and I will recommend the repetition of the name of God. That is vitamin 'G'! That is the medicine; regulated life and habits are two-thirds of the treatment, while the medicine is just one-third only. Fear is the biggest cause of illness."*

*To many, it may appear strange that, in this Anandalaya (Abode of bliss), there exists an Arogya Nilaya (Abode of Health) or Hospital. They may wonder why prominence is given to bodily health, in a place that is dedicated to the health of the spirit. But, for attaining the four aims of Human life, Dharma(Righteousness), Artha(Prosperity), Kama(Fulfillment of Desires) and Moksha(Liberation from Bondage), the basic requirement is Health of the body and the mind.*

**—Baba**

## **Sai Seva on the March**

The most significant aspect of the global growth of the Sai movement is the exponential expansion of service activities by Sai devotees all over the world. The Seva Dal in every place is the backbone of the Sai Organisation. The rapid growth of the Seva Dal all over India has been triggered by the increasing role allotted to Seva Dal groups from different parts of the country for various forms of service at Prasanthi Nilayam. This expanded presence of the Seva Dal has been a necessary consequence of the growth of the Nilayam township and the ever-increasing stream of devotees coming to Prasanthi Nilayam all round the year.

A special scheme to enable Seva Dal members to stay for a fortnight by turns to render service in Prasanthi Nilayam was instituted eight years ago. In the beginning these batches of Seva Dal members serving in Prasanthi Nilayam consisted of not more than 30 or 40 men and women. Today the members serving in the Nilayam every month come to over 2500 men and women. Each state or a group of two or three states send their Seva Dal members by turns each month. They are assigned a variety of duties including security duties within the Nilayam complex, service in the Super-Speciality Hospital and the General Hospital, service in the canteen, assistance to devotees and any other duties that may be assigned to them by the ashram authorities. At any one time at least eight hundred Seva Dal members, men and women, are involved in Seva at Prasanthi Nilayam.

During the birthday celebrations in November, the activities of the Sai Samitis and Seva Dal organisations all over India were reviewed at a conference attended by over 25,000 delegates. While most of them had to attend simultaneously to varied duties connected with the birthday celebration, most of them managed to snatch intervals to participate in the Conference and exchange experiences and ideas regarding the future programme of work. It was felt that the growth of the Seva Dal had enabled the active workers among the devotees to spread the message of Bhagavan by example and service. It was agreed that the global transformation aimed at by Bhagavan should begin with individual transformation and expand to the society, the nation and the world. An intensification of personal sadhana by each member of the Seva Dal was considered as the most essential task. It was decided to promote unity and harmony within the organisation by intensified service activity and resolving differences by periodical sadhana camps, retreats and mutual understanding. Dedication to the activities of the three wings of the



organisation—the spiritual, the educational and the service wings—was necessary to make the organisation fulfil the message of Bhagavan in its true spirit.

In the field of organisation, the Conference noted, as mentioned in the report of the All-India President, Sri G. V. Sathyanarayana, that at present there were 7,000 Sai Samitis and 15,000 centres functioning all over the country. All sub-divisional towns and taluq head quarters in half the states in the country had Sai Centres. By 2000 A.D., it was decided to have centres in all the states with the blessings of Bhagavan. Today in all but four states, the Sai Organisation is rendering some kind of service or other in every district. It is estimated that at least 10 million people are reached by these service activities. Bhagavan's message is obviously reaching hundreds of millions through electronic and other media. This provides the basis for a more rapid growth of the Sai Organisation both qualitatively and quantitatively.

As Bhagavan made it clear in His discourses at the world conference, the primary purpose of the Sai Organisations is "to raise the human consciousness to the Divine by eliminating all animal tendencies." The acquisition of the Love of God should be the primary aim of members of the organisation." The conviction of nearly all the participants in the all-India Conference was that this Spiritual Objective should be kept foremost before them by members of the Organisation.

Jai Sai Ram!

*"Make your lives simple. Execute the daily tasks in a spirit of love and mutual co-operation. Be tolerant towards the errors and failings of others. Look upon them with sympathy and equanimity. Be calm and without agitations under all conditions. Then your sentiments will be tender and unselfish. Envy, hatred and vindictiveness will not be able to gain entrance in the stronghold of your mind. You will have peace and happiness."*

—Baba

AVATAR VANI:

### **Cherish the Glorious Heritage of Bharat**

*Sarve Bhavanthu Sukhinah;  
Sarve Santhu Niraamayaah;  
Sarve Phadraani Pasyanthu;  
Maa Kaschid Duhkhino bhaveth.*

*Embodiments of Love!*

The foremost dictum of Bharatiya Culture is that all people should enjoy happiness and prosperity. Bharat is the birth-place of spirituality and the qualities of charity and righteousness. It is known for its devotion to peace and security. The adherence to truth practised in Bharat could not be found in any other country. This land gave birth to the immortal Seven Sages. It is the

birth-place of the first among poets, Valmiki, (author of the epic Ramayana), and the Sage Vyasa, who codified the Vedas.

Bharat is the land where Rama established the reign of Righteousness. Bharat is the sacred land where Krishna preached the Gita. This is the land sanctified by the advent of Buddha. It has the glory of witnessing the many incarnations of the Lord.

Unfortunately Bharatiyas are not recognising the sacred greatness of their country. Bharat was the land where at one time there was no one who did not practise charity or virtue (dana and dharma). These two qualities constituted the main wealth of the nation. Bharatiyas used to utter a prayer before embarking on any act, however trivial.

The young boys and girls of today are the inheritors of this sacred wealth. Bharatiyas of today, both young and old, should strive to preserve this heritage. Since ancient times Bharat has been the leader of spirituality and holding forth the message of peace and prosperity to the rest of the world. Then and now the Bharatiya ideal has been: "Let all the peoples of all countries be happy".

### **Bharatiyas' duty**

Bharatiyas today are letting slip this great, sacred and precious heritage. They are pursuing purely mundane and material gains.

Bharatiyas should realise that just as the body can be healthy only so long as the blood is pure, they can have real bliss, only as long as their minds are filled with thoughts of God. Bliss is not something apart. As long as sublime thoughts, noble feelings fill their hearts, they will experience bliss. Every thought arises from the heart. When the heart is filled with love, every thought and feeling becomes loving.

Hence, what Bharatiyas should seek is love-filled hearts. Every act stemming from the heart should be filled with love. Every effort should be made to foster this ancient culture of Bharat.

### **"Truth is God"**

In the chanting of the Lord's name there is no specific regimen to be followed. It is not governed by differences of creed, caste and religion or by any age restriction.

It is not associated with any particular language. It is like a boat that can be used by one and all. It is by the constant chanting of the Lord's name that Bharat has been protected through the ages. No other country can lay claim to the kind of spiritual wealth possessed by Bharat.

One of the earliest scientific investigators in the west declared that there is a base for all knowledge, all science and all wisdom. "This is the Supreme Truth. Bharat is the original home of this Truth". Truth is God. This Truth should never be forgotten."

Investigators elsewhere enquired into the source of all knowledge and wisdom and found that Bharat had found that Truth was the basis of all knowledge. Today people are not making such investigations. Crores of rupees are spent on trivial investigations and time and energy are wasted on them.

Divinity cannot be discovered by experiments. The different methods of devotion may not directly reveal God, but they show the path to God realisation. For instance, the sourness in the neem fruit and the sweetness in the sugarcane indicate the presence of the Divine. The basis for all the varied phenomena in Nature—the twinkling of the stars, the revolutions of the planets, the fire from the sun—is the Divine. Nature proclaims the immanence of God. You look with awe at a mountain. You feel ecstatic at the torrent of a mighty river. The sight of a green forest delights you. All these are manifestations of the Divine mystery. All the beauties in Nature testify to the basic presence of the Divine in all things.

### **Kshetra and kshetrajna**

What is the basis for man? It is the body. All the powers found outside are to be found in the human body. It was for this reason that the sages and the scriptures called upon man to discover his true nature.

What does "Knowing one's self" mean? A man's real self is not known by finding his lineage, or his profession, his nationality or scholarship. These are all attributes employed in ordinary parlance to identify a person. All these are related to one's body. When a person declares that one is a Brahmin or a young man, or a woman, these terms relate to the body. "Know thyself" does not mean knowing all about the body. What is to be known is the indwelling Spirit ("Sareeri"). It is not enough to know about the "Kshetra"(the body). You must know the "Kshetrajna" (the knower of the Field the body). Krishna declared in the Gita: "Know that I am the abode-Kshetra-and the knower of the abode Kshetrajna". Humanness consists in the unity of the two. The body is essential for knowing the nature of the indwelling Spirit. It is only when the Kshetra (the body) is used properly that the nature of the Kshetrajna (the Indwelling Knower) can be understood.

### **Experiencing divinity**

How are the various divine potencies in man to be made known? What are the basic requirements for every person? A mind pure as butter, a heart cool and pleasing as the moon, speech sweet as honey—when these three qualities are developed, Divinity is experienced. When you examine the present state of things, you find the mind is polluted, the heart is filled with bitterness and the speech is marked by harshness. These are not the marks of true humanness. These are signs of a cruel nature.

Hence, everyone should cultivate nectarine sweetness of speech, a moonlike pleasing heart and an unsullied butter-like mind. These are the characteristics of the Divinity latent in man.

To realise this inherent divinity in man the royal path is spirituality. God can be realised by any path. The scriptures indicated the nine paths of devotion for God-realisation and showed that chanting the name of the Lord is the simplest. Whatever form of worship, penance or meditation

one may adopt, the foundation is the Lord's name. The entire Rig Veda is replete with the Lord's name. The Yajur Veda is a compendium of mantras (sacred mystical formulae). Sama Veda is filled with melody. The human heart is a combination of music, mantra and name (of the Lord). The ancients regarded the human being as a combination of Yantra, Mantra and Tantra.

### **Yantra, Mantra, Tantra**

The body is a yantra (a machine). The life-breath is a Mantra. The heart is Tantra. What is the mantra contained in the life-breath? It is "SoHam". The mantra "So-Ham" (I am He) is chanted by each breathing. "So...."(He) is the sound that arises when air is breathed in. "Aham" is the sound that emanates when the air is breathed out. This sacred mantra is proclaimed by the heart with each breath. To pronounce this mantra the body is essential. If any minute part of the body is affected, the entire system will be affected, just as a defective bolt or nut can make a rocket functionless.

All organs in the human body should be kept functioning properly. Only then it would be possible to rise from the human to the divine level. How is this to be accomplished? By dedicating every action to the Lord. When every action is done with the consciousness that it is done for the pleasure of the Lord, life gets divinised. There is no need for anyone to give up any of his duties or actions in daily life. All that is needed is to perform everyone of them in a spirit of dedication to the Lord.

### **Devotion and faith**

Embodiments of Love I For anything that you want to accomplish faith (or self-confidence) is vital. Faith is as basic for spiritual progress as breathing is essential for life. Today what we witness is devotion without faith. There is a familiar saying that a bull without a yoke, a horse without curbs, a car without brakes and a mind without sense-control are dangerous and useless.

Chanting the Lord's name is essential for crossing the turbulent ocean of life. It is a boat that can carry you across the deepest ocean. In chanting the Lord's name, one should be tranquil, utterly selfless and pure at heart. Ostentation and egoism should be eschewed.

One can follow any one of the nine forms of devotion (from listening to total surrender) with purity of mind and in an unselfish spirit. In singing bhajans, there should be no spirit of competition and no caviling of others. The entire concentration should be on the name and form. In the Kali Age, the chanting of the Lord's name is the panacea. In Krita Yuga, it was Dhyana (meditation). In Treta Yuga it was Yajna (sacrifice). In Dwapara Yuga it was "Archana" (worship of icons). In the Kali Yuga, there is no other means needed for human redemption except the mere chanting of the name of Hari.

The Lord's name can be chanted while you are travelling or before you go to sleep, or while you are doing any of your daily chores. This easy, sacred path has been laid down for people in the Kali age.

### **Spiritualise life**

Today you have every kind of amenity. You have hospitals, schools and other institutions to serve you. The only thing people lack is faith in God. What is the use of having everything else? Develop faith in God.

It is the duty of students, boys and girls, to foster the ancient culture that has come down to us as a precious heritage. You are the inheritors of this culture. You must enter every walk of life in the world and infuse spirituality in it. Young people are sacrificing their lives in meaningless conflicts. Humanness is at a low level. Demonic tendencies have reared their heads. Young people should counter these forces and uphold the culture and human values of Bharat.

If you develop the sense of spiritual oneness of all mankind the conflicts of today will vanish. Discord has become ubiquitous. At the root of all this is the loss of faith in God. Get rid of jealousy and egoism. Then you will experience the Divine.

*Sarvarupadharam Santham  
Sarvanamadharam Sivam  
Satchidananda rupam Advaitam  
Sathyam Sivam Sundaram*

All forms of the Lord are peaceful. By whatever name the Divine is cherished in one's heart, that is Sivam. The one without a second, whose form is Being-Awareness-Bliss. When the changeless "Sat" combines with "Chit", total awareness, you have bliss. It is like the union of sugar and water which produces syrup.

The Gita has declared that the one Divine is present in all beings as consciousness, like the current that illumines a variety of bulbs. To be conscious of this oneness is the highest manifestation of love.

### **Max Mueller's Wish**

Embodiments of Love! You can have no idea of the greatness of Bharat as the land of wisdom, of yoga, of merit and noble deeds. Many foreigners desired to take birth and pass away in this sacred land. The great savant, Max Mueller, wished to be reborn in Bharat. He was such a great seeker that he was named "Moksha Moola"(one who is rooted in liberation). He made a thorough study of the Vedas. He regarded every clod of earth in Bharat as sacred. He regarded everything in Bharat as Divine. In Bharat unfortunately Bharatiyas do not have the same feeling regarding their motherland. Foreigners are having this blissful experience and are undergoing a great transformation.

The process of change is going on continuously everywhere. A seed grows into a tree, an egg becomes a chicken. But man is failing to grow into the Divine. Instead he is falling into the demonic state.

### **Onward to divinity**

This is not proper. Mankind should go forward from the human to the Divine. Evolving from the animal, becoming human, mankind should ascend to Divinity.

Embodiments of love! Whatever situation you may confront, never give room for religious differences. Whether it is Allah or Krishna or Jesus, God is one. The one Lord has myriad names. The goal is one. Don't entertain the idea of "my religion" and "his religion". Consider all faiths as one. Transcend narrow ideas of creed and nationality. Foster the feeling of oneness of all mankind. This is what you should develop on the sacred occasion of Sivaratri.

Sivaratri comes once a year. But the auspicious qualities in you are always there. Constant repetition of the Lord's name at all times and all places is the message of Sivaratri. I bless you all that you should realise God by devotion to God and by adherence to righteous thoughts and actions.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Hari bhajan bina sukha santhi nahi*".

**From Bhagavan's discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on the morning of February 18th, 1996**

### **Math and Social Welfare: Bhagavan's Call**

An assurance to Karnataka that He was prepared to initiate welfare schemes in the State, was given by Bhagavan Baba, while inaugurating the Gangadhareswara Samagra Grameena Vikas Samastha, an organisation for rural development set up by the Adichuchanagari Math, on February 4, at Nithyananda Nagara, thirty kilometres from Bangalore. The function had been organised as part of the celebrations in connection with the fiftieth birth anniversary of Balagangadhar, head of the Adichuchanagari Math, Kumhalgodu.

The village development Samstha set up by the Swamiji aims at comprehensive development of rural areas including education, water supply, health, women's welfare, professional training for blind children and improvement of agricultural practices.

Bhagavan Baba, speaking in fluent Kannada, expressed His appreciation of Balagangadharanath Swamiji for his interest in village development and said that many maths had plenty of funds but showed no interest in social welfare. Money, like blood, He said, should circulate freely. Of what use are maths if they do not serve the people? "The welfare schemes which I have initiated recently are not mine. I have only given back to the people what they have given to me." Bhagavan Baba criticised those who started hospitals and colleges to make money out of them, with no spirit of service.

The Chief Minister of Karnataka, Sri Deve Gowda, who spoke at the meeting said, "Many Governments have their hands in shame, seeing what Sri Sathya Sai Baba was doing for the welfare of the people." He said: "Chief Ministers and Prime Ministers may come and go. But Sri Sai Baba's name will live forever. I have met Prime Ministers and Presidents. They have not given me peace. But meeting Sri Sai Baba has given me peace."

Balagangadharanath Swamiji who presided over the function, said that all that he desired was God's Grace to enable him to serve the people and promote their welfare. Service, he said, needs the spirit of sacrifice like a lamp, which needs the sacrifice of the oil to make it shed light. All people whether they are politicians, parents or heads of maths, have their role to play. If each plays his allotted role well, the world will be a better place to live in.

A gold crown worth Rs. 15 Lakhs was presented to the Swamiji by Mr. Kurunji Venkatarama Gowda. The Karnataka Vokkaligara Sangha presented Rs 50 Lakhs to the Swamiji for his rural welfare schemes.

Bhagavan Baba returned to Brindavan after the function.

## E G O

The worst enemy of man is his ego. Many have been able to overcome the six weaknesses: anger, pride, lust, greed, hatred and attachment, but rare indeed is the hero who has demolished his ego, which has jealousy as its companion trying to dominate the mind continuously. More than ordinary men, the scholars, sages, teachers and even devout spiritual aspirants are victims of ego. It is their ego which makes them declare that they are nearest to God and the most enlightened. The ego brings wave after wave of wants and wishes. When egoism enters man, envy follows fast. Sorrow is the shadow that haunts the ego.

How does the egoism get into our system?  
Where was the ego in the beginning?  
Is it a weed cultivated by us for our destruction?  
Where were we before we were born?  
Where will we be after death?

All our ideas and inferences are but products of the period between birth and death. When the girl you married was seriously ill as a child, you did not worry since she was not 'yours'. We ourselves grow this attachment. This 'mine' and 'yours' attitude adopts colossal importance in our lives.

Egoism is a thorny bush, which when planted and fostered, makes us suffer. It makes enemies even of close friends and does not allow men to work together. **Grief follows ego like a shadow.**

—*Baba*

*The Body is impermanent. But it is the abode of the indwelling Spirit. It is a shrine and when it moves, the Divine moves with it. Hence the body should be cared for in the same way in which an iron safe which is of little value in itself, is safeguarded for the sake of valuables kept in it. What is it that binds man to the illusory world? It is not family or property. These can be given up when one wishes to do so. But what are most difficult to renounce are attachment (Raga) and hatred (Dweshya). As long as these are dominant in man, he cannot realise his true self. And as long as man remains unaware of his true self, he is in bondage. For man in bondage, there is no freedom from suffering or worry.*

—Baba

### **Bhagavan at Muddenahalli** **A Memorable Visit**

February 10, 1996, became yet another red-letter-day for Sathya Sai Grama, Muddenahalli, when Bhagavan Baba visited the idyllic village and sanctified by His sacred presence the three day Homa that was being performed in connection with the installation of the Navagrahas in the Vighneshwara temple attached to the educational complex.

Bhagavan's previous visit to the village was in September, 1994, when He named the newly-built imposing Mandir as "Premadeep."

Nestling at the foot of the historic Nandidurg hill, Sathya Sai Grama has been the home of an educational complex run under the aegis and with the blessings of Bhagavan Baba.

This serene and peaceful village is the ideal site for an educational institution which is spiritually oriented. Over the years, the secondary school started here as a sister institution of the school at Alike near Mangalore, has grown into an outstanding institution, with a fine array of class rooms, an auditorium, extensive playgrounds, a sprawling farm and its own dairy. To crown them all a magnificent Mandir was built in 1994, which has invested the campus with the atmosphere of an abode of the Divine. On 10th February, in eager expectation of Bhagavan's visit on his way back from Brindavan to Prasanthi Nilayam, all the teachers and students of the school busied themselves with decorating the entire campus with flags and festoons. The weather was delightfully cool when Bhagavan and His entourage arrived around noon. He was given a rapturous welcome by the students and staff.

Bhagavan went straight to the Vinayaka temple where the third day's Homa was going on for the Navagrahas. During the three days all the different homas—Rudra Homa, Aghora Homa, Sudarsana Homa etc.—were performed according to Vedic rites. Swami was received with Poornakumbham by priests participating in the Homa. Swami stood as Veda Purusha before the sacrificial fire and broke a coconut and made offerings to the sacred fire.



From there, Bhagavan proceeded to the new Mandir, "Premadeep", with serried ranks of white-clad students on either side providing a guard of honour. Large numbers of people from the neighbouring villages had also gathered to have darshan of Bhagavan. Bhajans were going on in the Mandir as Swami entered it. He was welcomed with the Bhajan, "Swagatam", sung with full-throated élan by all the students.

After blessing the gathering, Bhagavan went up to His apartment on the first floor of the Mandir. Swami and the devotees accompanying Him from Brindavan had their lunch, with Bhagavan Himself going round to see that all the guests were well served.

After a brief talk with the Chairman and Secretary of the Lok Seva Trust, which is managing the educational institutions under Bhagavan's guidance, Bhagavan came down to the spacious prayer-hall of the Mandir, where the students and teachers had assembled to offer their homage to Bhagavan. The whole hall was surcharged with devotion. Bhagavan asked the students to go on with their singing. Bhagavan was visibly moved when the boys sang the song, "Oh Ma!" praying to Bhagavan as the Divine Mother.

After the Arathi, Swami and party left for Prasanthi Nilayam at 1.15 p.m. Before leaving the mandir Swami gave Padanamaskar to all the priests who had officiated at the Homam.

Bhagavan's brief but blissful visit will be remembered by one and all for a long time to come.

—N.S.S.R

*"If anyone blames, abuses or hurts you, do not return him with the same. Behave nobly and with patience. When a dog bites a man, the man does not bite the dog in return. Education must lead you from darkness to light. It is only those who wander in darkness that fall into pits; can a man walking in the light fall into a pit? If he does, it means that he is still 'in the dark', VID means light, and a VIDYARTHI must seek light and gain it. What is the use of an eye that does not reveal to you the pitfalls? Education must endow you with the type of eye which will reveal in time the pits that yawn in your path. Education should be a preparation for the good life, in the service of society and Self-realization. The aim of Sai Educational Institutions is to reform the educational system in such a way that the students develop respect for Indian Culture and learn to live a life of sacrifice and dedication."*

—Baba

## Let Rama Live in Your Hearts

*Vedavedye Pare Pumse  
Jaathe Dasaraathmaje  
Vedah Praachetas Aaseeth  
Saukshaath Raamaayanaathmanaa*

### *Embodiments of Love!*

When the Lord, the knower of the Vedas, took birth as the son of Dasaratha, Praachetas realised the Divine by writing the Ramayana.

The story of Rama is the story of one who was filled with the sweetness of compassion. This story is the royal road to human progress and an ideal life.

The Rama Principle is a combination of the Divine in the human and the human in the Divine. The inspiring story of Rama presents the triple ethical code relating to the individual, the family and the society. If society is to progress properly the family should be happy, harmonious and united. For unity in the family, the individuals composing it must have a spirit of sacrifice. The Rama story exemplifies the ethical codes governing the individual, the family and society.

The Rama story holds forth many ideals. Children today pay little heed to the words of parents. Parents also show no great concern for rearing ideal children.

The preceptor does not command respect these days. The teachers show little affection for the students. Hatred and bitterness between people are growing. Today's friend becomes tomorrow's enemy. Kinship itself is robbed of its bonds of affection. Pollution has sullied every sphere of activity—business, education, agriculture, politics etc... and caused general degradation in society. In every sphere demeaning ideas and actions are rampant.

In such a situation, the Ramayana provides the ideals and the examples for reforming society.

The world is presided over by Narayana. Narayana is under the spell of His name. The name is under the control of the devotee. Hence every person should invoke the Divine in pursuing his aims.

The world today is in a strange predicament. Every step taken by man is tainted by unrighteousness. Falsehood is ubiquitous. Men have lost the vision of great things. ALL desires arise from selfishness and are insatiable. Control of the senses has become rare. The truth, in short, is, humanness has vanished.

### **Precept without practice**

On the other hand, another strange thing is also apparent. Large numbers of people gather to listen to spiritual discourses and speeches by learned scholars on sacred subjects. They come in thousands, listen to the talks, enjoy them, but do not practise any of the teachings. The result is that, though there is an abundance of spiritual teaching, disorder and unrest prevail because few people practise what they learn. What crop can you grow on the dry bed of a lake? Though man has recognised the inherent divinity present in him, he does not live according to this belief. Precept without practice is valueless.

Rama is the supreme example of one who observed in his life the triple Dharma relating to the individual, the family and society. When every person in the country observes this triple Dharma, there will be peace and prosperity in the nation.

The sun illumines the world during the day. The moon sheds light during night. But Dharma (Righteousness) illumines all the three worlds at all times. A good son, it is said, becomes a beacon for the whole clan. Everyone should strive to become a good son (Suputra). It is not enough to have sons. They should be good and worthy sons. Such a son was Ramchandra.

Even as a jasmine creeper fills an entire forest with its fragrance, a noble son glorifies not only his family but his entire clan. Essentially all human beings are "Suputras" (good sons). But their behaviour turns them into bad men.

### **From Ratnakara to Praachetas**

The author of the Ramayana is called Praachetas. How did he acquire this name? Praachetas is the name of the Rain-God Varuna. Ratnakara was the original name of the poet. After he was initiated, he began meditating on the Lord's name and completely lost all body consciousness. An anthill grew over his body. His body was not visible from outside. At this stage Varuna caused a heavy downpour. That heavy rain washed away the anthill, revealing the sage. Because Praachetas (Varuna) was responsible for bringing forth the sage, he got the name Praachetas (the offspring of Praachetas). He also got the appellation "Valmiki" because he had come out of "Valmika", an anthill.

Praachetas became the sacred and immortal composer of the epic Ramayana, which he gave to the world as a perennial source of inspiration to mankind. Any person today who can get rid from the mind, attachment and possessiveness enveloping him and who constantly meditates on God will become pure and sacred, like Valmiki.

Every man is endowed with a mind. The mind is a mysterious thing. It can appear totally stationary and yet move faster than the speed of light. Whatever births a person may undergo and whatever changes in name and form may occur, the mind remains unchanged. It follows one from birth to birth. It is the mind's peculiar behaviour. In this context, how is one to manifest his humanness? Man must follow the example of the honeybee which sucks the sweet honey even from a bitter flower. Likewise one must seek the good even in what is apparently bad. There is something good in what is bad.

### **The Divine and the human**

Valmiki declared that he saw the Divine in the human form of Rama. Rama, who was Divinity itself, was seen as a human being. "Madhava is human. Man is Madhava". God cannot be experienced unless He appears in human form. Incarnation as a human being is essential for recognising God. That is why it is said that "God appears in human form" ("Daivam manusharupena")

Rama did not announce at any time that he was God. He declared that he was the son of Dasaratha. In his speech, though there was humanness, there was also the illumination of Divinity.

God is not apart from the universe. The entire cosmos is the very form of God. But man, deluded by his physical vesture, forgets his divinity.

Rama and Krishna are regarded as avatars. This is not so. They are in their human form quite like other ordinary men. All of you are embodiments of the Divine. Recognise this fact and strengthen this feeling within you. The idea that God is different from you should be given up. You have to develop the feeling that God is not different from you.

On the occasion of Ramanavami, people hail the advent of Rama and recall his various achievements. But everyone should remember that he is an image of Rama. "Ramayati iti Ramah" "One who attracts (others) is Rama". In every person there is this power of attraction. Because of this magnetic power man is able to enjoy the world. He develops many worldly desires. But he is never satisfied. He derives satisfaction from discontent. That is a sign of the divine power of attraction. There is no limit to this power. Everyone can experience the divinity within him.

### **Rama and Ravana**

See the difference between Rama and Ravana. Both were equally eminent intellectually and were great scholars. Ravana was a great man. Rama was a good man. The difference between greatness and goodness should be understood. Ravana, out of egoism and uncontrolled desire, misused his knowledge and brought about his ruin. Rama used his knowledge for the benefit of the people and made them happy. Ravana did not digest his knowledge properly and suffered from the consequences of indigestion. The difference between Rama and Ravana was that between Righteousness (Dharma) and unrighteousness (Adharma).

Rama and Ravana are present in each human being. When a person takes to unrighteous courses, he becomes a Ravana. When people pursue the path of truth and righteousness, they become Ramas.

Precept and practice should go together like medicine and diet control. Meditating on God one should engage oneself in godly activities. It is useless to study or listen to spiritual discourses without leading a spiritual life. Righteousness means living according to the dictates of one's

conscience. Acting in violation of the conscience is wrong. To realise this there is no need to study books.

### **Relevance of Ramayana**

The truths propounded in the Ramayana are relevant to all mankind. Rama represents the exalted state of the human heart. Rama is the treasure house of compassion.

Where can you find such truth, compassion and grace? All thoughts arise from the heart and lead to actions. Hence for all thoughts, words and deeds, the heart is the source. What should be the condition of the heart? It should be full of compassion (Daya), Today "Dayyam"(the devil) has installed itself in the heart. The devil in the heart accounts for all bad deeds and for the absence of compassion.

If men today suffer from restlessness and lack of peace, their own actions are responsible for this state. No Guru or any other person is to be blamed. Nor can the changes in the years be blamed. The year is not responsible for your happiness or misery. You alone are responsible for your condition and your experiences. Make your thoughts pure. Realise that you are human and that there is the Divine in the human. Man has the option to pursue the external (worldly objects) or seek the bliss that is internal (the Pravriti marga or the Nivriti marga). Everyone is responsible for his condition. It has become a bad habit to blame others for one's plight. One should recognise one's defects. There is no greater sin than accusing others. One should see the Divine in others. When this attitude grows the nation will prosper. Men have immense potentialities for good or ill. By their good thoughts and good deeds men can transform the state of the nation.

### **Man's potencies**

Despite all the myriad scientific and technological achievements of man, it should be realised that human life is impermanent. Death may overtake anyone at any time. Man has all the potencies in him. This truth should be realised by all. Man is the maker of his country or the cause of its ruin. Men promote the prosperity of their nation or bring about its degradation. When humanness is fostered the nation will be prosperous.

Men have achieved many things in various fields, from atom bombs to space travel. They have acquired great destructive power. But it is not realised that by its very nature the physical body is impermanent. The truth should be recognised while the body lasts. You have to have a sacred life.

Rama took birth ages ago. He adhered to Dharma. Krishna came later. He propagated great truths. He led the Pandavas to victory. He taught the Gita. Where are they now? What has happened to all the proud rulers of the past? How many have taken birth and passed away. Death is certain. But before the end comes, one should lead an exemplary life and serve the nation.

### **Role of avatars**

Everyone should realise that he is the embodiment of the Divine. We may talk about the avatars of Rama and Krishna. But your present avatar is no less significant. All those avatars came to tell

mankind that all human beings are avatars (incarnations of the Divine). Having taken birth as human beings men should conduct themselves as embodiments of the Divine (as beings in whom the Divine spirit resides). Recognising your spiritual reality you should live always in the Spirit (Atma-tattwa).

Man who should progress upwards from day to day is going down the slope. This is not right learning. Every day you should make the ascent towards the Divine. "I am God. God is not different from me". This is the conviction with which men should live.

Some people offer prayers saying, "Sarvadevata Swaroopaya Namah". ("I offer my salutations to the one who embodies the forms of all deities"). How many deities are there? Unless there were many deities, the prayer would be meaningless. The implication of the prayer is: All are deities. Our ancients used to refer to three crores of deities. What does it signify? At that time there were three crores of human beings in Bharat. They considered all of them as Divine beings. Today we have hundred crores in Bharat. Hence, there are hundred crores (one billion) of Divine beings in Bharat. If you take the population of the world, there are 570 crores of people today (5700 million). All are divine beings.

That divinity is within you. What is the source of the life force in you? Men today create robots which operate like human beings. But there is no life in them. There is a world of difference between the man-made artificial robots and real live human beings. Today people are attracted by the artificial creations and are not aware of the immense potentialities latent in human beings. You have to respect the potency of the human.

### **Rama and Bharata**

This was the lesson taught by Rama. He revered his parents. He carried out faithfully their injunctions. Without regard to the consequences, he carried out their commands with love. He had immense love for his brothers. They had unity and harmony amongst them.

After reaching the forest, Rama sent word through Sumantra (who had driven the chariot) as follows: "My brother Bharata would have returned to Ayodhya by now. Tell Bharata that there should be complete unity in the family. He should love Kaushalya and Sumitra in the same manner in which he would love his mother, Kaikeyi. He should not make any distinction between them". However, unable to bear the pangs of separation from Rama, Bharata used harsh words against his mother. He did not spare even the family preceptor Vasishta. Vasishta approached Bharata and told him: "Rama has left for the forest. You must get ready for the coronation. As soon as you are ready I shall fix the auspicious moment for the ceremony". Bharata lost for a moment the sense of respect he should have for the word of the preceptor. Rama was the very life-breath of Bharata. He spoke to Vasishta in great anguish: "Am I to rule over a kingdom which banished Rama and plunged the whole of Ayodhya in grief? Do not mention the name of the kingdom that sent my Rama to the forest. I have no use for such a kingdom tarnished by a grievous wrong". This was the kind of love that existed between the brothers.

Once, when the brothers were children, Rama came to his mother Kaushalya in great joy. Kaushalya asked him what was the reason for his joy. Rama said: "I am immensely happy today because Bharata won in the game we were playing". Rama rejoiced in the successes of his brothers. Meanwhile Bharata came weeping to Kaushalya. She asked him: "Bharata! Why are you crying? Rama is so happy over your victory." Bharata replied: "Mother! I am very sad because Rama deliberately chose to lose so that I may win". The elder brother rejoices over the younger brother's victory. The latter feels sad about his victory and the defeat of the elder brother. What mutual love prevailed among the brothers! Such was the pure and sacred unity that existed among the brothers at that time.

### **Rama is within you**

Rama was always deeply concerned about the welfare of his subjects. He fostered unity among the people. This is the duty of every one at the individual level. Four qualities have to be developed by every individual: Equality, Integrity, Unity and Fraternity. The individual's personality blossoms when one has these four qualities. A family composed of individuals of this nature is an asset to the nation.

It is not enough if people merely observe Rama's birthday and glorify the Ramayana on one day in a year. Each one should develop Rama's qualities within himself. You should develop the feeling that Rama is within you. You should experience Rama's divinity within yourself, irrespective of whatever name you may bear. From the Atmic point of view, you are Rama or Krishna.

Do not base your life on the body. It is impermanent. The spirit within is immortal. The body is "Karmakshetra", the field of action. The heart is "Dharmakshetra", the Abode of Righteousness. The human state is a combination of Karmakshetra and Dharmakshetra.

### **The power of transformation**

Embodiments of Love! Recognise that there is Divinity in everyone. Man has all the potencies: the power of attraction (Akarshana), Prakarshana (the capacity to transmit that power to others) and Sankarshana (the power to be a source of attraction to all). Krishna was considered the embodiment of Akarshana (the power of attraction) and Balaram as the embodiment of Sankarshana. The combination of Akarshana and Sankarshana brings about Prakarshana—the spread of the Divine power of attraction over the entire world. Sankarshana (which is one of the names of Balaram) literally means transferring the foetus from one womb to another. The wider meaning of the term is the process of transformation of one thing into another.

What is the Sankarshana we need today? The transformation of the human to the Divine. We should be attracted (Akarshana) to this process of transformation (Sankarshana). And then this should be spread everywhere (Prakarshana). This is the type of sadhana (spiritual exercise) to which people must devote themselves and not be immersed in Japa and Dhyana (chanting the Lord's name and meditation).

Concentrate on developing the firm conviction that you are the Divine. With this conviction you can achieve anything. Give up the attachment to the body. Even scientists sometimes forget their body-consciousness while absorbed in their experiments. If that is the case, why should the spiritually-minded persons retain attachment to the body, which is made up of the five elements and is a container of all foul things.

### **Meaning of surrender**

Giving Up the attachment to the body, the scriptures call men to surrender to God. What is meant by "surrender"? Forgetting the body and thinking of God, that is surrender. Surrender does not mean offering to God your worthless body and your perishable possessions. Such offerings have no meaning for the Divine. People going to Tirumala make all kinds of promises to God if their desires are fulfilled. Does God need any of their offerings? No. Why should God be commercialised? You should seek oneness with God. God will be pleased if you realise your true self. Your happiness is His bliss.

Develop, therefore, this sense of spiritual unity (Ekatma bhavam). It is the loss of this sense of unity that is at the root of all the differences and divisions in the world today. You have no need to search for God. God is truth. Adhere to truth; follow Dharma. What is Dharma? It is not charity or gifts of earthly goods that constitute Dharma. Dharma means purity and unity in thought, word and deed. Turn your mind towards God. All will be well with you. If you turn the mind towards the phenomenal world, you will experience only misery. The mind is man's most precious possession. Without it man ceases to be human. The human birth has been given to man for practising Dharma. This was the truth demonstrated by Rama. He practised his Dharma. He told Bharata that the latter should rule over the Kingdom given to him and leave him (Rama) to do his duty in the forest. When Bharata argued that the kingdom should be ruled by the eldest son, Rama replied that he also had been given a kingdom to rule over. "Dandakaranya is my kingdom. I shall rule here. You reign over Ayodhya", said Rama. This means that there is an Ayodhya in the Dandakaranya and a forest in Ayodhya. "Realise the oneness of the two," said Rama. Such was the equal-mindedness of Rama.

Let people understand the Rama Principle and live up to it restrain your desires. Experience the bliss of the Divine at all times. That is true humanness, which manifests itself when you think of God. Happiness is union with God. How much bliss can you experience if you see God in yourself and in everybody! Let all differences cease. Recognising the divinity that is present in all, you should foster the principle of love and develop compassion in the heart. Love is God. It transcends all human relationships based on attachment. Develop divine and selfless love which is enduring and infinite. A true lover of God will experience no sorrow. On this auspicious day, ponder over the sacred teachings and develop the spirit of oneness.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the Bhajan: "*Rama! Kodanda Rama! Rama! Pattabhirama*". The Bhajan was a new one to most devotees. Bhagavan sang the Bhajan with such ecstasy, that the large gathering joined in singing the bhajan with deep fervour.

**From Bhagavan's Discourse in the Sai Ramesh Mandap on March 28, 1996**



*“Sathya and Dharma are the two rails on which the locomotive of the nation runs; when Sathya (truth) is given up, chaos prevails; when Dharma (righteousness) is discarded, might becomes right.”*

*"Unfortunately, India today is affected by the consequences of seven grievous sins.*

- 1. Business without Morality*
- 2. Politics without principle*
- 3. Education without character*
- 4. Worship without sacrifice*
- 5. Acquisition of wealth without hard work*
- 6. Human existence without regard for ancient scriptures*
- 7. Devotion without austerity*

*"The country can only regain prosperity and peace when all these are banished. Everyone's thoughts and actions should be related to the role he has to play, otherwise the social fabric will be shaken."*

**—Baba**

**BHAGAVAN AT "SAI DARSHAN"**

### **“Live in the Present”**

A call to the people to ignore the past, as it is beyond recall, and not to worry about the future, as it is uncertain, and make the best use of the present, was given by Bhagavan Baba, in a memorable address to a vast gathering of Sai devotees on March 8, a "Sai Darshan", in Indiranagar, Bangalore.

Bhagavan formally inaugurated the two new balconies added to the first floor of "Sai Darshan", since His previous visit to the place eighteen months ago. "Sai Darshan" and the places all around it, were packed with devotees from all parts of Bangalore.

Bhagavan was received with Poornakumbham on arrival in the morning from Brindavan (Whitefield). After going round the devotees, Bhagavan went to the stage which was beautifully decorated for the occasion. Sri S.N.S. Murthy, former I.G. of Police, Karnataka and Convenor of the Indiranagar Sai Samiti, welcoming Bhagavan, gave a brief report of the samiti's seva activities. He mentioned in particular what the members were doing to help children in the slum areas.

Bhagavan acceded to the request of the devotees to address them in Kannada. Speaking in fluent Kannada for nearly an hour, Bhagavan elaborated on the Gita sloka which describes the qualities that endear a devotee to the Lord. A devotee who has no expectations ("Anapekshah"), who is

pure ("Suchi"), who is resolute ("Dakshah"), indifferent to loss or gain ("Udaseena"), free from distress ("gathavyathah") and who renounces all ostentatious undertakings ("sarvarambha parithyagi") is dear to the Lord, says Krishna. Bhagavan explained the implications of these qualities. The way to give up expectations is by reducing desires. The devotees require, firm determination in the pursuit of the spiritual goal.

Bhagavan referred to four kinds of "Alayas" (temples) frequented by the people. They are: Vidyalaya (temple of learning), Bhojanalaya (places of eating), Vaidyalaya (temple of Medicine) and Devalaya (temple of God). When people go to one of the first three "Alayas", they are concerned only about the specific purpose for which that "Alaya" exists, whether it is education, food or medical relief. But when people go to a temple of God they talk about everything except God. When visiting a temple people should concentrate their thoughts and words entirely on God. The whole world is a temple of God. Everyone should try to see the Divine in everything. People should give up the body consciousness and develop "Ekatmabhava", the awareness that the same Divine Spirit resides in all beings.

In a passing reference to the considerations that should weigh with the people in the choice of leaders, Bhagavan said that in ordinary life people consider the antecedents and qualities of the person concerned before choosing a bride or bridegroom. Should not greater care be taken in choosing leaders to run the administration of the country? Equally, care should be taken in the choice of a Guru, who has been equated with Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara.

Commending compassion as the supreme quality of a devotee, Bhagavan recalled the example of Saint Eknath, who did not hesitate to offer the Ganges water he was carrying from Benares to a thirsty donkey, though it was meant to be used to perform "Abhishekam" for the Siva idol at Gokarnam. Eknath told his astonished disciples that he saw God in the donkey. Bhagavan exhorted all devotees to engage themselves in social service in a spirit of selfless dedication.

After the discourse, Bhagavan witnessed a play by Bal Vikas children from the slum areas. The play presented the Bhagavata of the child Dhruva going to the forest to perform rigorous penance, on the advice of Narada, and the appearance of Vishnu before him in answer to his prayers. The spiritual and moral significance of the story was well brought out in the songs and dialogues. Bhagavan greatly appreciated the performance of the children who played the roles of Dhruva, Narada and Vishnu.

## D U T Y

*"There is no higher duty than truth, no higher wealth than Santhi. Duty arises when you have another person to deal with. You have a duty so far as the person is concerned, and he has the responsibility to see that he deserves that duty, which you feel bound to fulfill towards him."*

*"You must not ask for reward when good work is done, since it is your duty (Dharma) to do correct work. Its reward is in its completion. Doing wrong work is against the duty of man. If*

***you do wrong, then pray repenting for intelligence, not to repeat it. Beyond that, it depends on His Grace whether He punishes and protects or pardons and corrects."***

*"A wise man has to do the duties cast upon him with discrimination, diligence and detachment. Play the role, but keep your identity unaffected. Have your head in the forest (Ashram), unaffected by the aimlessly rushing world. But, it is your duty which you cannot escape, to fully engage yourself in your work, unconcerned with loss or gain, failure or success, slander or praise."*

*"You are born as human being for doing your duty (Karma). Had the goal for man being mere living or even happy living, the ATMA could have been encased in the form of birds or beasts. Why it has taken this human form, with the power of reasoning through the intellect, is to achieve the goal of realization of the unity of self with God (Paramatman)".*

**—Baba**

AVATAR VANI:

YUGADI SANDESH

### **“Let every one do his Duty”**

*Anaadinidhanam Vishnum  
Sarvaloka Maheswaram  
Lokaadhyaksham Sthuvannithyam  
Sarvaduhyakshajitho bhaveth*

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

“Anaadinidhanam” is a name attributed to God in relation to time. “Sarvalokamaheswaram,, signifies that God is the illuminating overlord of all the worlds. "Lokaadhyaksham Sthuvannithyam”, He is the presiding ruler of the Cosmos. Who is He? He is the Sun. Time is marked by the Sun. Hence the Sun is the visible manifestation of God. He is the effulgence that is common to all nations, all creeds and all people. Hence Sankara hailed the Sun as "Anaadinidhanam Vishnum", the presiding deity for the year ("Samvatsara") as the over-lord of Time. "Samvatsara" is the appellation given to the Time-spirit (Kalathmaka). Because the Lord is the very soul of Time, Sankara described Him as Kalathmakaaya namah (Prostrations to the One who is the Spirit of Time).

Time is most precious in human life. More valuable than Time is life (Prana). Man aspires to achieve many things without concern for his life. However great his achievements are, man is driven by the urge to achieve more. This discontent is itself a source of satisfaction for man.

Every man has a heart. Every heart is filled with compassion. However, how many choose to share this compassion with others? Sharing the compassion in one's heart with ten others has been characterised as "Bhakti" (devotion). One who does not share his compassion with others

cannot be called a human being. Today the human heart that should be full of compassion has become stone-hard. This is man's misfortune. What is the reason? It is because the heart is filled with the bitterness of differences of caste, creed and nationality that it has become stony. All human beings belong to one caste, one community, one nation. All are embodiments of the Divine. Krishna declared in the Gita: All beings in the world are a fragment of My Self. It is tragic that man should forget his divine essence and behave like a demon.

What is the significance of the advent of the New Year? It is not necessary to wait for twelve months for the New Year to appear for one to do what he wants to do. The year is made up of seconds, minutes, hours, days and months. Every second is a new moment in one's life. Why then wait for a year? Every one should strive to render help to the people every second of his life and lead a noble and ideal existence. It is necessary for man to understand the truth underlying this dictum. The eye sees different persons in different relationship to a person: the mother, the daughter, the daughter-in-law and so on. Although the eye that sees is the same, the persons seen are different and one's behaviour is to be in accord with the varying relationships.

### **The apparent and the real**

The distinction between the apparent and the real (the true) should be properly understood. For instance, it is apparent that the sun "rises" in the east and "sets" in the west. But the truth is, the sun is stationary and neither rises nor sets. It is the revolution of the earth round itself at a speed of 1000 miles an hour that is the cause of the phenomena of day and night and the apparent rising and setting of the sun.

The relevance of the distinction between truth, falsehood and apparent fact is not limited to natural phenomena alone. It is equally relevant in the spiritual sphere. The quest for truth in the spiritual field provides proofs for the existence of God. In every man, at every moment a divine effulgence is always shining. Man has not taken birth purely for a selfish purpose. He has to strive with others to lead an exemplary life.

In the world today there is unrest everywhere. What is the cause of this unrest? The advent of the New Year is viewed by people with apprehensions as to what is in store for the world, what disasters and calamities. There is continual change taking place in almost every sphere, but the mind of man alone has undergone no transformation. Pleasure and pain are not the products of time. The year is not responsible for joy or sorrow. People's actions alone are responsible for the good and bad things they experience. The year does not bring any evil with it. Many people imagine that the New Year may bring calamities. The year is part of repetitive phenomenon of day and night. Hence Time does not bring in its wake any good or ill. Only human actions account for these reactions. Good acts produce good results and bad actions have bad consequences. As you sow, so shall you reap.

### **New Year portents**

Good and bad occur in succession in the usual course. A new year does not account for anything extra ordinary. However, the almanac (Panchaangam) indicates some changes as a result of the movements of the planets and the configuration of the constellations. The Hindu almanac refers

to five factors: the day of the week, the phase of the moon (thithi), the relevant constellation, the auspiciousness or otherwise of the particular day and the Karanam. The predictions in the almanac have no relation to what may happen to any particular person. The Siddhanthis (who produce the almanacs) give their own interpretation of the astrological configurations.

Above everything, if one has firm faith in God, one can face the future with confidence. There is no room for doubts as to who is God and where He is to be found. God is the Cosmic Form (Viraat-Swaroop). The whole universe is the manifestation of God. What does God teach? The lessons are given through Nature (Prakriti) which conveys lessons to mankind. The earth, for instance, is revolving round itself at a speed of 1000 miles an hour. This is going on without rest. This revolution of earth produces night and day. This enables man to have a time for work and time for rest. In addition, the earth is going round the sun at a speed of 66,000 miles an hour. This motion of the earth is responsible for the changes in seasons. The changes in seasons cause rainfall, enable the cultivation of crops and help people to live in comfort. The earth thus is a visible manifestation of God. The ancients hailed the earth as "Bhumata" (Holy Mother Earth) for this reason. All the essential necessities of life come from the earth. The earth thus teaches man that he should do his duty even as the earth itself is performing its duties.

### **Dedicated action**

Man should be dedicated to action. Today he does not adhere to this principle. How, then, can he expect the fruits? Men must work. They must perform good deeds and realise good results. They must share the fruits of their labours with others. This is the foremost duty of man. If everyone does his duty, there will be no room for conflict in the world. This is the lesson taught by the earth.

"Kartavyam" (Duty) is most important. The lawyer should do his duty. The doctor, the farmer, the administrator, the businessman, each should discharge his respective duty. If this is done, the world will have no problems. Everyone should aim at excellence in the performance of one's duties. Then nation will be prosperous and happy. Today very few discharge their duties properly. Instead of doing their work, they interfere in other people's work. They fail to do their work and spoil that of others.

The year is not responsible for the unrest in the world. Human actions alone are responsible. Every one should strive to work well and achieve good results. Every one has twenty-four hours at his disposal. If out of this six hours are used up in sleep, six hours for one's own private concerns and six hours for one's job, still six hours remain. How does one spend them? One should utilise them for rendering social service. One must embark on divine activity. In the present state of the world, if people do not take to divine activity, the conditions will get worse.

### **Index of greatness**

Today people have forgotten the spiritual, the moral and the ethical aspects of life. They are immersed in the worldly pursuits and in securing mundane benefits. There is no greatness in achieving these things. Once Sankaracharya asked his disciples what is the hall-mark of greatness. Each disciple gave his own answer. One disciple said that the man who won great

victories in battle is a great man. Another disciple said that man who underwent many troubles and difficulties and amassed large wealth was great. Another said that a great man was one who accomplished by determined effort what he wanted to achieve. Planting one's flag over a territory or crossing a mighty ocean were mentioned as marks of greatness. Ultimately Sankara gave the answer that he alone is great who has mastery over his mind. All other achievements are of no avail. Every action is sanctified by making it an offering to God. Sankaracharya declared that the one who is immersed in the contemplation of the Supreme Self, experiences the highest bliss, regardless of all other actions. (Swami sang a stanza from the Bhaja Govindam hymn of Sankaracharya). Sankara exhorted the devotee to adore God in whatever situation he was placed, whether in a crowd, or while enjoying something or in any other state. This experience of the Divine is one's true wealth.

Thus, it is essential to perform every action as an offering to God. The impulse for every action comes from the heart, whether the action is good or bad. The heart is the abode of Lord. Hence, every thought arising from the heart and every action resulting from it should be regarded as an offering to the Divine.

### **Unity and sacrifice**

Today, because men's actions are motivated by concern for one's family and possessions, society is driven by conflicts and differences. People talk about unity but there is no unity. For instance, there are different states in the Country. It is natural for people to have special regard for their respective states Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and so on. But they should all consider themselves children of one God. All states should be happy. If this broad vision is developed, there will be no room for inter-state differences.

The name of the New Year is "Daadru". This signifies the spirit of sacrifice. The scriptures have declared that sacrifice is the only means to attain immortality. People should develop the spirit of sacrifice. Thereby they will make the name of the New Year meaningful.

Giving up narrow ideas and feelings, people should show compassion towards their fellow-beings. Compassion is the hallmark of devotion (Bhakti). No one can hope to please God without showing compassion (daya) towards his fellow men. A loving heart is the temple of God. God cannot dwell in a heart without compassion.

God is one. The goal is one. People have to change their outlook. They have to develop love towards all. There is nothing greater in the world than this universal love ("Prema-drishti"). There are many eminent scholars and intellectuals in the world today who are adept in seeing the diversity, in the world. But why don't they try to see the unity that underlies this diversity? They alone are good who see the unity in the apparent diversity. But those who see only the diversity in the One are mere clever intellectuals.

The uniqueness of every being is one of the marvels of creation. No two persons are entirely alike. There are differences even among twins. People differ in respect of talents. But it should be realised that all talents are derived from the Divine.

How are we to recognise unity in diversity? Birth and death are common to all beings. Whether one is a millionaire or a pauper, both are brought forth from their mother's wombs. Hunger and thirst are common to all. The kind of food that is eaten may vary, but hunger is the same for all. Likewise thirst is common to all. These basic common experiences point to the unity that underlies the diversity. The Upanishads have emphasised the spiritual oneness of all beings. The life force is one and the same, in all. The Atma is the same in all. How, then, it may be asked, there are differences in the bodies? These differences are the results of differences in the thoughts, feelings and actions of the individuals concerned. The indwelling spirit is the same in everyone.

By developing attachment to persons and possessions men created causes for their sorrow. By reducing their attachments and developing love for God, they can reduce their misery and increase their happiness. The more they love God, the more the bliss they will experience. Men are plunged in misery because they hanker after the physical instead of yearning for God. If men convert their desire for material objects into the desire for the Supreme they will enjoy immense happiness. All that is necessary is for them, to see the Divine, in everything in the phenomenal world. That will be true devotion. And work will be turned into worship. Make every act holy.

### **Changes in prospect**

People need not be unduly worried about the portents of the new year. There are, however, indications that some big changes may occur in the political sphere. Internal conflicts may increase. There will be no shortage of food. There may be floods in some parts of the country and cyclones in some areas. By developing faith in God, some of these calamities may be averted or their ravages mitigated. Men have to realise that they are sparks of the Divine. They have to develop sacred thoughts and lead ideal lives. They must seek to promote the welfare of society. Pray for the welfare of all. The power of prayer is incalculable. Every one gathered here should pray every day for the welfare and happiness of all people everywhere. This is true spirituality. To render service to others to the limit of your capacity is real spirituality. The body has been given to man for serving others. If one has a compassionate heart, is truthful in speech, and uses his body for serving others, he needs nothing else to redeem his life.

### **Tribute to speaker**

Today the book, "Vision of India", written by Sri Shivraj Patil, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, has been released. He has been coming to Swami for many years. He knows Bhagavan well and Bhagavan knows him equally. He has a compassionate heart. He is calm and serene. All are aware of the kind of uproar and disorder that prevail in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Members have not hesitated even to shout at the Speaker. On such occasions, as Chavan observed (in his speech earlier), it is natural to expect the blood pressure of the Speaker to go up. But our Shivraj Patil spoke calmly to every member, giving suitable replies to everyone, and thereby winning the confidence of all sections of the House. He has earned the approbation of all parties. That good name is enough (cheers). Having been born, one should earn a good name. Good thoughts flow from his heart. In his book, he has related all his experiences, his aspirations and his hopes. His book covers all aspects of his life-social, economic, spiritual and political.

It is not enough to speak about one's ideals. One must live up to them. Today everyone must develop a compassionate heart and be truthful in speech. Truth is means to realise God. God is the very embodiment of Truth. Where there is Truth there is God.

### **Sathya and dharma**

Bharat in its ancient days of pristine glory achieved greatness by adhering to Truth and Dharma. The Upanishads have declared: "Speak the truth. Follow Righteousness". Today in their daily life people must adhere to Truth. Whatever Dharmic acts you do should be done in a spirit of sacrifice. Charity is the best ornament for the hand, truth for throat and listening sacred things, for the ears. It is such sublime sentiments that constituted the priceless culture of Bharat. These eternal verities are being forgotten in the craze for ephemeral pleasures.

Embodiments of Love! The New Year portends nothing, to be feared by the common people. However, for those in high offices and for politicians there are indications of internecine conflicts of their own making. Those who discharge their duties in a spirit of dedication have nothing to fear.

Regard every moment as new. Live in the present. Have good thoughts and do good deeds. Cultivate good company. Act according to the dictates of your conscience. The secret of happiness lies within you, not outside. Pray for the welfare of all. The speakers here requested Swami to bring about peace and bliss in the world. In fact, you are all embodiments of peace, bliss and Divine.

Everyone of you should make efforts to develop inner peace individually. Then the whole world will be peaceful. Don't yield to any fear or anxiety. Develop love. Hatred breeds disaster. Shed feelings of hatred. With love, the country and world will prosper.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the Bhajan, "*Prema muditha manase kaho: Rama, Rama, Ram!*"

**From Bhagavan's discourse in the Sai Ramesh Mandap, Brindavan, on March 20, 1996**

### **N A M A S K A R A M**

*"The one Namaskaram you do, do with devotion. That is enough. You do not do even that; you do it so callously, so indifferently and automatically. When you fold both your hands and bring them together, feel that you are offering at the feet all the actions of the Five Karmandriyas and the Five Jnanindriyas as indicated by the ten fingers. Again, the purpose of Namaskaram is to touch the Feet, to have Sparshan of the Lord. The Negative pole Mayashakti, and the Positive pole, Mahashakti, have to meet in order to produce a spiritual current that will flow through*



—Baba

### **Pranavopasana**

*"The most effective method of cultivating PREMA is to practice Namasmarana. Or better still spend your time in Pranavopasana, the repetition of **OM**. OM is the origin of Creation; it is the source and sustenance and the strength. It is the Prana of every being. Just as air forced through the reeds of a harmonium produces the swaras Sa-Ri-Ga-Ma-Pa-Dha-Ni, so the OM is at the root of all the sounds in all the worlds. Know its significance and practice its recitation."*

—Baba

#### **YUGADI AT BRINDAVAN**

### **Leaders Hail Bhagavan's Mission**

If everyone did one's duty with dedication, the world will be free from strife and enjoy security and prosperity", declared Bhagavan Baba, in the course of His benedictory discourse to a vast gathering of devotees from all parts of the World in the Sai Ramesh Mandap in Brindavan, Whitefield, on the occasion of Yugadi, the lunar new year day.

Earlier, Bhagavan formally released a book of reminiscences by Sri Shivraj Patil, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, entitled "**Vision of India**", published by the Somaiya Trust, Bombay.

The Sai Ramesh Mandap and its environs had been beautifully decorated for the occasion with flags and festoons. An artistic floral arch had been erected at the south-eastern entrance to the Mandap with the slogan on the arch: "Help ever; hurt never." The bronze statue of Lord Krishna on the stage was decorated with beautiful garlands. A large shamiana had been put up to cover the open ground to the north of the Mandap.

Bhagavan arrived at the Mandap at 4 p.m., accompanied by Sri Shivraj Patil, Sri S. B. Chavan, Union Home Minister, Mr. Khurshed Alam Khan, Governor of Karnataka Sri H. D. Deve Gowda, Chief Minister of Karnataka, and Dr. Somaiya, Vice-President of the Somaiya Trust.

Sri K. R. Prasad, member of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust welcomed the visiting dignitaries and conveyed his Yugadi greetings to all the devotees.

Dr. S. K. Somaiya, while requesting Bhagavan Baba to release the Book, "Vision of India" by Sri Shivraj K. Patil, gave an account of the various educational and welfare activities carried on by the Somaiya Trust, founded 30 years ago by Sri K. J. Somaiya, who was still vigorous and active at the age of 95 and Dr. Somaiya said that over 18,000 students were studying in the various educational institutions run by the Somaiya Trust. Promoting the learning of Sanskrit was one of the major activities of the Trust. He paid a tribute to the great work done by

Bhagavan Baba in arousing the spiritual consciousness of people all over the world and the exemplary institutions set up by Him to promote integrated education and provide free medical relief in His hospitals.

Sri S. B. Chavan expressed his gratitude to Bhagavan for taking him as a close member of the Sai family. He referred to the various educational and humanitarian projects undertaken by the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust and commended particularly the stupendous drinking water project to serve a drought-stricken region. He prayed to Bhagavan to extend his grace to other areas in the country as the Government alone would not be able to carry out such project as successfully as He had done. Referring to the disorders and violence prevailing in the country, Sri Chavan said the spirit of tolerance and brotherhood of man preached by Bhagavan should be fostered by one and all. He paid a tribute to the able and impartial manner in which Sri Shivraj patil conducted himself as the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. The Speaker's job was not an easy one in a House where there were frequent uproars. The Speaker's blood pressure might go up. But Sri Shivraj Patil managed to remain cool and unruffled and was fair to all parties.

Sri Deve Gowda, Chief Minister of Karnataka, speaking next, explained the significance of Yugadi and the fact that on that day people took both sweet and bitter edibles, symbolic of the good and bad experiences which the year may bring. "We have to share both joy and sorrow in a spirit of brotherhood", he said.

He praised Sri Shivraj Patil's record as Speaker of the Lok Sabha. As one who had watched the proceedings in Parliament as a back-bencher for about four years, he realised what a tough task it was for the Speaker to maintain order in the House. Sri Shivraj Patil had been successful as a Speaker because of his maturity and parliamentary acumen.

While confessing that he was too small a person to speak about spirituality, Sri Deve Gowda declared that Bhagavan Baba's grace alone would redeem humanity and turn the people from materialism to the spiritual path. He prayed to Bhagavan to bless all.

Sri Shivraj Patil began his speech with a reference to an incident in the life of the Maharashtra Saint, Jnaneshwar. When Jnaneshwar was asked to speak on the Bhagavad Gita at a gathering of pandits, in the presence of his elder brother, who was his guru, he said: "I have to receive knowledge and wisdom from my guru. It is not becoming for me to talk in his presence before such a congregation of learned scholars. But, just as a child takes food from his father's plate and offers it to him, thinking he is doing a great thing in feeding his father, I have to obey his commands and speak what I learnt from him". Sri Shivraj Patil said that he was in a similar position now when he had to speak in front of Bhagavan, whose nectarine words of wisdom they were all eager to hear.

"We have seen many ups and downs during the past year and we may have them in the coming year too. We have to put up with these with equal mindedness. This can be done only when we have purity of heart. Unity comes out of purity, and divinity follows. This is what Bhagavan Baba often reminds us. The outer world is full of material wealth while the inner world is full of

spiritual wealth. It is easy to reach the outer world, but extremely difficult to discern the inner world. This can be done only with the blessings of Bhagavan, who is our Divine Master. We pray to Bhagavan on this auspicious and holy New Year Day to bless us all to realise the inner Cosmos.

“I am indeed happy and feel highly honoured because Bhagavan Baba has graciously released the books which I have written by His grace. Four books have been placed at His Lotus Feet today. The first is a translation of a Marathi work by Samarth Ramadas (the guru of Shivaji). Because it is in simple language, I could translate it for the benefit of English knowing people. It explains the simple ways of realising the Divine. The second book is "Vision of India", dealing with the social, cultural and economic problems facing India. The third portrays the reflections and reminiscences of one who has been in the political field for 30 years. The last is a book of poems on various themes, including the Hindu Trinity. Creation, Sustenance and Dissolution are a never ending process. Bhagavan gave a thrilling talk about this in "Trayee Brindavan" the other day. He is Gangotri and Gangasagar. I have just picked up a few drops from this and call myself part of the ocean. I am indebted to Bhagavan because He is the inspiration. I thank Somaiya Publications for their help in publishing the books."

Sri Khursheed Alam Khan, Governor of Karnataka, speaking next, said that he got inspiration whenever he came to this holy place. People talk about secularism, but few practise it. "Here we find the real coming together of all sections of humanity, regardless of caste, creed and nationality. This is really an Abode of Peace and Tranquility. We pray to His Holiness to spread His message to all parts of the globe. We should end our strife and live in peace and harmony." The Governor quoted the words of Hazrat Nizamuddin, who told a disciple who wanted to present him a pair of scissors. "Don't bring a pair of scissors as they can be used only to cut cloth into pieces. Instead bring a sewing needle which will help to sew the pieces together". It is only a personality of Baba's stature who can spread the message of unity.

Referring to Sri Shivraj Patil, the Governor said: "He is neither left nor right, but upright. As a Speaker he was respected by all parties.

Bhagavan then delivered His Yugadi message (details of the discourse appear separately).

After the discourse, prasadam was distributed to the gathering. There was a music programme consisting of Sitar and Tabla.

In the morning, Bhagavan gave Darshan to a vast gathering in the Sai Ramesh Mandap. Bhagavan was greeted on arrival with a special programme of songs by the Institute students, beginning with the song, "Namo Sathya Sai Baba, Namo Sathya Sai." This was followed by songs in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi. The morning's function ended with the distribution of prasad blessed by Bhagavan.

*"I want Devotees (Bhaktas) to improve their behaviour and character." "When the Devotee feels that God is not coming near to him, the fault lies with the devotee. Obviously the heart of the*

*devotee is not pure enough and is sullied by hatred or contempt. Repent for the errors that you commit and resolve never to repeat them. Pray to the Lord to be able to carry out your duties and resolutions and to be able to improve your conduct."*

*"Bhakti involves complete dedication, with nothing held back, not even a wisp of EGO should remain in you; His command alone counts; His will prevails."*

—Baba

## **Echoes from Prasanthi Nilayam**

Daughters of the earth Unite!

"Daughters of the earth, Unite!" what an inspiring slogan for the women of the world! What a memorable message to carry from the unforgettable Seventieth Birthday Celebrations of Bhagavan!

There were hundreds of thousands of devotees from every corner of the world gathered in the holy premises of Prasanthi Nilayam. How did they react to the crowded events of the ten days from November 14 to 23? What did Bhagavan's downpour of discourses mean to them?

There is no doubt that each devotee's experience is different from that of another. Each receives from the Divine the message according to the level of one's spiritual evolution and the intensity of one's aspiration.

Here is an account from Deepa Awal, a New York devotee, of what the birthday celebrations meant for her (as published in the January issue of "Sai Sarathi", the monthly newsletter of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organisation of America, New York). Five days after the 23rd of November 1995, I sat in the aisle seat of an Indian Airlines plane to Delhi. Overwhelmed by the events of the last couple of weeks, these are the first few moments I have to process the experience. It has been difficult to be with so many people in the midst of so many happenings. While love always exists, regardless of our consciousness of it, our joy and bliss lies in the awareness of it. I have not been aware of it. Only now, in the quietness of the mind, the consciousness floods with the marvellous warmth of His love. He is so near and yet so far!

Nov. 14-17: **Harmony in Humanity Musical Concerts:** As I sat listening to the superb music concerts, with Swami's hair and occasional gestures of hand barely visible, I would find myself listening not with the senses, but with the heart. And at those moments the music and I would be one along with the entire universe. It was then that it struck me life is a song if you listen with your heart.

Nov. 19: **Ladies Day:** Swami has always honoured women, but today is a special opportunity for understanding why Swami values women and considers them worthy as spiritual aspirants. Self-sacrifice, giving, forbearance, patience are all qualities of women, He said in His discourse today. The only quality He chided us for was talking too much. The consciousness He created this day of our role on the world stage, our relationship with Him and what He wants from us, will disseminate to the entire world, moving us from the limited concept of women's lib to the limitless freedom of the soul.

At the personal level He offered me a piece of work that kept me singing along with 60 other women for most of the three days preceding the 19th. The task was to create a song that presented unity and women as its theme. This was to be sung as an invocation before His discourse that day. I struggled with myself—who was I to write a song and put it to music? I knew nothing about music, let alone writing a song! But the dice had been cast; I had no choice in the matter. Under pressure, and somewhat diffidently, I wrote some words that reflected the theme of unity and women, passed it on to a friend to give to an 'expert' who would set it to music.

I expected the revised musical rendering to arrive complete at my doorstep so I could proceed to share it with the group and start practising as soon as possible. The finished version came on the 17th night and it was far from satisfactory. Less than 48 hours for the event and not even the song was in place; I was about to panic! Instead I surrendered. The results were miraculous. The next morning I had a song and the words to it. How? It just came to mind in a flash as I sat pondering over the words I had penned earlier. The group practised intensely for 24 hours thereafter and ended up with an invocation offered in six different languages by 60 women from across the globe.....

**Like the rivers, we flow  
Like the sun, we shine  
In harmony  
Of His Love Divine  
Daughters of the earth unite.**

### **Discipline**

*"Discipline is essential for the success of every endeavour of man, whatever the field, whether it be economic, social, education or merely material and worldly. It is even more essential for success in spiritual effort."*

*"I am insisting on FIVE points of discipline for the Permanent Residents of Prasanthi Nilayam:*

*1. SILENCE: This is the first step in Sadhana. It promotes self-control.*

2. *CLEANLINESS: It is the doorway to Godliness.*
3. *SERVICE: It broadens your Vision. It deepens your compassion.*
4. *LOVE: Do not calculate or weigh the reaction, results or reward. Love calls, love responds.*
5. *HATE-LESSNESS: No being is to be looked down upon as secondary, inferior, unimportant or expendable."*

**—Baba**

## **A Lesson in Patience**

**"Only patience, tolerance and love can bring success."  
(Sathya Sai Speaks VIII)**

**"Love is patient, Love is kind."—(Corinthians 13:4)**

I am a product of the Western World, specifically the United States of America. My life has always been designed to plan and then to act immediately. Patience was a virtue that seemed to have its limitations, for certainly if there was something to be done, it had to be done now!

I lived in this time-frame. Little did I know that my years, my time, is not the time in which Sathya Sai Baba exists or what he plans for us and our future.

Let me share with you the following events: It was in 1983 when I was in India on a teacher sabbatical. I attended a World Conference for teachers at Prasanthi Nilayam and listened to the presentations on the Education In Human Values Programme. I was naturally in awe of everything that Swami told us and it was at that time that I committed myself to being an instrument of Sai Baba, dedicated to helping school children to develop their character. The path became clearer as a group of us came together with the intention of writing an Education In Human Values manual for American teachers. We started to gather stories, songs, activities and quotations. Excitement grew! With my return to the classroom, I began to use these new ideas. It was no surprise that the students were improving in their outlook and in their reaction to school despite the fact that they were a "bottom class" and had been in trouble throughout their school career. After all this was Swami's programme! He had created it and so I was confident that it had to work. And work it did, even to the extent of improving each student's academic abilities!

### **EHV on the March**

A few years passed and more teachers began to use the programme as they observed the changes in their students. I was thrilled and as I went to the District Office I was given a chance to expand the programme to cover a greater number of schools. At the same time we began to

conduct EHV workshops throughout the United States thoroughly convinced that this programme was needed in the fast decline of values evidenced throughout the country.

We continued to edit and re-edit the lessons in the manual always wondering why this process was taking so long. Why could not this wonderful work be incorporated into every classroom immediately? Why was not every teacher ready to embrace this approach? After all, Swami has always said that education is for living, not just for earning a living. Surely everyone must agree! And had not my students and so many others improved their character along with their academics? My Western mind could not fathom this delay. It just did not make sense.

### **A dream and the message**

During a visit to Swami some years later things began to jell. One evening in my room at the ashram, Dr. Ronne Marantz and I were going over the EHV manual, again correcting the lessons and writing some new ones. My husband was asleep in bed and it was through him that Baba sent us a message. Harry suddenly woke up and told us about the dream he had just had:

"Swami came into the classroom, holding onto a little girl's hand. She was attired in a pretty dress and was so happy to be present. I (the teacher) was behind a desk. Swami said, 'Teach this child'. With that remark, He went out of the room.

"The next scene had Swami coming into the room which was completely chaotic. The little girl had turned into a monkey, prancing around, destroying everything in her wake. I was pulling out my hair, distraught as to what to do next. Very quietly, Swami said, 'Patience! Patience!' And with that He left the room.

"Scene three showed Baba coming into the same classroom. The room was quiet, the little girl was no longer a monkey but the sweet self she had been originally. I was teaching and she was happily learning. Swami had this to say to me, "See, patience is all that was needed. Patience!" And with that He left the room.

We were quite taken with this dream but I must admit that I did not think much more about it. That is until the next darshan. There I was sitting and awaiting the Lord's entrance when across the compound came a large monkey. She bounded across the ladies with what appeared be a planned mission for she stopped at the north grounds and suddenly seated herself there. "A monkey", I thought reminding myself of my husband's dream. The Seva Dals looked perplexed and before they could do anything, a group of baby monkeys came across the area right up to their mother. She was awaiting their coming, for as soon as they arrived, together as a group, they departed with hardly a sound or a look.

What did this all mean? For me, of course, it reverberated with Swami's message of PATIENCE! I began to understand His meaning of patience, not only as related to teaching but to life itself. It was a lesson in Surrender to God's will, to God's time frame.

So, here it is 1995, some 12 years from its start, and the Education In Human Values Manual is finally published and available at the Sathya Sai Bookstore in Tustin, California!

It will not be long before the whole world will know Sathya Sai Baba, His mission and His programmes, and we will remember how blessed we are to have learned His message!

—Bea Flaig, New York

*"TRUTH is something that is not modified by time or space or guna. God is the embodiment of truth. Speak the truth; speak what is pleasing; Do not utter truth that is unpleasant."*

—Baba

### **One Afternoon in the Ashram**

The students are filling the verandah. The devotees called for interview have already left, and Baba is walking under the shadow of the Mandir's balcony. He is signing pictures shown to Him by the students and blessings trays filled with candies. Baba is also receiving letters and folded slips, smiling at everyone everywhere. Sometimes He stops moving and holds both hands behind his back while looking at everybody. Everyone is quietly expecting the next movement of the Lord.

This afternoon something unusual happens. Swami talks briefly to His students; then one student moves forward and after kissing Baba's Feet looks for a place in front of his classmates and begins speech. Some Indian ladies next to us point out that the students had prepared some stories about certain episodes from the Mahabharata which they are presenting in such a way as to show how to put them into practice in their own lives. One by one they give their speech and when finishing their presentation, Baba congratulates them. Now, a student about ten years of age goes up the bench used as a small podium from which he can give his speech. He speaks for a few minutes, but suddenly he stops his speech, thinks for a while and starts again, then, he keeps silent in grief. He has forgotten his text. He, then, goes to Baba, looks at Him with his face in distortion, the child begins crying.

At that instant Swami smiles, so filled with such incredible love, goes to him and comforts the child by hugging him and by patting on his back. However, the boy does not get any comfort; he had been preparing his speech for days and now, he forgets everything in this way and in front of Baba!

As Swami understands the child's mood, He holds the boy's hand and looks at it in astonishment and asks him very loudly so that everyone can hear Him: "But what have you done to the ring I gave you?" In amazement, the child stops crying and replies: "No Swami, You have never given any ring to me". Swami insisted: "Tell me what you have done to the ring!" In view of this the



boy gets fully concentrated on this new matter and answers with his face close to Swami's: "You have never given me a ring, Baba, never!"

"You say I have never given you a ring?" says Swami smiling while He starts doing the premonitory movement of some Divine gift in front of the amazed student. On this occasion the process culminated in the manifestation of a ring that He immediately put on the student's right hand. After this, Swami asked the child to continue with his speech and so he did, faultlessly; fully recovered from the previous amnesia.

What happened was but a brief episode included in the short period of one out of the many Ashram afternoons, another Leela of Baba's. However, this clearly shows the Avatar's sensitivity, the dimension of His Love, The urge of His love comes first in front of other urges. He did not scold the student or make him go back to his place among the other students. Moreover, He helped him overcome the problem, He played on him, He encouraged him and raised his self-esteem. Later Swami completed this with a regal gift, so he got another chance to speak.

I am sure that, for that child, that ring stand forever as a symbol of the truth immersed in Swami's words: God is Love; Live in Love".

—Graciela Busto, Argentina

## Gayatri Mantra

"Your two eyes cannot reveal to you the magnificence and the majesty of the realm of the spirit. They are focused towards the objective world and its transient attractions. So the Gayatri Mantra has been given to you as a third eye to enable you to have that inner vision by which (you) may realize Brahman (God)".

"What is Mantra? 'MA' means manana and 'TARA' means saving; so the Mantra means, that which can save you. If you meditate on it, Mantra will save you from being caught up in the coils of this worldly life, which is infested with death, grief and pain".

*"Om bhoorbhuvaha swaha  
Thath savithru varenyam  
Bhargo devasya dheemahi  
Dhiyo yonaha prachodayath"*

"And this prayer fosters and sharpens the knowledge-yielding faculty. As a matter of fact, the four Mahavaktas or 'core-declarations' enshrined in the four Vedas are implied in the Gayatri Mantra."

The Gayatri is the universal prayer enshrined in the Vedas, the most ancient scriptures of man. It is addressed to the immanent and transcendent Divine which has been given the name 'Savita' meaning, that from which all this (is) born. The Gayatri may be considered as having three parts: (1) Praise (2) Meditation (3) Prayer.

—Baba

## Heart & Love

"The Heart is the film and the Mind is the lens. Turn the lens towards the world, the worldly picture will fall on the heart; turn it towards God and it will transmit the picture of the Divine." How can God shine in a heart that is darkened by bad thoughts and intentions?"

*"If there is righteousness in the heart,  
There will be beauty in character.  
If there is beauty in character,  
There will be harmony in the home.  
When there will be harmony in the home,  
There will be order in the nation.  
When there is order in the nations,  
There will be peace in the world."*

"The Lord is Sweetness, you are sugar; He is fire, you are fuel. He has no heart; every heart where He is installed is His. Cleanse the heart by listening to spiritual discourses, seeking the company of the righteous, simple and sincere, and by cultivating goodness of character and sweetness of disposition."

"Expansion is the essence of love. When a lamp is lit from another, there are two, where there was one. The first one did not stop emitting light. You can light a million lamps from one; yet the first will not suffer at all! Love too is like this. Share it with a million, it will still be as bright as when it was alone."

"Work (Karma); Wisdom (Jnana); Worship (Bhakti) are the three paths to God, but because of desire (Kama), Karma is warped through Krodha (anger). Jnana is befogged and due to greed (Lobha), Bhakti is ruined, but by developing PREMA, man can conquer all these weaknesses."

"The true strength can be acquired only through Love. All other efforts are of no avail. Thus we should ask from God only the strength of LOVE."

—Baba

*Embodiments of Love!*

In this world constituted by the three gunas (Satwa, Rajas, Tamas), the mixture of happiness and sorrow prevents man from recognising his divinity. Human existence is enveloped in infatuation ("Moham"). When man frees himself from this infatuation, he will experience real happiness. This infatuation breeds egoism and possessiveness (Ahamkara and Mamakara) which bring about the loss of one's name and fame. One who is filled with ego will be unable to experience love from others. It is essential therefore to get rid of this infatuation. "MOHAM HITHVA PRIYAM BHAVATHI" (One becomes endearing to others by conquering infatuation).

"KRODHAM HITHVA NA SOCHATHI" (By conquering anger one is free from grief). As long as man is filled with anger, he can have no peace. To secure peace and happiness man has to subdue anger. An angry man may become the enemy of mankind. "A man filled with anger will not be able to achieve anything. He will commit many sins and will be an object of derision. He will forfeit all prosperity and lose the respect of all persons. Anger is the cause of total ruin" (Telugu poem). The first requisite for a person embarking on spiritual development is control of anger.

"KAMAM HITHVA SUKHEE BHAVATHI" (Conquering desire, a man becomes happy). Life is a long journey. Desires are the luggage you carry. The less the luggage the greater the comfort during the journey. Man has to discriminate between necessities and luxuries and confine his desires to what is essential.

"LOBHAM HITHVA SUKHEE BHAVATHI" (Happiness is got by overcoming greed). Life is an ocean filled with waves of pleasure and pain. Man is happy when his desires are fulfilled and is sad when they are not. "Joys and sorrows are inseparable. Joy is not separate. It is the fruit of difficulties" (Telugu poem). Pain and pleasure are like the two parts of a seed or the two sides of a coin. People should learn to treat pleasure and pain alike. In fact, pain enhances the joy derived from the pleasure that follows. Pleasure and pain, loss and gain, fame and infamy are inextricably linked in the world. Man's divinity consists in overcoming these opposites. Unfortunately, man falls a prey to limitless desires and ends his life in misery and despair.

Man needs God's grace to experience real happiness. But by his own thoughts, words and actions, man forfeits the Grace of God. "See no evil; see what is good". But men today look at only other people's faults and do not think of their own failings. Examine your own faults and rectify them.

Here is an example from the Mahabharata: The preceptor, Dronacharya, asked the eldest of the Pandavas (Dharmaja) and the Kauravas (Duryodhana), to go round the kingdom and find out how many good persons and bad persons were there. Dharmaja came back and reported that he could not find a single bad person in the kingdom. Duryodhana told the guru that he could not find a single good person. Dronacharya pondered over their divergent findings and realised that

man, found only what is good in everyone. Duryodhana, with his evil mind, could only see the bad side in every body. Everything thus depends on the outlook of the person concerned and not on the nature of the things he observes. If one looks at the world with a good mind everything will appear good.

The entire cosmos is a manifestation of the Divine (Vishnu-Swaroopa). It is called "Srishti", creation. "Prakriti" (Nature) is a synonym for creation, "Srishti". "Prakriti" means creation of the Divine ("Pra"). The five basic elements, which constitute Nature, are in every individual human being. Hence, it is declared that the Lord dwells in every living being. When this truth is recognised, there should be no room for anger, hatred or envy. The oneness of the universe is the reality, though there are a myriad forms and names. The unity that underlies the apparent diversity should be understood.

Embodiments of love! Recognise the supreme significance of the Love Principle. Today, it is love of the Divine that should be fostered. This love transcends the mind. Various forms of meditation are purely mental exercises. But devotion (Bhakti) which emanates from the heart transcends the mind. Communion with the Divine is true Yoga. All other yogic practices are merely physical exercises.

It is essential to limit one's desires and keep the senses under control. This is the only way to true happiness. The most important organ which has to be controlled is the tongue, which, unlike the other sense organs— the eyes, the ears and the nose—has a double function, speech and taste. The ancient sages practised silence for a variety of reasons. Silence serves to conserve energy, improve the memory and experience the Divine. Restraint in speech and avoidance of gossip and slander are commendable virtues. "Help ever, hurt never". This should be the motto of everyone.

"See no evil; see what is good" is the prescription for the eyes. Keechaka (in the Mahabharata) looked with an evil eye on Draupadi (who was serving as the Queen's maid in the palace of the king of Virat desa). His lustful vision brought about his death. His very name is abhorred by everyone.

Likewise, one should not pay heed to bad or evil-minded words. Kaikeyi (in the Ramayana) is the example of a well-intentioned woman who allowed her mind to be poisoned by the evil counsel of Manthara and was responsible for the death of Dasaratha and the bitter resentment of her son Bharata. Kaikeyi and Manthara have passed into history as infamous characters.

How evil thoughts influence a person and bring about his ruin is illustrated by the story of Duryodhana in the Mahabharata. He always entertained evil designs regarding the Pandavas. What was the ultimate result? Not only did he ruin himself but he ruined everyone in his clan. Likewise, Ravana, who was versed in all branches of knowledge, ruined himself and his kinsfolk by his wicked actions., Innumerable examples of this nature can be found in the Indian Epics.

through three stages: Self-confidence, self-satisfaction and self-sacrifice. Man should regard himself as the master of the body, the senses and the mind. He has to use the intellect to experience his oneness with the divine, the cosmic all-pervading consciousness.)

The constant integrated awareness (Prajnanam) which is in everyone is covered by the ash of worldly desires. When the ash is blown off, the fire of Brahman reveals itself.

To give another illustration: There is a tree on which thousands of birds are resting. Their droppings on the ground below the tree make it unusable. How to drive the birds away? When you shout "Rama, Krishna, Govinda" and clap your hands the birds will fly away. Our life is a tree on which have gathered a big flock of birds in the form of desires. The desires pollute the heart. To get rid of desires you have to perform bhajans.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the song: "*Bhajan bina sukha santhi nahi*".

**From Bhagavan's discourse in "Sai Shruti", Kodaikanal, on 12th April, 1996**

### **Self Esteem the Basis of Spirituality**

In an interview in 1988, Bhagavan Baba spoke about self-esteem or self-confidence as the foundation upon which the house of a sound personality is built. He also said that a common form of trickery by psychiatrists is to make people dig up all the worst negative things that have happened to them—such as between husband and wife—which destroys their self-esteem. "Self-esteem is very important!" He said. What specifically, is self-esteem and what creates or enhances it?

In the West, especially in the U.S., a multi-million dollar industry is based on increasing people's self-esteem. People pay huge sums to "self esteem therapists", while research into self-esteem and large development programmes have been funded at State level. However, the measurable effects have been shown by many researches to be almost nothing. There is no proof of better school grades, of less violence or crime or of less chronic welfare dependency. (For research results and a far reaching analysis see *House of Cards: Psychology and Psychotherapy Built on Myth* by Robin M. Dawes, N.Y. 1994). This indicates that self-esteem cannot be had simply going into treatment, joining a healing group or simply changing one's attitudes towards oneself. On T.V., taking pills (like Prozac) that enhance a feeling of self-confidence is even hotly debated for and against! In all that, a correct idea of self-esteem seems to be lacking.

The proponents of self-esteem often quote the slogan, "if you cannot love yourself, you cannot love anyone else". One main problem with this is that it tends to put the cart before the horse, for the converse is even truer! As Baba always points out, the best way to develop oneself

## **Two kinds of self-esteem**

There are at least two different kinds of self-esteem, the selfish and the genuine. Selfish self-esteem is to feel good about oneself without backing this tip by the requisite good behaviour. One takes pleasure in the ego and seeks only its own satisfaction or apparent happiness. But only a person who always behaves impeccably well in thought, word and deed has genuine cause for self-esteem, for that person realises (i.e. makes real in actual life behaviour) divine qualities that are its only valid basis. Genuine self-esteem is only felt when one knows within, that one's intentions were truly good and one therefore acted rightly in full accordance with the aim.

Self-esteem, seen as the opposite of self-destruction or self-hate, is not to take pride in oneself. It arises from natural propensity and develops with personal achievements. It is natural and good that self-confidence comes along with knowledge of the world and personal achievements. Yet true self-esteem comes only from those that are of a lasting nature knowing oneself and making qualitative improvements in oneself. Worldly self-confidence from positive achievements in the physical and social environment is only a stage from which one has to transform oneself towards realization of the inner self. Attainments in society and its organisations whatever the material, social or order results involved—can become as much of a hindrance as a help in maturing the self esteem of a person. With self-esteem comes peace with oneself—an inner or psychic quality of the soul. This is mainly achieved through controlling the mind and, as Socrates held, disciplining oneself always to know and to do what is right.

When a parent corrects a child with the words, "Remember Yourself!" this contains an essential truth about how to behave; that we must act in accordance with our true self not to behave badly. Not to remember or look to oneself is to lose one's integrity, to "forget oneself" as the phrase has it, and tiffs cannot lead to self-realisation.

## **Self-righteousness**

It seems clear that self-trust, which may perhaps just be called "love of self", is the basis of an untroubled mind and an effective personality. But "love of self" tends more to imply narcissism and cultivation of the ego. A person who is self-confident, whatever he or she may do or have done, may just be acting from self-interest and not doing sufficient self-inquiry. Persons who never feel guilt could well be over-confident and devoid of conscience. Not to be willing to examine oneself is the essence of self-importance, as distinct from humility, both of which are quite visible characteristics in a person's behaviour. Selfish persons usually have the highest regard for themselves, even adopting an air of superiority. If one always has to be No. 1 or always takes the best place for oneself, without sometimes thinking of others, the temporary satisfaction this may bring, is no reason to feel self-esteem.

## **Bhagavan's tests**

Bhagavan Baba seems to give almost everyone who meets him increased self-confidence. He instills it in us by various ingenious means, and not least by the inspiration and striking rightness of His teachings and the ways He lives them. During interviews, Baba often points out

stated that, though he may say nothing to show it, we are being weighed and tested by Him constantly.

The main test of self-esteem must surely be, whether or not we really live up to the standards He sets for fight action (Dharma). Tests come in many shapes and forms. Tests may be outward, such as when Baba (i.e. apparently) ignores a person for long periods of time at darshan, or equally well through His granting of boons and privileges over a long period. How we react to either type of situation whether or not we conduct (or maintain) self-examination so as to try to expand our love in humility and take real care of orders, is a continuing test of the worth of one's self-esteem. Both talk and behaviour exhibit in public how well all such tests are taken, and this includes what one does not say (but could or should have) and what good one does not do (though one could have afforded it) and whether we employ ingenuity and imagination in seeing, being and doing good.

### **Self-evaluation**

The mini-world of Prasanthi Nilayam confronts us with many chances of learning how vastly different individuals are and how easy it is to misjudge others due to our relative ignorance of the amazing variety of customs, behaviour, attitudes and talents (as well as foibles and weaknesses). Such experiences make us more aware why we cannot judge one another on the spiritual level. We can only act and react according to our own Dharma, according to how well each of us understands it.

We may or may not understand another person's heart, but we can evaluate ourselves in our hearts, where lie our real intentions. This is what counts, for Baba has informed us that self-esteem arises only from our higher Selfhood, in "making real" our divine origin and heritage.

—Robert Priddly

### **Moments to be Cherished**

Sitting in the darshan ground  
With a hush of silence all around,  
I waited for my Lord  
To bind me with His Divine cord  
Of love that He always gives  
To transform our poor lives.

I was enchanted seeing Him  
Around Him was a halo dim

To manifest the universal Giver  
I thought, holding out my letter  
Of hope that was better.

He came along my line  
Took my letter with a Sign  
That showed He knew the contents  
And promised to cover my life's rents  
Tears flowed out of my eyes  
Each said, "it's cause of love that's Sai's".

He, placing a hand, said, "Padnamaskar"  
He glided away, lifting His robe,  
Looking down watching the globe.

—D. Sai Bindu, (XI Standard)

*GURUDEV VANI:*

### **Make Swami's Words Your Beacon-Light**

*Embodiments of Love,*

Through the power of speech man is able to conquer Kingdoms. Through speech man loses all his wealth. Man acquires kinsmen and friends through speech and loses them also by his words. Through words, again, man loses his life. Words are the root cause of all these happenings. Speech is important for man whether for experiencing loss or gain, prosperity or adversity or pain and pleasure.

Life is extremely precious. Time is highly valuable. The heart is tender. The mind is a great possession. Though endowed with all these valuable things, man conducts himself as a mean, ignorant and miserable being. He is unable to recognise what a rare, sweet and blissful thing is human life. The reason is, man, forgetting his divine nature, is immersing himself in worldly pleasures and in mundane desires.

Man should realise that he is subject to Time and Time has no respect for wealth or position. Man is devoting all his time to worldly pursuits and the demands of the body. Not realising the significance of time, man leads an animal existence.

The heart, which is soft and compassionate by nature, has been hardened into stone by man. Humanness should manifest itself in a heart overflowing with compassion, but compassion has turned into hard-heartedness.



and move about without legs. Man tries to control the mind, but he is subordinate to it. As long as he is subject to the mind, man cannot understand the true nature of the mind.

### **Ravana and Rama**

Although Ravana was master of a larger number of "Vidyas" (types of knowledge) than Rama, he could enjoy no peace or bliss because he did not practise in the right way what he had learnt. Rama, on the other hand, was always blissful because he had fully digested what he had learnt and put it to proper use.

Mere scholarship alone does not make a person a "Panditha" (a man of learning). "PANDITHAS SAMADARSINAH", says the Gita. The true man of learning is the one who sees with an equal eye different beings. True knowledge should become an integral part of one's being, flowing in one's blood in an endless stream. Ill-digested learning results in the diseases of egoism and pride, as in the case of Ravana.

Unfortunately education today has become a bookish affair, used only for passing examinations and forgotten immediately after quitting the examination hall. People who cannot make proper use of their knowledge for the nation's good, are traitors to the nation. They are a liability to the society and the country. Of what use is it to flaunt one's degrees if the only purpose of acquiring them is to earn a mess of pottage?

### **Mansur's saga**

There was once in Northern India a Muslim called Mansur. From his childhood he was constantly meditating on God. Although he belonged to a poor family, his parents wanted him to have a good education. But Mansur had a pure unsullied heart filled with love and his only desire was to know his true self. When the parents wanted him to go to school, he asked what was the purpose of going to school. The parents said that he should get educated to be able to earn a living. Mansur said: "Mother! Have I to study only for earning a living? Are not dogs, birds, ants and many other creatures able to get their food without any education? Am I to waste my divine life for the sake of filling my belly?" He walked out of his home. He was a young lad, but there was an effulgence in his face. He sought nothing from any one. People seeing the effulgence on his face offered him things of their own accord. One old lady offered him food. The purity of his heart secured for him the food. His pure love was feeding him.

### **Anul Huq**

Wherever he went, he was declaring: "I am God. I am God". ("Anul Huq! Anul Huq"). This corresponds to the Vedantic declarations, "Aham Brahmasmi" ("I am Brahman"), "So-ham" ("I am He"). This declaration was treated with ridicule by some persons. The elders reviled him and asked: "You little fellow! How do you claim you are God? How can you be God?" Foolish people ask such questions in this world out of their ignorance and lack of faith. Why should they undermine the faith of others?

energy in everyone. But some use it for good purposes and some others misuse it. I am using it for good purposes". He went on declaring, "I am God. I am God."

Meanwhile all the pandits came together and observed: "We have studied all the Vedas and Scriptures. We dare not make a declaration of this kind. How is it a young student goes about making such a claim? How did he dare to make such a claim?"

It is not scriptural knowledge that confers the courage to make such a declaration. It is the faith in the heart. Whatever others may say, one should not allow one's faith to be shaken. Students should have such firm faith.

The pandits came together and went in a body to complain to the king. "Oh King! This boy is insulting our scholarship. In spite of all our knowledge, we are not able to declare that we are God. This illiterate fool goes about saying that he is God. How to account for this? Either he is a lunatic or an arrogant fellow".

The pandits somehow wanted to put an end to this. It is the nature of the evil minded to cause harm even to those who are innocent and good. They make no distinction between the bad and the good, just as white ants make no distinction between an expensive sari and a torn piece of cloth. People who criticise others are like these white ants.

When the pandits complained to the king, the latter ordered the boy to be brought to him. When the King summoned Mansur, he declared: "I am God". The King drew the boy near him and tried to appeal to him in soft words. "Child! You are an ordinary human being. You are illiterate and ignorant. You should not boast that you are God." Mansur replied: "I will continue to do so. I am proclaiming the truth. I am God. You are God. All are God. The indweller in all is the one God. The Muslims say: "Allah ho Akbar". The Christians say: "God is great." The Hindus say: "So-Ham". God is one. He is the Brahma-Sutra. He is the one thread running through all beings who are like bead, in a rosary." Mansur went on arguing with the King in this manner. The King's words did not appeal to him. He said: "Oh King! You are seeking to divert me to a wrong path away from my royal road. This is not proper on your part." Mansur continued to assert: "I am God".

### **Mansur's ordeal**

The King got angry. "You are despising my words", he said. He summoned a doctor and ordered him to gouge the eyes of Mansur. "This will force him to remain in one place and he will not disturb others". The doctor took away the eyes of the boy. But he continued to shout in joy: "Anul Huq! Anul Huq!" ("I am God. I am God".) The boy was free from body consciousness. The king then summoned a butcher and asked him to cut off the hands of the boy. Continuing to laugh, he exclaimed: "Anul Huq! Anul Huq!"

of grief on the face of the boy. He continued to laugh. His faith was unshakable. He was unaffected by what others said.

Of what use is education if there is no firm determination? Is the amassing of wealth and secreting money abroad, the purpose of education? No. Earning of money may be necessary, but it should be limited and the money earned should be used for good purposes.

Seeing the determination of Mansur, the King ordered that his legs should be cut off. After this maiming, Mansur died. But the blood flowing from his tortured limbs was proclaiming: "I am God. I am God." The dead body was cremated. But from its ashes rose the cry: "I am God. I am God."

This happened three centuries ago in Northern India. The people were astonished at the phenomenon. The king felt repentant, but of what use, is repentance after a grievous wrong had been committed?

You should not pay heed to the words of all and sundry. Students should use their power of discrimination and should be guided by the voice of conscience. They should imprint on their hearts the words of wisdom of the great sages.

Students should realise that no one can escape the consequences of one's actions sometime or other. But God's Grace can overcome a mountain of difficulties and sins. Why are you not taking the Sai medicine, which is the panacea for all ills?

### **Ingratitude—a grievous sin**

You are the beneficiaries of totally free education in the Sai Institute. The gratitude you call show to the Institute is by your behaviour, as mark of good character. Never be ungrateful to those who have been good to you. There is no greater sin than that. The still, who is the presiding deity for the eye punishes the ungrateful by denying them their eyesight. The consequences of one's actions may be felt instantaneously or after the lapse of some time. But they are bound to follow. I seek nothing from the students. All that I want is that the moment they see you, people should recognise you as the fine products of the Sai Institute. By your bad behaviour you should not bring a bad name to the Institute. More than a white uniform, you should have a white and pure heart. You must become ideal students.

### **Failure of parents**

The situation in the outside world is appalling. Even tenth standard students are taking to drink and drugs. The parents are not restraining them. Nor are they setting a good example. When the parents exchange words, the children exchange blows. The parents give a free rein to the children instead of controlling them. The parents are to blame for three-fourths of their children's misbehaviour. (Swami recalled a story about how a child who had stolen a mango was praised by his mother for his cleverness and how he grew up into a criminal and was sentenced to death for murder. Before the hanging, the man asked for his mother to be brought near him and he started

story so vividly that the entire audience was deeply moved.)

When parents allow the children to go astray, some time or other they will suffer the consequences. It has become fashionable in the Kali Age to let the children have their own way. They fear that otherwise the children will run away or commit suicide. What does it matter what befalls such characterless children? Parents do not have today this kind of moral courage. They go on listening to bad reports about their children and end their lives in despair.

### **Bhagavan's grace**

Thanks to the Lord's Grace you young people have come to Swami. You may not appreciate all that I have said at this age of yours. But you will realise the truth of Swami's words in due course. You have been fortunate to secure something which few others have got. You are discarding it lightly. You are slighting Swami's injunctions. You do not heed the words of Swami. "People do not listen to words of the wise, but easily fall a prey to bad advice. Such people, how can they hope to understand Swami? Of what use is all their education?" (Telugu poem) They will not listen to good advice. But bad talk they will listen with both ears! How can they expect to know Bhagavan? Can an ant fathom the depths of the ocean? Likewise you cannot cognise the truth about Swami? But you can make good use of the opportunity that has come your way. "San has come to you because of your great merit. Arise! Wake up!"

### **"Earn a good name"**

You are returning to your homes for the holidays. Conduct yourselves well. Bring a good name to your parents. Earn a good name in society. If you have no other work, join in any service activities of the local Sai Organisations. Let service be your motto. That should become your life's goal.

If all of you behave in this way how much will the country benefit and prosper. Promote the welfare of society. Do not succumb to some of the petty desires of your parents. "Oh boy! Get married soon. You will get a rich dowry of lakhs of rupees!" What a shame that parents should speak like this and that boys should give in to them! Should a son be sold for the sake of a girl? Whether it is ten lakhs or ten crores, do not sell yourselves. You must stand on your own legs. You must depend on your own strength. Do not be carried away by what others say. Do not become a slave. Be a master. Only then you can be a master over others.

Students! Put into practice at least a fraction of what you have studied. Plunge into society and engage yourselves in social service. Make society happy. Having taken birth in society, if you achieve this much, it is enough. Remember that nothing lasts—the body, the mind or senses. Only one's reputation survives him. This is what Swami expects from you. If you achieve a good name and bring credit to the Institute where you have studied, you would have rendered great service to the nation.

Do not become Ravana. Earn a good name like Rama. Do not aspire to become a Birla, a Kirloskar or a Tata. A name earned by merely amassing wealth is ephemeral. Do not sell yourself for money. Earn a good income and make proper use of it. Money earned by sinful means will not last. Either thieves will rob you or the Income-tax department will seize it.

For wealth there are four claimants: Number one is fire (Agni). Number two, thieves. The third, relatives. Fourth, enemies. These four are after one's wealth. Before any of them deprives you of your wealth, you should make good use of it.

Our students should not hanker after money either in the matter of marriage or in regard to a job. Work, work, work. That should be your sole concern. Become votaries of work. Work binds men to the world. The body is given for carrying out righteous actions. It is not given for enjoying carnal pleasures.

### **Madalasa's example**

Madalasa gave birth to four sons. When each son was born, she did not desire that they should study, go abroad, earn great wealth and acquire name and fame. From the time the child was in the cradle, she taught the child the ideal of renunciation (Vairagya). She sang a lullaby for the child, treating Pranava mantra as the cradle, the Mahavakya "Tattwamasi" ("Thou art That") as the bed, Awareness as the cord drawing the cradle. The four Vedas were the chains for the cradle. Rearing each child in this manner, she sent him to the forest telling him that he will find real "rest" there.

### **Janaka and Gargi**

King Janaka was similarly a seeker after the Supreme Truth (Brahmajnana). He sought knowledge for the sake of Self-Realisation and not for the sake of creature comforts. He held an assembly of sages where he achieved fame. At that assembly Gargi carried on a debate with the sage Yagnavalkya. The debate was based on the scriptures. It was inconclusive. Then Gargi put a question to King Janaka: "What is the mark of a Sthithaprajna?" (a person of steadfast Awareness). The King replied: "He is the one who realises the Oneness of the Absolute. There is no second." Gargi said: "If you have realised this state of Awareness, you will be conscious of Oneness alone. You are not in that state now. I wish to realise this Awareness."

Gargi said: "Oh King! I have one desire. Will you fulfill it?" "Certainly", replied the King. She asked him to marry her. The king said: "I have only one wife, Sunetra (the one with good eyes). I don't wish to have any other wife." Gargi said: "You are a great Jnani. You have good eyes and your queen is a good-eyed lady. May I ask what reward you are giving to the great Yagnavalkya?" The king said: "I shall give him whatever he asks". Yagnavalkya was no doubt a great scholar but he did not have total sense-control. Yagnavalkya asked the king again: "Give this Gargi to me in marriage. Celebrate our wedding". There was a great uproar in the audience-hall. The great scholars present there asked: "what is the meaning of Yagnavalkya's request?" Gargi then asked Yagnavalkya: "What is the purpose of a marriage?" Yagnavalkya replied: "To have progeny". Gargi said: "No. The wife is one-half of the husband—Ardhangi. This means that

Marriage is for the sake of pursuing Dharma. It is not for enjoying worldly pleasures. Our emperor enjoys carnal pleasures in his palace. The same pleasures are experienced by street dogs. Is that happiness?"

### **Source of happiness**

Thyagaraja asked: "Is wealth the source of happiness or serving the Lotus Feet of Rama?"

Students should ask themselves: "Does happiness consist in the acquiring of degrees or getting good jobs or attaining high positions? Real happiness consists in the acquisition of wisdom. However, till that wisdom is got, one should try to live in the world with morality and integrity. That should be the aim, while living in the world. Keep your vision on the Divine and lead your life in the world. This is the teaching of Sai. You need not renounce the world. You need not go after jobs like dogs hunting for crumbs. Stick to the job you have and take proper care of your family. Lead an ideal life. Always bear in mind the goal. Students should recognise this and conduct themselves properly. Therein lies true bliss.

In olden days, after the disciples had completed their education and before they entered on the life of householders, they stood before the preceptor to receive words of advice from him. This was similar to the convocations held these days.

Today some of you are leaving for your homes after completing your studies and others are going for the vacation to return after the holidays. You must experience happiness whether you enter on a new life or whether you come back. Do not get into bad company.

### **Good company**

As one of the student speakers said, cultivate good company. Avoid bad company at any cost. Seek good company with all your life. Serve your parents. Help your mother when she goes out shopping. You must confer happiness on the mother who bore you for nine months in the womb. Do not cause any displeasure to the mother. Be ready to give a helping hand to your father. Don't waste your time in idleness. Engage yourselves in social service. Those who can sing should take part in Bhajans. Serve patients in hospitals by purchasing medicines or providing clothes, but do not give them money. If you give them money, they turn into beggars. If you render service in these ways, you will be earning a good name. You will be redeeming your human birth.

### **Adore God: abhor the world**

Keep your minds always fixed on God. That is the true meaning of "Upavasa", not observance of a so-called fast, followed by a sumptuous feast. (Swami sang a Kannada song to illustrate how fasting is observed by some people only to enjoy a feast later).

Never forget God. Do not believe in the world, which is perpetually changing. Don't fear death. If you learn to observe these three maxims, you can accomplish anything. Swami will take care of you. When students complain that Swami is not talking to them, they should understand that Swami does not want to talk to those who do not heed His words. If you are good, Swami will talk to you of His own accord. If you act up to Swami's words, Swami will take good care of

protector. Do not trust anyone else. Today distrust of each other has become universal. Esteem God alone as your true friend. You forget God at your own peril.

### **"I seek your love"**

Students! I had no intention to speak today. But the Warden appealed to me to say a few words to the students. I have spoken often enough. Even now I am saying the same thing. I seek nothing from anyone. I have not sought anything all these seventy years. My hand always gives. The only thing that I seek from you is LOVE. My love for you is pure, unchanging and selfless. What is your life worth if you cannot believe in such love? Believe in it. You place trust in double-dealers. Why don't you stand by the truth which you know? Receive my pure love with a pure heart. Make yourself holy. Live in Love. Love is God. Bear in mind what Swami has said and regard Swami's words as a beacon light for your lives. With the light of Swami's advice in your hearts, you can proceed on life's journey for any length of time. Remember with love God, who is everything.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Prema muditha manase kaho! Rama! Rama! Ram!*"

**From Bhagavan's discourse in Sai Ramesh Mandap on 31st March, 1996**

## **Faith**

"There is nothing like blind faith. For faith there can be no reason and no season. Faith and Spirituality are beyond reason. Faith is the foundation for realization of God."

"People are going about now advising that one should believe only things that one has 'seen' and 'experienced'. Something happens somewhere and the news is published in the papers. It is believed without question. So, too, believe in the experience of seers and sages who had no other purpose than discovering the Truth and sharing it with others who were unaware of it. In India we have had millions who believed in God and in the seekers after God, and who have themselves realised the Truth of God. This has made their lives happy and contented."

"Truth is born of love, which comes from true faith in God."

"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."

yours. Only the man of faith is completely free from fear. Love of God promotes fear of sin and makes one lead a moral life."

"Faith is the basis of every act. You do not run away from the barber because he is armed with a sharp razor. You place faith in him and allow him to cut your hair, quietly submitting to his idiosyncrasies. You give away costly clothes to the washer since you have faith that he will return them washed and ironed—so too, believe in the inner motivator, the ATMAN within the voice of God."

—Baba

*"The youth must learn the art of renunciation, and acquire character. These are the two eyes which can guide, him safely through life: Renunciation is the golden key that reveals in acquisition and accumulation of properties and possessions. 'Sai' colleges aim at the production of a generation of youths who live ideal lives. They should imbibe the right ideas and plunge into society with their thirst for service as a spiritual duty and this will make their humanness worthwhile. Students should cultivate basic human traits like humility, readiness to serve and commiseration at the sufferings of others."*

—Baba

## **Breath, Life and Soul**

It has always been easier for man to take a stand on remote issues that do not involve him directly than to fight causes that are closer to home. As one animal rights activist put it, "To protest about bullfighting in Spain or the slaughter of baby seals in Canada while continuing to eat chickens that have spent their lives crammed in cages, or veal from calves that have been deprived of their mothers... is like denouncing apartheid in South Africa while asking their white neighbours not to sell their houses to blacks. " Clearly, this shows that one's thoughts, words and deeds are at variance with each other. Only when they are consistent can the much desired 'Inner Transformation' take place within man; the two are mutually dependent on each other. As Sir George Trevelyan explains, "One basic spiritual law is that for each step into higher knowledge, a man should take three steps in the development of his own character."

In a fairly recent discourse to foreign devotees, Swami talked about the relationship of food to spiritual development, saying, "The United States has a great name as being the land of Kubera (the embodiment of wealth). The people don't fall short of food, and there are no obstacles to pleasure. In spite of this, He pointed out the number of "unfavourable deaths" (including those from suicides and divorces) as being the highest in the United States and Europe, attributing this to the "food that causes mental agitation."



amount of meat, dairy products and highly processed foods is indeed largely responsible for the epidemics of diseases like heart disease, osteoporosis and cancer. Other major contributing factors are of course, pollution in the environment, the widespread use of insecticides and chemicals in foods, the problem of alcoholism, cigarette smoking and mental stress.

Factory farming in the United States in the past several decades has led to deplorable conditions in which animals are raised for meat. Apart from being subjected to untold suffering and pain, they are fed disease causing chemicals and hormones which eventually end up in our bodies. One frightening example which is quoted in John Robbins, book (Diet for a New America, 1987) concerns a government report which found that more than 90% of the chickens produced from most of the flocks have leukosis, which is a form of chicken cancer.

### **Man and animals**

Our minds have become so programmed to accept all this as the normal state of affairs that we do not question the moral and ethical validity of the practices of the society we live in. Food is recognised essentially as fuel for the body and its role in the development of our mind and the spirit is largely ignored. However, the Hindu belief is that the more `satvic' the food, the more pure will be our thoughts. In the Chandogya Upanishad, the dialogue between Uddalaka and Svethakethu is based on the connection between food and mind, stating that the purity of food leads to purity of mind. According to Swami, "In spiritual endeavours, there can be no stability or concentration when meat is taken." Mahatma Gandhi had also once said, "I feel that spiritual progress does demand at some stage that we should cease to kill our fellow creatures for our bodily wants."

Hindu scriptures declare that man goes through many animal lives before he takes human birth. About this Swami says "Man is many animals in one. He has the jackal, buffalo, the tiger, the elephant—all in him. Each of these incarnations has left a mark on his mental make-up, like a scar when a wound has healed. For example the qualities of unsteadiness and waywardness are acquired from his previous life as a monkey, while the trait of foolishness is a relic of his existence as a sheep."

"The mind is the sacrificial post, and the animal instincts still resident in the human character are to be slaughtered on the altar of the mind," says Swami, referring to this as the "Inner Sacrifice" as opposed to the outer animal sacrifice that is practiced as a religious offering to the deity invoked and which He strongly condemns. Thus, spiritual unfolding involves eliminating one's 'Pravritti' qualities like anger, egoism, jealousy, greed and pride and replacing them with the 'Nivritti' qualities or inner qualities like love, compassion and kindness.

The Sanskrit word 'Ahimsa' means Non-violence or Non-injury. In Indian religious traditions, particularly, the Jain religion (in which Ahimsa is believed to have taken root,) non-violence denotes respect for all life forms, human beings, plants and animals; thus opposing wanton destruction of any of God's living creations. In Jainism, living forms include almost everything,

which exist consciousness, bliss and energy.

In India (a country which has the largest number of vegetarians), vegetarianism is based purely and simply on the principle of Ahimsa alone. While every life form feeds upon another, the question may arise as to why man should be a vegetarian and refrain from eating animal flesh? The cat will kill the mouse for its dinner or birds may dig worms for their breakfast; to do so is their dharma, their way of life. It is not a matter of choice for them. Animals hunt just to obtain food and do not take any more than they need. The lion is seen to roam harmlessly among antelopes hunting them only for obtaining his food. Free will means using our God-given conscience to make responsible, ethical and moral decisions. Yet, he is the only living creature that kills for pleasure.

Swami says, "Animals have not come for the purpose of supplying food for the human beings. They came to work their own lives in the world. But we have taken to eating meat as a habit." He adds, "Among things endowed with Consciousness or Chaitanya the plants, trees, insects... all have managed to treasure their specific Dharma unaffected by the passage of time. But man, whose intelligence sweeps from the inert and the infinitesimal to the super-conscious and the Universal is the only living thing that has slipped and is sliding down."

Looking back into Indian history, it will be interesting to note that the practice of Ahimsa influenced policies of some of its important rulers. Repelled by the horrors of war, Emperor Ashoka, the greatest of India's rulers during the third B.C., became a convert to Buddhism on account of its doctrine of nonviolence. He also introduced many laws which encouraged compassion towards animals. These included the building of hospitals for animals, the digging of wells and the planting of trees to provide them with water and shade to rest under. Animal consumption was restricted and many were given special status and declared inviolable. Throughout India, Ashoka's famous edicts were inscribed with laws and moral precepts relating to the treatment of animals.

Akbar, the Muslim emperor who ruled over most of India between 1556 and 1605, was so fascinated with the Jain religion that he studied the principles of non-violence and subsequently introduced laws to limit the slaughter of animals; in some cases even banning their killing altogether. These laws helped to bring about an awareness of the sanctity of life and above all, a change of heart of the part of these rulers and some of their followers.

### **The non-violent ethic**

If we examine the western cultures, we find that the non-violent ethic has been confined to areas of civic disobedience, antiwar propaganda, and pacifism. It derives its basis from Biblical injunctions like "Love thy neighbour as yourself" and "Turn the other cheek," thereby stressing non-violence towards man, in particular. The concept of non-injury towards the Earth and animal kingdom did not feature in their philosophy.

eventually influenced certain movements in Europe dating back to the early days of Alexander the Great of the fourth century B.C. These movements which propagated vegetarianism did not gain the approval of the church authorities in their days, but continued to exist on a small scale in Europe until the fifteenth century. The most notable among them was the Cathar Church which was founded in Italy in the 1140s and whose teachings then spread to France, Germany and England.

Later, St. Francis of Assisi, the great lover of nature and animals, influenced medieval piety and western thought towards a reconciliation of the spirit of Christianity with the love of nature. The veneration of God found expression in the veneration of Nature.

The nineteenth century saw Transcendentalists like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau profoundly influenced by the sacred scriptures of the East. Through their philosophy they drew people's attention towards the aesthetic values of nature and life forms, thus inspiring the present day environmentalists and conservationists.

The idea of "Vegetarianism" did not however take a stronghold in western society per se. Today there are a few Christian monastic orders in the western world that practice total vegetarianism; the most famous one being the Seventh Day Advent Church. Their philosophy is based on the teachings of the Bible in which God proclaims: "I give you all plants that bear seed everywhere on earth and every tree bearing fruit which yields seed: they shall be yours for food" (Genesis).

### **Reincarnation and karma**

In order to view life as being sacred and all life forms as mutually dependent, man has to understand his relationship to the environment. The Chandogya Upanishad says that when man dies, he returns to the atmosphere and becomes one with the earth again, only to re-enter the plants which in turn become food for man, thus creating conditions for assuming new embodiments or new life. This establishes a connection between our body in this life and the embodiment we will be assuming in the next one. The samskara or impressions created through our actions in this lifetime determine the nature of our next life. Reincarnation is thus an integral part of the law of Karma; by hurting the animal kingdom we are incurring a karmic debt of enormous magnitude and bringing retribution upon ourselves. Lord Krishna has stated in the Bhagavatam, "those who kill animals without remorse are devoured by those animals in their next birth."

The great sage Yagnavalkya, in his Yagnavalkya-smriti stated that three ghastly crimes are committed by slaughtering animals for the sake of eating their flesh. These are: (1) PRANAHARA, the taking of innocent life; (2) PIDA, the infliction of pain on the innocent animal during the process of killing it; and (3) VIRYAKSHEPA, the crime of depriving the animal of its strength through slaughtering it. Punishment for all three crimes entails twenty re-births characterised by premature and painful death in the first; pain, suffering and unhappiness, including family feuds, anxiety and tensions in the second; poor health in which the life of the person concerned will be wasted away, in the third.

All living beings place a great value on life. Anything that has life tries to stay alive (this includes plants) though the level of consciousness or awareness might differ from one species to another. No living creature would give itself up as food for another living being. Animals, birds and fish, and indeed all mobile creatures also feel the desire to live, just as humans do. They too would struggle, cry and feel the pain in being hurt, just like the way we would if we were captured and threatened to be killed. The only difference is that animals cannot verbally express to us the agony that they feel. It has been reported that pigs that are being slaughtered cry in a manner similar to the way humans scream.

We may rationalise that it is the butcher who kills and that we only eat, therefore we have not sinned. Swami responds by saying that "sin is committed by the one who eats as well as the one who kills." The American philosopher and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "You have just dined, and however scrupulously the slaughter house is concealed in the graceful distance of miles, there is complicity." It is said that if slaughterhouses were made of glass, most of the people in this world would be vegetarians. We simply choose not to think about what we know goes on within the premises of these slaughter houses.

There is an interesting story in Alexandra Tolstoy's book: 'Tolstoy: A life of my Father' in this story her aunt is invited to dinner and her father wanted to teach the aunt a lesson regarding the truth behind eating meat.

"Auntie was fond of food and when she was offered only a vegetarian diet she was indignant, said she could not eat any old filth and demanded that they give her meat; chicken. The next time she came to dinner she was astonished to find a live chicken tied to her chair and a large knife at her plate."

"What's this?" asked Auntie. 'You wanted chicken,' Tolstoy replied, scarcely restraining his laughter. 'No one of us is willing to kill it. Therefore we prepared everything so that you could do it yourself.'" She was shocked and dumb-founded!

The American Indians, the original settlers of this vast country lived in sacred harmony with Nature and the animal kingdom. Though circumstances forced them to hunt for food in the wilderness, they killed only the very old, diseased, defective and weak members of the species, thereby strengthening the species in question and contributing towards a balance of Nature. The question of killing arose only for reasons of survival and never for pleasure.

When the time came for the American Indians to surrender their land to the white man the great Chief Seattle spoke on behalf of his people. He could have asked many things for himself and his people, but his only request was this: "I will make only one condition. The white man must treat the beasts of this land as his brothers. For whatever happens to the beasts soon happens to man. All things are connected."

scientific advancement, even though the conditions of survival and our freedom of choice have drastically changed since the very challenging and difficult times of our predecessors.

Keeping in mind that man has risen from the stone to the plant and from the plant to animal and eventually to his present life form, we should remind ourselves of our struggle to achieve human birth, which according to the Vedas is the most difficult to attain. Swami says, "Do not slide back into the beast. Rise higher to Divinity, shining with the new effulgence of love." It is therefore the responsibility of man, having reached the pinnacle, to lead himself and all living creatures towards this goal of liberation and evolve towards higher consciousness.

When we begin to recognize this 'Unity in diversity,' sacred thoughts will begin to permeate our attitudes and actions. It would then become meaningless to take the life of an animal, no matter for what reason, least of all for food. Depending on the life forces of plant, fruit and grain, rather than meat, would become one's choice. Thus vegetarianism transcends food alone; it leads to a new way of life. Let us then re-evaluate our privileged role in God's circle of life and give a helping hand to our fellow creatures.

—Indira Pradhan, Ohio, U.S.A.

### **Blessed Day**

The great dawn arose and there began a day  
A day so pleasing, so beautiful and gay  
There we sat on the Darshan ground  
Waiting for **SAI** to make us spellbound.

He came! Oh! He was immersed in Bliss  
A sight which one should never miss.  
He walked, He smiled and all trees swayed  
In the rhythm of the wonderful music played

He cast at all a loving glance  
Which made our joyous hearts to dance.  
He gave a twinkling and a charming smile  
His words appeased us all the while.  
The Darshan was over and Our eyes were wet  
Oh! this most blessed date We shall Never Forget.

**Priya Mani (IX Standard)**

## **"Found My Mother at Last"**

Oh, Mother, why have you abandoned me?  
You are all I have; why are you not here?  
Where can I go? To whom can I turn?  
Without your protection, I'm enveloped in fear.

I am the least; the last on the list.  
The one who can't measure up to the rest,  
Not talented nor pretty nor elegantly dressed.  
Oh, why did you bear me and leave me unblessed?

The night is so dark, and the time is so long.  
For one so flawed, what hope can there be?  
Shall I perish unwanted, unloved, and forlorn,  
With the overwhelming desire my mother to see?

Time passes by, but my goal does not change.  
Must this search be continued my whole life through?

**Joy Thomas**

## **"Hand in Hand"**

The golden gates of dawn open  
To welcome the Great Lord Divine  
Who walks along with His arms open  
Beckoning to its, saying,  
"you all are mine. "

He has come at last, the Leader of all,  
To beckon its all with His clarion call  
To find ourselves within His proximity  
And to live our lives in stability.

Not to throw anyone into brimstone.  
Has He come, but to melt the hearts of stone  
He has come as an answer to many cries,  
And to save the wicked from many lives.

He has come with no shining swords,

Let's hold on to Him marching band,  
Arid tread with Him His path in hand.

—S. Premalatha (XI Standard)

## **The Hand That Helps**

Jhargram is a small town in Bengal. On the outskirts of this town, in the midst of paddy fields is a small cluster of mud huts. This area is called Gaighata, and is the home of approximately 120 leprosy afflicted people. The inhabitants are very poor, most of them live, off the alms they can collect in the nearby neighbourhoods.

There is a Sathya Sai Seva Samiti (Centre) in Jhargram. The centre members have actively participated in providing help and in the upliftment of the inhabitants of Gaighata, especially their children. For example, a teacher has been hired to initiate small children into basic education, after which many of the children have gone on to local junior schools. The Sai Centre provides help for the children's admission, and purchase of books and supplies. Most importantly the centre members arrange for supervision of the children's education. This is vital because most of the residents of Gaighata have never been to school and often do not value education. Sometimes they would prefer that the children help in earning money rather than going to school.

Along with formal education, an active Bal Vikas programme has been initiated. Now the children have learnt to chant mantras, Sing bhajans, and on occasions such as Easwaramma Day they put up very nice functions. The involvement of the Sai Centre has helped to break down some of the barriers between the inhabitant of the leprosy village and the local residents. Consequently some of the children from the adjoining neighbourhood have also joined the Bal Vikas and the tutoring class.

Recently the Bal Vikas children put up a play called "Haath" (hand). The theme of this play was to demonstrate Baba's teachings: "A hand that helps is holier than the lips that pray. A hand that helps is really beautiful". A fourteen year old boy named Indra played a leading role U1 this play. Recently the same young Indra put into practice this very important message of our Swami and saved the life of another boy. This article tells that story.

One morning Indra stepped out of his hut and looked across the paddy field. He was attracted by some movements on a far away tree. On close inspection, it appeared to him that a boy was trying to hang himself from a tree. Immediately he started running to the tree while screaming for help. Once he reached the tree, he frantically climbed up and reached the hanging boy. He precariously balanced himself on a thin branch below the hanging boy, held the boy's legs and kept pushing him upwards in order to prevent his body weight from falling on the rope as that would certainly choke him. He risked his own life in the process holding onto thin branches that

risk, he kept pushing this boy up. In the mean time his screams brought several villagers to the scene. They eventually brought the hanging boy down. The boy was alive and needed only minor medical attention. Thus his life was saved.

The boy who tried to hang himself was a twelve year old from a nearby village who also attended the classes at Gaighata. That day his parents had scolded him for some reason. So, in a moment of despair, he had decided to take his own life. It was only Swami's grace that saved this boy. Indra's hands were the instruments Swami used to teach us the lesson that "the hands that helps are really holy".

—Mrs. Bani Mitra, Jhargram, West Bengal

### **Why Fear?**

When your day is grey,  
And you see no other way,  
Fold your hands and pray,  
You will hear Him say:  
"Why fear when I am here?"

When your eyes are full of tears,  
And you are enveloped with fears,  
He will say: "My dear,  
Why fear when I am here?"

When you have no other go,  
And your mind sways to and fro,  
Pray to Him: His grace will flow,  
Assuring you: "Why fear when I am here?"

When the six enemies pull you down  
A hand will pick you up soon,  
A protective hand and a kindly face  
Telling you softly: "Have my grace;  
Don't fear when I am here?"

~P. Mahalakshmi (XI Standard)



## **Hope**

What is this world so full of vice?  
Everything bad except things which are nice.  
Things like anger, jealousy and greed,  
Things like hatred, which should never breed.

But still there is something known as hope.  
This is the only thing on which we can hope.  
So let us not waste our lives as gutter,  
But do our best and hope for the better.

## **The Call**

A cry of agony passed through my ears,  
A cry which I had not heard even in my fears,  
But I realised it was the call of the seers  
To the God who wipes off everyone's tears.

For a great catastrophe had befallen the earth.  
There took place the disappearance of mirth.  
Of violence and untruth there was no dearth,  
Which influenced the cycle of birth and death.

The Lord came to the earth in answer to their call  
For the benefit of seers, sages and all,  
So He awakened the hearts of big and small,  
And, thus saved the earth from a disastrous fall.

*AVATAR VANI*

## **The Triple Transformation**

*Embodiments of Love!*

Bharatiya culture declared from the outset that all people should be happy, that all should enjoy peace and prosperity and that all should lead sacred lives.

morality and spirituality mankind is unable to give up narrowness and pettiness. What is the reason? It is because over many lives men have grown in selfishness. In every effort of man, in every aspiration, self-interest is the driving force. Man has become a plaything in the hands of Selfishness. Whatever object he seeks, whomever he loves, it is out of selfishness and not for its own sake. No step is taken without regard for self-interest.

This intense selfishness has resulted in the total decay of human values. This monster of selfishness has pervaded every field of human activity—the physical, the social, the economic, political and moral fields.

### **Shed selfishness**

Hence, the primary endeavour of man today should be to shed selfishness, develop spirituality and realise the Divine. Three basic changes should take place in man. That is the truth contained in the SAI principle. "S" stands for Spiritual change. "A" stands for "Associational" (or National) change. "I" stands for Individual change. By this triple change the nation will prosper. Without a change in the individual, society will not change. Without a social transformation, spiritual transformation cannot take place in the heart.

Because the individual's behaviour has gone astray, society has got polluted. Concern for social good should influence every individual's action. The individual should give up the preoccupation with the interests of his own kith and kin. He must give up this attachment to "my and mine" and aspire for the Divine.

Obsessed with worldly desires and forgetting God, man is immersed in misery. Even devotion is tainted by selfishness. It does not stem wholly from the heart. It is only part-time devotion and hypocrisy. All should realise that the Divine is the basis of everything in the universe. Having evolved from the animal, man should aim at realising the Divine. Unfortunately, men today are descending to animality. As a result, peace and order are vanishing from every sphere of life.

### **Prema and seva**

What is the use of all the progress in science, if people have no control over their senses and are not aware of the all- pervading cosmic consciousness (chaitanya)? Everyone should recognise the indwelling Divinity in his heart.

### **A minister becomes a devotee**

In the Tamil land, many great saints have taken birth. Many great scholars were born here in the Tamil land. One of the Tamil kings was very fond of horses and sent his Prime Minister to buy horses. During his journey the minister came across a holy man named Thirukannan. He was attracted by the teachings of the holy man. The sage said that all worldly pleasures were ephemeral and God was the only Reality. Inspired by these teachings, the minister decided to give up his mission (of purchasing horses) and used the money given to him to build a temple for Siva. Meanwhile, the king was worried about what had happened to his minister and why he had not come back. He came to know that the minister had used the money, given to him for

minister was unaffected. He continued to chant the Lord's name in the prison.

Later, the king realised his mistake. Recognising that the minister was a great devotee, he summoned him to his presence and asked him what he had done with the king's money. He said: "Oh King! I used the money for God. . What God had given, I gave it back to Him. Without the grace of God no one can have anything. Without the power of the Divine not a cell in the human body can move, not a blade of grass will move. The whole universe exists by the will of God. Oh king! By a stroke of good fortune, you have become a ruler. Because of my bad luck I became a minister."

That minister considered his becoming a minister as a misfortune. When one becomes a minister he should be prepared to use all his energies and powers in the service of the Divine. Only when Spirituality prevails, will humanness blossom. The lotus blooms when the Sun's rays fall on it. The lotus of the mind residing in the lake of the human heart will blossom when the light of Divinity illumines it.

### **Manikkavachakar's message**

The mind should blossom and proclaim the glory of the Divine. The minister told the king: "It is out of a realisation of this truth that I offered the money, given to me for buying a horse, to the Divine." The king ordered the freeing of the minister and allowed him to lead a spiritual life after his own heart.

From that moment he started composing hymns in praise of God. He wrote many hymns. This work is known as "**Thiruvaachakam**". The author is known as **Maanikkavaachakar**. His writings are spiritual aphorisms containing the sublimest spiritual truths.

### **God and mammon**

This kind of transformation should take place in every person. Only then will Bharat become an exemplar for the world. Today men have become worshippers of Mammon. Such persons are not human at all. What use is there in endlessly seeking wealth without securing peace of mind? Why don't you spend at least a few moments on thoughts of God? "If one spends a small fraction of the time, devoted to numerous worldly affairs and to family property and possessions, to thoughts on the Lotus Feet of the Lord, he will have no need to fear the messengers of Death" (Sloka). How much bliss will you derive from devoting five minutes out of the twenty-four hours of a day to worshipping God?

"Prema" (love) and "Seva" (service) are like a bird's two wings for a man. He can soar to any heights with those two wings. To cultivate these two qualities one has to achieve the triple purity in thought, word and deed. In addition one has to reduce one's desires. Today enormous money is wasted on useless luxuries while people grudge expenditure on incense and joss stick. What folly is this?

Time is precious. It should be used in the service of the Divine. All actions should be dedicated to God. Only through renunciation can man realise the Divine. Today people have forgotten the meaning of sacrifice. Sacrifice is yoga. Enjoyment is "Roga" (disease). Make your heart blossom every moment. That is the way to greet the New Year. Realise your oneness with the Divine.

### **"My life is love"**

Promote love in your hearts and share it with other. That is the best form of worship. Love is the only property of SAI. My life is love. That is what I offer to one and all. I go on giving, giving and giving. But to what extent are you putting into practice Swami's teachings? Practise silence for at least ten minutes in a day. Meditate on Swami's teachings at that time. Realise that in this transient world the Eternal is immanent. Hold fast to God. Experience the bliss of union with the Divine. Make love your life breath. With love of God in their hearts the ancient sages could transform even the wild animals in the forest.

On the New Year's Day in Tamilnadu people prepare a chutney made up of fruits, sweet, sour and bitter, and take it as a sign of their readiness to meet all situations in life with equanimity. Sorrow and happiness should be treated alike as gifts of God.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Prema muditha manase kaho Rama! Rama! Ram!*"

**From Bhagavan's discourse at "Sai Shruti", Kodaikanal, on 13th April, 1996**

**AVATAR VANI:**

### **The Quest for Truth**

#### *Embodiments of love!*

Trees bear fruits, rivers carry water, cows yield milk, not for their own sake but for the sake of others. Equally the body is given to man for helping others. (This is the purport of a Sanskrit sloka with which Swami began His discourse).

We witness today humanity being racked by innumerable troubles and worries. No administration or authority can solve these problems. God alone can save mankind. Men have to develop faith in the Self (Atmavishvasam). Thereby they should acquire the grace of the Divine. Humanity as a whole is in need of God's grace. To receive this everyone has to fill his heart with love, render service to his fellowmen and thus redeem his life.

Everyone has to embark perpetually on the quest for truth (Sathyanveshana). In every thought, word and action this quest must go on. Truth is not merely what appears as a fact for the moment. It is changeless and beyond time. In uttering truth one should bear in mind that it

anyone. Truth that is practised in this way will transcend barriers of caste and creed. Rooted in the spiritual, it is valid universally.

How is the quest for Truth to be undertaken? A distinction should be made between truth, untruth and apparent fact. What is apparent at one moment is liable to change at another. Moreover, what is apparent may not be the real truth, as for instance, in the case of the Sun "rising in the East" and "setting in the West". The sun in fact does not rise or set at all. It is the revolution of the earth round itself which produces the apparent phenomenon of the sun rising and setting.

### **Change your vision**

To cite another example: The same pair of eyes look at different persons—the mother, the wife, the child and so on. Though the eyes are the same, the feeling with which each person should be viewed has to be different. The mother should be looked with a feeling of reverence. The child should be looked at with affection. The wife should be seen with endearment. The quest for truth in this instance calls for understanding how each person should be viewed in the context of his or her specific relationship.

In looking at the world, man has to change his vision. There is nothing wrong in creation. It is man's vision that has to be rectified. The eyes look at good and bad things, the ears listen to sweet music or harsh words. The sense organs are the same. It is the individual who has to discriminate between what is good and what is bad, in using the sense organs. The senses are misused when you look at bad things or listen to evil talk. The tongue is likewise misused when one indulges in bad speech instead of using it to chant the name of God. No one should indulge in abuse or criticism of others.

The search for truth should go on in every sphere of life. There is no need to search for God. He is everywhere. He is the indweller in everyone. As the Isopanishad declares: God is immanent in the entire cosmos.

God can be called by any name—Rama, Krishna, Allah or Jesus. The same God is adored under different names. The names and forms are countless. All names are His. There is no name or form that does not belong to Him.

"Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam, Brahma", says the scripture. Truth is infinite. Everything is based on Truth. Today people have to adhere to Truth. Truth is God. The answer to the question, "Where is God?" is: He is everywhere.

Today the world is filled with hatred and discord. What is the reason? It is the feeling of "mine" and "thine". Everyone must try to find out the nature of his true self. Everyone answers the question, "Who are you?" with the reply: "I am so-and-so". The "I" that is proclaimed by everyone is "Aham", the appellation of God. The inherent Divinity of each person is turned into egoism (Ahamkara), by identifying the Self with the body. The body is liable to change and

process which takes place as long as life remains in the body proclaims through the mantra, "SO-HAM", that the individual is one with God ("I am He"). This mantra emanates from the heart. People today recite mantras mechanically.

### **Human unity**

Today is New Year Day for Malayalis. The day is usually observed as a festive occasion. But it should be regarded as a sacred day for purifying one's self. One should get rid of all bad thoughts and fill the mind with good feelings. Hatred should be banished. One should cultivate this spirit of equal-mindedness in facing the ups and downs of life. People should contemplate on God as the embodiment of infinite bliss, the bestower of all happiness, as the transcendental Lord, as the Eternal witness in the hearts of everyone, the One Absolute, immaculate Being, free from the three gunas and the pure embodiment of supreme wisdom. The Lord is described as the embodiment of "Brahmanandam"—Brahmic Bliss. This bliss is far beyond the comprehension of human beings. It is infinite and unchanging bliss. The heart is the seat of all bliss. There is a basic difference between the mundane happiness and Brahmic bliss. The former is temporary and is purely physical. Bliss resides in the Spiritual heart of man, which is on the right side. From this new year day cherish pure thoughts and cultivate good feelings.

Each should practise his own religion sincerely. A Christian should be a good Christian. A Hindu should be a good Hindu. A Muslim should be a good Muslim. Let each one be a true practitioner of his religion. No one should criticise or hate another's religion. Muslims should not hate Hindus and Hindus should not hate Muslims. "All are one. Be alike to everyone", declared Jesus. The one God is common to all.

Embodiments of Love! Whatever you may do, never give up your faith in God. Do not place your trust in the transient things of the world. Regard all humanity as one family. Transcend the barriers of creed, language and nationality. The message of the Vedas is universal, meant for all mankind. The message is one of unity and harmony. "Let us live together, strive together and rejoice together". Develop this spirit of oneness.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the Bhajan, "Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma".

**From Bhagavan's discourse at "Sai Shruti", Kodaikanal, on 14th April, 1996**

## Message of the Avatars and the Epics

### *Embodiments of love!*

This vast cosmos, consisting of moving and unmoving objects, is permeated with Truth. All names and forms are founded on Dharma (Righteousness). Dharma is the form of God. The Spirit (Atma) which is present in the subtlest of the subtle and vastest of the vast as a witness is verily the Brahman (the all-pervading Consciousness).

All the objects in the universe are made up of atoms. The atom is the embodiment of the Spirit (Atma). Hence there is no place in the universe without the Atma or Brahman.

### **Buddha's message**

Forgetting the spiritual basis of the universe man gets entangled in misery through his worldly attachments. It was out of a recognition of this truth that Buddha declared: "Everywhere there is sorrow. Everything is momentary and everything is perishable." To consider the worldly things as permanent is the cause of sorrow. If man recognises that the world is permeated by the Brahman, which is all bliss, he will free himself from the cause of sorrow. He fails to recognise the divinity that subsumes the whole of Prakriti (Nature or the phenomenal Universe). Instead, he regards the Divine as a natural phenomenon and though the workings of the Divine can be seen in Nature, man in his folly fails to recognise the Divine. Nature in its myriad forms is the effect. God is the cause. The entire cosmos is a manifestation of cause and effect. Hence the universe is a manifestation of the Divine.

Man should realise that the fine basic elements which constitute the fundamental stuff of the universe are common to all mankind and should be enjoyed as such. He should see the Divine in every human being. This was the purport of the prayer: *Buddham Sharanam Gacchaami* ("I seek my refuge in the Buddha") The second prayer is: *Sangham Sharanam Gacchaami* ("I seek refuge in the Sangha"). The implication of this prayer is that, after getting enlightenment, one should enter society (to serve it). The third prayer is: *Dharmam Sharanam Gacchaami* ("I seek refuge in Dharma"). The meaning of the prayer as a whole is that for the sake of upholding Dharma (Righteousness), one should use one's Buddhi (the enlightened intellect) and engage himself in social activity. Possessing intelligence, if a person does not do social service, how can he uphold Dharma? It has been said that man has been given a body essentially to pursue Dharma.

### **Non-violence the first dharma**

The observance of non-violence has been described as the highest form of Dharma. All the violence in the world today is due to the fact that people do not lead righteous lives. People do penance and perform various kinds of rituals, but they have secured no peace. Why? Because they have not sought to find out who they really are.

This enquiry should lead to the realisation that one is the Divine in human form and deeming the body as the basic reality, men are misusing the body and the talents and qualities given to them. They are failing to recognise how to use their endowments for redeeming their human birth.

### **Ahimsa**

Among the teachings of the Buddha to the world, the foremost was "Ahimsa" (not causing harm to anyone). Non-violence is not merely refraining from inflicting injuries on others with one's limbs or weapons. Non-violence has to be practised with purity of mind, tongue and body. ("Trikarana Shuddhi"). There should be no ill-feelings which is a form of violence. To cause harm to others through the body is also violence (Himsa). No one should be harmed even by speech. The speech should be sweet, pleasing and wholesome. All actions should be helpful to others.

"Buddha laid down three rules for all actions. All acts done by the hands should be good. The proper ornament for the throat (Kantham) is truth. For the ears the best ornament is listening to sacred lore. What other ornaments does anyone need?" (Sanskrit sloka)

What are people doing today? They are listening to what is undesirable. They are looking at ugly scenes. How, then, can they hope to get peace? Only by the harmony of the mind, the heart and the tongue. There should be unity in thought, word and deed.

### **Transformation and need**

Despite all the teachings, no real transformation is taking place in the behaviour of man. Of what use are bhajans and 'Satsang' (the company of the good) if one does not become purer? Through the company of the good, one should cultivate good thoughts, which in due course will lead one to self-realisation (Jivan Mukti).

Men should act according to the dictates of their conscience, which can discriminate between right and wrong. They should rise above animal tendencies and realise the glory of human birth. Men should lead ideal lives, manifesting their inner divinity. Everything they do, their speech, their manners, should be exemplary. Even the smallest act should cause no harm to others.

### **Lesson from the epics**

Men today get easily enraged. Where can we find the example for such anger? In the Bhagavatam. Likewise where can we find an example for Kama (Desire or lust)? In the Ramayana. Where is the example for the evil quality of greed? It is in the Mahabharata.

How do these great works contain warnings against three grievous evils? In the Ramayana, the all-powerful Ravana, a great scholar well versed in the 64 types of knowledge and one who had performed severe penances, was destroyed because of the one evil quality of 'kama' (lust). All his other virtues were burnt up by the fire of sensuous desire. Kama (lust) is destructive of all other good qualities in a man. Ramayana demonstrates this truth.



In the Bhagavata we have the story of Prahlada and Hiranyakasipu. Prahlada was a great devotee of Vishnu. His father, Hiranyakasipu, hated Vishnu. In his uncontrollable hatred of the Lord, he did not hesitate to subject his young son to the most terrible ordeals. His anger (krodha) was the cause of his destruction.

In the Mahabharata, Duryodhana stands out as the example for the evil quality of greed (lobha). He declared that he would not part with even a needlepoint of land to the Pandavas (who were his cousins). His greed turned him into a totally wicked person.

Ravana, Hiranyakasipu and Duryodhana were not men of common clay. They were all eminent in their own way. They were heroes by virtue of their accomplishments. But they proved zeroes in their lives because of their specific vices. What use is there in possessing great talents if one is subject to a grievous vice? Ravana had numerous abilities and had made Lanka veritable paradise. But of what avail were all these when he had no control over the senses? It is the bounden duty of every human being to get rid of his evil qualities and foster his good qualities.

### **Avatars and dharma**

The role of every Avatar (incarnation of the Divine) is to establish the reign of Truth and Righteousness, banish all that is evil, false and unrighteous in the world, and help to manifest the divinity in mankind.

It was to establish the reign of righteousness ("Dharmasamsthapana") that the advent of the Rama Avatar took place. No one should go back on his plighted word. There is no greater Dharma than Truth. In order to uphold the promises given by his father, Rama chose to go in exile to the forest.

Likewise, in the Krishna Avatar, the Lord declared, "I incarnate from age to age to establish Dharma."

When you listen to these declarations, it will be clear that Dharma is the supreme ideal. What is Dharma? Any act that is done with purity in thought, word and deed is Dharma. But, how many act up to this dictum? Very few understand or live up to it. Practice is primary.

The history of Bharat is replete with stories of the great men who have upheld Dharma. Buddha also had to face criticisms from his contemporaries. These are the familiar experience of all Avatars. No incarnation was free from calumny. All good causes also suffer from criticisms. Peace and good result from the work of the Avatars in spite of these attacks and impediments.

### **Importance of good company**

The following is the fourfold formula for all people. Welcome good company. Eschew all association with the evil minded. Perform meritorious acts ceaselessly. Always discriminate between the transient and the everlasting.

Buddha's first teaching was: give up bad company. In his wanderings Buddha used to take with him some young men. Some persons criticised Buddha, charging him with spoiling the young men. Buddha gave a free rein to his traducers. He listened quietly to their accusations and left without uttering a word in reply. When the disciples asked him why he chose not to reply to the criticisms, Buddha said that unanswered criticisms return to the critics who made them.

By not getting excited over the angry words of a critic, one becomes superior to the critic. Otherwise, one descends to the same level as the critic. Bear no ill-will towards anyone. That is the golden rule indicated by the Gita. Buddha carried on his mission in this spirit of equanimity and tolerance.

### **Beyond the critics**

It is the quality of great men to face obstacles and opposition with courage and calmness. It is not easy to understand the inner urges of great men or the motives and actions of Avatars. The animating principle of Avatars is infinitely wide. Compared to it, the capacity of the ordinary man is infinitesimal. How can the atom comprehend the infinite? Can an ant measure the depth of the ocean? Impossible! Likewise the nature of Divinity is beyond human comprehension. Even the great sages like Vasishta and Vamadeva could have no full understanding of the divine.

### **Realising the Divine**

Instead of trying to understand the Divine, it is better to practise what you have learnt. "Jnathum, Drashtum, Praveshtum" ("know, perceive and commune") are the three which draws the Divine towards them. The bhajans should be sung with complete obliviousness of the body. Devotional fervour is more important than musical skill. The ladies who took part in the bhajans in the morning sang the bhajans whole-heartedly. Their hearts were full of sweetness. Hence sweet music flowed from their hearts.

It is significant that a large number of devotees from Sri Lanka should celebrate their national festival of Buddha Jayanti at Brindavan in the presence of Swami. It is their good fortune that they have been able to have this celebration here despite all discomforts and inconveniences. Their bhajans have sustained them in these celebrations. They have been singing the bhajans at all places and as often as they could. They could find happiness and peace because of the bhajans.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with His favourite bhajan: "*Prema muditha manase kaho: Rama! Rama! Ram!*"

**From Bhagavan's discourse in Sai Ramesh Mandap on May 15, 1996**

## The Greatness of Rama-Rajya

*That day alone is a true day  
When all good devotees gather to pray to the Lord;  
When people serve the poor and the needy in a spirit of brotherliness;  
When a feast is offered to the servants of the Lord who sing His glories;  
When holy men visit our homes and relate the exploits of-the Lord;  
All other days are only days of mourning.* (Telugu poem)

It was the great day of Sri Rama's Coronation. The City of Ayodhya was en fete, with the people rejoicing in the festive celebrations. The crown that was first worn by Manu, had been worn by successive emperors according to hallowed tradition. That day the sages Vasishta, Vamadeva and Jabali carried the crown for the coronation of Sri Ramchandra.

To participate in the historic ceremony several kings, chieftains and lesser rulers were entering the Durbar Hall, along with many sages. At the main entrance gate, a gigantic message was blazoned across the gate in a novel manner. The message read in Sanskrit: "Sathya-Dharmabhilyukthanam nasthi mrithyu-Kriyambhayam" ("Those who adhere to Truth and Righteousness will have no fear of death"). The message declared that for the one who adhered to Truth and Righteousness there was no fear of rebirth. This means that such a one need have no fear of death again after this life because he will have no re-birth. Without birth there can be no death.

The Ramayana brought home to one and all this significance of Truth and Righteousness. The glorious story of Rama spread the name and fame of Bharat to all countries. In the reign of Rama (Rama-Rajya) the two words, Sathya and Dharma, (Truth and Righteousness) reverberated everywhere in the Kingdom. Dharma prevailed everywhere and young and old, men and women, scholars and illiterates, one and all adhered to these two principles.

As is the ruler, so are the ministers. As are the ministers, so are the administrators. As are the administrators, so are the common people. The ministers strictly adhered to Truth and Righteousness. Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna were assigned the duty of enforcing Sri Rama's orders in all parts of the Kingdom. They kept a close watch over what was happening in every nook and corner of the realm, how far the people were adhering to truth and righteousness and how they were getting on in daily life. For this purpose a large body of officials were employed to go round the country. These messengers gathered all information everyday about the difficulties experienced by the people and their conduct. This system prevailed as long as Rama reigned over the Kingdom.

Rama performed a hundred horse sacrifices (Ashvamedha yagas) and many other sacrifices. Together with these sacrifices Rama propagated among the people the qualities of truth and right conduct.

In Rama's reign, all married women were "Sumangalis" (whose husbands were alive). Widowhood was unknown. It is natural for parents to die before their children. But it is unnatural for children to die earlier than their parents. In Rama-Rajya there was not a single case of premature death. Death of young people was not known. There were none suffering from disease. There was no sign of poverty. The rains came in the right seasons. The harvests were bountiful. There was no shortage of food. Unrest was unknown. ALL people were happy and peaceful.

Comparing those days with the present times, we realise what a pathetic plight is ours. Bharat will enjoy Rama-Rajya only when it has rulers like Rama, ministers like Sumantra, saintly advisers like Vasishta and Vamadeva and brothers like Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna. During Rama's reign there was no conflict anywhere. People did not indulge in mutual recrimination. Everyone in the Kingdom was grateful for any act of help and was eager to repay the act of kindness.

The first pronouncement which Rama made on the occasion of the coronation is remarkable. He said: "Who is it that is primarily responsible for making today's celebration possible? Hanuman was solely responsible for the successful search of the whereabouts of Sita and helping me to recover her. Hence, at the outset I express my deep gratitude to Hanuman."

Rama then expressed his gratitude to Jatayu, who sacrificed his life in fighting against Ravana while he was carrying away Sita.

Next, Rama expressed his gratitude to Sugriva, who had helped him in organising the search for Sita and in providing the hordes for the war on Ravana. He next expressed his gratitude to Vibhishana, who had come over to him, despite the suspicions of Rama's companions, and who had revealed to Rama many of the secrets of the enemy.

Above all, there were the huge hordes of monkeys, who had no direct connection with Rama or Sita, who endured many hardships and even laid down their lives for his sake and he expressed his gratitude to all of them. In this manner, Rama expressed his gratitude to one and all who had helped him in the epic Rama-Ravana battle.

The supreme lesson to be learnt from the Ramayana is that one should be grateful all his life to anyone who has helped him in a crisis. Only the man who shows such gratitude can be termed a human being. The ungrateful man is a demon. The human and the demonic are not different in external appearance. It is by his actions that one is called human, demonic or divine. All those who indulge in bad thoughts, bad speeches and wicked acts are described as demons. Equally, those who do harm to those who have helped them were regarded as demons. So also, those who renounce Truth and Righteousness and cherish falsehood and wickedness as their life-breath were treated as demons.

Today men have a fascination for untruth. Ignorant of what is meant by Righteousness they practise unrighteousness. Our Vedas teach: "Speak the truth; follow righteousness." Men today are not qualified even to utter these words, much less to practise them.

Every substance has its "Dharma" (inherent quality). This quality is independent of one's belief. It is its inherent nature. For instance, that which has the quality of burning has been called "fire" (Agni). The natural quality of fire is to burn. This quality is not based on anyone's faith or opinion. Whether you are aware of this quality or not, when you touch fire it will cause a burn. Likewise, the quality of ice is coldness. This, again, is independent of anyone's belief. If coldness is absent, it is no longer ice. It has forfeited its nature. Similarly, the sun's nature is to shed light. One may fail to see the sun because it is covered by clouds or one is blind. But that does not detract from the sun's "dharma" of shedding light.

Likewise man has a "dharma." This "dharma" (or natural trait) is to perform all actions with purity in thought, word and deed ("Trikarana Shuddhi") Man's natural function is to behave with harmony in thought, word and deed (unity of body, speech and mind). Where there is divergence between thought, word and deed, the resulting action is unrighteousness. It is because today there is no harmony between thought, word and deed in the conduct of human beings, unrighteousness is rampant. This triune unity is not prevalent among the educated or the illiterate.

One who lacks faith, but acts as if he has faith, is bound to face ruin. He is of a demonic nature.

Today Truth and Righteousness have declined alarmingly. The first task is to produce young men and women who are wedded to Truth and Righteousness. Only a nation where the men and women adhere to these two principles will be prosperous and happy. When Bharat has such men and women it will achieve great prosperity.

Bharatiya culture gave to the world spirituality and proclaimed the message: "May all people everywhere be happy!" In ancient times, the rulers, the sages, the house-holders all strove to practise Truth and righteousness. The rulers set the example and all others followed them. Today we see that as are the rulers, so are the people. The people are not to be blamed at all. The faults lie entirely with the rulers.

Because of the lapses of the rulers, the people are subject to all troubles. Each one pursues his own self-interest and selfish gain. Each is after power and pelf. There are no leaders who are concerned about the people's need and their well being. If the nation's progress is to be promoted, the rulers must follow the advice of high-minded leaders in society. Bharat's survival even in its present condition is due to the fact that in the past the rulers accepted the guidance of great sages. The sages have no personal interest of their own. Why did sage Vasishtha come to Emperor Dasaratha? He was not interested in wealth or pomp. He wanted to be there when the Lord incarnates as Rama. Sita esteemed Hanuman in the same manner. She said that even if she were to offer him lordship of the three worlds, she would not be discharging her debt to him. "You are the embodiment of sacrifice. You exemplify pure devotion. Because of these two

qualities, you are entitled to move freely in all the three worlds. All the three worlds will experience prosperity through your presence."

What we need today is the supremacy of Truth and righteousness. There are some who cavil at the use of these two terms. If they do not know what truth and righteousness are, they cannot be deemed human beings at all. Truth and Righteousness are the inherent natural qualities of human beings. Human life is based on Truth and Righteousness. What folly is it to declare that one does not know what they are?

Truth is utterance of what you think. Righteousness is acting according to your words. The unity of thought, word and action is essential.

Truth and Righteousness are not qualities to be acquired, as was suggested by Narasimha Murthy (in his speech prior to Swami's discourse). They are inherent in man, born with him even as his limbs and his life-breath. There is no need to search for them elsewhere. They emanate from one's heart. They dwell in everyone. What is necessary is to see that these inherent qualities are not lost. No one is entitled to live in this world if he does not practise truth and righteousness.

It has been declared that for the practice of these two qualities, renunciation (Vairagya) is essential. Renunciation does not mean giving up hearth and home. True renunciation consists in treating happiness and sorrow alike. One must have the spirit of equanimity in facing pleasure and pain, profit and loss. Do not get elated over happiness or depressed by sadness. Treat praise and censure alike. This is true renunciation (or detachment). Treat the ups and downs of life with equanimity.

Consider the example of Sita. She was a prisoner in the Ashokavana of Ravana. He had enhanced its beauty in many ways to make it alluring to Sita. But Sita had no interest in these allurements at all. But she was deeply moved when a small monkey sang in praise of Rama from the top of the tree under which Sita was sitting. (Swami sang the song of Hanuman in praise of Rama). Sita found more beauty in the monkey than in all the flowers in Ashokavana. It was the chanting of Rama's name which lent beauty to the monkey's face. She was full of bliss at that moment. The name was like nectar to her. Bliss without beauty is sterile. Ramayana taught the integral relationship between beauty and bliss.

Wherein lay the bliss of Sita and Rama? It was in the well-being and happiness of the people. They sought nothing from the people. They were interested only in giving and giving what was good for the people. This applies to all Avatars from Rama to the present day. What is it that I am asking from you? I do not ask even for a small shell. Free education is given to the students. Free treatment is offered in hospitals. All that is offered by Swami is free. The students bear only their mess charges. Where can you see such free provision of education and medical aid? Nowhere else. I do not ask for anything from anybody. This is the bliss I shall experience if you lead good lives and stand forth as noble citizens.

In the world today you find that only when students pay a heavy price for education, they show greater interest in studies. People have greater confidence in hospitals where they pay heavily. In private hospitals you are asked to deposit in advances Rs. 2 lakhs for a heart operation. The patients feel that they will get high-class treatment because of the heavy charges they pay. This is sheer folly. Little attention is paid to the patients after the operation is over. In the Sai Super-Speciality Hospital everything is done free, the best facilities are provided and loving concern is shown for the patients. All this is taken for granted because no fees are paid to the doctors. This is a totally mistaken attitude. No doubt the value of what is offered free will be realised in due course. But I am sorry that such wrong impressions should exist. If even students feel in this way, what is the benefit they derive from their education in Sai institutions? Is it for merely earning a livelihood that you are pursuing your studies? Earning money is no great thing. Even dacoits make money. Even beggars are known to have amassed large sums by beggary. Education should be sought only for the acquisition of wisdom (Vijnana), not for acquiring wealth. The one who is interested only in money will never be able to foster good qualities. All our Institute students should be concerned only with fostering virtues. Many Kings have enjoyed wealth and passed on. Where are they now? Only their wicked deeds are remembered.

During the past ten days you must have heard a great deal about Ravana. There was no limit to his riches. Kubera (the god of wealth) was his cousin. His fort and city were paved with gold. What was the use of all his riches and affluence? He had no character. Ultimately he lost everything.

Hence, promote your character. Acquisition of good qualities is the mark of true education. What matters how much wealth a man has if he has no morals? A rich man hardly enjoys peace of mind.

No doubt money is necessary for carrying on one's life. But excessive money is harmful. You owe a duty to your family. For that purpose you have to earn an income. But obsession with money pollutes the mind. Excessive wealth is the cause of all bad thoughts and feelings. You can see that in most cases it is the children of the rich who go astray.

People should always remember that the ultimate end may come at anytime. One should reform one's life well before the end comes. Greatness consists not in wealth but in virtue. A true human being is one who recognises the Divine within him. He should lead a godly life. Everyone should strive to recognise the Indwelling Spirit within, which is the master of the body and the senses. The highest education is Atma-Vidya. The Spirit is invisible like the roots of a tree. But it is the basis of real bliss, just as the fruits of a tree are derived from the roots. The external pleasures you enjoy are based on the power of the Spirit within. The air you breathe, the light you see, the water you drink are all derived from the Divine.

Students should recognise the Divine power that sustains everything in the universe. It was the faith in the Divine that sustained Sita during the ten months she lived alone as a prisoner in the Ashokavana. The divine power that sustained Sita in her captivity is in everyone. Rely on that power. All that you have to do is to turn your vision inward. Follow the dictates of your

conscience. Education should teach you good qualities, right thinking, right conduct, discipline and devotion to duty.

Students should develop unwavering faith in truth and Righteousness. Stand by your plighted word. That is the message of Rama's life. "One word, one wife, one arrow." Rama exemplifies these three signs. You must experience the Rama Principle residing in your heart.

Rama is not the remote son of an emperor. He is the Eternal Spirit in one's heart. Live up to your conscience and you will please God.

Every human being has to develop faith in Sathya and Dharma, practise them in daily life and lead worthy lives.

Students! Boys and girls! You are likely to assume positions of leadership in the nation in future years. The nation's future depends on how you conduct yourselves. Go forward to serve the nation, whatever trials you may have to face, do so with faith in God. Follow the Divine injunctions. It will contribute to your welfare and the welfare of the nation and the world.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: *"Govinda Krishna Jai!"*

**From Bhagavan's discourse in Sai Ramesh Mandap on 29.5.96**

### **Nature's Cathedral**

I do not need a church to pray; No bricks and mortar, tiles of clay;  
No altar table, cloth of white, No golden chalice, candlelight.  
Carpeted aisle with carved pews flanked Don't make my prayers more sacrosanct.  
For God is with me every day In every place - in every way;  
Through relaxation and through chore He is before me evermore.  
The whole world is the Church of God From tallest tree to greenest sod.  
The trees and mountains form the walls, The flowers and green grass deck the halls.  
White clouds on high the altar set; Sun's rays, feeding life, the chalice;  
yet  
No candles - but when falls the night Profusions of stars to lend their light.

**—Joan Miller, Australia**

***SUMMER SHOWERS IN BRINDAVAN***



## **Render unto God what is His**

*Without Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema all knowledge is useless;  
Without these four, all charity and righteous acts are of no use;  
Without these four, the value of all good deeds is zero;  
Without these four, the exercise of power is profitless.  
For the edifice of the Ancient Dharma these four qualities are the main walls.  
What else can I convey to you, virtuous and noble-minded students?*

*Students!*

Wherever you turn, you see in the world only unrest and disorder. There is little trace of unity, harmony and brotherliness.

Unrest and confusion prevail at every level from the individual to the nation as a whole. There is discord between man and man, from family to family, village to village, district to district and province to province. These conflicts are due to the craze for power, insatiable desires and intense selfishness. Moreover, the growth of unrest and chaos in society is also due to the weakness of government, the decline of truth and righteousness and the failure of people in the mass to discharge their respective duties.

Everyone talks about the presence of the Divine, who is the embodiment of Truth and Righteousness. People speak about the omnipresence and omniscience of God. But few care to understand what this means, to experience it and to live according to it. A few drops of nectar on the tongue will work wonders, but of what use are barrels of nectar which remain untouched?

Many lectures are given today about the Divine as the embodiment of Truth and Righteousness. How many have direct experience of this? How many practise Righteousness? Have they tried to practise even a small fragment of this teaching? Have they made the slightest attempt to secure a vision of this Truth? To preach without practice is repugnant to spirituality.

Devotees like Potharaju, Thyagaraju and Goparaju (Ramdas) experienced bliss by their spiritual austerities. They sought no positions of power. They were content to seek the grace of the Divine. Their sole objective was to earn the love of God.

Owing to the influence of the Kali age today, even spiritual seekers are eager to earn wealth and positions, forget the Divine and lead unworthy lives. People should not pray to God for any position. In the pursuit of pleasure men today spend any amount of money. But they hardly try to spend even a fraction of this money on charity, good deeds and service to the Divine. Many people grudge to give even small amounts of money to the women in the house for the performance of worship with joss-sticks, flowers and fruits. They even question the usefulness of such offerings. It may well be asked what benefit such persons derive from their lavish expenditure on their pleasure and comforts. These sensual pleasures confer fleeting happiness. But acts of charity, goodness and sacrifice confer divine benefits.

Man should learn to treat pain and pleasure alike because both contribute to the beauty of life like the variety of flowers in a garland. People should also learn not to sneer at the traditional practices of the common people who do many simple acts out of reverence for what they regard as sacred. A young man travelling in a train ridiculed the act of a simple village woman who piously offered a few coins to the Krishna river when the train was going over the bridge. The woman asked him of what use was the money he was spending on smoking, which was ruining his health. She said that the few coins she had thrown in the river were an offering to Krishna. It happened once in a way. "But how much are you wasting everyday on your smoking? What will you gain from it except lung cancer or T.B.? Without realising the grievous mistake you are committing, you are ridiculing my simple action", she said.

### **Pothana's dedication to God**

The life of Pothana, the immortal author of the Telugu Bhagavatam, shows the difference between the God-oriented poet and a poet who seeks the favours of rulers and wealthy patrons. Once, Pothana's brother-in-law, the poet Srinatha, told Pothana that if, instead of relying on Sri Rama, he dedicated his Bhagavatam to a local chieftain, the latter would offer him gifts of land and properties which would relieve his poverty. Pothana declared: "Brother-in-law! You are making a serious mistake. Our real protector is Rama and not any Raja (ruler). How many have been helped by these rulers and for how long? I revere my mother Earth. My life will be redeemed by my trust in Mother Earth and by my faith in Sri Rama." (Bhagavan recited a poem of Pothana in which the poet firmly declared that he would prefer to live on what he got from the soil rather than offer his sacred work to unrighteous rulers for the sake of a mess of pottage.) Pothana told Srinatha, "My poem is the very embodiment of the Goddess of Wisdom, Saraswati. Such a work should be offered to Brahma and none else. How can I offer such a sacred work to wicked rulers?"

Srinatha was displeased with Pothana's attitude. He conveyed Pothana's sentiments to the local ruler, who also felt slighted. In his bitterness, he sent his minions to set fire to Pothana's house. The entire house was burnt down except the shrine where Pothana worshipped Rama and kept his Bhagavatam. While the flames were burning, Pothana prayed to Rama as the Lord of everything. When a person believes whole-heartedly in God, he will not come to grief. With their interests primarily in worldly benefits and material gains, men pray to God with their lips not their hearts. Rather than pray with lips, it is better to serve with the hands. This was the lesson which Hanuman taught to Vibhishana, when the latter was disappointed that he had no vision of Rama.

Men are engaged in the pursuit of wealth and position, but not in the quest of the Divine. They forget that lasting happiness and peace cannot be got by wealth, scholarship or position. Only good qualities can confer happiness because a good man finds a place in the Lord's heart.

### **Spirit of sacrifice**

The ancient sages and savants offered all their knowledge and scholarship as an offering to God. They did not regard knowledge as a means of acquiring wealth. In the days of Rama everyone was filled with a spirit of sacrifice. Rama set the example by His readiness to sacrifice the

kingdom for life in the forest as an exile. Before leaving for the forest, Rama gave away all his personal possessions as gifts. Sacrifice is the essence of the Rama Principle. To develop the spirit of sacrifice the first requisite is firm faith in God.

Students should realise that their only true friend at all times is God. He will be with them wherever they go. No others will accompany them like God. Hence, they should cultivate love for God. There is nothing greater than that love.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Prema muditha manase kaho...* "

**From Bhagavan's discourse in the Sai Ramesh Mandap on 30.5.96**

*Avatar Vani:*

*Summer Showers in Brindavan*

## **Infinite Potency of the Rama Principle**

*Embodiments of divine love!*

Man is endowed with all potencies. Forgetting the divinity inherent in man, people behave as if the body, the physical instrument, is everything. The truth about man is taught as a secret in the Ramayana. In the following discourses in this series you will learn more about Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, Kaushalya, Sita and other characters in the Ramayana. Only then the true significance of the Ramayana will be properly understood. The Spirit that is the indweller in all of them, is one and the same. Because they appear in different forms they are considered different.

*Embodiments of Love!*

The Rama Principle is a mystery. There is nothing that cannot be accomplished in this world with faith in the Rama Principle (Rama-tattwa). It is a mighty force. That is the reason why the Rama Principle has survived in the hearts of Bharatiyas even after thousands of years. Despite the efforts of foreign conquerors, this faith in the Rama Principle has remained firm. It remains as fresh as ever. It is infinitely mysterious. It is present in everyone. It survives as the imperishable nectar though the form went out millennia ago. We should not go by the name and form alone. The Rama Principle has infinite potency. Its true form is beyond description. The Rama Principle continues to illumine and inspire the hearts of men. When students grasp this truth, they will understand what is meant by humanness (manavatwam).

If you wish to lead an ideal human life, you have to follow the example of the avatars. Avatars can come in human form. But you should not be misled by this phenomenon. Avatars may appear in human form, but you should not equate yourself with them. In physical form both may appear alike. But there is a fundamental difference. You should not mistake the cotton fruit for the mango.

God comes in human form because man has strayed away from the path of righteousness. To reform man and bring him back to Dharma, God has to take the human form. Birds, beasts and insects lead lives according to their specific nature. They do not need avatars. Today, only man has given up all righteousness, forgotten his divine essence and degraded his humanness. To reform man in this state, God has to come in human form. The avatar has to protect the good ("parithraanaaya saadhoonaam"), reform the erring and punish the wicked. The role of the avatar will be explained in detail in the ensuing discourses.

The Ramayana should not be treated merely as the story of Rama. It has a life-giving message for every human being. People lead artificial lives today. When they understand the Ramayana they will know how to lead true lives. The first requisite is to know what is right. Then it has to be practised. There is no meaning in merely repeating the name, "Ram, Ram, Ram." The Rama Principle has to be fully understood. And one has to live upto it. This is possible only if there is love. Through love, one realises the Rama Principle and is transformed into an image of Rama. ALL scholarship and religious observances are of no value without such a mental transformation. The mind should be divinised. Faith in the name of the Lord is the basis for this transformation.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, *"Prema Mudhitha Manase Kaho: Rama! Rama! Ram!"*

**From Bhagavan's discourse in Sai Ramesh Mandap on the evening of May 20, 1996**

AVATAR VANI:

EASWARAMMA DAY SANDESH:

## **Heroic Mothers and Noble Sons**

*Embodiments of divine love!*

For the benefit of others alone trees give fruits, rivers carry water and cows yield milk. Likewise the human body is given for rendering help to others. But not recognising this truth, man uses his body for selfish purposes. Man today behaves in a more degraded manner than trees, rivers and cows.

Man is forgetting the purpose for which he has been endowed with a body. From dawn to dusk, he is immersed wholly in selfish pursuits. He has no comprehension of what selflessness means. Man considers the phenomenal world as the only reality. "People mistake the unreal for the real and the real for the unreal. But the real is the only One and there is nothing else in the universe." (Telugu Poem).

This visible universe is made up of three gunas (Satwa, Rajas, Tamas). This is the reason for describing the cosmos as "Stree." The term "Stree" has three components: "Sa", "Ta" and "Ra." "Sa" signifies the satwic quality. This comprises qualities like forbearance, compassion, and

love. "Ta" signifies the Tamo guna which includes qualities like modesty, bashfulness, fear and patience. "Ra" signifies the Rajo guna represented by such qualities as courage, sacrifice and the adventurous spirit. Every being born in the world has only feminine qualities. Merely on the basis of the physical form, a distinction is made between men and women. The three qualities in the term "Stree" are to be found both in men and women.

### **Role of the mother**

The term "Stree" should not be treated lightly. The Bhagavad Gita lists seven attributes to the feminine principle: Fame, Wealth, Speech, Wisdom, Intelligence, Fortitude and Determination. The Mother principle, which embodies these seven potencies, is highly sacred. Wherever you turn, you will see manifestation of the feminine principle in Nature. When any person goes abroad, the first question that is put is: "What is your Mother-tongue?" No one asks, "What is your Father-tongue?" This shows how much importance is attached to the role of the mother. The mother fosters the child in the womb and goes through all travails to protect the child. There is no greater love in the world than maternal love. Hence the ancients accorded the highest honour to the mother and declared: "Esteem the Mother as Divine" ("Matru devo bhava") and "Esteem the Father as Divine" ("Pitru devo bhava"). For every person the first preceptor is the mother. It is from the mother that a child learns its first words of speech, the first steps in movement and many other primary lessons in behaviour. Hence, the mother stands out as the reflected image of Nature (Prakriti).

### **Heroic women**

Despite the evidences of recognition of the greatness of the feminine principle, women have been described as "abala" (the weaker vessel). This appellation is applied to women because of the secondary status accorded to women in the performance of yajnas (sacrifice) and other rituals, though participation together with men was permitted. Women could not perform sacrifices and rituals by themselves. Even charitable and religious acts could be performed by women only in association with their spouses. Though the term "abala" is applied to women in this specific context alone, women are not weak at all in terms of strength or ability. We have innumerable examples of the strength displayed by women in the world. As against three potencies attributed to men, women are said to have seven potencies (according to the Gita). Can you call as weak Savitri, who made the Lord of Death restore to life her dead husband? Can Anasuya, who transformed the Divine Trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva into three babies and played with them, be called an "abala" (weak woman)? Sumati was a great lady who stopped the sun from rising, because her husband was predestined to die the next morning. Could she be termed as "abala"? No. Was Draupadi, who bore with fortitude for 14 years all the ordeals her husbands went through, a weak woman? Can Sita, who shared with Rama all hardships of life in the forest and achieved ultimate victory, be called weak? Can Gargi, who could carry on the debate with the Rajayogi Janaka in a dauntless spirit, be called a weak woman?

There are any number of such heroic women in recorded history. Though physically women may appear weak, in reality they are full of strength. As the embodiment of the three gunas, women are endowed with exceptional strength. Even in the spiritual field women display their boundless capacity.

### **Gratitude to the mother**

It is in her role as mother that there is the highest expression of a woman's strength. Every child that is born owes its existence to the mother. Hence everyone should be extremely grateful to one's mother.

The mother is the symbol of the Universal mother and father of the Divine Lord. There is a popular prayer describing the Lord as everything: "Oh Lord of Lords! You are my mother and father, my kinsman and friend, my wealth and knowledge, my everything." (Sanskrit sloka) The mother is the first teacher of speech. The first words taught to the child are "Amma", "Appa." Then the teaching of the alphabet starts. The first lessons are: "Om Nama Sivaya" or "Om Namo Narayanaya." The teaching of language begins with the teaching of names of the Divine—Siva and Narayana. In ancient times, the mother occupied the place of the first preceptor for the child. Unfortunately, in the world today, what are the parents teaching to the child? They are teaching them "A, B, C, D." Nor is that all. They go on to teach the child some meaningless stuff like: "Baa Baa black sheep!" (laughter) The mothers imagine that they are teaching something wonderful to the children. This is wrong. Teaching of the alphabet should begin with learning the names of the Lord.

### **Truth and righteousness**

This was the way the mothers in ancient Bharat taught their children. The ancient teachings exhorted the people to "Speak the truth, adhere to Righteousness" ("Sathyam vada, Dharmam chara") No mother taught the child to speak untruth. No mother would think of asking the child to follow unrighteousness. Their sole desire was to see that their children secured happiness by leading worthy and meritorious lives. Hence, in the attitude towards parents the children should give the primary place to the mother.

Today, we need to promote such ideal mothers. This is all the more necessary because the modern trends are disturbing. The tendency (among the affluent families) is to entrust the child from birth to a nurse or an ayah. The child does not get the love of the mother. The child has no knowledge of what a mother means.

### **Madalasa's example**

In ancient times, Queen Madalasa was teaching the children from their infancy, the greatness of detachment ("Vairagya"). She used to sing a lullaby while putting the children to sleep: "Placing you in the cradle of Omkara on the bed of the great saying "Tattvam asi" (That thou art), swinging to the music of Awareness, dear child, may the Gods lull you to sleep!" (Bhagavan sang the song in His own mellifluous voice). "The four Vedas are the four chains of the cradle. May your heart be filled with the nine forms of devotion."

Because the mothers in ancient times filled the child with devotion and detachment, Bharat stood out as a land of sacrifice, of wisdom, of yoga and contentment. Because today mothers do not bring up the child in this spirit, this sacred land is ceasing to be one of sacrifice and is becoming a pleasure-loving nation. The pleasures are turning into breeders of disease. Sacrifice in ancient

times made this country the land of yoga ("Yogabhumi"). Our goal should be to become yogis, not "rogis" (victims of disease).

### *Embodiments of divine love!*

You must be prepared to make even the supreme sacrifice for showing your gratitude to the mothers. Even the avatars, Rama, Krishna and others, owed their advent to their mothers. Everyone should pray for sacred mothers who will bring forth good children. There may be bad sons in the world but bad mothers are rare. Most mothers today lament over the bad behaviour of their children. No son who has caused distress to his mother can come to anything good. The Telugu saying is: There can be no prosperity in a home where the mother sheds tears. Today we need sons who will please their mothers.

The mothers, for their part, should teach the children always to speak the truth. When a mother asks the son, "Where have you been?" he should not prevaricate. He must tell the truth and confess his mistakes if he has done anything wrong. Very few children tell the truth to their parents today. Of what use is education for such children?

Today's boys and girls are the future redeemers of the nation. Hence, the parents should bring them up on right lines so that that may be ideal citizens.

### **Ladies' Day**

Women in various places observe what is called Ladies' Day. The day should not be observed only by making speeches or holding bhajans. They should endeavour to help the poor and the destitute. Helpless women who have no means of livelihood should be taught some occupation like tailoring to enable them to earn an income. Slum dwellers should be helped to keep their huts clean. The environment also should be cleaned to help the children grow in a pure atmosphere. Proper housekeeping should also be taught to those people. Disease is caused mainly by unhygienic surroundings. Moreover the air, the water, the mind, everything is polluted. This pollution is causing several new types of diseases.

### **Example of Vidyasagar**

In the past, mothers used to play a big part in moulding their children. For instance, there is the example of Easwara Chandra Vidyasagar. He was a native of Calcutta. He justified his name by being a great scholar ("Vidyasagar" means "ocean of knowledge"). He belonged to a very poor family. His mother brought up her son at the expense of her own food. Pursuing his studies under the most adverse circumstances, he completed his education and found a job on a salary of Rs. 50 per mensem. In due course, he rose to an eminent position by dint of hard work. One day he approached his mother and said: "Mother, I have reached an eminent position thanks to your blessings and guidance. I am now able to fulfill any of your wishes." The mother said: "Not yet, my son. I have three desires but I shall tell them in due course." Reaching a still higher position after sometime, Easwara Chandra renewed his appeal to his mother. The mother said: "Our village is poor and the village has no school. Please set up a school here so that the children will not have to go outside for their education. That school will be an ornament for me." The son carried out her wish. Later, the mother revealed her second wish. She wanted Easwara Chandra

to set up a small hospital in the village to serve the villagers. She said this would be her second ornament she wanted from him. He set up a hospital as desired by his mother. In the following years, Vidyasagar rose to greater eminence, but remained as humble and free from conceit as ever. He asked his mother what her third desire was. She said that he should build a small rest house (choultry) for travellers passing through the village to stay. Vidyasagar built a small community hall in the village.

Today's educated persons get puffed up over their petty educational attainments. It was his mother's teachings which made Vidyasagar practise humility. "Not penance, not rituals, not pilgrimages are of any avail in crossing the ocean of human existence. Only service to the good can take one across" (Sanskrit sloka). Service is most important. It helps to promote humility and to further the oneness of mankind. No room should be given for ostentation. True devotion is free from exhibitionism.

Children should recognise the supremacy of maternal love, which is equal to Divine Love. Revere and love the mother. That is the meaning of Mother's Day. The parents are living symbols of God. Children must make them happy.

Bhagavan concluded his discourse with the bhajan: "*Prema muditha manase kaho! Rama! Rama! Ram!*"

**From Bhagavan's discourse in Sai Ramesh Mandap on May 6, 1996**

***BUDDHA JAYANTI AT BRINDAVAN***

### **Bhagavan Blesses Sri Lankan Devotees**

Devotees from Sri Lanka celebrated Vaisakh (Buddha Poornima, Vesak) for the second time at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in Brindavan, Whitefield, on 14th-15th May, 1996, even though Vaisakha was actually on 3rd May. Vaisakha marks the Anniversary of the Birth, the Enlightenment and the Death of Lord Buddha. Over three hundred devotees came specially for the occasion from the Island Republic of Sri Lanka, most of them Buddhists, and joined by Hindus and Christians from both the Tamil and Sinhalese communities. Swami aptly blessed the occasion as the Sri Lankan New Year.

The stage in the Sai Ramesh hall was beautifully decorated by a group of experts from the hilly regions of Sri Lanka, renowned for their traditional 'Relipalang,' made with crepe paper on bamboo. 'Relipalang' is an ancient art and it is used only on occasions to display the highest kind of veneration. It blended beautifully with the hedging of red lotuses all along the length of the stage on either side in the midst of tender coconut leaves woven into different patterns. A curtain of white jasmine flowers formed the backdrop behind the statue of Lord Krishna. Behind



Bhagavan's chair was an artificial Bo-tree, to represent the Bo-tree under which the Buddha attained his Enlightenment.

The Sai Ramesh hall was decorated with festoons of tender coconut leaves and Buddhist flags. In the centre of the hall was a large and unique Vesak lantern, while tiny white and gold lanterns adorned both sides of the entire length of the hall. The Ashram premises too were brightly decorated with flags and banners made of the five Buddhist colours—Blue, Yellow, Red, White and Orange—the different colours of the aura emanating from the Enlightened One. Hundreds of oil lamps, specially made of clay for the occasion by craftsmen from Sri Lanka, lit the pathways.

Even the Prasadam offered was another traditional Sri Lankan sweetmeat known as 'Kaludodul', specially prepared in Sri Lanka and brought here for distribution to devotees on this occasion.

On 14th the devotees observed 'Sil', that is, focus upon the Eight Precepts of the Buddha to sanctify the occasion. In the afternoon Bhagavan gave saris to all the Sri Lankan ladies for them to wear the next day. The Sai Ramesh Hall was colourfully illuminated overnight. The main celebration commenced on 15th morning when Bhagavan was ushered into the Sai Ramesh Hall in the traditional Sri Lanka manner. White cloth was laid for Bhagavan to walk on and the procession was led by Kandyan dancers and drummers. Sri Lankan devotees led the bhajans for almost an hour and their devotion was clearly felt by the thousands who spilled beyond the confines of the hall.

In the evening Bhagavan permitted the Sri Lankans to sing their traditional devotional songs in His Holy presence. Mr. Mangala Moonesinghe, the High Commissioner for his country in New Delhi, was invited to speak. He gave a concise and illuminating talk on Buddhism, highlighting its essential similarities to Bhagavan's teachings. At the conclusion of his talk, Bhagavan stood up and materialised a gold chain for the speaker. Major-General Mahadevan spoke on Swami's life and Message.

Swami graciously blessed the Sri Lankans by delivering His Divine Discourse. This is the first time a Buddhist celebration in His Divine Presence included His Divine Discourse, which heralds another landmark in His Mission to unite all mankind. Swami sang two bhajans at the end of His Discourse—"Prema Muditha...", which He sings often, and "Subrahmanyam Subrahmanyam..." Subrahmanya or Muruga is a deity, whom all communities in Sri Lanka venerate.

The Sri Lankans were blessed once again the next morning with an exclusive darshan and interview inside the Kalyana Mantap and an opportunity to lead bhajans once again in the afternoon.

—S.V.P.

## Bhagavan Baba's Exhortation to Students

*Brahma Vidya (Knowledge of the Supreme Self) is the means by which one learns the way to achieve world peace and live in harmony with all, eschewing narrow ideas, and cultivating unity.*

(Telugu poem)

*Embodiments of love!*

*Dear Students! Boys and Girls!*

The main aim of a student should be to mould himself in such a way that he leads a purposeful and useful life in society. Unfortunately in the educational system today, there is no strength of purpose, no unity and no love. Whether one learns anything or not, whether one leads a meaningful life or otherwise, one's span of life melts away like a block of ice. Students should recognise this truth.

Students today are not aware of what is the primary goal of life. They do not seem even to be worried about this. One in a million seems to be concerned about knowing the primary purpose of life. This concern is the first step in the ascent towards the goal.

Most students and the common people in general think that food, clothes, shelter and sleep, having a wife and children and enjoying material comforts of various kinds constitute the goals of life. However, these are not the primary purpose of life. Without knowing this, life becomes a saga of misery. With the awareness of this purpose, man can get rid of that misery.

### **Beyond negative impulses**

In this context, it is necessary to know the proper meaning of Veda. Veda is described as higher knowledge (Vijnana), as effulgence or knowledge of one's basic nature (Uniki). It is only when these three are known that one can get rid of sorrow and experience the bliss of Veda.

What is the effulgence that is meant here? Is it the effulgence of the sun or the moon or the light of a lamp? No. It is the effulgence of the heart that is implied.

What, again, is meant by the term "Vijnana"? Is it the science of physics or worldly knowledge? No. Vijnana refers to knowledge about the functioning of the heart.

What is meant by "Uniki"? It is recognition of one's true nature. Are you the body? Are you the mind? Are you the senses or any other substance? No. Man has to realise that he transcends all these physical characteristics which are negative in nature. How can he realise his true transcendental positive nature if he fills himself with negative tendencies? What he can experience will be confined to the reactions and reflections of these negative factors and not that which is beyond them.

The first requisite, therefore, is the eradication of the negative impulses. One should investigate the truth about the divinity inherent in humanness.

### **Need for gratitude**

What is it that one should do in this mundane, transient phenomenal world? The students should realise what everyone owes by way of gratitude to every person that has helped him in one way or another. For instance, if a doctor has cured a patient of a serious ailment, he should not forget what he owes to the doctor by way of gratitude. He should not think that after-all the doctor has done his duty. Likewise, when a mother bears the child in the womb for nine months and rears the child with love and concern, the child when he grows up should not merely consider that the mother has simply done her duty. He should be ever grateful for all the travails the mother has gone through and for all the love and care she has bestowed on the child.

You have to show towards the mother the same love and spirit of sacrifice with which she has brought you up. Similarly you have to be grateful to one who enables you to earn a living when you are without the means of livelihood.

### **Gifts of the Divine**

In the love of a mother for the child or the affection of a preceptor to the pupil, there may be an element of self-interest. But there is no selfishness in the bounties which the divine showers on mankind. God has no self-interest or selfish purpose to be achieved. He expects no return from anyone. God is conferring on mankind countless benefits which no human being can offer. Can all the man-made lamps in the world equal the light coming from the sun? Can all the pumps you may install produce the amount of water that came down in last night's downpour? Who has given you the life-giving air that pervades everywhere?

Thus, innumerable superhuman benefits are conferred by God on mankind. Even electricity is an expression of the Divine. From magnetism to electricity, heat and light, all these various forms of energy are considered as different forms of matter. This is not so. God is the source of all energy. If this is not realised, we will be failing to appreciate the true source of the air we breathe, the light we enjoy and the heat that sustains life.

For the power we consume or the water we use, charges have to be paid for their supply. That being the case, do not we owe gratitude to the Divine who has provided the world with air, water and light free? As the beneficiaries of the benefits provided by the five basic elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth), we should show our gratitude to them as manifestations of the Divine. The five elements are the source of five qualities experienced by the five senses: Sound, Touch, Vision, Taste and Smell. Man makes use of these five elements but shows no gratitude to them. Gratitude should be an essential quality in man. Unfortunately this is not very evident in man today. Everything is treated lightly. The result is disorder and discontent in the nation.

**Action and reaction**

Students should understand the relationship between cause and effect. Every action has its reaction. Every word has its resound. Every thought has its reflection in one's conduct. No one can avoid the consequences of one's actions.

Man is a reservoir of all potencies. The eternal principle of divinity is present in man, but he is not able to recognise it as he is deluded by the external world. A man produces a brilliant diamond out of a piece of rugged rock, but more value is given to the diamond than to the man who fashioned it.

The educational system today has failed to bring out the spiritual effulgence in man. This really means that man is oblivious to his own real nature. Students have not learnt to use their faculties in the right way. They rely on others for forming their opinions. This is a kind of blindness. Of what use can such persons be to the society? Students should equip themselves to serve society and to promote its well-being.

**Education and spirituality**

Students might know about some of the great intellectuals of Bengal like Bipin Chandra Pal, Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo Ghosh and others. But very few remember them today except through books. But the name of an almost illiterate person like Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa is remembered and cherished by millions because of his spiritual eminence.

Education which is not based on ethics, morality and spirituality is utterly worthless. All education, all wealth, all ritualistic worship or penances are of no value without genuine devotion to God. Devotion can elevate the lowly to the highest level. Without faith in God, even an eminent person gets degraded.

The culture of Bharat lays stress upon ethics, righteousness and spirituality. True culture consists in the recognition of the unity that underlies the diversity in mankind. The basis of that culture is love, which is essentially divine. Love is a much abused word today. What is called love is only attachment of different kinds based on relationships.

Love of the Divine is the only pure, unsullied, unchanging, enduring love. It is free from the taint of selfishness and self-interest. This is the love that is glorified in Bharatiya culture. There should be no unfair comparisons between different cultures. All of them essentially are one. What is important is people should learn to live and strive in harmony for achieving things in common and sharing their benefits equally. This is the attitude that should be promoted among students in educational institutions.

Students should also develop steadfast faith in God so that they can face with fortitude any of the vicissitudes of life. Prahlada is a supreme example of such faith. He bore with calmness and faith in the Lord all the persecutions to which he was subjected.

Culture and spirituality are not different from each other. Oneness of spirit is culture ("Ekatmabhava"). Students should combine spiritual education with academic studies. Moreover, cultivation of good conduct is equally important.

Good behaviour should be maintained even after leaving College. Students of the Sai Institute should bear the stamp of morality and good behaviour wherever they go; they should act according to their conscience. Students should prove themselves exemplary citizens.

The Vice-Chancellor has requested that from this evening I should give discourses on the Ramayana during this summer course. Every syllable in the Ramayana is relevant for us today. It is pregnant with moral and spiritual teachings. Humanity will be redeemed when the lessons of the Ramayana are learnt and put into practice.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Bhajan bina sukha santhi nahi.*"

**From Bhagavan's inaugural discourse to the Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality on the morning of May 20, 1996, in the Institute Auditorium, Brindavan Campus**

*The easiest and most fruitful method of keeping yourself free from dust and rust is Satsang (good company). The Company of the good and the godly will slowly and surely chasten and cleanse the persons prone to straying away from the straight path towards Self-realisation.*

**—Baba**

**SUMMER COURSE IN BRINDAVAN**

**"Let Sathya and Dharma Reign on Earth"**

Aeons come and go. But the Eternal Verities—Sathya and Dharma—remain valid for all ages. Whenever Truth and Righteousness decline, the Divine comes down in human form to teach mankind the way of Sathya and Dharma and make them realise the Divine source from where they have come. This is the meaning of the advent of Avatars from age to age. This is the message of the Ramayana, the story of God incarnating on earth as the ideal man, and standing out as an example for all mankind on how to live a life based on Sathya and Dharma.

This perennial message of the Ramayana was expounded in all its glory and beauty by Bhagavan Baba in a series of scintillating discourses delivered in Brindavan during a ten-day summer course in Indian Culture and Spirituality from May 20th to 30th to over 1200 students (boys and girls) of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.

Bhagavan inaugurated the course on the 20th morning in the Institute Auditorium in the Brindavan campus. Dr. G. Venkataraman, Vice-Chancellor of the Institute, in welcoming

Bhagavan, spoke on the objectives of the summer course and prayed to Bhagavan to grace them with an exposition of the inner message of the Ramayana and its crucial relevance to the contemporary world in His discourses.

Bhagavan, in His inaugural discourse, referred to the Ramayana as not merely the story of Rama but as the repository of the profound message of the Rama Principle (Rama-tattwa) which was the Divine Spirit animating every human being. If the Rama Principle is rightly understood and the people live up to it, the world will experience peace, harmony and bliss. (Details of Bhagavan's discourse are published separately).

In the afternoon, besides the students and staff, a vast gathering of devotees from all parts of the world were present in the Sai Ramesh Mandap to listen to Bhagavan's discourse.

During the ten days of the course in the morning sessions held in the auditorium, several speakers from the Institute faculty and students addressed the students on various subjects pertaining to Indian culture and spirituality and the different aspects of the Avatars with special emphasis on the universal love shown by the present Avatar, Bhagavan Baba. The student speakers dwelt at length on the motherly love of unparalleled magnitude showered by Bhagavan on the students, quoting numerous examples from personal experience.

The highlight of the morning sessions was a panel discussion on human aspects of Avatars by a group of six members headed by Prof Sampath, former Vice-Chancellor, who officiated as the moderator on 23.5.96. The Avatars of Rama, Krishna and Bhagavan Baba considered to be Poorna Avatars were taken up for discussion and a lively session ensued.

The Institute faculty members spoke about the many facets of Bhagavan and the unique nature of the integral education offered by the Institute during the post-lunch sessions which constituted the orientation course for the new entrants.

In the evening function two or three students gave summaries of the lectures delivered by the speakers in the morning as well as post-lunch sessions, while one member of the staff of the Institute spoke on the various aspects of the Avatar.

During His Divine discourses in the afternoon, Bhagavan related various episodes from the Ramayana, beginning with the birth of the four brothers, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna, and expatiated on the greatness of different characters in the story including Sita, Hanuman, Jatayu, Sabari, Sugriva, Vibhishana and Ravana. Departing from the textual accounts in several cases, Bhagavan gave an insight into the esoteric significance of the different incidents in the Rama story. In the last two discourses Bhagavan explained the greatness of Rama Rajya, which was based on the twin principles of Sathya and Dharma—Truth and Righteousness—and how these two fundamental values are essential for harmony and peace in society and for the true happiness of mankind. (The discourses will be published in subsequent issues of "Sanathana Sarathi.")

At the end of the course, an examination was held in which all the students fared well. Six top rankers—three from the boys and an equal number from the girls—were given prizes by Bhagavan.

On the 29th, after Bhagavan's discourse, there was a devotional music programme by Srimati P. Suseela, with instrumental accompaniments provided by the students of the Institute.

The course came to a close on the morning of the 30th at a valedictory function in the Sai Ramesh Mantap addressed by Bhagavan.

*Love as speech is Truth.  
Love as action is righteousness.  
Love as thought is peace.  
Love as understanding is non-violence.*

—*Baba*

### **The Avatar of Kali Age**

As the candlelight grows bright  
Baba comes to fight the fight:  
To conquer darkness, bringing love,  
To make our world as Heaven Above.

Rejoice in Lord Sai Baba,  
Rejoice and sing of love,  
Rejoice in Lord Sai Baba,  
Rejoice and sing of love.

Sai Baba gives His Blessings  
To all who come to see  
The Avatar of Kali's Age,  
Who holds the future's key.

Sai Baba's servants we will be  
To help and serve Humanity.  
Please guide us in Your Holy Ways  
And be with us through all our days.

—J. M., Australia

### Selfless Service

\* O Wondrous tree of Sandalwood!  
To the axe that cuts you, you do good;  
In selfless service you excel;  
You give the axe blade your sweet smell.

\* O Firewood, from you we learn  
A lesson as you brightly burn;  
You turn to ashes giving heat,  
That cooks in seva the food we eat.

—C. B. S.

*Sadhana must be done in a discipline systematic manner in an atmosphere of virtue. Just as we have fans here in this Hall to cool the atmosphere and make it possible for such a large gathering to sit c packed in this Hall. So too the fans of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema are necessary to reduce the sweltering heat of Ajnana, Asathya, Anyaya and Akrama; Ignorance, Falsehood, Injustice and Indiscipline. In a world where Dharma is being insulted and denied at every turn, Shanti and Tolerance are the roads through which man can save himself.*

—BABA



AVATAR VANI:

## The Four Beacons

*Pradoshe deepakas-chandraha*  
*Prabhaathe deepako Ravih*  
*Triloke deepako Dharmaha*  
*Suputrah Kuladeepakah*

*Pradoshe deepakas-chandraha:* At night the moon illumines the world. *Prabhathe deepako Ravih:* At daybreak the sun is the illuminator. *Triloke deepako Dharmaha:* For the three worlds Dharma is the beacon-light. *Suputrah Kula Deepakah:* A virtuous son is a beacon for the whole family.

The difference between the New Moon night (Amavasya) and a full moon night (Poornima) is between darkness and light. During Amavasya, the night is pitch dark. People do not relish this darkness in anyway. Darkness invokes fear. It also breeds evil thoughts and provides opportunities for evil deeds. Darkness is welcomed only by evil minded persons. No good intentioned persons will welcome darkness. Darkness is a valuable ally for thieves and rogues. Hence only the evil-minded will hail the advent of darkness. The good-intentioned and righteous persons will welcome the advent of the full moon. The hearts of good persons, filled with good feelings, are cool like the moon. Children delight in the sight of the moon. Poets are inspired to pour forth the joy in their hearts at the sight of the moon. On the day of the full moon (Poornima) man's heart is also pure and bright. People should recognise the relationship between the full moon and the mind. The Vedas declare that the moon emerged from the mind of the Cosmic Person (Viraat-Purusha) and the sun emerged from his eye. The human mind is a reflection of the moon and when there is the full moon the mind blossoms effulgently. Moonlight dispels the darkness of ignorance, drives away fear and confers peace and joy.

### Worship of sun

During the day, the sun affords light to the world. Without the Sun, the world will cease to exist. The sun is the visible deity for the world. Without the sun there can be no life on earth. Crops cannot grow. There will be no air, no food and no means of sustenance for living creatures. It is only because of the sun that rivers flow, crops are grown, life is sustained and there is happiness and comfort. It is the power of the sun that, helps to purify the heart. Hence, for the planet earth the sun is the visible manifestation of God. The earth receives its life-sustaining oxygen from the sun.

### The light of dharma

*Triloke deepako Dharmaha:* The light that illumines the three worlds is Dharma (Righteousness). What is this Dharma? "*Dharayathe iti Dharmaha*" "Dharma is that which upholds everything." This means that without Dharma the Cosmos cannot exist. Dharma is the life-breath of all actions. There can be no life without the sustaining power of Dharma. Every object in the universe is governed by its "Dharma"(the law of its being). For instance, there is fire. What is its "Dharma"? The capacity to burn is the basic trait of fire. When the burning power is lost, it

ceases to be fire. It becomes mere charcoal. Likewise, the "Dharma" of ice is coldness. When ice loses its coldness, it ceases to be ice. For man, the Dharma is "Righteousness" Righteousness implies harmony in thought, word and deed. The unity of body, speech and mind promotes purity and sacredness in man. This triune purity constitutes humanness. All actions should be pure and according to the dictates of the conscience. The tongue is a sacred organ endowed on man to chant the glories of the Lord. But today it is being misused to utter untruth. The "Dharma" of man is to speak the truth and adhere to righteousness.

### **Three maxims**

Three words describe the primary obligations of man: "Preeti", "Bheeti" and "Neeti." "Preeti" pertains to the love of God ("Daiva Preeti"). "Bheeti" is related to the fear of sin ("Papabheeti"). "Neeti" is related to morality in society ("Sanghaneeti"). If these three are observed, there will be peace and non-violence. The love of God ("Daiva Preeti") is the basis for all human values. This love is inherent in all human beings. It is the index of man's divinity as proclaimed by the scriptures.

### **Experiencing God**

How is God to be experienced? God is present in everyone like butter in milk. Your heart is the container. Love is the milk present in the heart. When this love is offered to the Lord, it acts as the churning process for getting butter. There is then the direct experience of the Divine.

(Bhagavan referred in passing to the behaviour of some devotees who fall asleep during the discourses or brood over some extraneous matters without listening to the discourses. Swami related the story of how Ramakrishna Paramahansa chided Rani Rasmani for thinking about her court cases while appearing to listen to his talk. Swami said that persons who are not interested in the discourses should keep away from the meeting).

### **Man's dharma**

Man's "Dharma" is threefold. It relates to his body, his mind and his Atma. Good deeds, good thoughts and Godly experience of bliss are the expressions of this triple "Dharma." The reference to the light that illumines the three worlds should be understood in this way.

### **Who is a good son?**

"*Suputrah Kula deepakah*": (A good son is a beacon for the family). Who is a good son? He is a good son, who is always immersed in the contemplation of God, in sacred activities and leads a godly life. A good son is one who reveres his parents, pleases them by rendering service, and is grateful for all that he has received from them. Nor is that all. A good son earns a good name in society. A good son sheds greatness on the family like the fragrance of a jasmine creeper in a forest.

Nowadays, parents distribute sweets on the birth of a son. But it is not the birth that is the right occasion for celebration. The right moment for celebration is when the son earns a good name in society. "The father will not rejoice on the day a son is born. He will rejoice when he hears the praise of the virtues of his son by others." (Telugu poem) God also will be happy when a son

earns such a good name. A son should be called a good man by one and all. Such a good son ("Suputra") is a beacon-light for the entire family.

### **The four illuminators**

There are three kinds of light. The lamp in a house illumines only the house. The moon at night gives his light to the world, although it is a dim light. But the sun who illumines the day sheds his effulgence everywhere. The light that burns inside a home is comparable to "self-interest"(swartham). The light coming from the moon may be compared to "Parartham" (for the benefit of others). The light of the sun is "Yadartham", the effulgence of Truth. Truth is God. The sun who illumines everything is verily God. For this reason, from early times Bharatiyas were worshippers of the Sun God. They offered salutations to the Sun (Surya-namaskar). They regarded the sun as the visible manifestation of God.

Thus, what people need today are moonlight at night, sun-light during the day, and the light of Dharma which illumines all the three worlds, and a good son who is the beacon-light for the family.

Education alone does not make one a good son. One should be good in his actions and behaviour. The marks of a good son are good behaviour, good manners, good discipline and good devotion. These are the most important things. If there is devotion all other things will come easily.

### **Three sects, but one truth**

Today there are three schools of philosophy prevalent in Bharat. Dvaita, Visishtadvaita and Advaita. (Dualism, qualified Non-dualism and Non-dualism). In the Dvaita philosophy, there is dualism, separation between the individual jiva and Supreme Self. There is no great difference between Visishta-Advaita and Advaita.

Whatever the creed, whatever the country or nationality, Truth is one. "Ekam eva Adviteeyam Brahma." "The Omni-Self is one only, without a second.

The variations between the three systems of philosophy can be explained by an example. You have sugarcane, with a number of knots. Whatever the shape of the sugarcane, the juice in all of them is the same. Advaita (or non-dualism) may be compared to the juice which is one and the same irrespective of the cane from which it is extracted. The juice drawn from any cane has the same sweetness. There is no other taste.

Ramanuja (founder of the Visishta-Advaita system) conducted his own enquiries and came to the conclusion that the sugar cane juice cannot be preserved indefinitely and therefore it should be converted to sugar. The sugar can then be used any day at any time. This is qualified non-dualism.

Madhvacharya was the exponent of Dualism. Madhvacharya viewed the problem in this way. He declared: "Oh Lord! I do not want either sugarcane juice or sugar. I wish to be born as an ant that

relishes the juice or the sugar. The sugar does not know its own sweetness. Only the one who consumes sugar can know its sweetness O Lord! You are the very embodiment of Love. I do not wish to be mere love. I want to be one who enjoys love. You should remain as God and I should remain as a Jivi (individual soul). It is only when the individual is separate from God that he can enjoy the Divine.” This is the essence of dualism—the distinction between God and the individual self. When the individual self starts enjoying sugar (the Divine), in due course he becomes the Divine itself. "The knower of the Divine becomes the Divine.”

Magnifying the differences between the three systems of philosophy, Bharatiyas are wasting their time. All the three are essentially one. Advaita is like the sugarcane juice. Visishta-Advaita is sugar. The consumer of sugar is a Dvaitin.

The truth is that sweetness is common to all, though the names and forms may vary. Similarly, in the world the different nations and countries have diverse forms and names. But the Divine in all of them is one and the same. The Indwelling Spirit is the same in all beings. The Divine energy is common to all, like the current which activates all bulbs, fans etc. God is present equally in everyone. The differences among human beings are the result of the differences in their capacities. When one is immersed in thoughts of God, his capacity will grow.

### **The three evils**

Develop greater love in your heart. As your love grows, the Spirit in you will shine brighter. Spiritual growth calls for restraint on desires. In addition, you have also to get rid of bad qualities like attachment and aversion. The three great enemies of man are desire (Kama), anger (Krodha) and greed (lobha). Desire destroys devotion. Anger annihilates wisdom (Jnana), greed (lobha) poisons every action. These three vices are destructive of Karma (good deeds), Upasana (devotion) and Jnana (wisdom). All the three have to be totally given up. The only cure for them is to burn them in the fire of Divine Love (Premagni).

### **Example of Rama**

Good qualities can be acquired only by practice. The practice may be difficult, like moving an object uphill. But the effort has to be made. The sadhana (spiritual exercise) must be done with full faith and no doubts. God is omnipresent. To experience God certain disciplines are required. That is the significance of the term "Sputraha" (a good son). To realise God you have to be good. This means that one has to cultivate good qualities like reverence for parents, humility, respect for teachers and elders. How did Rama achieve such greatness? By carrying out the injunctions of his father. Rama also exemplified friendliness and brotherliness. He moved among the people with a sense of endearment. He identified the people's welfare with his own well being.

When you utter the prayer, "Loka-samastha-sukhino Bhavantu!" ("May all people in all the worlds be happy"), you should pray whole-heartedly with the conviction that the same Divine dwells in everyone.

Cultivate love for God. There is nothing greater than that. That is the message of Tulsidas and Mirabai. Realise God through Love.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Govinda! Gopala! Prabhu Giridhari.*"

**From Bhagavan's discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on June 18, 1996**

**AMRITA DHARA:**

### **Selfless Love and Firm Faith**

*A heart without love is lifeless;  
Can you call that life  
Merely because there is  
Breath in the body?  
It is just a pair of bellows.*

#### ***Embodiments of Love!***

The hall-mark of love is sacrifice (tyaga). Love seeks nothing from anyone. It bears no ill-will towards anyone. It is utterly selfless and pure.

Failing to understand the true nature of love, man yearns for it in various ways. Love has to be cherished with feelings of selflessness and sacrifice. In what is deemed as love in the World whether it be maternal love, brotherly love, or friendship-there is an element of selfishness. Only God's love is totally free from the taint of selfishness. Divine love reaches out even to the remotest being. It brings together those who are separate. It raises man from animality to divinity. It transforms gradually all forms of worldly love to Divine love. To experience this Divine love, men must be prepared to give up selfishness and self-interest. They must develop purity and steadfastness. With firm faith in the Divine, they must foster the love of God regardless of all obstacles and ordeals.

However, even the feeling of universal brotherliness is not the same as the experience of oneness (Ekatwam). Even in such a fraternal feeling there is an element of self-interest. Those who really wish to promote universal brotherhood should develop the consciousness of the one Spirit dwelling in all beings. Even brothers are often found engaged mutual bickerings and hatreds. What described as fraternity may not be real unsullied love. True love should express itself in the awareness of the presence of the Divine in one and all. Names and forms may differ but the indwelling Spirit is the same in all.

#### **Love and faith**

Fill your hearts with love. One will be betraying himself if he entertains evil thoughts, but pretends outwardly to be full of love. No one having Divine love will ever fail to manifest it anywhere at any time. Students, who behave well during their stay in the Institute, should

maintain the same behaviour wherever they may live or work after leaving the Institute. There should be no room for any outside associations or circumstances to change their conduct. Love should be firmly implanted in their hearts. One filled with Divine Love will be fearless, will seek nothing from others, and will be spontaneous and selfless in expressing his love. There is no need to pray for gifts from God. God will give of His own accord what is good for any devotee. Did not Sabari and Jatayu get the grace of Rama even without their asking for it? God will decide what to give, when to give, and where. Hence, all actions should be dedicated to God and He should decide what the devotee is fit to receive. When everything is left to God out of pure love and total faith, God will take care of the devotee. People today lack such firm faith. In the path of devotion many ordeals have to be overcome. Great devotees in the past faced such ordeals with faith and fortitude. Ultimately they secured the grace of the Divine and experienced bliss.

### **Dhruva's example**

For example, take the case of Dhruva. He was a five-year old boy, who knew little about the affairs of the World. He acted upon the advice of Narada and through severe penance was able to have a direct vision of God. His faith enabled him to secure this experience. But, when Vishnu appeared before him and asked him what he wanted, Dhruva said: "Lord! You came to me, knowing where I was doing my penance. Is it conceivable that you could not know what I want?" The Lord said: "I know what for you performed the penance. When you set out from your home you took a resolve that you will perform penance and secure a boon from the Lord that you should be enabled to sit on the lap of your father. I want to know whether your words and actions are in harmony." Dhruva said: "It is true that I came to perform penance for a small favour, a piece of valueless glass as it were. But, experience of your Form is like a diamond to me. What good fortune is mine that while seeking a glass bead I had found a brilliant diamond. I have no use for that glass piece." The Lord saw the contradiction between Dhruva's original resolution, his penance and his present desire. The Lord told him that he should stick to his original wish for which he had performed the penance and therefore return to the kingdom with the Lord's Blessings. This emphasises the need for unity in thought, word and deed.

For achieving anything in life, two things are essential: firm faith and pure love. People should not think that pleasure and pain are caused by some external forces. It is not so. They are the result of one's own thoughts. There is no meaning in blaming others. If you develop love of God, that love will banish all sorrow and evil tendencies like attachment, anger and envy. Students should pursue both spiritual education and secular studies.

You have to realise that Nature is also a manifestation of God. Hence, Nature should not be ignored. Nature is the effect and God is the cause. Hence you should recognise the immanence of the Divine in the entire cosmos.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Prema muditha manase kaho!*"

**From Bhagavan's discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 20-06-96**

## Bhagavan Deplores Devotees' Lapses

*Without giving up Tamasic tendencies  
How can the truth be realised?  
Without giving up Rajasic qualities  
Bhakti cannot be promoted;  
The practice of Bhakti  
Is the Satwic quality  
Hearken! Oh valiant son of Bharat!*

This entire phenomenal universe is an expression of three qualities—Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. Every human being is an embodiment of these three qualities. How can such a being transcend the three qualities? It is only when man recognises these qualities that he can go beyond them.

For all ordinary persons, all the three qualities are essential. Man cannot live without sleep. Man cannot perform any action without prior enquiry. Thought must precede any action. Sleep, enquiry and mentation are Tamasic qualities.

Man cannot carry on his normal daily life without Rajasic activities. All desires arise from the Rajasic quality. Even the yearning for God is a Rajasic quality. There is a Telugu saying: UNo one can have the desire for liberation without experiencing other desires.” Desires may be diverse, but their essential nature is the same. Qualities like anger, jealousy, hatred, pride and pompousness are Rajasic in nature. Even in the Rajasic quality there is an element of the Satwic quality. Like the river Saraswati which is said to flow unseen between the rivers Ganga and Yamuna, the Satwic quality is also present in a subtle form as the undercurrent between the Tamasic and Rajasic qualities. As one examines each of these qualities individually, it will be found that there is a substratum of the Satwic quality in the other two.

To develop the Satwic quality, the Tamasic quality is an accessory and the Rajasic quality is a necessary stage. When one goes beyond these two the full nature of the Satwic quality manifests itself.

### **From highwayman to sage**

How does one get over the Tamasic quality? There is the example of Ratnakara, who was originally a highway robber harassing and plundering wayfarers. Absence of compassion and consideration for others is the mark of Tamasic nature. Such a person was transformed into a great sage by the contact and teaching of the Seven Sages (Vasishta and others). Not only did he become a sage, he became also an immortal poet, the author of the Ramayana, the epic story of the Rama avatar. The term "Kavi" (poet) signifies one who has a vision of the past, the present and the future. The so-called poets of today can hardly be called poets in the ancient sense of the term.

Valmiki and Vyasa, by their penance, transcended the three qualities, experienced the Divine and acquired the capacity to envision the three categories of time-the past, the present and the future- thereby they became immortal poets. The company of the good was responsible for the transformation of a totally Tamasic person like Ratnakara into the totally Satwic sage, Valmiki. This shows that no one need feel that a Tamasic person cannot become a Satwic person. For every transformation Divine Grace is the cause. It is possible at one jump to proceed from the Tamasic to the Satwic nature by Divine Grace and association with Godly persons.

### **From emperor to Brahmarishi**

Coming to the Rajasic quality; it is characteristic of persons belonging to the Kshatriya or warrior caste. Hatred, jealousy, ostentation, egoistic pride, are some of the traits associated with the Rajasic quality. The sage who exemplifies the transformation from the Rajasic to Satwic quality is Vishwamitra. Vishwamitra, who was steeped in Rajasic tendencies, became a great Rajarishi and later a Brahmarishi. His antipathy to sage Vasishtha went to the extent of even contemplating the destruction of the sage. Vishwamitra was hovering near the ashram when he overheard a conversation between Vasishtha and his spouse, Arundhati. Arundhati expressed her admiration for the beautiful unblemished light the full moon was shedding that night.

Immediately Vasishtha observed: "Tonight's full moon is shining untainted like the pure penance of Vishwamitra." On hearing these words, Vishwamitra realised how mistaken he was regarding Vasishtha and rushed into the ashram, fell at the feet of Vasishtha and prayed to him to forgive him. Vasishtha lifted Vishwamitra and hailed him as "Brahmarishi" (a sage who has realised the Supreme Self). Vasishtha, who had previously described Vishwamitra as a Rajarishi (a royal sage), spontaneously hailed him as a Brahmarishi. Vishwamitra could not contain himself and asked Vasishtha on what grounds he was calling Vishwamitra as a Brahmarishi. Vasishtha said: "Vishwamitra! Hitherto you were filled with self-conceit. You were born with ego, grew with ego, and never bowed your head to any one. Today you put an end to your ego and fell at my feet. This is the significance of egolessness. A Brahmarishi is one who is free from egoism, acquisitiveness, pride and arrogance."

A rishi is not one who is a great scholar or a ritualist, but one who is free from evil tendencies.

The transformation of Ratnakara from a highwayman to a sage, who could compose the Ramayana, was possible because of his association with great rishis. But association alone was not enough. He practised wholeheartedly what the sages taught him. He lost his body consciousness in the contemplation of the name of Rama to such an extent that an anthill rose over him from which vibration of Rama's name could be heard.

A similar transformation occurred in the case of Vishwamitra also. From a Rajasic King he became a Brahmarishi by sacrificing all earthly pleasures and performing severe penance.

Coming to the Satwic quality, it should be noted that its main characteristic is a perennial state of peace. Other traits related to Satwa are forbearance, compassion, truth and similar virtues. The Satwic quality gives no room for vices like lust, anger, greed and envy. The Satwic person



converts any occasion for anger into an expression of love. If one cannot effect such a change, all his austerities are useless.

### **Devotees failure to practise love**

Now, I wish to refer to a matter which you should consider without any misunderstanding. I have been propagating the message of love for many years. In every discourse Love" (Prema) is repeatedly mentioned. How many of you are comprehending this love or practising it? If any one comes to you with a query, can't you give a loving answer? I have not seen a single individual giving a loving reply. Either in the Mandir, or the canteen or the Bookstall, the Accommodation Office or the Hospital or in any other establishment there is not a hint of the word "Prema." Why, then, should you listen to these discourses? If any newcomer asks about how to have darshan of Swami he is rudely brushed aside with a "get away!" Cannot you tell somebody calmly what you know? If educated persons are approached, they dismiss the seeker of information with a curt: "No, this is not my duty." Should answering a question be prescribed as a duty? What does anyone lose if he gives a calm and loving answer?

### **Practise swami's teachings**

Whether it be women or men devotees who have been staying here for over two decades, no one has a loving heart. They profess to perform sadhana, or Japa or meditation, but what for are they doing all this? What has happened to the love in them? They seem to be stifling it. They are developing ill feelings. If you are really serious about listening to Swami's teachings, why don't you put them into practice? People live in the ashram, but their practices are unbecoming.

Is anyone doing any duty assigned to him with dedication? Are they uttering truth? Are they speaking pleasantly? I have neither seen nor heard such things.

If anyone wants to talk to you, you can excuse yourself softly if you want to avoid any talk. You can explain sweetly: "Swami disapproves of excessive talk. I have to adhere to His injunctions."

### **Open your hearts for God's love**

I do not find any teachers or students, doctors or nurses talking lovingly. There should be some benefit from your listening to the discourses. But there is nothing of the kind. During bhajans the women are engaged in mutual recrimination. They quarrel over seats. "This seat is mine. That is yours." They compete for front seats. Cannot they experience Bhagavan wherever they are? You have plenty of time and are receiving plenty of love. But you don't avail yourself of it. If you keep your pots topsy-turvy, how can you collect any water even if there is a downpour? Today those who listen to the discourses are keeping the pots of their hearts upside down. Hence not a drop of love gets into your hearts. Why, then, should you come here? Cannot you live elsewhere? What is the use of your coming here? What are you achieving from your stay? What bliss are you deriving? Nothing at all. It is sheer waste of time.

### **Treat patients with love**

At least from now on, reply with love to anyone who comes to you. Those functioning in the accommodation office or Public Relations or other places in the ashram should not behave like

bulldogs or Alsatian hounds. We are spending crores of rupees on the hospitals. Why should not the patients be treated with love? Any patients will get well merely by kind and sweet words. But many of them are turned away rudely. This is totally unbecoming of persons claiming to be devotees. If they have come to serve Swami, they should cultivate love as the first quality. Swami is the embodiment of love from head to foot. I offer love. You accept it, but do not make good use of it.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

I continue to call you as such though you are lacking in love! You need not cultivate anything but love. That will be equal to any amount of penance you can possibly do.

When new devotees come to the ashram you must welcome them as the airhostesses do on a plane. In the Institute also, freshers who join in the New Year should be welcomed and treated with special regard and affection. They should be made to forget the separation from their parents. In outside colleges, new entrants are subjected to "ragging" by the old students. This conduct is demonic. Is this the way to treat the new entrants, who should be made to feel happy and comfortable? Likewise new entrants to the hostel should be welcomed with love and helped to adjust themselves to their new life. It is only when you show them due consideration that you would have really understood Swami's "Prema-tattwa" (Love Principle).

#### **"Stony devotion"**

Learn to respect all. Only then you will earn the grace of the Divine who is the In-dweller in all beings. Harming living beings and worshipping inanimate idols, what kind of devotion is this? Bullocks which work night and day are whipped, but a stone idol of Nandi is adored by going round it. This is stony devotion! Not devotion from the heart.

At least from now on, make your hearts pure. Fill it with genuine compassion instead of talking about compassion ad nauseam.

You have been in this Ashram for many years. "Ashram" means a place where there is no stress or strain. Many devotees feel that they are being driven about like street dogs outside the ashram and pray for at least a few quiet moments in the interview room. But, how many can be taken into the interview room? It is not possible to give an interview for all at one time. Hence, this open interview for all! All are being treated alike (cheers). Develop love. From tomorrow you must speak to one another lovingly. Get rid of your animal qualities. Love all. This is the true Satvic quality. Manifest your humanness and progress towards the Divine. Get rid of animality and demonic qualities. To acquire Swami's grace the path of love is the only royal road.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema muditha manase kaho: Rama! Rama! Ram!*"

**From Bhagavan's discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on 3-7-96**

## **Spirituality in Daily Life**

Thousands of devotees—including students and teachers of the Sai Educational Institutions in Prasanthi Nilayam—were thrilled beyond words when they heard the announcement on June 15th that from the next day onwards Bhagavan would be delivering regular discourses every evening in the Sai Kulwant Mandap.

In His very first discourse in this historic series, Bhagavan explained that the discourses would be concerned with bringing home to the devotees the immemorial message of India's cultural and spiritual heritage. It was one of the most remarkable facts of history that despite the vicissitudes of foreign invasions and internecine conflicts, the essence of this culture had survived to this day in the lives of millions of ordinary people.

Bhagavan devoted His first two discourses to a broad exposition of the greatness of Bharatiya culture, its roots in the Vedas and immense range, covering every aspect of human life and activity. Bhagavan pointed out how many of the latter-day discoveries of science had been anticipated in the Atharvana Veda and how Bharat had stood out as the leader for other countries in the areas of social ethics and spirituality.

### **Students' speeches**

Every day, Bhagavan's discourse was preceded by speeches by one or two students, who spoke in English, Hindi, Telugu or Sanskrit. The speeches revealed an intense interest in Bhagavan's life and message and an eagerness to live up to His teachings. One afternoon, Bhagavan congratulated a student from the Higher Secondary School who had spoken in Sanskrit, and materialised a gold bracelet for him.

From the 18th, Bhagavan has been devoting His discourses to one or other aspect of the application of spirituality to daily life. On the 18th He spoke on how Dharma (Righteousness) illuminates the three worlds and how a virtuous son is the beacon for the entire family. (Details of this discourse are published separately). On the following days, Bhagavan spoke on the importance of discipline (Kramasikshana) and the supreme potency of Divine Love. Summaries of these and other discourses are given separately.

Bhagavan explained that while the discourses might appear as repetitive in some respects, it was necessary to stress the essentials of the spiritual teachings to make the people, the students in particular, observe the message and make it a part of their lives in the years ahead. Swami compared His discourses to the food which people eat day after day for sustaining their bodies. The spiritual teachings are food for the soul, which needs such constant nourishment even as the body needs food.

Swami enlivened His discourses by innumerable parables and stories from the lives of the avatars, the saints and the great ones of all countries. In several of His discourses Swami referred to incidents from the life of Shirdi Baba. Many of His illustrations were drawn from the epics and the Bhagavatam. The discourses were frequently punctuated by poems and songs rendered in His own melodious voice. The keen interest of the students, especially the young ones from the secondary school, was evident from the detailed notes taken by them.

## **Sir George Trevelyan and the Avatar**

Sir George Trevelyan, who was awarded the alternative Nobel Prize for his great work in the field of adult education, was among the leading British thinkers who recognised the Divine role of Bhagavan Baba as an Avatar. In a memorable address which he delivered in 1983 at the first international Sai Conference in Rome, Sir George stridently declared: "We are convinced that energy of love has been released into the planet and is operating now, actively transforming Man. Now comes this wonderful realisation, the supreme phenomenon, that the great energy of love flowing everywhere, can canalise itself into one, the manifestation of one great being. This supreme possibility that is Sai Baba, in Him truly God manifests upon earth."

In a tribute to Sir George (who passed away in February in this year) in the latest issue of the U.K. quarterly magazine devoted to Baba (edited by Peggy Mason) Julian Wontner writes: Sir George, as we in the Sai family affectionately called him, was probably the greatest spiritual giant of this century in this country. There is a unique form of irony that a man so universally loved, whether taken seriously or not, should have achieved World status and immortality without his own country honouring him especially coming from such an illustrious and ancient family; his father Sir Charles and grandfather Sir George Otto were both Ministers of Education in the Government Cabinets of their day. In 1982 Sir George was the winner of The Right Living Prize, the alternative "Nobel Prize."

### **Discovering the Divine**

As prophet of the Divine, a role he did not consider for himself, he was the great teacher and explorer who taught from his own experience. He decried the title Founding Father of the New Age. "What was that", he said, "what does it mean?" He had from childhood begun to question the real potential of the human being and to enthuse his students to explore beyond their own conditionings. Holistic optimist, he came to believe there was a unique force within and without us with which we should be in touch. From an atheist background full of famous intellectuals on all sides, he "knew" he had to prove it to himself! So after Cambridge, where he met Matthias Alexander who first opened his mind, he was inspired first by the spiritual Thinkers like Morris to apprentice himself as craftsman, and went to work in the workshop under Peter Waals at Chalford. There he discovered the Divine Order in all things, the "mysteries of master craftsmanship."

### **Guest for the self-realisation**

What he learnt he wanted to teach. His chance came through his love of climbing and mountaineering. His experience of teaching boys (among them Prince Philip) made him realise he was more interested in Adult Education and after the War his dream came true. He was appointed Director of the new Adult Education College at Attingham. For 24 years as Warden he introduced exploratory courses in the expansion of consciousness and the newly emerging post-War quest for redemption and self-realisation.

### **"Droplets of God"**

He inspired and helped to heal a whole generation of post-war trauma and led thousands to discover their relationship with God. He had realised at a lecture in 1942 the vital importance of "the living idea", the mental "big bang" that exploded for him that day in Scotland when he heard the teachings of Rudolf Steiner for the first time, it seemed. Forever onwards he played with his audiences across the World to light that fire in their imaginations, to conceive beyond their dreams, as "droplets of God." He chiselled and chipped, he planed and smoothed, he polished until their eyes shone with hope and vision. His childhood in Northumberland, his Ruskinian love of architecture and Nature's own mansions underground in the Mendips, his passion for the space of mountains, and above all his deep appreciation of poetry, which he could recite as if it were just part of his dialogue, all these pulled together in one man was truly "renaissance".

After Attingham he set up the Wrekin Trust in 1971 which inaugurated hundreds of Network Courses across the country over the next years. Alternative technologies, soil and organic farming, communes, and spiritual research of all kinds mushroomed across the country and farther afield abroad as his expansive personality explored the "new awakening" across the globe. His charm and love of people attracted those seeking to visualise his ideas which reflected patterns emerging in their own lives. People were Nature, as wood is Nature, and his understanding of craftsmanship meant carefully crafting ideas and people, creating, like a gardener, wonderful avenues of vision with gardens of souls - a spiritual beauty.

Like the Darwins, the Bells, Huxleys, Wedgwoods, the Trevelyan were the great thinkers of the last hundred years and Sir George led the pack across the spiritual heights like Roerich. When he read about Sathya Sai Baba he realised his dream was true and alive on Earth. His teachings were echoed in India by Baba—"you are all droplets of the Divine." "Wake up to your inherent divinity." His speech in Rome in 1983 at the First World Sai Conference outside India touched everyone in their heart. Orator, he was superb, teacher, he inspired, personality, he was loved; whatever he touched became alive with his infectious spirit. A rebel, he dared to confront. He mixed with heady earnestness the vision of Steiner with Ruskin, of Jung with Tagore, even his uncle G. M. Trevelyan with Shakespeare, so that we all drank the timeless elixir of Oberon with the wisdom of Portia. Wordsworth blended with Coleridge and Omar Khayyam with Tennyson.

Despite the pain from his crippling arthritis, he never complained nor even criticised another. He lived Swami's teachings as his own and like Blake, looked to St. Michael with the flaming sword of cosmic intelligence to lead us all to discover the Divine. He did!

## Teacher's offering to Bhagavan

Many devotees present in Sai Kulwant Mandap were puzzled when the usual chair used by Bhagavan was suddenly replaced on June 18th by a brand new beautifully designed rosewood chair with embellishments in silver. The mystery was solved the next evening when, towards the end of His discourse, Bhagavan disclosed how the chair happened to come to the Mandap.

Swami said: This chair was got made by the warden and teachers of the students' hostel. They had intended to get it ready in tune for the 70th birthday. But this could not be done. The chair was ready only yesterday. All of them came to Swami, held fast Swami's feet and pleaded that Swami should accept the chair. I told them: "Babu! My practice is only to give and not to receive. However, how much did the chair cost you?" They kept silent. I then told them what the cost was. "I shall give you this money and accept the chair", I said. They were in anguish and tears. They said: "How can we accept money? Please accept it, Swami!" They earnestly pleaded.

I felt that they had got the chair made out of their pure feelings and their deep devotion. I therefore accepted the chair. (Cheers)

The students are a very good lot. They are full of love for Swami. But now and then they go through what may be called 'air pockets', which spoil their minds. This morning I told the warden: "I have stocks of rice here. The three hostels may take each 200 bags of rice (Basmati rice). (The college hostel, the Secondary School Hostel and the Primary School Hostel). The warden said, "The boys are quite willing to pay. Please permit us to pay for the rice." I immediately told him: "Is this all that you have learnt about Me after all these years? When I am asking you to take the rice out of my large-heartedness, you are so small-minded as to offer money. This is very wrong. (Cheers) The students are my property. (Cheers) I am giving the rice for my children. Am I to receive money from my children? On a festival day a father brings for his children new clothes? Will he ask them money for the clothes? If an ordinary parent will not ask for money, will the boundless universal Father ask for money?" (Cheers) This will not happen at any time. Swami's heart is infinitely vast. Realise the Spirit within you and cultivate a similar large-hearted nature. When you regard Swami as yours, you should also consider that you are mine. You are entitled to claim: "Swami is ours." But you must see that you justify that title. That is enough for me. If you do not strive to earn this right, of what use is all your education? What you have to learn primarily is magnanimity. You must be prepared to carry out implicitly Swami's commands. Then alone you will experience real bliss. I am always ready to shower my grace on you. But you must be prepared always for the call from Swami, which may come at any time. Be always ready.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Chittachora Yashoda-ke Baal Navaneeta chora Gopal.*")

## Story of an Ant

An ant clutched half a grain of rice in its jaws and was running along the first enclosure to the Mandir in Prasanthi Nilayam.

"I want to offer it to the Lord," She had proudly exclaimed before starting the adventure.

"Are you sure He will accept?" Her astonished friend had questioned.

"Why not? A rice grain, a leaf—God accepts everything that is offered with a sincere heart. Do you not know even that much, how silly."

And off she went strutting in the pleasant morning sun. Half way along the wall she confronted a senior ant. "What brought you here sweetheart?" The older ant was more than interested in the early guest. "Oh! Sai Ram, Today is my birthday, so I brought this unnecessarily."

"Give it to me I'll offer it on your behalf."

"No please," was the astonished reply, "It is my birthday." "No, you cannot; you do not know the procedure. Swami likes people to be disciplined", said the senior ant.

In the tussle the new black one was thrown into a crevice. The older ant bit off a part of the rice and disappeared.

Moaning and limping the younger ant picked up her share. It looked so miserably small and dirty. She could have cried out but there was no time for personal sorrows. Six inches more and she was almost strangled by a scurrying foot that stalked towards Darshan. Now dusty and tired she dragged her body forward, hiding under the sand or a slit between two slabs of stones. She no longer cared for her appearance or her offering. The only desire was to have a glimpse of the Lord, may be just a flutter of His Robe. The wall between her and the door seemed unending and the entrance was still a long, long way off. "Oh Lord of Creations," she looked ahead and sighed, "Oh Lord of Creations, "how many more tests to reach you?"

—Dr. Zeba Bashiruddin

*What is the meaning of Sadhana? In the word Sadhana, 'Dhana', means wealth. Therefore, Sadhana is wealth, not worldly wealth but divine wealth, the greatest treasure on Earth. A sadhaka (the person who is devoted and earnest in his Sadhana) is the wealthiest person on Earth. For true, genuine Sadhana is the divine truth, pure and unsullied. It is God itself, for Truth is God!*

*How do you do Sadhana? By making your outlook pure. Sadhana is purity. It is 'taking out' from within you what is bad and evil, your negative traits! It is also 'recognizing and bettering' what is good and Godly in you, your positive traits!*

—Baba

## **Prediction about the Sathya Sai Avatar**

In the course of His discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on June 17th, Bhagavan referred to the prediction about the Sai Avatar contained in the Padma Purana, of which an English translation was brought out by a European scholar named Wilson in the nineteenth century, Swami said:

"Wilson had made an in-depth study of our scriptures. He had also translated the ancient code of Dharma, as given by Emperor Manu, into English as "Manu's Law." While studying the Padma Purana, written by Sage Parashara, Wilson came across the prediction that in the Kali Age, the Supreme Consciousness will be born in a village called Parthi in South India and will be named Sathya—Truth—and he will attract the whole world like a huge magnet. Such was the power of our saints that they could foresee events in the future."

**AMRITA DHARA:**

### **Importance of Discipline**

*While uneducated birds and beasts  
Know how to lead regulated lives,  
Alas! man endowed with intelligence  
Does not lead a disciplined life.*

*Embodiments of Love!*

Discipline is vital to every living being. For man it is even more important like the spinal column. Without discipline mankind will be ruined.

Discipline means the observance of certain well-designed rules. Without such regulation it is not possible to maintain humanness. Such regulation contributes to the glory of human existence.

Discipline cannot be acquired from books. Nor can it be learnt from teachers. It has to be a natural component of one's daily life in the discharge of one's duties. Discipline is essential from the moment of waking to the time of going to sleep.

Discipline is essential for every group, for every society and for every political institution. Without discipline there can be no society or Government. No nation can exist without



discipline. It is discipline that unites man to man, and one society to another. Hence discipline is one of the basic insignia of social life.

### **Discipline and life**

Discipline has to be observed in speech, in sport and in every kind of relationship. For instance, during bhajans, all those singing in chorus have to maintain the same tune. Discordant singing will jar on the ears. Singing in unison in bhajans is a form of discipline.

In games, you have an umpire to enforce the rules of the game. Every player has to observe the rules strictly. Sometimes while playing, in their enthusiasm, the players fail to observe the rules. The umpire, however, sees to it that the rules are enforced and the players have to obey him implicitly. Any player who does not obey will be violating the rules of the game.

Today it is because people do not observe the rules, whether in sports or elsewhere, life has become intolerable. Some persons hold positions of authority in business, the administration or in other institutions. Here also discipline is essential. Just because one holds an office, he cannot behave as he likes. He cannot be free with his tongue. In his words and his writings he should observe restraint. In the use of words, whether in speech or writing, care should be observed regarding their future implications. Your discipline will protect you in whatever you do. Even in a simple matter like walking on the road, many do not observe the rules. They choose to walk on the middle of the road instead of using the pavement. Jay walking on the road is not only harmful to oneself but is a hindrance to others. Your motto in life should be: Help ever; hurt never.

Discipline must start from the early years. But it is needed not only by students but by elders and all persons in authority.

### **Physical purity**

Students should learn the right way of doing things even in ordinary actions like sitting or reading. They should sit erect and keep the spinal column straight. This enables the Kundalini shakti to move up from the base of the spine—the Mooladhara—to the top of the head—the Sahasrara—through the vertebral column. This movement takes place during the yogic exercise known as Pranayama (breath control). This exercise is also useful for improving one's memory and powers of concentration.

One of the important elements of discipline is physical purity. This does not merely mean keeping the body clean by a good bath. Real bodily purity calls for involvement in good actions. Good actions and good thoughts lead to purify of mind and the intellect.

### **A boy's devotion to Shirdi Baba**

Another important aspect of discipline is keeping one's plighted word. The importance of this is illustrated by an incident in the life of Shirdi Baba. There was a sheristadar by name Tarkad. His wife and 16-year-old son were ardent devotees of Shirdi Baba. Tarkad did not object to their worship of Baba. One day when they wanted to go to Shirdi, he gave them his consent. But Tarkad himself did not go to any shrine as he was a Brahmo Samajist. He did not go to Shirdi

despite many appeals from his wife. Tarkad's son told his father that he would not go to Shirdi because he was performing regular worship to Shirdi Baba in their house. This worship would be affected if he went to Shirdi. The lad told his father that every day he was making an offering of sugar candy to Baba and he was partaking part of the candy as "prasad" out of the conviction that Baba was receiving the candy. He declared: "I do not want any break in this practice. Hence I do not want to go to Shirdi." The father had great affection for the son. He told the son: "Babu, I shall perform that duty. You better go to Shirdi" The boy wanted an assurance from the father that he would carry out the promise. "Will you offer worship to Baba as I have been doing? Will you offer candy to him and later eat part of it as prasad?" The father was moved by his son's determination and gave him the promise to carry on the worship during his absence. The mother and son left for Shirdi.

### **The father's lapse**

The father kept the word given to his son and performed the worship in the manner of the son for a few days. Offering candy to Baba, he took a part of it after the worship before taking his meal. On a Thursday, Tarkad had some urgent business in the court and left the house in a hurry after performing puja. Returning for his meal, he asked the cook to bring the prasad. The cook informed him that he had not offered any offering of candy that day. Tarkad felt very sad over his lapse in failing to keep the promise he had given to his son. He was not sorry that he had failed to make the offering to Baba.

At Shirdi, when the mother and son went to see Baba on the following Friday, Baba told the son: "Babu, yesterday I had been to Bangra, but no one gave me any food. Even the candy which you used to offer daily was not available. I have come back very hungry. Will you give me something to eat?" The boy was shocked on listening to Baba's words. He returned home and wept over his mother's lap. "Father gave me a promise, but he has not kept it and Baba was disappointed. I cannot stay here any longer. I must adhere to my daily routine. I shall go back to our place" At that time, Baba sent a chit to the boy through one Jog. In his message, Baba said: "There is no need for you to go now. Your father failed to keep his word, but you have not failed in your duty. You have all my Grace. You can stay here as long as you wish." The boy stayed on for a few more days feeling very depressed and frustrated.

### **Apology to the son**

When the boy returned home, the father rushed towards him and begged his pardon. He said, "You are young and I am old. But I am seeking your pardon because I failed to keep my promise." The boy said: "You must seek pardon not from me but from Baba. Whatever the Samaj to which you may belong, whatever your beliefs, the promised word must be kept. Truth is one. You must adhere to truth. This is your duty as a lawyer. You have studied the law. You know very well how Emperor Manu upheld Dharma. If you do not adhere to truth, you are violating the law."

If discipline is observed in this manner, one can experience the Divine directly. The first requisite is purity of the body. "What is it you gain, oh man, from waking to sleeping if you seek only bodily comforts, forgetting God." (Telugu poem) Restraint has to be observed even with

regard to eating. Excessive eating is the cause of many ailments. One fourth of the stomach should remain empty.

Discipline should govern every action of yours all through the day. Then it becomes Karma Yoga—the Yoga of Action. You must be the master of Karma and act according to Divine commands. This is the way to make education fruitful.

—From Bhagavan's discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on 19-06-96

## House Built on Rock

*From untruth lead us to Truth  
From the changing lead us to the Unchanging*

In conversation the other day I found myself saying, "I must get out of the changing into the unchanging." Do you ever find yourself saying something that strikes you in an accented way and then sticks in your mind, repeating over and over...? These passing words did just that and stuck with me—repeating... With the words came an impression of being in a plane and feeling I had to climb, climb, climb... The urge was to get above dangerous weather and fly above the cloud.

*Dear Lord, when I fly this place for You  
Show me how to stick to Truth  
I find the changing chases me  
and it's the unchanging that sets us free  
Yet in a life of such frantic pace  
It's so hard not to get caught up in the race*

In life, when we are young we think the seasons are long and different and when we are older it is always Christmas again or bluebell time. Similarly, when we have been a devotee for a while the changes eventually start to look the same. It is Guru Poornima again and it is coming up for Swami's birthday again. If we look down a collection of several years worth of Sanathana Sarathi magazines we can see that there are the Birthday discourses and then Christmas and the Sports Day and the International Medical Symposium and so forth. We have a pattern of stability. So after a while we can set up constants and focus on the importance of consistency.

Many of the rituals and festivals observed in the world are to keep us steady and focused into consistency; to become unwavering. Young people often find consistency the essence of boredom. As soon as something had become constant it has lost its excitement. It has lost its mystery and unpredictability. This is easy to see in the young but not so easy to see in ourselves later in life.

Now, many of us have had an exciting time finding out about Swami. We have been shocked, astounded, confounded, dazzled, delighted and have suffered all manner of confrontation. It is likely that everything we thought was set and settled has been stirred up and it resettles differently, can we say, "Baba, I am ready now for the unchanging. I will not fall away. I will not stop. I do not need to be stimulated to work. I am ready to become constant now. I am ready. What I do now will stay constant like the sun shining and the breath rising and falling"?

*Stillness in a life of haste  
Help me break the World's pace  
I know if I stop running  
I'll hear the soft cosmic humming  
Around my own doorstep you build Your dream  
and I must attend to being clean*

Some of the constants that make us clean are the Nine Point Code, the five Values, deepening our religion if we have one and practising any of Baba's teaching.

—Sarah Edwards, U.K. (From “Sai Reflections”)

### **A Devotee's Prayer**

Open my inner vision so I may realise the Divine within myself.  
Fill me with the love of God and turn that love into acts of service.  
Make me an embodiment of your love and may I love all, who are embodiments of love.  
Teach me your ways—ways in which I can serve You, please You and experience You.  
Make me selfless, pure in thought and deed and useful to society.  
Keep me from pride, conceit, greed and vanity.  
Give me the courage, patience, strength, desire and everything I need on the path.  
Make me a friend of the poor, the needy, the sick, the neglected, the oppressed and the forgotten of this world.  
Let us live in harmony and peace.  
Grant us the sincerity, devotion, dedication and humility that guarantee success.  
Keep us from the power of the wicked and the violent.  
Let us never forget that we belong to You.  
Use us as instruments of Thy will and we shall thus be blessed.  
Grant us the happiness that only You can give.  
Be our way, our Path and the Goal of our lives.  
Keep us from worry, incapacity and failure.  
Forgive us when we fall short.  
Bring us closer and closer to you everyday.

Grant us the company of the godly.  
Make us efficient and effective in service.  
Make us a blessing unto many.  
Grant that we be a burden to none.  
Grant us the blessing of Your Holy Vision.  
Liberate us from the bonds of Karma.  
Grant us all this not because of our goodness but out of Your Bounty and Love.  
We thank you for Your Grace, Bounties, Love, Guidance and Protection. AMEN.

—Noor H. Kara, London

### **A Model Sai School in Thailand**

The Sathya Sai Educational movement is steadily achieving global dimensions. Apart from the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Programme, which is implemented by Sai organisations in many countries, in recent years schools have been established in Zimbabwe, Africa, and in Thailand, which are serving as models of Sai Education in the countries concerned.

Bharati Samnani (an Indian teacher from Kobe), who served for six months in the first Sathya Sai School in Thailand, has reported about the success of the Thailand School in the following account of her experiences:

The Sathya Sai School of Thailand is far from ordinary and is in fact very special. There is a constant flow of Love and miracles witnessed by all every day. According to Dr. Art-ong Jumsai and Sister Lorraine Burrows, two of the pioneers of the school, Swami's presence and guidance were seen even while choosing the land site to build the school. The name of the area is called Lam Narai, literally meaning "Ram Narayan". In front of the school are three hills. One of them is called "Yaikata", which stands for "Grandmother and Grandfather Mountain". Many people, including myself, have seen Swami's face on this particular hill.

Five years ago, while the construction work was going on, two of the workers staying at the site started booing and smoking. The following morning, they tremblingly admitted their wrong behaviour. When asked why they were frightened, they said they saw a huge giant walking from one hilltop to another! Thus, the negative activities were halted.

There were less than fifteen children studying and living at the school during its first year. One day, everyone heard a loud thud; one of the girls had fallen down from the third floor of the school and safely landed on a bush. The teachers were petrified, but when examined she was without a scratch! Now she is known as Swami's 'miracle child', since He saved her life, and she leads all the prayer sessions. Another miracle is that some of the students have seen Swami walking along the corridors.

There are many talented students out there as well. One 9-year old boy is a genius who once beat Dr. Jumsai at chess. Dr. Jumsai is one of Thailand's top chess players. Another student got the best exam results in his Buddhism class although he himself is a Muslim. The top English student from Grade 2 is a very talented actor and is able to imitate Swami impeccably. One student who has two fingers from the right hand missing is the most gifted at drawing and other fields of art. None of the students really studies only for exams and yet manage to obtain an above average grade. The credit for their bright minds and talents goes to constant practice of Light Meditation. In addition, they are very humble and modest about their achievements.

Many psychiatrists, research students, journalists, and teachers from other schools often come to Sai School to observe its working. Their usual response is of alarm at how well balanced, helpful, loving and happy the kids are in spite of their coming from unsuitable or violent backgrounds.

For instance one of my Grade 3 students was constantly bullying and disturbing the class. She had witnessed her mother getting killed in a car accident, and her father had left them both to marry another woman. I tried various methods to change her. She gradually responded to the Method of Love and Patience. Today, she takes on leadership roles and is one of the most obedient and enthusiastic class participants. For me, this was the greatest miracle. Swami's Grace is transforming each child and teacher into better human beings. Today, the school has 120 children and is expanding gradually in the number of students as well as in Love.

## **Heart to Heart**

The children in the orphanages in India are the greatest healers in the world. They perform the most complex, psychological feats of healing without ever earning any degrees or attending any seminars. They heal with a power far greater than any drug, operation or therapy. Their power is the unconditional Love of a child channeled through a clear heart and the purity of a brilliant soul.

On the way to the orphanage on that bright spring morning, I was told to prepare myself to see the "rejects of society." Well, I saw the twisted arms and legs, the enlarged deformed heads, and the too-thin, dysfunctional bodies. But no one could have prepared me for the experience of the incredible. Light emanating from the eyes and hearts of these children. I felt humbled before these brave souls who had chosen to reincarnate in these pathetic bodies, and in these tougher-than-you-can imagine circumstances.

### **They ask for love**

These children ask for nothing but your Love (I have heard Swami say that is all He wants from us....) As their arms reached out to me, I became oblivious to bodies, nationalities, ages, or sexes.

I was only aware of the incredible ache in my heart. By evoking the Love of the God within me, the children magically opened and healed my heart. They taught me this basic truth: there is only one way to receive unconditional Love, first we must give it away so our hearts become open to receive it!

### ***The Magic Garden***

My first heart to heart encounter was with a small boy who had newly arrived at the orphanage since I had last visited. The extensive scarring on his right side told the silent story that he had already suffered more than many people know in a lifetime. He looked expectantly up at me when I gently patted his back. When I did not pick him up, he threw his small body face down onto his mattress, drew his legs up underneath his tummy, and wrapped his arms around his head. My heart broke at such an obvious act of dejection by such a tiny being. I bent over, scooped up the tiny boy, and lifted him to shoulder height. Together we went to the *Magic garden* and the *Magic tree*.

The *Magic garden* and *Magic tree* are located next to the orphanage. In the garden is a lovely statue of Mary, the mother of Christ, several small rows of plants, and a few footpaths. A large tree overshadows the entrance to the garden, and a small stone bench is located beneath it. I named it the *Magic garden* and *Magic tree* because the children whom we visit here were awed by the sights, smells, and sounds, and found peace and joy just by being there.

Quietly rocking and singing to the sweet bundle in my arms, I prayed to God with all my heart: "Please pour Your Love through me to this soul, and cradle him in a cocoon of Love so he won't ever feel dejected or unhappy again. As I prayed and sang, the squirms stopped and I realized how many children just like him had never been held, or rocked, or had songs sung to them. When we returned to his crib, he sat up, stuck his legs through the bars, happily rocking his body to and fro to the memories of our visit to the *Magic garden*.

The next visit was more adventuresome. Although the little boy did not talk, he could walk easily. But when I placed him gently on the ground in the *Magic garden*, he became very timid. He stood statuesque, quietly interacting with lights and energies I did not perceive. His hands would grasp, manipulate, and bring the energies to his mouth to taste them, but all the while his feet remained planted in one spot.

After a short while, I took his tiny hand and softly pulled him forward to a row of plants, and he obediently followed. Watching me intently as I patted the leaves, he mimicked my actions. Then sensing the discovery, he took to the experience like a duck to water. Holding one finger of mine, he moved through the rows, fondling the plants like old friends. Finally, a bit weary, he bent over, smoothed the soft dirt at his feet, and laid his cheek down on its warmth.

Whenever we revisited the *Magic garden* in subsequent weeks, he would pull through the Garden, letting go of my finger for short periods of time. His unseen friends and energies remained with him, but he felt safer, freer, lighter, and with a new sense of inner courage and joy.

### **The boy who learnt to sing**

My second encounter was with a teenage boy who had the look of pure peace on his shining face. Radiant is the only word to describe his countenance. Although almost as tall as I, the tiny arms and legs were bent all over, with overlaying rows of teeth, so eating was difficult. The breaths were noisy gasps, and coughs came frequently. Although his lustrous, deep brown eyes lacked the capacity to return my gaze, I could not tear my eyes away from the Light of his beautiful face.

At first I was hesitant to pick up the flailing body. The spasms precluded setting him in a wheelchair, so there was simply no alternative. So, with a silent "Sai Ram", I supported his head under one arm and his knees under the other, and hoisted the young lad up with surprising ease. Off we strolled to the *Magic garden*.

The sweetness of his nature tore my heart wide open. I sang every happy song I could remember. But my throat was tight and my voice choked frequently as incredible depths of compassion and Love radiated through me for this teenage boy. While rocking to and fro, I begged God to overwhelm him with Love. As the tears flowed down my face, I could sense a washing away of years of pain in my own heart. Because I could not bear the pain of this boy's life, God's Grace removed the pain of my life. The Love flowed in a golden shower from above, and the child grew within my arms. Miraculously, the spasms ceased, and we became only One Soul, locked in an aural embrace of pure Love.

I truly looked forward to the next visits. I rushed in to see "my" teen, who recognized my voice by showering me with his beatific smile. After lunch we sped out to the *Magic Garden* to rock and sing with joy, although the tears flowed down my cheeks. One day I was surprised to hear a moaning sound while singing. I stopped my song and looked in amazement at my saintly son. I realized he was singing back to me! After weeks without a whimper, he gave me a gift of a lifetime! What more could I ever want?

### **The gift of love**

My third encounter: I had talked to him several times in passing, and had noticed how remarkable it was that this teenage boy always placed his crippled, spastic body into a perfect lotus position to sit up in his bed. But I had never spent too much time with him. On one day, he kept reaching out to me, grabbing my shirt, while I was feeding a girl next to him. So, to pacify him, in my mind I telepathically promised him I would take him for a walk when I finished taking the other teen to the *Garden*.

Upon my return, I stood in front of his bed, hesitating to lift him up as he was even larger than the other boy. I was flabbergasted to see him stick out his lower lip in an obvious pout, afraid I would not keep my "telephonic promise!" So with a silent "Sai Ram", I hefted the body that was as tall as I was, (but far lighter, thank goodness), and scrambled out to the wheelchairs. Once strapped in, he uttered a squeal of glee, totally aware of the forthcoming adventure. We rolled out to the *Magic Garden*, down the pathways, under the trees, squealing with joy. Oh God, why



did not I bring him out before? How many weeks had I not given him such a joy? Forgive me, friend.

This lean lad was very bright, mimicking me with ease. It appeared he was totally aware, but trapped in a crippled body. He had spastic movements in the limbs, eyes unable to focus synchronously, and without the power of speech, although his broad smile and squeals of joy lightened my soul beyond words! I fell in love with this child too, so much that I knew I would always see him before me in my memories.

The time came to leave, and the pain of leaving was so great I could not stop the tears. I prayed to God to give me strength. As I stood before him, I whispered, "I Love You." The boy looked up with widened eyes of wonder. He, who had never spoken, spasmodically grasped my shirt with his hands and pulled me close to him. Then to soften my misery, this heavenly child placed his open mouth on my cheek in a farewell kiss! God is Great in His Mercy and Love—for it was His gift I had received.

—Susan Anne Coats, Tucson, USA

## The Human Adventure

*Through meritorious deeds  
And acts of sacrifice,  
Developing love in the heart,  
Suppressing demonic traits,  
Fostering devotion to God,  
Lead your daily life,  
Oh Man!*

*In boyhood man is immersed in sport;  
In youth he is lost in sensual pleasures;  
In old age, unaware of the Divine Lord,  
He pursues one thing or another;  
Unable to give up evil tendencies,  
Incapable of taking to the path of Devotion  
He wallows in the cesspool of Karma  
And makes human life a clod of earth.*

(Telugu Poem)

Man is an intelligent being, but does not know how to utilise his intelligence. Some persons, even though they know how to use it, pursue wrong paths. If they are asked, why they behave like this, they glibly answer that the whole thing is "Maya", an illusion. "Maya" is only called by the name illusion, but it has no existence in reality. People imagine that it is Maya which produces the phenomenal world and makes it appear as real in all its varied forms. Scholars have described Maya as a dancer (Nartaki). This Maya is said to make every man dance. How is Maya to be controlled?

Read the word "Nartaki" in reverse and you have the answer: "Kirtana". This is proclaimed as the path of devotion.

### "Sadhana"

There are several misconceptions about "Sadhana" (spiritual exercise) for Self-Realisation. For instance, some women devotees feel sad when they are unable to attend Bhagavan's discourses because of their preoccupation with domestic duties and attending to their spouses and children. What is the service they render by taking part in a Satsang or a discourse? To attend to one's household duties, look after the children and attend to the needs of the husband and others at home constitute the right type of sadhana. Even the preparation of meals in the home is a great sadhana. To remove the stones from the rice before it is cooked is one kind of yoga ("gunatraya vibhaga yoga"—the yoga of division of the three qualities). Every stage in the cooking of vegetables may be deemed a spiritual exercise. Likewise every household chore can be sanctified without a sense of regret that you are missing a bhajan or a discourse. Even the sweeping of the house may be considered as a process of purifying the heart. All such thoughts are spiritually

exalting. Such actions are better than listening indifferently to a discourse and forgetting the teachings thereafter. Doing one's duty is the highest spiritual endeavour.

### **True renunciation**

There are many ochre-robed persons going about flaunting their so called renunciation while they are full of pride and possessiveness. (Swami related the story of an encounter between a renunciant and Ubhayabharati, wife of the scholar Mandana Misra, in which she made the renunciant realise how he was filled with attachment and egoism in spite of his having renounced everything. The ascetic fell at the feet of Ubhayabharati and sought her forgiveness. He assured her that thereafter he would practise renunciation in the true sense of the term).

Renunciation ("Tyaga") does not mean giving up hearth and home but giving up bad qualities. That alone is true sacrifice and real yoga. It is enough if man gives up attachment (raga) and hatred (dwesha). If everyone adheres to his "Ashram-Dharma" (the code of conduct pertaining to one's stage in life), devotes his time to meditation on God, he will be redeeming his life.

There is no need to go in search of Divinity elsewhere. The Divine is the indweller in every heart like sugar at the bottom of a tumbler filled with water. If the water is stirred with the spoon of Buddhi (the intellect), Divinity will be experienced in the heart.

Have the conviction that God is within you and in every being. Hence bear no ill-will towards anybody. Show your love and esteem for everyone.

### **Mother for the motherless**

Let me refer to something, which I am not anxious to reveal. A young boy who gave his word to me years ago continues to stand by it to this day. The student who spoke first this afternoon is a boy from Simla. I am seeing him today. Ten years ago he came as a small boy. He was studying in the primary school. A younger brother of his (who was in the Mandap) is also studying in the primary school. Their mother was brought in a stretcher from Himachal Pradesh to Brindavan. I drew both the boys close to me and told the mother: "They are my children. Don't worry about them. Have no worry on their account." The mother gave her word to Swami. "I am entrusting my children to you, Sai Mata!" Uttering these words, she closed her eyes.

I brought the two boys from Brindavan (to Prasanthi Nilayam). They were very young at the time. The elder boy said at that time: "My mother is Mother Sai". The father also affirmed the son's words.

From that moment these two boys have not shed a single tear. These children at that tender age held fast to their words. In life once a promise has been made (to the Lord) there will be no room for grief. That is the meaning of "Sharanagati" (surrender to the Lord).

### **The children's faith**

The mother was no more. Even the father appeared rarely. The children were left totally in the care of Swami. Morning and evening I used to speak to the boys and enquire about their welfare.

Their tender hearts were filled with total faith in Bhagavan. Today the elder boy spoke well about faith. He is full of that faith. They did not feel at any time the loss of their mother.

One day the warden brought the boy to me from the primary school, saying that he was feeling the absence of his mother. She told Swami that the boy is not taking food and is weeping incessantly. He was five years old at the time. He was in the first standard. I took him inside the interview room, gave him a ring and spoke pleasantly to him and made him forget his loss. From that moment he has always been smiling and laughing. (Cheers)

The hearts of the children are so pure. Today elders are unable to understand such pure love. Love is so sacred. It confers limitless courage and forbearance. What would have been the plight of these children in any other place? They could get on here because they were with Swami. Swami takes care of them with the love of a thousand mothers. This truth is not being understood even by many renunciants. They perform Japa and sit in meditation. But to what end? They are immersed in their egoism and attachment.

What is needed is total faith; in a simple word: Love. Abide by it and lead a worthy life. Love will confer every kind of strength you need to sustain you in life. If you recognise the Divine in all, you will be blessed with everything.

### **Swami's love**

Students should understand that I take interest in the welfare of every child. I constantly enquire about all of them with the warden. Students, who are not aware of Bhagavan's boundless love, feel depressed when they think Swami does not speak to them. But I am having my eyes on all of them. The boy who spoke earlier said that he had lost one mother but found a thousand mothers. How many will make such a declaration? He began his speech with an appeal to "Mother Sai". It is this faith which is sustaining them and making them overcome all problems.

### **Devotees and discipline**

Hence, develop this Love Principle. Moreover, you have also got to develop discipline. In recent months, there appears to be a falling off in discipline in Prasanthi Nilayam. As soon as the bhajans are over, the devotees get up make a lot of noise. Similarly, when the people called for interview, go into the interview room, the people in the Mandir verandah and outside get up after the door is closed and indulge in noisy talk as in a market-place. After Bhagavan's discourse is over, devotees should ruminate over Swami's speech and not indulge in idle talk. It is all one cacophony from both the men's and women's wings of the mandap. There should be no such talking, not only in Prasanthi Nilayam but outside also, in the bazaars. Discipline is like a shadow. It should follow you wherever you may go. Bhagavan desires from all of you only discipline. Hence, when the discourse is over or when the bhajans end, you should go out in silence. When you get back to your apartments you may discuss your private affairs. But as a rule observe restraint in speech everywhere. It helps to conserve energy. Excessive talk affects the nerves. You are liable to forget what you have heard.

Moreover, elders set a bad example to students by talking in front of them. You should realise that the voice of the Divine is heard in the depths of silence.

Restraint in speech also calls for the avoidance of harsh words. Speaking lovingly and ever thinking of God, you will be oblivious to all worldly things.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Govinda Krishna Jai! Gopala Krishna Jai!*"

—From Bhagavan's discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 4-7-1996

AVATAR VANI

GURUPOORNIMA SANDESH

### Seek the Guru within You

*All the stars are Brahman;  
The Sun is also Brahman;  
The Moon is Brahman; Water is Brahman;  
Swarga is Brahman; Vaikuntha is Brahman;  
The mother is Brahman; the father is Brahman;  
Speech is Brahman; the individual is Brahman;  
Birth is Brahman; Sustenance is Brahman;  
Death is Brahman;  
All actions are Brahman; the body is Brahman;  
The whole of nature is Brahman;  
Life is Brahman. This assembly is Brahman.  
The Sai proclaiming this Truth is Brahman.*  
(Telugu poem)

*The tree growing out of the soil returns to the soil;  
The individual arising from Brahman returns to Brahman;  
This truth is not easily perceived  
That is the mystery of this marvellous creation.*  
(Telugu poem)

#### *Embodiments of Brahman!*

When a seed is sown in the earth, it sprouts as a sapling and grows in due course into a big tree. In the tree, the branches, the leaves, the flowers and the fruits all appear as distinct from each other. Moreover, each of them is used for a specific purpose. But all of them are different forms of the mud from which they have originated.

Seeing a rope at a distance, suspecting that it may be a snake, a man develops fear. Soon another person arrives and assures him that it is not a snake but a rope. The moment he realises that what he feared was a snake, was only a rope, he gets rid of his fear. During all the stages, the rope was only a rope.

Likewise, the ignorant man mistakes the phenomenal world for the Brahman, till a Jnani reveals to him that what he thought was Nature is in reality Brahman.

All that one sees in the entire universe is a manifestation of the Brahman. Some people declare: "Where is Brahman and what are we, petty human beings? How can we be equal to the all encompassing Brahman?" This is not correct. You are that omnipotent, all-pervading Brahman. Because of your worldly attitude, you are not recognising the Reality. You are separating yourself from the Divine. All that you see is Brahman. To search for God as something different from you is a delusion. But this truth is not easily recognised by man.

When you look at the ocean, its endless series of waves and the foam from the waves, they all appear separate from each other. But the truth is they are all one. The water in the waves and in the foam comes from the same ocean and has the same qualities.

### **The Divine and the cosmos**

Likewise, from the infinite ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss), innumerable living creatures emerge like waves. While the Divine is in the state of Sathyam-Jnanam-Anantam (Truth-Wisdom-Infinity) man is in the state of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Embodiments of Divine Atma! When you fill your vision with love, the whole creation will appear divine to you.

The cosmos appears to you as a manifestation of diversity, but in reality there is no diversity. No one makes any effort to discover the Divine unity that underlies the diversity.

### **Maya and God**

In every human being, both Divinity and the Maya principle are immanent. How is this to be comprehended? Sat-Chit-Ananda represent the Divine in man. The names and forms which man perceives are expressions of the Maya principle.

On the ocean, the wind is the cause of waves, on the ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda, the wind of Maya gives rise to the innumerable living creatures. Therefore, the individuals who have emerged from the ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda are manifestations of the Divine.

Divinity is everywhere. But because of man's ignorance, man is a prey to numerous troubles. Here is an example:

### **Vyasa Poornima**

Today is described as Gurupoornima Day. This is not quite correct. The day got its name because of some "gurus" who wanted to have an occasion for receiving offerings from their disciples. The right name for this day is Vyasa Poornima.

Vyasa was born on this full-moon day. He completed the codification of the four Vedas on this day. He completed the writing of the eighteen Puranas on this day. Owing to the passage of time Vyasa Poornima came to be called Gurupoornima.

The true meaning of "Guru" is "one who dispels the darkness of ignorance". Another meaning of the word is "one who is beyond attributes and forms, namely, the Supreme Self (The Brahman)". When this Self is within you where is the need to search for someone to teach you? A teacher who teaches others has had a teacher himself. The one who has no "Guru" above him is the true guru. The Sanskrit stanza which hails the guru as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara and as Parabrahman is misinterpreted. The right approach is to consider Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara as the guru. These three are symbolised by the three gunas: Brahma is Rajas, Vishnu is Satwa and Siva is Tamas. The whole cosmos is constituted by the three gunas. The three gunas are present in man. The Trinity are present in the form of the three gunas in every human heart.

### **"You are your guru"**

Hence, you are your own guru. You need not seek him elsewhere. The so-called gurus of today seek to impart some mantras and receive offerings as "Guru-Dakshina" on Gurupoornima day. The mantra is whispered in the ear and the palm is stretched for an offering. This is what happens today. It is not the proper sign of a guru.

You are a guru unto yourself. All potencies are within you. This is indicated by the Gayatri Mantra.

You have to feel at all times your inherent divinity, which is also present in everyone. When you help or feed someone you must feel that the Divine in you is feeding the Divine in others.

### **"Follow Swami"**

Embodiments of Divine Atma! For many years you have been pursuing wrong paths because of the feeling of separateness. The truth is you are part of the collective (Samashthi). This collective is a part of creation (Srishti). Beyond creation is Pushti (the cosmic energy). Transcending that energy is Parameshthi (the Supreme Omni-Self). You are all these as an embodiment of the Divine. You have to proceed from the individual to a realisation of the Omni-Self.

All are manifestations of the Divine. You may ask whether you can ever acquire the powers possessed by Swami. Follow me. You are bound to get that power. (Cheers) That power is latent in you. But you are not aware of it. You want to experience bliss. If you truly follow Swami, you will discover that bliss within you. Nor is that all. You will find that bliss all around you wherever you go. You cannot find that bliss in the physical world. It is wholly within you. Consider yourself as Divine (Brahman) at all times and in all situations. You will thereby become one with the Divine.

Turn your mind Godward and you will experience the bliss of the Divine. It is for this reason that Swami gives you advice from time to time as to what you should do and what you should avoid. All this is not for my sake but for your own good, to make you take to the path of God Realisation, to teach you the Supreme truth about the Brahman and to make your sacred life an ideal one.

Every man should strive to become an ideal human being. This means that every one should testify to his Divinity. Imagine how happy everyone would be if the entire world was filled with this pure, sublime and sacred ideal.

Recognise that God is your preceptor. He is the preceptor of preceptors. When you have such an all pervading guru, why should you hanker after gurus of lesser breed?

All are children of God. All are embodiments of the Divine, as declared in the Gita. Vishnu is described as the Lord carrying in His four hands the conch, the discus, the mace and the lotus. These four represent the cosmic power of sound, the wheel of Time, the puissance of the Lord and the heart in which the Lord dwells.

There is a certain naiveté about the way in which Vaishnavites and Saivites adore the same deity, Venkateshwara. Vaishnavites hail Him as Venkataramana, while Saivites hail Him as Venkateshwara. The votaries of each sect derive some special satisfaction from using a particular name, though the Lord they worship is one and the same. The names vary but the Lord is one. Siva is called Pashupati (the Lord of cattle). Krishna is worshipped as Gopala (the Lord of cows). The emblems of Siva and Vishnu have common characteristics. Sectarian differences are out of place in the worship of the Divine.

Students should learn a lesson from a musical instrument like the veena. It has different strings producing different vibrations. But if the vibrations are discordant the music jars on the ears. Just as there should be harmony in playing on the veena, there should be harmony among people in a country professing different faiths.

### **Shraddha and bhakti**

Shirdi Baba used to ask for two rupees from devotees who came to him. The two rupees symbolised Shraddha (earnestness) and Bhakti (devotion). These are the two qualities he expected from the devotees. The combination of the two is essential for spiritual progress. Only then bliss will emerge like a plant from a seed.

From this day onwards, give up all differences and concentrate on realisation of the Brahman (the Omni-Self). All are embodiments of Brahman. In due course all will realise this truth by eschewing narrow-minded differences. Develop the sense of spiritual oneness by continuous practice. This sense is bound to grow if you act up to Swami's injunctions. The primary requisite is love for God.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the Bhajan: "*Prema muditha manase Kaho*".



—From Bhagavan's discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on July 30, 1996

AMRITA DHARA

## Sadhana and Sense Control

*Of what use is all Sadhana without sense control?  
Of what avail is practice of yoga without forbearance?  
Of what use is Japa without peace of mind?  
It is like ploughing a barren field.*

*Students!*

"By diligent efforts success can be achieved," says the adage. An ant can cover miles by continuous movement. But even Garuda (the celestial eagle) cannot soar two feet if it has no will to fly. Likewise, without good thoughts and good deeds based on them, a man cannot accomplish anything good. The child Dhruva could achieve what he desired because of his firm determination and the spiritual austerities he observed, despite the ordeals he had to go through. By his sublime thoughts, he achieved the status of a star in the sky. Likewise, any man irrespective of age or abilities, who has faith and determination, can accomplish what he wants. You are aware of the stories of many sages who embarked on severe penances but failed to complete them because of lack of faith and determination. Vishwamitra was repeatedly foiled in this way by either loss of self-control or succumbing to temptation.

In every field sadhana (steadfast performance) is essential. For instance, the participants in the bhajans have improved their singing by constant practice. The sage Durvasa, despite all his penances, could have no peace because he could not control his temper.

Together with peace, the quality of forgiveness (Kshama) is also essential. "Forgiveness is truth, it is Dharma, it is the essence of the Veda, it is non-violence and it is sacrifice (Yajna), it is the source of joy and everything else." (Telugu Poem) "Kshama" is for every man a third eye.

### **Dreams and the reality**

For all these, the primary quality that is necessary is love. Without love there can be no life. A student who spoke earlier said: "Life is a dream, realise it". What is a dream? Entire life is a dream.

During the day you sit here and listen to Swami's discourse. This is not a dream. You see with your eyes, listen with your ears, absorb with your mind and chasten your heart. All these are apparently proofs of direct perception. (Pratyaksha Pramanam). But how far is this real? When you go to sleep at night, all this direct perception vanishes. In your night dreams you experience joy and sorrow. How long do they last? Till you wake up. Then all the dreams become unreal. In the waking state, the dream world has no existence. In the dream state the waking world does not

exist. So, what we have are a daydream and a night dream distinct from each other. But you are present in both the states. Hence you are omnipresent. When both the waking and sleeping states are experienced as dreams life itself becomes a dream. "Realise it". That means, you must realise the true nature of these states.

The student said: "Life is love, enjoy it". Verily love is God. Purandaradasa sang about the glory of the devotee's love for God. "Even as a lotus adorns a lake, the moon adorns the sky and waves are the adornment for the ocean, for your devotees, Oh Lord! Love is the greatest adornment." Nothing lends greater beauty to a devotee than his love for the Divine.

Hence love is Divine. Have love for all. Impart your love even to those who lack love. Love is like a mariner's compass. Wherever you may keep it, it points the way to God. In every action in daily life manifest your love. Divinity will emerge from that love. This is the easiest path to God-realisation. But, why are not people taking to it? This is because they are obsessed with misconceptions relating to the means of experiencing God. They regard God as some remote entity attainable only by arduous spiritual practices. God is everywhere. There is no need to search for God. All that you see is a manifestation of the Divine. All the human beings you see are forms of the Divine. Correct your defective vision and you will experience God in all things.

### **Love for Swami**

Develop the sense of the spiritual oneness of all beings. The power of love is immeasurable. So many of you have assembled here. What has brought you all here? Love alone is the primary reason. (Cheers) You have gathered here in such large numbers because of your love for Swami and Swami's love for you. You have all come of your own accord. The binding factor is love.

Speak lovingly, act lovingly, think with love and do every action with a love filled heart. There is no need for counting beads or sitting in meditation, while your mind is preoccupied with worldly matters. The japa you have to perform is constantly to remind yourself of the Divine within you. This is the supreme message of the Vedas.

Realise that the path of divine love is the easiest, the sweetest and surest path to God.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema muditha manase kaho*".

—From Bhagavan's discourse on July 5, 1996

**AMRITA DHARA**

### **Not Salaries but Service**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

The educational system today prepares students for pursuing worldly gains and comforts, but makes no attempt to cultivate in them the qualities of righteousness, love of peace and promotion

of social welfare. Both students and educationists are mainly concerned about using education for getting jobs and earning large incomes. What kind of life do they lead in their earning career? After a so-called hard day's work, they spend their evenings in clubs, imagining that they get peace and rest there. If they wanted real peace they should have it in their homes. In the clubs they spend their time playing cards and having "bottles". Is this commendable? Does this befit persons calling themselves educated? Far from it. Not only do they ruin themselves this way, but also ruin their families. Instead of falling a prey to such pernicious habits, the educated should use their knowledge for the improvement of society and thereby redeem their lives. Addiction to drink makes a man ultimately a slave of the bottle.

### **Man's debt to God**

Man is the beneficiary of innumerable gratuitous gifts of God: wind, rain, sunlight and so on. What gratitude is man showing to God for all these, while he is paying a big price for every small benefit he derives from civic services like water supply and electric power? God is the provider of all that is essential for life. What recompense is man making to God? On the contrary he goes on praying for more benefits. This insatiable desire is the cause of all man's evil qualities. The truly human qualities are calmness, forbearance and compassion. Man should lead a contented life.

God has given to man a wonderfully beautiful world, with mountains, forests, rivers and the glorious moon. Above all, God has endowed man with a compassionate heart. But he is polluting it. What is it that man owes to God for all his gifts? The ancient sages called it "bali"(sacrificial offering). The term "bali" has been misunderstood as the offer of an animal as sacrifice. The right meaning of "bali" is tax.

Many such terms are often given wrong meanings in common usage. For instance, the term "Shikhandi" is interpreted as referring to a hermaphrodite (one who is neither a man nor a woman). The true meaning, however, is "one who wears a peacock feather". The term is applied to Krishna.

### **Grateful prayer**

What is the tax ("bali") to be paid to God? Only the expression of our gratitude by a heartfelt prayer. That prayer is an expression of one's joy and thankfulness. The hands should be lifted in prayer and the words should come out full-throated. It is unfortunate that even those who are gifted with good voices do not sing aloud in bhajans. Man has been endowed with a tongue to sing the praise of God. If he fails to do so, he remains indebted to God.

The right attitude of the devotee should be one of total surrender. As one devotee declared: "I am offering to you the heart which you gave me. I have nothing I can call my own. All are yours. I offer to you what is yours. What else can I do?" This was the spirit in which Lakshmana served Rama. As long as this spirit of total surrender is not developed, man will have to be born again and again. One should offer one's heart to the Divine, and not be content with offerings like flowers and fruits.

### **Why the avatar comes**

You should offer your knowledge for the benefit of the people. You should set an example to your fellow men. Cultivate the spirit of oneness of all mankind. It is to teach this message that the Sai advent has taken place. (Cheers) Sai has come to indicate the omnipresence of God. The Avatar has come down to declare that God is present everywhere. This is as necessary as the need for some one to light a lamp even if you have a lamp holder, oil and wick. The Avatar comes not only to proclaim the eternal virtues but also to shower His love on all mankind. But each one will get the benefit according to the size of the vessel he holds.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Bhava bhaya harana! Vandita charana*".

**—From Bhagavan's discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on July 1, 1996**

AVATAR VANI

### **The Message of Vedanta**

*One may master the scriptures,  
Or be a great composer of poems,  
But without purity of heart  
These accomplishments are valueless.*

#### *Embodiments of Divine Atma!*

From ancient times Bharat has been famous for its exposition of the four Purusharthas (the four goals of life—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha) and the teachings of the Vedas and Vedangas. The Vedas embody the sublime truths experienced by the sages and the seers.

Veda is derived from the root "vid". It means knowledge. The Veda proclaims the truths, which are valid for all time for all the three worlds, relating to the well-being of mankind and the divinisation of human life. The Vedas taught the principles of daily life and how people should order their lives. Their approach is dualistic, being concerned about how men should achieve the four goals of life in the world.

The Vedas, which originally constituted a single body of hymns, were later divided into three sections: Rig-Veda, Yajurveda and Sama Veda. The Yajurveda later got subdivided into Shukla and Krishna Yajurveda. Then came Atharvana Veda.

The Vedas are known by nine names. The first is Shruti—that is, what is learnt by listening. This was necessary in ancient times when printing of books was unknown. The others are: Anushravanam, Aarunaayam, Samaamnaayam, Chhandas, Adhyaasa, Gamanam, Nigam, Aagamam. Nigam and Aagamam refer to the breathing process of the Divine.

All the Vedas relate to the affairs of the phenomenal world. Each Veda has a Samhita (collection) made up of Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads. All these lay down the practices that should be observed in the stages of householder (Grihasta) and hermit leading an ascetic life (vanaprastha). The practices were intended to control the mind. They are not designed to enable one to have direct experience of God. It is Vedanta that deals with the question of Self-Realisation. For the spiritual journey, it is the guide-post and the destination.

There are three essential things to be understood regarding Vedanta. First is Tarakam. Second is Sankhya. Third is Amanaskam.

Tarakam calls for the understanding of four principles: Kesari, Desari, Madhyama and Bhagavati. Tarakam calls for the investigation of five mudras (ritualistic signs) and after realising their spiritual insignificance, concentrate on Sat-Chit-Ananda and merge the mind in the bliss of that experience.

Sankhya envisages twenty-five entities made up of the five sense organs, the five sheaths, the five life-breaths (pancha-pranas), the five elements, the mind, the body, the intellect, the inner motivator and the individual soul (Jivi). This system of yoga calls for an enquiry into the reality of each of these entities leading to the discovery that the Reality (Sat-Chit-Ananda) is beyond all these and to recognise one's identity with this transcendental Atma. This calls for an exploring of both the external world and the internal world of mind and spirit.

"Amanaskam" means the realisation that the entire universe is nothing but Brahman, which is the only Reality. When there is this realisation of Brahman—the one without a second—even the mind ceases to exist. It is only the operations of the mind that result in the perception of diversity in the universe. When oneness is experienced, there is no mind at all. All is Brahman in that state of consciousness. There is room only for Prema (Love) in this state. That love is Truth.

The power of that love is illustrated by an episode in Bhagavatam. Once Yashoda went in search of Krishna and could not find him anywhere. She met Radha and asked her whether she had seen Krishna.

Radha closed her eyes and meditated intensely on Krishna. That very moment Krishna appeared there. Yashoda realised that the love of a devotee like Radha for Krishna was infinitely greater than her own maternal love for him.

This is how the Divine reveals Himself to devotees. Krishna appeared instantaneously before Radha because of her pure, intense, selfless love. If the heart is polluted or filled with pride, God cannot be experienced even if one tries for endless years.

Yashoda confessed to Radha that her devotion had removed the veil of ignorance and pride clouding her vision all along. She admitted that there were many who loved Krishna more than

she did and requested Radha to teach her how to love Krishna. Radha told Yashoda that this love cannot be taught by others. Each one has to develop it by one's own pure and total devotion.

After Krishna came home, Yashoda chided him for going to others, houses to steal butter while refusing to eat what was available in plenty at home. The lesson to be drawn from Krishna's action is that he preferred to enjoy the devotion and love of His devotees rather than the maternal solicitude of Yashoda.

This means that if you have pure, sacred, selfless love for God, the Divine will appear at that very instant.

**—From Bhagavan's discourse on July 31, 1996  
(To be continued in the next issue)**

**AMRITA DHARA**

### **Love for the Divine Transcends All Kin**

*Happiness emerges from total love;  
Truth and renunciation lead to peace;  
Without love there is no well-being;  
Hearken! Oh valiant son of Bharat!*

*Students!*

There can be no human being who is unaware of love. The universe is permeated with love. Love is beyond description. It is beyond the grasp of the mind and speech. Narada declared: "Love is beyond the scope of words".

How can an ordinary man, living in this phenomenal world, understand such love? This love is an expression of Divinity. Like the mariner's compass, it always points to the Divine wherever it may be present. As oil makes a lamp burn, love illumines life itself.

What is termed love in ordinary worldly life is not real love at all. It is only one or other form of attachment based on human relationships in the family or in society.

True love is pure, selfless, free from pride, and is full of bliss. Such love can be got only through love. All worldly attachments are not real love at all. They are transient. The everlasting, pure love arises from the heart. In fact, it is ever existing and all pervading. How is it that man is unable to recognise such all-pervading love? It is because man's heart today has become barren and is polluted. The heart is filled with all kinds of desires and there is no room in it for pure, unsullied love to enter. It is only when the worldly attachments are expelled from the heart that there will be room for real love to abide in it and to grow.

### **True love gives and gives**

As a man grows from childhood to manhood, his attachments change from the mother to friends, to wife and children, and then to the acquisition of wealth. In the ups and downs involved in the pursuit of wealth, he begins to feel the need for God. This perpetual alternation of attachment and separation cannot be called real love which is spiritual and enduring.

The quality of true love is to give and not to receive. How many are to be found today in the world who love to give? Even a father hesitates to part with his property to his children. Only God can be the infinite giver. Hence love is a divine quality.

Although inherently love is present in every cell of the human being it does not manifest itself because of the pollution of the heart. A man without love in his heart is as good as dead.

### **Live the message**

Once a preceptor summoned all his disciples and told them that he was going to give them something extremely sweet which they should protect from insects and rodents. The disciples resorted to various devices to safeguard the guru's gift. However, one of them ate the sweet, digested it and derived considerable strength and energy from it.

What is the lesson to be drawn from this story? It means that the teachings learnt from the preceptor are not to be merely preserved in safety. The nectarine message of the preceptor should be enshrined in the heart. It should be made part of one's being. Then the recipient acquires vigour and strength.

In the same manner, whatever you see or hear or read should be taken to heart and then put into practice. Only then you have the full satisfaction of benefiting from the teachings. Hearing is not enough. You must take in and digest what you have listened to. It must be put into practice in daily life. This was the prayer which the Gopikas addressed to Krishna that the nectarine music flowing from His flute should fill their dry hearts with divine love. A pure heart is essential for progress in the spiritual or other fields.

### **Chaos in the world**

Divine love is all-compassing and the whole cosmos is contained within it. Hence it is essential for man to comprehend the nature of this love. Today, the world is riddled with disorder, violence and unrest. Injustice, exploitation, corruption and immorality are ubiquitous. All these are the very antithesis of love. Only through the divine love can the world be transformed.

Spiritual love (Atmic love) has to be distinguished from love (or attachment) related to the body, the mind or the intellect. These latter attachments are related to the world and they are the source of sorrow.

### **Four types of love**

Love of the Divine is of four kinds. One is "Swartha-Prema" (love based on self-interest). The second is "Samanjasa Prema", the third is "Parartha-Prema". The fourth is "Yadārtha Prema".

"Swartha Prema" is like a lamp kept in a room. The lamp illumines only the room. This kind of selfish love is confined to a limited group and does not extend to others. "Samanjasa Prema" may be compared to the light from the moon. This moonlight is visible both outside and inside. It is, however, not very effulgent. The light is dim. This kind of love extends to a wider group but is not very intense.

The third is "Parartha-Prema". It is like sunlight. It illumines both inside and outside with brilliance. But it is not continuous in the sense that the sun is not visible at night. But this is not a permanent absence, because the sun "rises" again. Actually, the sun is always there. Likewise, this selfless love may appear to be absent some times, but it will appear again.

The fourth one is "Yadartha Prema" (or Atma-Prema). This love is present always, inside and outside, in all places and at all times, in all circumstances. This is Divine Love. It is imperishable. It is eternal. It is immanent in everyone. When this love is manifested by a person, he achieves the peace that passeth understanding.

### **Supreme example of Vibhishana**

How the love of the Divine manifests itself in a devotee is illustrated by the example of Vibhishana, the younger brother of Ravana. Vibhishana submitted himself to many indignities at the hands of Ravana out of the love he had for Rama. In the battle against the Rakshasas in Lanka, Rama and Lakshmana destroyed many of the great Rakshasa warriors on the first two days. On the third day a formidable warrior stood before them. Vibhishana told Rama: "If you conquer this warrior, the whole of Lanka will be yours. He is a greater warrior than even Ravana." Rama fought with this mighty Rakshasa the whole day, but could not vanquish him. Rama was on the point of giving up the battle for the day. At this stage, Vibhishana, who was behind Rama, said: "This is not the time to give up the fight. You must rally all your strength and destroy the enemy. You should not miss this chance. I am telling this out of my love for you." Egged on by Vibhishana, Rama continued the fight and destroyed his opponent.

The formidable warrior fell on the battlefield. The moment he learned that the warrior was dead, Vibhishana also collapsed on the ground. Recovering himself after chanting the name of Rama, Vibhishana got up and confessed to Rama: "Swami! This is a mark of weakness on my part. I should not have succumbed to such weakness. Having filled myself with your love, how could I succumb to such weakness?" Rama observed: "That's all right. But why did you collapse so suddenly?" Vibhishana replied: "Swami! This happened because of bodily attachment. It was due to parental affection. That mighty warrior was my son."

### **God is greater than son**

He was Vibhishana's son! See what Vibhishana did. To ensure the victory of the Lord, Vibhishana did not hesitate to get even his son killed in battle.

Rama asked Vibhishana: "Why did you do this? Is it not wrong on your part? Why did you not tell me at the beginning itself that he was your son." Vibhishana replied: "When you are facing



an enemy, you should not worry about any kind of relationship on the battlefield. In this war there is no room for considerations of relationship. When anyone takes up arms against you, he ceases to be a relation. Whether it is mother, father, son or anybody else, when he figures as an enemy especially against God, there can be no question of relationship. I have completely surrendered to you. I am your servant. I must be primarily concerned about your victory and not about any temporary kinship. The only truth for me is your will."

It is this abounding love of Vibhishana for Rama which contributed to Rama's victory. Love for the Divine should be an inextricable bond. All other worldly attachments are impermanent. Tamasic bonds are like iron chains. Rajasic bonds are copper chains. Satwic bonds are like chains of gold. But, whether the chains are of iron, copper or gold, they are chains all the same. The nature of the metals may vary, but the chains are shackles nevertheless. Vibhishana declared: "I have no use for any of these bonds. I am content with the pure love of Rama".

It is to demonstrate to the world the supreme quality of total love for the Divine that Vibhishana acted in this manner.

### **Satwic friendship**

Vibhishana is a Satwic friend (Supremely sacred) of Rama. Despite his long intimacy with Rama, Lakshmana was not in the same category. He was a satwic brother, not a satwic friend. Sugriva was a Rajasic friend. Jambavan was a tamasic friend. Vibhishana, though he belonged to the Rakshasa brood, stands out as a satwic friend (pure and selfless). It is in this unalloyed purity that love shines. It is utterly invaluable.

About Divine love the Shruti (Veda) declares: "It did not originate from the firmament. It did not grow from the earth. It has no birth and death. It is all pervading. It emerges from the heart when the knots of ignorance are broken". This is how the Vedas glorified Divine Love. Even Narada (the author of the Bhakti Sutras) could not describe the nature of Divine Love. He described in various terms the state of mind of the devotees filled with love of the Lord, but he could not describe love (prema) itself. He compared Prema to a priceless gem. Likewise Tulsidas also referred to Rama's name as a precious gem.

### **Call to devotees**

Where is this love to be found? It can be got only from Bhagavan Himself, who is the very embodiment of love. Do not treat lightly this infinitely valuable love, which is eternal, pure, sacred and powerful beyond words. "Do not miss this opportunity given to you by Sai. It is only devotion to His feet that will redeem you. Do not be swayed by anyone's words. Come all of you! Come! Come along and bask in this blissful love!" (Telugu poem) (cheers).

Bhagavan crowned His discourse with His favourite bhajan: "*Prema muditha manase kaho: Rama! Rama! Ram!*"

**—From Bhagavan's discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on July 27, 1996**

AVATAR VANI:

## **Bhagavan Reaffirms His Avataric Mission**

A historic pronouncement about His Avataric Mission—to raise the spiritual consciousness of mankind on the basis of the profound truths of Vedanta—was made by Bhagavan Baba in a memorable discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on July 31.

Towards the end of His discourse, Bhagavan said: Today I have just made a beginning with the exposition of Vedanta. Every small mantra in Vedanta is pregnant with meaning. I shall take up every day one mantra and explain its meaning in simple and easily intelligible terms. (Cheers) The essence of the Vedanta can be compressed in a small message. But that small message condenses the import of 15,000 mantras. I shall reveal to you the meaning of these mantras. This cannot be done by anyone except the Divine.

Seeing this human form you may be tempted to treat it casually or view it with love as an embodiment in human form. This is not correct. I am not the body. I am not the mind. I am not the intellect (Buddhi). I am not the will (Chitta). I am not the Inner motivator (Antahkarana). I am not any specific object. This body has been assumed for your sake.

Here is a small example: Here is a tumbler. How can water be contained without a tumbler. To have the water you need a tumbler. You have a container for oil, a wick and a lamp. But will these alone produce light? There must be someone to light the wick. Supposing you have flowers, thread and a needle, can you have a garland? Should not there be someone to make a garland out of them?

You have not known even a small fragment about my Reality. The full nature of this Reality can never be understood by anyone. I am a man amongst men. When they see me I appear as a man. Among women I am a woman. Among children I am a child. When I am alone I am God. (Cheers) This is the Truth about Me. The reason is I have to act towards each section at their level.

When an old man is seen playing with dolls, children would laugh at him. When a young boy is seen walking with a stick, elders will laugh at him. An old man should walk with a stick. Young children should play with dolls. So, when I am with children I make them happy by giving them playthings and sweets. To the seekers of Vedantic truths, I preach Vedanta. To householders I teach the duties of householders. I teach people what is appropriate for them.

What for do I do all this? So that they may learn from Swami (what they need to learn).

### **Unique good fortune**

You must realise that all this is coming to you because of your extreme good fortune. This kind of blessing has not happened to anyone in any previous avatar.

Your good fortune will fructify immensely if you make good use of this opportunity to learn and benefit from Swami's teachings.

You will see in due course that even the blind and the ignorant will declare: "Swami is God" (cheers).

In the human condition, occasionally Maya enters and subjects people to various tests. Do not submit to Maya in any way.

Succeed in all the tests. Then you will become "tasty" for Bhagavan. Immerse yourself in the Love Principle. Its true nature is beyond description.

Vedanta is more important than the Veda. Love is more potent than meditation or recitation of the Lord's name (Japa). The Lord is not concerned about how much you gave to anyone, how many poor people you fed or how many clothes you distributed. You may render accounts of these gifts to the Income-Tax authorities. What you have to offer to Swami are your feelings. Even if what you give is small, I value the feeling with which you have given it. I am not bothered about the quantum or the variety of the things you give. Consider the example of Rukmini. By a simple leaf of Tulsi offered with pure devotion she could tilt the scales against Krishna. Kuchela offered a fistful of parched rice and earned the boundless grace of Krishna. One small grain of rice offered by Draupadi to Krishna was enough to make Krishna appease the hunger of Durvasa and his band of disciples.

All incarnations have demonstrated in this way how even small offerings by devotees with a pure heart can earn great rewards.

Give up all the bad qualities in you. Banish the ego and develop the spirit of surrender. You will then experience bliss.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma!*"

*"Let not the seeds of bad thoughts sprout anywhere near you. At least from this day onwards, live up to the word you have given to Swami, and walk along the flowery path shown by Sai. Receive in full Sai's Grace and Love."*

**—Baba**

**AMRITA DHARA**

## **Adherence to Truth**

There is an eternal Truth which transcends the categories of time and space and is beyond the three "gunas" (Satwa, Rajas, Tamas). This truth is God. All creation has emanated from this

Truth and merges in it. The phenomena perceived by the senses are by their very nature transient and ever changing. The Spiritual Reality is unchanging. The three letters in the term "Sathyam" represent life (Prana), food (Annam) and the Sun, who is the sustainer of all life. All the three represent the Brahman. Another meaning of "Sathya" is control of the outward and inner senses. When there is such sense control combined with purity in thought, word and deed, one experiences the Divine.

"Dharma" is based on Sathya. The Upanishadic saying is: "Sathyam vada; Dharmam chara" (Speak the Truth and practise righteousness). Today the number of persons adhering to truth is one in a thousand or so. Most of one's life is spent in untruth. A true human being should lead a life based wholly on truth. Man is in desperate search of bliss in the external world, forgetting that the source of bliss is within him. Ignorance of his inherent Divinity makes a man miserable. When the ignorance goes, his blissful nature reveals itself. Man has to realise this basic truth.

Students! You should realise that whatever difficulties you may encounter in life, you can overcome them by steadfast adherence to Truth. You must carry out your promise at any cost. You have the example of Emperor Bali, who honoured his pledge to Vamana even at the cost of his kingdom and against the warning of his preceptor. Bali declared that there is no greater sin than going back on one's plighted word.

Even ten persons who adhere firmly to truth can save the world. How many today are prepared to sacrifice their all for truth? People listen to endless discourses, meet noble personalities and read all the scriptures. Of what use is all that when there is no practice of the teachings?

Man has evolved from the animal to the human and he must progress towards the Divine. Unfortunately today he tends to revert to animality. Man should realise the infinite preciousness of human birth.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Hey Siva Sankara! Bhavani Sankara! Siva Sankara Sambho!*"

—From Bhagavan's discourse on July 2, 1996

**AMRITA DHARA**

### **As You Sow, So Shall You Reap**

"All the pains and pleasures man experiences are the results of his own actions and not due to any act of the Divine. God is only a witness", observed Bhagavan, in His discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on the 30th. In the course of His discourse, Bhagavan said: "God is like a postman. He delivers to you whatever letter is addressed to you. The grief or joy you derive from the contents of the letter are your own. Likewise the suffering or happiness one experiences are the results of one's own bad or good deeds and are not derived from God."

However, there is the operation of special grace on certain occasions. When you pray to God with a pure heart, without a trace of selfishness and with sacred feelings, God confers special favour. Moreover, when a person has done some unique act of sacrifice in a previous life or at any time in the past, the Divine confers an appropriate reward for it at the proper time. (Here Swami related the story of how Krishna came to the rescue of Draupadi when Duryodhana attempted to disrobe her, by making her sari endless, in return for the readiness with which Draupadi tore off a piece from her sari to bind the bleeding finger of Krishna.

Swami described how even a noble and large-hearted hero like Karna became an accomplice of the wicked Kauravas because of his association with them. Swami called upon the students to avoid bad company. Swami incidentally referred to the spontaneous magnanimity of Karna and related an episode which Krishna had contrived to bring home to Arjuna the extent to which Karna was prepared to sacrifice himself to satisfy any one who came to him for help. Krishna assumed the form of a Brahmin and came to Karna on the battlefield asking for some gold. As the only way he could satisfy the Brahmin was to pull out his two golden teeth to give them to him, Karna did not hesitate to do so. He got them washed in Ganges water by aiming an arrow at the ground and making the river spout forth. Arjuna, who had a high opinion of his own prowess and devotion to Krishna, felt humbled at the sight of Karna's boundless generosity.)

The ways of the Divine should be properly understood. God exists not for one nation or one community. God incarnates on earth for the benefit of all mankind. Each one gets the reward according to his deserts. As are his actions, so are the fruits thereof. Hence, before doing anything, one should consider whether it is right or wrong. One should see that no harm occurs to anyone on account of one's actions. This is not easy for one who is attached to the pleasures of the body. All sorrow is related to the body and worldly desires. You experience desires in the waking state. In the deep sleep state (sushupti) one is totally unaware of even the body and of the phenomenal world. Hence there is no sorrow in that state.

By constant contemplation on God the mind should be turned away from mundane desires. That is the way to get rid of both pain and pleasure. Man has to wake up from the sleep of ignorance and realise his divine essence (Sat-Chit-Ananda). To the extent worldly desires are reduced, to the same extent bliss will be experienced. Simultaneously with the control of desires men should also get rid of egoism (Ahamkara).

Men today are filled with fear because they have no confidence in themselves. A bird can brave a storm because it has faith in its wings. But man succumbs to the slightest reverses of fortune because he does not rely on the power of the Spirit. People must rely primarily on the power of the Divine. With confidence in the Self, they should devote themselves to good deeds. This is the purpose of life. Every step you take must bring you nearer to God.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Rama Jayam, Raghurama Jayam*".

—From Bhagavan's discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on 30-6-1996

### **A Student's Testimony**

The students who are privileged to speak before Bhagavan's evening discourses in the Sai Kulwant Mandap, have many interesting stories to relate about their experiences with Bhagavan. Here is one such story:

"Five years ago, a lad was standing at the bus stop waiting for the bus to come. When the bus arrived, the young boy ran to catch it, and though it didn't stop completely, he managed to get his foot caught on the lower step. He missed his hold and fell forward on his face, smashing his glasses, nose, chin etc. As he was being dragged along, he whispered softly, "Oh God!" With those soft words, the flaming orange robe appeared, enveloping him in its soft flow. The Lord had saved his life; there was not a scratch on the boy's face, with only a trickle of blood from his nose. That boy is standing here before you now."

### **Musician's Homage to Bhagavan**

It was indeed a thrilling experience for the thousands of devotees who had assembled in Prasanthi Nilayam for the Gurupoornima celebration, to listen to a magnificent musical offering to Bhagavan by 25 artistes from 16 countries in the Poornachandra Auditorium on Gurupoornima eve (July 29).

It was the first time such an international concert programme had been presented in Prasanthi Nilayam.

Over many months the Italian Conductor, Maestro Guiseppi Savazzi had planned with Swami to present an orchestra and choir of fine players with a programme of western classical music. Twenty-five musicians from sixteen different countries had first rehearsed in Italy, then travelled to India to present a first-class performance. The men all wore the customary dress of black dinner jacket, white shirt. Maestro Savazzi and the Compere David Bailey (from U.K.) wore black "tails".

Swami took his seat in the semicircular orchestra pit in front of the stage, after greeting the devotees present in the hall.

The first piece was "The Gloria", written by Antonio Vivaldi, born in 1678 in Italy, who grew up to be a priest and a fine musician. This piece for choir and the orchestra was in 12 parts in various moods, from the joyous celebration of glory to God to much quiet prayerful sections some of which were beautifully sung by The expert solo singers.

This was followed by the orchestra playing another piece by Vivaldi, entitled "Spring" from his celebrated composition on the four seasons. The violinists brought out the feeling of spring, expressed in music, the freshness, newness, the chirping of the birds and the happiness of a spring day. The leader of the first violin played the difficult solo, part, which was lively and appreciated by all.

It must have been a great joy to the composer of the next piece, Xavier Delisle, a French musician, to be present to hear his newly composed work on the 108 names of God played as homage to Swami. The work started using the percussion section of the orchestra making a very different sound from the pieces presented earlier. This was very effective and the piece was full of different moods and sounds, with moving melodies both sung and played excellently. Mr. Bailey presented the composer to the audience at the end of the piece.

Swami showered His grace upon all the musicians, presenting the men with lovely Kashmiri scarves and the ladies with saris. Then came the great performance of the evening "The Messiah" chorus by Handel.

What tremendous love and joy poured from the players and singers as they performed for Swami the words "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! King of Kings! Lord of Lords and He shall reign forever and ever! Amen!"

At the end of the performance, Swami went up the stage and materialised a gold bracelet, which He fastened on the wrist of the Conductor, Maestro Savazzi. Swami was then photographed with all the participants.

When Maestro Savazzi offered to Bhagavan, the orchestra rendered the arati song, again a new arrangement by Delisle in which the entire audience participated with fervour. It was indeed a glorious and memorable evening.

—D. B.

*When you scatter seeds on the surface of the soil, they do not germinate. You have to keep them inside the soil. So too, Bodha, if it is scattered on the surface, will not germinate, grow into the tree of knowledge and yield the fruits of wisdom. Plant it in the heart, water the plant with Prema, manure it with Faith and Courage, keep off pests with the insecticides of Bhajan and Satsang, so that you can benefit in the end. You have not yet got started on Sadhana; still you demand Santhi. You demand Grace. How is it ever possible? Start! Then, everything will be added unto you.*

—Baba

**To Be Loved**

*Oh, to be loved and cared for; to be loved  
Is all we need for joy; yes, to be loved  
Is all we need to work for; to be loved  
Sincerely and supremely, to be loved  
Unselfishly is true to be loved.  
We have to give love truly to be loved;  
We need to love in order to be loved*

**—Benito F. Reyes**

### **The Sai Mantra**

May I seek Thy permission, Lord,  
To say what I want to say?  
For many an ardent devotee eager,  
And many doubting Thomases too,  
Come to me merely because I have been  
For nearly five decades at Thy Lotus Feet.

Sometimes inquisitive, sometimes genuinely interested  
To know about Sai Baba, the simple village boy, turned God.

Grant me, my Lord, the humility and Wisdom  
To say things seemly and sound.

Came one of bold mien and asked curiously:  
"You've been so long with Sai Baba,  
Pray, tell me about the much-coveted  
Divine visions you may have seen".

I humbly replied, "I am not so lucky.  
I have had no such experience.  
I only know that He loves me  
And I adore and worship Him".

They raised their eyebrows and exclaimed:  
"Does not Sai Baba initiate one into a mantra"?  
"Yes", said I, "The mantra of selfless love".  
"Don't be funny", they said, "we know it".  
"We are eager to know how Baba makes one evolve spiritually."



"Pardon me, just observe the Great One.  
His life is His message,  
And so, we learn and grow at His lotus feet,  
To be loving and kind, to help ever and hurt never.  
Is this not spirituality, my friend? "

"This is not what we mean", said they.  
"We are referring to those mysterious supernatural experiences,  
Beyond sensory perception and mental comprehension".  
"Ah!" said I, "Yes, He has made me see  
God in you and in the whole creation,  
He has enthralled me in the mystery of His Divinity,  
He has opened up in me, the floodgates of deeper understanding,  
That All that was, is and will be,  
Is His enchanting drama of Love.  
You and I are the chosen ones,  
To play our assigned roles to perfection,  
Bringing joy and fulfillment not only to ourselves,  
But to make beloved Sai Baba, your and my God,  
Happy, that we love Him, just for the sake of loving Him.

"Let us undertake the holy pilgrimage within,  
And reach the innermost sanctum of Love and Light.  
Then all shall be clear in the dawn of realisation,  
That Sai Baba is that very Love and Light  
Who adorns the temple of our hearts.  
This is the profound spiritual experience,  
This is the inexplicable supernatural mystery,  
This is the initiation, the mantra, the spiritual endeavour,  
This is the indissoluble bond of love between God and us.  
Are you satisfied, my friend? "

—Jayalakshmi Gopinath, Anantapur

*"A bar of iron sinks in water; but beat it into a hollow vessel and it will float merrily and even carry some weight. So too, man's mind sinks easily in the sea of senses; beat it hollow, hammering it with the Name of the Lord. It will float, safely on a sea of troubles. Do not be like gramophone records singing someone else's song, ignorant of the genuine thrill of music. Sing from your own experience the Glory and Grace of the Lord. "*

— Baba

*Truth is the mother;  
Wisdom is the father;  
Right Conduct is the brother;  
Compassion is the friend;  
Peace is the spouse;  
Forgiveness is the son;  
These six alone are the real relations for everyone.*

In this vast phenomenal universe, we consider the body as the mother. But the body is perishable by the very name given to it ("Sareeram"—that which decays). The bodies of the mother and the son are both impermanent. Hence for every human being the real mother is Truth. ("Sathyam mata") Truth is that which remains unchanged for all time. Truth is eternal and changeless. Hence from ancient times the sages esteemed Truth as Divine. Truth, therefore, should be considered one's real mother.

"Pita Jnanam" ("Wisdom is the father"). Is the one who fosters and protects your body the father? He is only a guardian. The true father is wisdom, which is Divine. The Upanishads hailed Truth and Wisdom as Divine.

"Dharmo bhrata" (Righteousness is the brother? The uterine brothers who are elder or younger than one are not one's real brothers. From the worldly point of view they are one's brothers. But one's true brother is Righteousness (Dharma), which is Divine.

"Daya sakha" ("Compassion is the friend") People look upon associates with bodies as friends. This is not correct. One's true friend is "Compassion".

"Santham patni" ("Peace is the spouse") One's true spouse is peace, without which no existence is possible. Peace is a shining ornament for man. It is Divine.

"Kshama putrah" ("forgiveness is the son") This is not obtained easily by everyone. Today, because of the influence of the Kali age, sons are keener on getting at the properties of their parents than on rendering them service or looking after them. Sri Rama was a son who had such supreme regard for the honour and good name of the father that he willingly chose to go into exile to the forest and face all difficulties. Hence Rama is hailed as the very embodiment of Dharma ("Ramo vigrahavaan Dharmah"). Such a son is verily the Divine. To have forgiveness ("Kshama") as one's son is to possess the Divine.

These six qualities are the right relations for every man. Human birth has been conferred on humanity to acquire these relationships.

yesterday or today, but do not remember the great truths inherited from the past. With the result that man is plunged in misery and worry perpetually.

Men have forgotten their ancient culture. They are lost in the transient values of modernism. Remembering this, you students should pledge yourselves to uphold human values.

### **"Lovers of the atma"**

What you should seek to acquire today are not scholarship and wealth. You must acquire the supreme quality of love (Prema). The Vice-chancellor (in his speech earlier) said that you should prepare yourselves to become "soldiers". You should become not "soldiers" but seekers of "soul dears". You should become lovers of the spirit. The term "soldiers" has a political tinge. But you should become "Lovers of the Atma". Cultivate human values. Remember that you are born in Bharat, breathe the pure air of Bharat, live in Bharat and grow in Bharat. The denizens of Bharat have been described as Hindus. What is the meaning of "Hindu"? Anil Kumar said (in his speech earlier) that Hindus are those who have abjured "himsa" (or harming others). This is not correct. "Hindu" stands for the five following qualities: "H" for Humanity. "I" for Individuality. "N" for Nationality. "D" for Divinity and "U" for Unity. These embody the Hindu tradition. (Cheers)

These five qualities are the five life-breaths ("Panchapranas"). They are the five vital principles (Pancha-Tattwas). The ancient Bharatiyas, who have drawn sustenance from these five values, have esteemed them as the essence of their culture ("Sanskriti")

"Sanskriti" means that which has been refined. To make a silver tumbler you have to subject a piece of silver to the process of melting, processing and shaping it into a tumbler. Only after the metal goes through all these processes can it become a tumbler. This applies to every object of utility. The raw material has to be processed before it can become a useful object.

### **The Purusharthas**

Men should consider, however, of what use is their ceaseless pursuit of material objects, forgetting God? All day long men everywhere are pursued by endless desires and worries. Only a proper culture can convert these desires and worries into purposeful actions.

It is for this reason that the ancient sages placed before Bharatiyas the four goals of human existence. Dharma (Right Conduct), Artha (the acquisition of material things), Kama, (satisfaction of desires) and Moksha (Liberation).

Today, people have given up the first and last of these four goals—Dharma and Moksha—and are immersed only in the pursuit of Artha (wealth) and Kama (sensory pleasures). What is necessary is to infuse Dharma (Righteousness) into the pursuit of Artha and Kama. The acquisition of wealth and the enjoyment of sensory pleasures should be based on Dharma. The entire life should be founded on Righteousness. Only then wealth acquires real value.

combination of material wealth for daily life and spiritual wealth for achieving supreme bliss constitutes the meaning and goal of human life.

These basic human values have been forgotten today and human life has been devalued. Today the price of everything has gone up inordinately. Even a broomstick is very costly. But the value of man has depreciated, because men no longer possess the qualities which a human being should have.

Human values are essential for man. They are the hallmark of his humanness. These values should be manifested in daily life. Your words should demonstrate their sacredness. Your actions should sanctify these values.

*Oh Students! Pay heed to my words!  
Eschew harshness in speech.  
Excessive talk is harmful.  
Idle strolling is a bad habit.  
Let your light shine  
Become lamps for others  
(Telugu Poem)*

The first thing students should learn is to speak sweetly and avoid excessive talk. They should avoid going from room to room like rats and cats. This is part of the culture they have to imbibe.

### **Love and unity**

In the culture of Bharat, there are three basic elements: Morality (Naitikam), Righteousness (Dharmikam) and Spirituality (Adhyatmikam). These are the threefold aspects of man.

First, "Naitikam" (Morality). This is based on pure thoughts. When there is purity in thoughts, there is righteousness in speech. Out of righteousness ensues spirituality. There should be unity in thought, word and deed.

Whatever you may learn or do, the fundamental requisite for right living is love. Love promotes truth in speech. That speech should be both pleasing and wholesome as indicated in the Gita ("Sathyam Hitham prithikaram").

There is love in Jnanam (wisdom). Without love wisdom is like bagasse after the sweet juice has been taken out of the sugarcane.

The "Dharma" should be rooted in love. Of what use is charity or an act of goodness without love in it?

There is love in peace and in all other qualities. It is the undercurrent flowing through truth and other qualities.

Without love, there can be no genuine relationship between different beings. Love alone can foster unity. Hence love and unity are essential for mankind. Unfortunately men have become morally blind without the two eyes of love and unity.

Love is the force that binds person to person. Unfortunately today, though Bharat has achieved freedom, she is far from achieving unity. Let us have a look at the past. You know about Emperor Ashoka. The top of the Ashoka Pillar, with figures of four lions looking in the four directions, is independent Indian national emblem.

### **A lesson from Ashoka**

Emperor Ashoka had established a certain custom of giving presents to his feudatory Kings on the occasion of his birthday. Today is India's fiftieth Independence Day. On the occasion of Ashoka's fiftieth birthday, all the feudatory rulers had assembled in the capital. A ruler from the east submitted to the Emperor the following message: "Your Majesty! I have collected this time three times as much revenue as in previous years and I am offering it to the Emperor's treasury". The Emperor appeared pleased with the offering and accepted it.

Then came a ruler from the western region. He said: "Your Majesty! I have cut down as much as possible the public expenditure in my kingdom, reduced the salaries of public servants and have brought six times as much tribute as I used to give in earlier years." The Emperor requested the King to resume his seat.

A ruler from the northern region made the following submission. "Oh Lord! I have been unable to bring any offering to your Majesty because of the failure of rains in my kingdom. Owing to the poor harvests I could not make any collections from my subjects." The Emperor expressed his approval and requested the king to resume his seat.

Next came a ruler from the south. He informed the Emperor: "Your majesty! This year I have had to raise the taxes, to reduce the expenditure and to put down unrest in different parts of the Kingdom and round up all the troublesome elements. As a result peace has been established all over the kingdom. This is the offering I am making to the Emperor". The King requested him to resume his seat.

### **Welfare of the people comes first**

Then the ruler of Magadha rose from his seat and approached the Emperor. He told the Emperor "Your Majesty! My sole concern is about the welfare of my people. I have used all the taxes collected from the people for establishing schools and hospitals for the people and to provide other amenities to them. I got wells dug for providing drinking water to the people. I got tanks to be dug for storing water. Without causing any hardship to the people, I spent all the money collected from them for their own benefit. All the people are happy. I did not reduce the emoluments of public officials. I allowed them to use the money collected from the people to be used for the benefit of the people, thereby encouraging them to discharge their responsibilities

being of my kingdom to Your Majesty. My people are living in peace and plenty".

Emperor Ashoka was supremely pleased on hearing these words. He summoned his attendants and offered to the ruler of Magadha presents of the kind he had not offered to anyone before.

### **Duty of rulers**

What is the significance of this episode? This means that rulers should be concerned solely with the well being of their people. They should seek to provide what is essential for the people. The king built choultries, constructed roads, set up schools, built hospitals for daily life. When these are provided the~ will be no discontent among the people.

To ensure peace among the people, the sense of spiritual oneness should be developed, as declared in the Gita: "Mamaatmaa Sarvabhoothaantharaathma" ("I am the indwelling Spirit in all beings") When this feeling prevails, there can be no room for any kind of differences and strife. If one sees the same spirit that is within him in all the others, how can he hate the others? If one sees his image in a mirror, will he hate it? Everyone loves his own self.

### **What Swami wrote as a boy**

In this context, I may recall a poem I wrote at the age of seven. It was as follows.

*To see your face in a mirror do you need anybody's help?*

*Why do you need anyone's friendship for this purpose?*

*To view the moon in the sky do you need a lamp?*

*To look at the moon shining in the sky do you require any other source of light?*

*To know your own Atma why do you need a guru?*

*The Atma is your God, your Vishnu, Siva and Brahma.*

*One who has realised this, why does he need any preceptor?*

### **Selfishness rampant**

Therefore, everyone should realise that the same Universal Divine Spirit is the Indweller in every being. All are embodiments of the Divine. When this sacred feeling fills everyone there will be no room for conflict or chaos.

Today people have forgotten this sacred Truth. Hatred alone is ubiquitous. Envy is rampant. Selfishness prevails everywhere. Self-interest is predominant. Because of these evil tendencies, pure human relations have been undermined.

The relationship, which you should develop is that of spiritual oneness. "I and you are one ". That is the truth you have to realise. Who is the "You"? It is also another "I" Every one knows himself as "I" In the declaration, "I and you are one", "you" stands for God (who is in everyone). The first name of God is "I" (Aham). Then came "Aum". Every person, in every reference to himself, describes himself as "I" ("Nenu" in Telugu).

"I" is permanent, everlasting.

### **All-pervading love**

Hence, the scriptures declare: "Sathyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma". The Brahman is Truth, Wisdom and everlasting. The term "Aham" applies to Brahman. Hence the Mahavakya, "Aham Brahmasmi". Brahma here is not a four-headed deity depicted in the films. It refers to the Universal, all-encompassing Spirit. Brahman is infinite love. It is all pervading in its expansiveness. This means that there is no place in the cosmos where love is not present.

This is illustrated by an incident in the Bhagavatam. A gopika heard a knock at the door. She was in two minds whether she should open the door or not. Debating in her mind about this she realised that the one outside was the same as the one within her. "That being so, what does it matter whether the door is opened or closed?"

The Brahman is the same effulgence shining within you and within everybody else the Gopika experienced the Divine as a cosmic mansion which had no exits and entrances. "When the Lord of the Universe is within me, where is the need for a door or a welcome?" (Bhagavan sang with feeling a song expressing the dilemma of the Gopika and the delight that fills her mind when she realises her oneness with God.)

All is within us. The heart is the container of everything. It is the source of strength and of weakness. The pure-hearted man is full of courage. The man with a guilty heart is weak.

Love is the source of strength. Get rid of all fear by developing love for God. Thereby the door of your heart opens and you experience Divine Bliss, which is symbolised by the term Kailash, the abode of God.

Students! Purify your hearts by the waters of love. Apply the cleansing powder of earnestness (Shraddha). Then the heart will shine like a star, "a diamond in the sky". Every student should be like a star, twinkling in the sky.

Develop love and cherish concern for the welfare of the people. Realise the goal of union with God. (Bhagavan explained the significance of "Namaskaram" and how Japa should be done). Redeem your lives by loving all and serving all.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema Muditha*"

**From Bhagavan's discourse on August 15, 1996**

**AMRITA DHARA:**

*Fear of Sin has vanished;  
Wicked deeds have become common;  
Devotion to the Lord is gone;  
Indescribable misdeeds  
Have enveloped the world.  
Oh man! Only the Contemplation  
of the name of Hari, which is  
the refuge of all renunciants,  
Will confer happiness on You.*  
(Telugu poem)

*Devotion alone confers the Supreme gift;  
Devotion alone destroys the disease of mundane existence;  
Devotion alone stirs the yearning for the Divine;  
Devotion alone is the means of Liberation.*  
(Sanskrit Sloka)

*Embodiments of love!*

To realise the Supreme, the path of devotion is the only royal road. It is the panacea for all worldly ailments and for the disease of birth and death. Devotion is the most effective means for awakening the spiritual urge.

The Upanishads are the great spiritual legacy of ancient Bharat. "Isavasyam idam sarvam" ("The entire cosmos is the dwelling place of the Lord") declares the Upanishad. If the full import of this one aphorism is understood and practised by Bharatiyas, the country will be free from all difficulties. Any person who has true faith in this declaration will be free from all troubles.

The Upanishads declared: "Tat Twam Asi" ("Thou art That"). This truth should get implanted in the hearts of devotees. Equally, the great saying, "Aham Brahmasmi" should get enshrined in the hearts of all human beings. "Sarvam Khalu idam Brahma" Verily all this is Brahman". The Brahman permeates everything in the cosmos.

(Bhagavan went on to explain the esoteric and numerological significance of the Pranava Mantra, "AUM" and the name of "Rama").

Man has to realise how much he owes to God who has provided so many things for his life and comfort. Prayer is the expression of man's gratitude to God. It is also the means of awakening an awareness of the eternal Divine within him. The Upanishads beckon man to realise the bliss within him. Prayer is essential for developing love for God.

The prayer should be heart-felt. Ravana worshipped Siva but without giving up his demonic nature. Hence he could not get the grace of God.



### **What pleases the Lord**

The Lord is pleased with even the simplest things offered with full devotion to Him. It is enough if the devotee offers his body, mind, heart and the joyous tears flowing from his eyes.

Students should realise the supreme value of human birth. The indwelling spirit in every one is the same Divinity. Forms may be different but the Spirit in all is the same. It is pure, unchanging and timeless. It is ever blissful. It is nectarine. Everyone should recognise this Atmic Principle.

The body is like a chariot. It is essential for the journey of life. But you are the charioteer, not the chariot. The four Purusharthas (Goals of life) are the four wheels of the chariot.

Students! In driving the vehicle, you have to be mindful of the state of the road. You have to see how the body is used for various purposes in society according to the prevailing circumstances. You should know how to behave towards elders, teachers, parents and above all, how to love God. You should use your discrimination in the discharge of your duties. Only then you can make the journey of life smooth and safe.

### **Uphold high ideals**

Look upon the body as a shrine in which the Divine is installed. Dedicate all actions of God.

Today many are becoming slaves to wealth, power, position or name. Students should not become such slaves. They should be upholders of sacred ideals. "Help ever; hurt never". Let that be your motto. (Swami sang songs from Thyagaraja to show how the great saint treated Rama as a friend).

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the Bhajan "*Prema muditha*"

**From Bhagavan's discourse on August 17, 1996**

*AMRITA DHARA:*

### **Jnana and Bhakti**

"Everything in the cosmos is made up of the five basic elements, which are manifestations of the Divine. The Divine has no separate form. This truth is not realised by mankind. Avatars come to dispel the ignorance of humanity," observed Bhagavan Baba, in the course of a discourse on August 21.

Bhagavan said: "Avatars do not come in unique form. The reason is all the creatures in the world carry out their specific functions. Animals, birds, insects, ants and mosquitoes do not deviate from their respective roles in leading their lives. But, man alone has forgotten his duties. Birds obey "reason and season". Man alone behaves without regard to "reason and season". Hence the

"God comes in human form" ("Daivam mannusharupena"). If God comes in any other form, say, a bird, it will be driven away. Man will take no notice of it. If the Avatar comes in the form of a buffalo, it will be driven away with a stick.

In this context, two points have to be noted.

There were two brothers, Jnanadeva and Bhaktideva. Both were going on a Journey. On the way, they felt thirsty. Bhaktideva asked Jnanadeva: "I am thirsty but I cannot see water anywhere". Jnanadeva said: "Let us see whether there is any well nearby." After going some distance, they noticed an old well with water deep at the bottom.

Jnanadeva declared: "Jnanath eva thu Kaivalyam" ("Through Jnana anything can be accomplished.")

He immediately assumed the form of a bird, flew down to the water in the well, quenched his thirst and came up. Jnanadeva had the ability to assume any form because of the supreme knowledge he possessed, the knowledge of the oneness of the Self.

Bhaktideva could not get down into the well. He sat near the well and prayed to God with intense love. After sometime, the water in the well rose to the level of his feet. Noting the wetness of his feet, he opened his eyes and saw that the water in the well had overflowed.

"Jnana" requires a change in one's form. But "Bhakti" needs no such change. Intense loving devotion will suffice. What the devotee needs will come running to him. There is nothing greater than devotion.

Bhaktideva wrote a letter to Jnanadeva. It was a blank piece of paper which he sent in a cover. When Jnanadeva opened the letter, he found there was no writing on it. Jnanadeva then started writing his reply in page after page. He could not come to the end of his writing. His entire life was spent on enquiry and investigation. There was no time for doing any thing practical. The life of most scientists is spent this way: continuous experimentation, with no experience. This sort of endless pre-occupation with enquiry is of no use. Devotion is easier than the Jnana marga (the path of Knowledge). Through devotion, constant chanting of the name and loving remembrance of God, anything can be accomplished.

Students! See that the love that is inherent in you is not diverted in wrong directions, in anti-social activities, or in ways opposed to the wishes of your parents. So far as love for God is concerned, you need not submit yourself to anyone.

When you love God with all your heart, the bliss you experience is unexcelled. This was the experience of the Gopikas. This has been described as the fifth "Purushartha", the experience of union with God (Paramabhakti) Supreme devotion.

whether President or Prime Minister, if he forgets God he is nothing. Hero becomes zero if he forgets God. These officers come and go. You must never give up your faith in the supreme. That is the way to redeem human life.

**From Bhagavan's discourse on August 21, 1996**

### **Anywhere, at any time**

*There is nothing like a holy place or a special time for the contemplation of the Omnipresent Lord. Wherever the mind revels in the contemplation of the Divine, that is the Holy Place! Wherever it does so, that is the auspicious moment! There and then one must meditate on the Lord. That is why it is said: "Na kala niyame yathra, na desasya sthalasya cha; yathrasya ramathe chiththam, thathra dhyane na kevalam" "For meditation on God, there is no fixed time or place. When and where the mind so desires, then and there is the time and place."*

**—Baba**

**AVATAR VANI:**

### **Stand up for Truth**

How do you realise the presence of the Divine within you? Your body is made up of physical constituents like iron, water, phosphorus and lead, the value of all of which totals barely a few rupees. And yet within that body there is a power which can make millions. Wherefrom does that power come? Does it come from the mother who gave birth to the child? No. Till the child in the womb is four months and nine days old, the foetus is just a round mass of jelly. Then a force of vibration enters the embryo. Wherefrom does that vibration come? That is the Brahman principle (Brahma-Tattwa). That is the Life Principle (Prana-Shakti). From that moment the child in the womb starts moving. Simultaneously The Brahman Principle enters the foetus. The combination of the two in the body is "Tarakam". This is one of the secret doctrines of Vedanta. This process is treated as a human phenomenon. It is not something human. It is a manifestation of Brahman.

When I speak through the mike you are able to hear me. But without the current the mike cannot function. The mike is matter. The current is energy. Their combination enables my voice to reach all of you.

Likewise, the coming together of Brahman and Maya results in emergence of the Brihat-Swarupa (the cosmic form of the Lord). Brihat-Swarupa is the all-pervading energy.

### **How to realise the self**

You must realise that whatever scriptures one may master or whatever power and wealth one may acquire, without love one cannot achieve liberation. ALL of you are looking at the external

you will recognise your true form. The master of a house throws out all the useless things but safeguards what is most valuable inside an iron safe in the house. Each of you should realise what is most precious within you. The three processes of "Tarakam", "Sankhya" and "Amanaska" are extremely precious spiritual gems. They are within you, but you are not aware of their existence, because you have not related yourself to the owner, the Master within you that owner is the Supreme Self (Paramatma). How to relate yourself to the owner and cultivate his friendship? To enable the students to understand this I am explaining this Truth of Vedanta in simple terms.

The master resides in the upper floor of the house. You are outside the gate, guarded by a mastiff called Maya. How, then, are you to approach the master, the Paramatma? You shout His name. He comes down, recognises you and takes you inside. Maya does not trouble you.

To neutralise Maya, you have to prove your oneness with the Divine. This has been proclaimed in the Upanishadic saying: "Advaita darshanam Jnanam". The Supreme knowledge is the perception of the non-dual unity. This is the path of knowledge. The other path is that of devotion. The Lord comes down to help you when you chant His name at all times. You may ask how this can be done when one has to attend to many other things everyday, including study of books etc. There is no room for this doubt. Consider every act of yours as an offering to God. Do what is appropriate for each action. All this is necessary till you secure God's grace. Thereafter, they are unnecessary.

Awareness consists in the conscious remembrance of God on all occasions.

### **Confronting evil**

In the presence of evil actions, the Godly man should not remain a silent spectator. He has to stand up for truth. Because of their failure to do so when the Kauravas were attempting to disrobe Draupadi, Krishna accused Bhishma, Drona and other Acharyas of being accomplices in Duryodhana's sinful act. Because of this grievous lapse on their part all these preceptors came to a sad end.

Vedanta declares that three kinds of attachment—attachment to wealth, wife and children—are the cause of a great deal of sinful deeds. Hence, Krishna enjoined Arjuna to remember the Lord always and fight the battle. That will ensure his victory.

However, the Lord's name should be remembered with total faith. This is what the students should bear in mind. Krishna sought to instill such faith in Arjuna through the Gita. Whoever it may be, if he carries out Swami's commands with total, unwavering faith, he will have direct vision of the Divine in a moment. This principle is taught by Sankhya Yoga.

Vedanta in its essence is extremely simple. It is easier to grasp than butter. God is softer and sweeter than butter. To experience God you have to apply the heat of Jnana-Agni (the fire of

to Him through your love. When that happens desires disappear.

Vedanta is replete with such profound truths expressed in short aphorisms. Dr. Jumsai (who had spoken earlier) said that all are children of God. In fact all are the Divine itself. Instead of being a lover, whose love is confined to a few, become love itself so that you can love all. This is the supreme truth proclaimed by Vedanta.

**(This is the concluding part of Bhagavan's discourse on July 31, 1996, in the Sai Kulwant Mandap, The first part appeared in our August, 1996 issue.)**

*AMRITA DHARA:*

## **The Gospel of Hard Work**

Science and technology have advanced so much that man is able to explore space and dive into the deep ocean. But he has not learnt how to live like a human being on earth. It is more important for man to learn how to lead a good life on the earth than explore space. Man's life is based on the earth.

Man's primary aim should be to recognise the unity that underlies the diversity in the phenomenal world. To break up what is one into many pieces is easy. But it is difficult to bring them together into a meaningful unit. It is in the unifying process that the utility of things can be understood. The role of both diversity and unity in life has to be properly understood.

When a tailor has to stitch a bush coat out of a piece of cloth, he has first to cut it into various pieces and then stitch them together to make a bush coat. The scissors are used to cut the cloth. The needle is used to stitch the different pieces. Today human beings tend to behave like the scissors rather than as the needle. With the result that all man's intelligence is being used to divide society rather than unify it.

### **Beyond birth and death**

There is a family of three, father, mother and the son. When the father brought home his earnings the mother felt happy. Whenever he came home empty-handed the mother used to get angry. The son watched the alternation of happiness and sorrow in the home. Unable to bear the troubles at home, the father went to a temple of Kali. He prayed: "Oh Devi! I cannot bear these troubles. I cannot live with my wife. Please see that her life is ended soon". "Be it so!" declared the Goddess. The wife died.

Watching this, the son went to the Kali temple. He prayed intensely to the Goddess. She appeared before him and asked what he wanted. "Please restore the life of my mother", he pleaded. "So be it!" declared the Goddess.

around death and life. Have such prayers any meaning? How much more sensible would it have been if they had prayed for the gift of goodness. The father surely could have asked the Goddess. "Oh Devi! Confer good sense on my wife". The prayers of the father and son only brought about death and birth.

Swami sang the "Bhaja Govindam" song in which Adi Sankara deplores the human condition which is caught up in the cycle of birth and death and Govinda is the only redeemer)

What folly is it to be caught up in the endless cycle of birth and death? What is the purpose of life? It is to live for some ideals. The Vice-Chancellor (who had spoken earlier) said that there is the practice of performing annual ceremonies for one's departed ancestors. The Vice-Chancellor said that while performing these ceremonies the young people should remember the departed ones with gratitude and love. The children should show their gratitude first and foremost to their parents because they owe their life and all that they enjoy to their parents. The anniversary of their passing should be remembered with grateful tears.

Students should recognise the supreme importance of time. Most of them are wasting three-fourths of the time they have at their disposal. They indulge in useless gossip and scandal. Abusing others amounts to abusing God.

### **Why borrow from others?**

Bharat would be a land of plenty if people worked hard instead of being lazy and idle. Bharat is well endowed with land, rivers and other natural resources. Bharat has become dependent on other nations because the people do not work hard enough. We are borrowing from so many countries. Why? Let us use our resources well. We can then easily feed our people. The people should work hard. It is good for their health and happiness.

People today waste a lot of time and energy on meaningless arguments and controversies.

Students! Realise that what I think, say and do are in perfect harmony. Hence there is no loss of memory or weakness of any kind. Look at the young people in their teens. They have castor oil faces and look worn out. I hey should look happy and cheerful.

### **A lesson from history**

Recall how a small nation like the British ruled over a vast country like India before we got out freedom. The British could do it because Indians betrayed the nation for selfish interests.

Every student should realise his potential strength. All of it is derived from the Divine. (Swami sang songs from Thyagaraja to point out the power of devotion to achieve the impossible.)

Students should cultivate moral values. It is the decline in moral values that is responsible for the deplorable state of the country. Three things are most essential today. Fear of sin, love of God and morality in society.

AMRITA DHARA

## The Lord and the Devotee

*Why do you search for God hither and thither?  
Is He not present in your heart?  
Offer service and receive the love of God.  
This is the way to realise the Divine.*

*Students!*

Humility is the hallmark of education. Humility calls for actions free from egoism and self-importance.

The inherent goodness in man is covered by the ashes of attachment and hatred. Remove the ashes and the goodness will manifest itself.

There are three ways of recognising the Self. One is to consider yourself as the "Dehatma". This is dualism. The second is: "I am Jivatma". This is Visishta-advaita (Qualified non-dualism). "Aham Paramatma" ("I am the Supreme Self"). This is Advaita (non-dualism). It will be seen that in all the three concepts, the common entity is "Atma". The Deham (body), Jiva (Individual) and Param (the Absolute) are separate. ALL the three are present in the same person as is clear from the Gayatri Mantra. "Bhur-Bhuvas-Suvah" represent the body (Bhu), the Bhuvah (the Life-Force) and Suvah (the Atma). The body is inert matter. The Life Force animates the body and is vibrant in every cell.

### Kabir's example

The power of the spirit is exemplified by the life of Kabir. He was a poor weaver, who used to help the poor out of his earnings. While plying his loom, he constantly chanted the name of Rama. The clothes woven in such a devotional spirit were prized high. But he used to sell his cloth at fair prices and often gave it free to those who could not afford the cost.

### Greek devotees' bhakti

In this context, I wish to refer to a current incident. Here are some 25 Greek devotees. They landed at Bangalore by plane. They strapped their baggage to their backs, carried water bottles in their hand and started walking all the way to Prasanthi Nilayam. Such is their devotion! At every step they recited the mantra: "Om Sri Sathya Sai Babaaya Namah!" and reached Prasanthi Nilayam (cheers). I went towards them and received them on arrival at the Mandir. I asked them: "Do you feel pain in the legs?" They said: "Oh Lord! Not at all. We are ready to walk another ten

the Lord's name."

Kabir was in the habit of uttering "Ram! Ram!" at each step as he walked. The greatness of his devotion spread to all parts of the country. A ruler of that time also came to know about it. Realising Kabir's poverty and helplessness, the king sent various presents to Kabir in a palanquin. Kabir saw the palanquin nearing his house while returning from a bath in the river. Astonished at the sight, Kabir asked the four bearers of the palanquin: "What is all this? In our house, there are only two of us. For whose sake did four of you bring the palanquin? Both of us are quite hale". Kabir hinted that only a dead body is carried on the bier by four persons. "Please inform the king that we are quite well", said Kabir.

The palanquin-bearers said: "We have brought in the palanquin clothes, provisions and other gifts from the king who sympathises with your plight. The king has ordered us to offer them to you because he considers you 'Anaatha' (a helpless person)".

Kabir said: "Oh! Did the king say so? But, I am not 'Anathaa'. Bhagavan is my overlord. I am not without a protecting master. Rama is the only one who is 'anaatha'. There is no lord above Him. You better offer all these things to Rama".

See how Kabir has delved into the meaning of the word "Anaatha". No one in the world is an "anaatha" (without a master). God alone is "anaatha", as there is no "naatha" (master) above him. Everyone has a master. God alone has no one above Him.

Some people come to Swami and say: "Swami! Don't make us 'Anaathas.'" I used to tell them: "It is not you who are 'anaathas'. I am the 'anaatha'. Never consider yourself 'anaatha'."

Many people feel miserable and forlorn because they do not understand the ways of God. To those who firmly believe in God, there can be nothing lacking.

First of all, you have to get rid of attachment and hatred. Develop love.

### **Bhagavan's example**

Get rid of ego and possessiveness. Here is a small example. Bhagavan sets the best ideal for you. How? You are all seated where you are. I Myself walk towards you, bending my back, stretching my hand, to receive your letters (cheers). If I had chosen to sit and ask you to come and hand over the letters, what would be wrong? Still, with no sense of ego, I am going to each of you, to set an example. This is Sai's ideal (cheers).

So many who have come so far at such expanse, will they shrink from walking a few feet towards Swami? But, to demonstrate that I am free from ego, I am acting in this manner to teach a lesson to you. I have no feeling of attachment to any one to treat some as 'mine' and others as not mine. All are mine and I am yours. Every student and devotee should recognise this truth. This is what the Gita declares: "I am the indwelling spirit in all beings."



You may ask: Why, then, is God not visible? Why are some near to God and others remote? God is not to blame. People are immersed in worldly concerns.

Modern youth are all crazy over their games and pastimes. With the result that they sing ridiculous songs, indulge in silly games and revel in meaningless talk. They are not eager to take part in bhajans or interest themselves in devotional activities. Some listen to discourses with one ear and expel them out of the other. Very few listen and take to heart what they have learnt. Some merely repeat parrot-like what they have heard.

Unfortunately today there are no good teachers and very few earnestly interested speakers. Students must develop real interest in the teachings. They must convert all work into worship. (Swami sang Thyagaraja's song to illustrate how the Lord should be worshipped as omnipresent.) God does not judge anyone by his external appearance. This was the lesson which Ashtavakra taught to the pandits at the court of king Janaka when they laughed on seeing the crooked body of Ashtavakra. The latter laughed at them and told them: "I thought you were great scholars. I find you are only a set of cobblers. You judge a person by the skin on his body."

Students should have firm faith in God and minimise their desires. You must treat with contempt sensuous pleasures. Whenever any worldly desires arise in the mind, treat them as garbage that should be thrown only. By this means, students will enter on the path of purity. Then the Divine will welcome you and fill you with bliss. There is no greater goal, no higher destiny.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the Bhajan: "*Govinda Krishna Jai!*"

**From Bhagavan's discourse on August 22, 1996**

*Sadhana must be done in a disciplined systematic manner in an atmosphere of virtue. Just as we have fans here in this Hall to cool the atmosphere and make it possible for such a large gathering to sit packed in this Hall, so too the fans of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema are necessary to reduce the sweltering heat of Ajnana, Asathya, Anyaaya and Akrama: Ignorance, Falsehood, Injustice and Indiscipline. In a world where Dharma is being insulted and denied at every turn, Santhi and Tolerance are the roads through which man can save himself.*

**—Baba**

## **“No Luggage”**

Life, they say, is only a journey  
Along a road—Stretching between two  
Doors—The Entrance and the Exit.  
It has its bumps

The only rule seems to be:  
No Luggage is allowed through the  
doors, Except,  
The spirit with its deeds and thoughts.  
And yet, we spend the journey  
Making attachments, Collecting, building,  
and cherishing things material  
Mounds of concrete by the roadside  
Forgetting That no amount of payment  
Will get this "Excess Luggage"  
Through the Exit.

—Poonam Arora New York

## **U.K. Bal Vikas Children's Homage to Bhagavan**

An innovative method of presenting some of the sacred names of Bhagavan Baba, figuring in the Ashtothara namavali (Garland of 108 Names) in the form of dance sequences depicting scenes from the life of Bhagavan Baba, was used by Bal Vikas Children from U.K. on August 2, in the Poornachandra Auditorium.

The curtain opened to a simple stage, only the dark blue velvet back-drop and ivory coloured pillars. The style of the dance drama was the same as two years ago in Whitefield, when the actors and dancers enacted seven of Swami's sacred 108 names. The music, again, was the wonderful Bhajans which all devotees know and love.

It was such a simple production really but done so well. The music sung correctly by various groups of singers brought about instant audience participation and evoked devotional feelings.

After the traditional slokas in praise of Lord Ganapati, 'the girls dressed in traditional costumes danced in the Bharat Natyam Style.

The first name portrayed was "Ratnaakara Vamsodbhavaaya Namah "The opening scene related to the resentment felt by Sathyabhama owing to Krishna offering flowers to His other wife, Rukmini. In the next scene, Sathyabhama appeared to grandfather Kondamaraju, asking for shelter from the rain storm (brought on by her outpouring). This led Sathya Narayana's grandfather to build her a temple in Puttaparthi. The dancing and costumes for the scene were wonderful and the bhajan singing excellent.

Another name that was portrayed was, "Bhakta-Vatsala", the one having a mother's love for the devotees. Krishna's foster mother Yashoda, on the left side of the stage, was trying to persuade

Him into it. On the other side of the stage, Subbamma, Sathya's foster mother, was encouraging the young Baba to take His bath. He needed no encouragement. After that we had the Rasa Lila dance, on the Krishna side, and on Swami's side we had the precious lithe Panduranga Bhajan troupe of boys in lithe yellow knickers waving their yellow flags. We know in the story that the troupe travelled to many villages during a cholera epidemic in those early days and that cholera didn't touch those villages where the boys sang.

In the next scene Sathyanarayana appears a lithe older, wearing His long white dress. They had managed to find a very thin kid to play the part which was just right. The audience was beside itself with joy.

Next, they portrayed Subbamma's death scene when Swami came back to her just before she departed for the next world, calling "Subbamma, Subbamma, your Swami has come!"

"Om Sri Sai Maheshwaraswaroopaya Namah" was also very good. There was a huge Siva Lingam center stage and we all sang, "Kaalithi-thaaya Siddhiroopaaya". Lord Siva danced out of the lingam with perfect grace and balance as the tandava dance was performed. Then after Siva again merged in the lingam, a large size picture of Swami was walked out and stood at the back of the lingam.

There was one scene which portrayed a lithe boy undergoing an operation in the Super-Speciality Hospital. There were three doctors in green surgical gowns and after surgery, the small boy turned cart wheels across the stage to show everyone just how strong and well he was.

It was clear throughout the drama that where there were boys and girls both in the cast, they were kept separate and made their entrances and exits from opposite sides of the stage, keeping in mind Swami's regulation in this respect.

The name which announced Swami as "Siva-Shakti" was particularly well done. First Adi Shakti, the great Goddess, danced in a glorious costume of gold lace and light green. She preceded Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. The costumes were rich in gold, red velvet and white satin, and the dance choreographed very well. They all danced in a line at one point with only their arms showing, looking like the mother Goddess.

In the last section, "Lokabaandhavaaya Namah", (Friend of the world), we had the broad world-view. The first group of dancers portrayed a group of Japanese girls with their fans and the second group has supposed to be Russian boys. They actually used bhajans for this music by changing the rhythm and mood to match the style of the country.

The last scene was, "Allah Ho Akbar" and the little boys looked like Arabs in their white gowns and head dresses. They carried silver poles and the dancing was simple.

Swami then came on the stage with much love and manifested a gold medallion for the little Krishna. The delightful programme concluded with Arati to Bhagavan.

—F.A.C.

*AMRITA DHARA:*

## **Shirdi Baba's First Miracle**

The circumstances in which Shirdi Baba, as a young lad of ten years, performed his first miracle by restoring to life a dead boy, who had intended to kill Baba, were narrated by Bhagavan, in a discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on August 20.

Bhagavan Said: Seen physically Nature alone is perceived. But seen with the spiritual vision the entire universe is Bhagavan alone. From the perspective of love (Prema) everything will appear Divine.

A young man who had studied Adi Sankara's Philosophy, came to me and said: “Swami! Sankara says: Brahma Sathyam, Jagat Mithya. Please let me know what is the truth and what is unreal”.

Swami told him: "You simpleton! Leave it to Nature to demonstrate what is real and what is unreal. Concern yourself with knowing your own reality. There is no need for you to enquire into the nature of the phenomenal universe (Prakriti). Do not argue" A man who is not aware of his own true nature, how is he competent to know about the reality or otherwise of the cosmos?

A man regards his visible body as real and the invisible Spirit as unreal. He does not realise that the invisible is the cause of his pleasure and pain. "Let no one imagine that beauty, youth and vitality will last for ever. Old age is looming ahead and will bring in its train all miseries."  
(Telugu Poem)

### **"Deha and dehi"**

There are two entities in man: the body (deha) and the Indwelling spirit (the dehi). The body is governed by three factors: Vata (wind), Pita (bile) and Kapha (phlegm). The wind factor is responsible for 80 types of diseases. The bile accounts for 82 kinds of ailments. Phlegm is the cause of 224 types of maladies. In all, the three account for 386 types of diseases. Recognising the multitude of diseases to which the body is prone, the sages of yore sought to give up attachment to the body, while taking care of it for essential purposes.

Many of these diseases are insidious and hence may not be noticed in an apparently strong person. Disease lies hidden in almost every action of man from breathing to eating. The body by its nature is perishable. But the Dehi (the Indwelling spirit) is undying. Through the impermanent body, the eternal spirit has to be experienced. Men are immersed in seeking the passing pleasures

true happiness can be got only by union with God.

### **God and the devotee**

Some people imagine that God bestows excessive grace on a few, appears to be indifferent towards some others, and totally to ignore some others. All these are only the aberrations of the people having such thoughts. For God all are the same. You can see your true image only in a glass covered on the rear with the mercury of love. Everyone says he has not experienced God, it is not God's fault. The feeling that God favours some and not others is born of jealousy.

(Swami here related an episode from the boyhood years of Shirdi Baba).

### **Shirdi Baba and Venkusa**

When Shirdi Baba was about ten years of age, Patel took him to Venkusa. Patel had a dream in which he was told. "Patel! You are not likely to live long. The boy whom you have brought up so far cannot be looked after by anyone. There is a person called Venkusa in a certain place. You take the boy to him and leave him in his care".

Venkusa was giving spiritual lessons to a number of boys. When the young lad was being brought to him, Venkusa had a premonition of his coming. He called the lad: "Aaoji! Aaoji" ("Come, Come!") I have been waiting for you all these years." He spoke lovingly to the boy and asked him to go in and have his food. From then onwards, Venkusa developed great affection for the boy. Seeing this, the other students felt envious and started talking about him among themselves." How is it that the teacher is showing so much love for the new boy? We have been here for years. He has not shown us such love". This was the way some of them spoke. Some others said: "He is lucky to have such love". Some others remarked, "Perhaps our teacher expects some money from Patel, Who is a wealthy man".

### **Plan to kill Baba**

The attachment between Venkusa and the young Baba grew steadily from day to day. One day both of them were going to a forest called Sikhaara. After they had gone, the other boys drew up a plan to do away with the young Baba. "Then Venkusa will have greater liking for us," they thought. They went to the forest and took rest behind a hut. One of the bigger boys, according to the plan they had already made, took a big brick and hurled it towards Baba. Venkusa had great love for Baba. Immediately on noticing the brick, Venkusa stood in front of Baba and let the brick hit him. What was aimed at Baba struck Venkusa. Blood was streaming from Venkusa's head.

Baba immediately took a piece of cloth from his robe and bandaged Venkusa's bleeding head. When Baba and Venkusa were speaking about the wound caused to Venkusa, some of the boys came rushing towards them bringing a dead body. That was the body of the boy who wanted to kill Baba. "Biter bit", says the proverb. (If you intend to harm others, you will be harming yourself). The boys cried: "Guru ji! I forgive us" and fell at his feet Venkusa told them: "Children! I have grown old. This young lad is carrying on all the work I was doing. Love alone

tell at the feet of Baba and placed the dead body before him. Baba burst into laughter. Why did he laugh? Not because he felt that the boy who intended to kill him was dead. He knew that death could come at any time, in any place and in any situation. Even at the young age Baba had realised this truth relating to the body. Baba transcended time. Age did not matter to him. He was the Cosmic Person. He told the boys: "Today this boy has died. Your turn may come tomorrow. No one is immortal." The boys cried: "How can we explain this calamity to the parents?"

Baba told them: "Tell the parents what actually happened."

The boys realised that if they told the truth they would be put to shame. If they told what did not happen, they would be uttering falsehood. Recognising their dilemma, Baba asked them: "What is it you want now?" "Please restore the life of this boy". Immediately Baba placed the head of the dead boy on his lap and passed his hand over it. The boy revived. This was Shirdi Baba's first miracle.

### **Dust unto dust**

Students should realise that the body is made up of materials coming from the earth and will go back to the earth when life is extinct. The body is like a mud pot which serves its purpose for a time and when it is broken it becomes in course of time one with the mud from which it was made. A seed sown in the ground grows into a tree with branches, flowers and fruits. All the things in the tree have come out of the earth. Likewise the body is made up of the five elements. It must be used properly.

The essence of Vedanta can be summed up in one sentence: "The Atma in you is the same as the Divine". Only those who have this feeling can experience God.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the Bhajan, "*Prema Muditha*".

**From Bhagavan's discourse on August 20, 1996**

**AMRITA DHARA:**

### **God is the Sole Refuge**

*The form of love is Brahman;  
Brahman is permeated with love;  
Love is bound to love alone;  
If one is filled with love  
He is eligible for union with God.*

*Not from the heavens above,  
Nor from the netherworld, nor from the earth,*

*The knot of ignorance in the heart  
One gets liberation, declares the Shruti.*

*Embodiments of love!*

Liberation will not drop from the sky. Nor can it come from the nether world (Patala). Nor can it be found on the earth. Liberation can be attained only when ignorance is dispelled.

In this vast universe every creature lives according to the law of its being. Man alone, who has the gift of this extremely precious human birth, is failing to realise the purpose of his existence & ignores his duties.

Immersed in sensual mundane pleasures, man forgets his spiritual destiny. All scholarship is valueless without Self-realisation. Pavana, Bhasmasura and Kamsa were not lacking in scholarship or even religious practices. But all these were related to the externals (Pravritti) and not to the cultivation of the Spirit inside (Nivritti-marga). Hence their basic demonic dualities did not change.

It is only when impure and unholy thoughts are expelled from the mind that sacred feelings will enter it. To experience lasting bliss the heart has to be sanctified by filling it with love. Through that love has to be secured the highest wisdom (jnana).

**The goal for youth**

The foremost goal modern youth should set before themselves is to sow the seeds of love, rear the plant of forbearance and distribute the fruits of peace to society through dedicated service.

The secret of peace is not in the external world but is within each individual. He should realise that the whole universe is permeated by the Divine. Today the world is filled with strife. It is not possible to make a distinction between a human being and a demon. Man, who evolved from the animal, instead of proceeding towards Divinity, is regressing to animality. Man's primary duty is to uphold the human values of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love.

Man today is enveloped in attachment and hatred. The moment he casts them off, he will realise his divinity.

Students! You must realise that the spiritual path is easier than the academic studies you pursue. Education should serve to refine the heart, not fill the mind with useless lumber.

(Bhagavan sang two poems deprecating the preoccupation with jobs for filling the belly, forgetting the Supreme Lord.)

The country today has lost all sense of ethical and spiritual values. The countryside is rampant with evil practices. Uncontrolled selfishness and insatiable desires are the root cause of the present evils. In the pursuit of worldly objects is there enduring happiness? Not at all. (Swami

all ephemeral). Late in life, after going through all the experiences of family life, man even in his last years seeks a happiness that eludes him. Where is happiness to be found? The answer was given by Thyagaraja when he sang that happiness is not to be got through wealth but only through the worship of Sri Rama.

### **The glory of sacrifice**

Worldly comforts cannot be adjoined. But the spiritual goal should always be kept in mind. There should be a limit to the enjoyment of sensual pleasures. The money that is earned should be used for public good. Bharatiya culture has always glorified the quality of renunciation. Immortality can be got only through sacrifice, declare the scriptures.

Students should realise that God's love alone is totally selfless and boundless. Even the love of parents, wife or children is tainted by a tinge of selfishness. But God's love has no trace of selfishness. Dedicate all your actions to God. Surrender to God all your bad qualities. God will offer you what is good for you. (In this context Swami related the story of a student who used to go to a preceptor's hermitage in a forest for his studies.)

### **How good are relations?**

The guru used to teach the student that there is no use in depending on one's mother, father, brothers or relations or on wealth and property. All these are transient. Therefore he should be on his guard. Thasmaath Jagratha! Jagratha!" He also used to teach him that life is full of sorrow up to the very end and hence he should be always on the alert. The boy told the guru that this teaching might be all right for recluses like he guru, but was irrelevant for ordinary persons like himself. He told the guru: "My parents are exceptional, my wife is good, without me she will not take her food. All of them love me. How can I disown them?"

The guru said, "I shall prove to you the Truth of my teaching". He gave a pill to the student and said that after taking it he will become almost lifeless, but he will be conscious of what is happening around him, though others will consider him dead. "Then you will know the truth".

The lad returned home, took the pill and dropped dead (as it were). The mother came, called the father and started wailing over the death of the son. The wife came out on hearing her crises and seeing the husband's body started crying. "I am my father's only daughter. If my husband goes, what will happen to me?" Everyone wailing over the body cried: "What is to happen to me?" Other relatives also gathered and lamented on the death of a young man who was virtuous and spiritually oriented. At this stage, the preceptor came there. Everybody made way for him the guru asked the mother, the father and the wife why they were wailing I hey all mentioned the grievous loss they and suffered in the death of the young man. "What will happen to me?" was the refrain of each of them. He asked the mother to fetch a glass of water. He closed his eyes as if in prayer and then told them: "If anyone drinks this water, that person will die but the young man will be restored to life." He first offered the water to the wife as the one dearest to the young man. She said: "I am the only child of my parents. If I die they will collapse. Hence I cannot



replied: "The dead man is no more in any case. Why should I die?"

The guru next asked the mother. She said: "My daughter has come for confinement. She is helpless. And I have two more young daughters to be married. How can I leave them?" When the father was asked, he replied: "I am the head of the family. If I go only two ladies will be left in the house, my wife and my daughter-in-law. My wife will become a widow. With no male member in the house, they will be helpless. How can I give up my life?" All the three declined to drink the water. They went inside the house and drew up a master plan. They came out and said: "Swami! You are immensely compassionate. You have no other attachments. Please drink the water yourself and restore our son's life. (Laughter) We will build a Samadhi in marble for you."

At that moment, the guru sprinkled the water on the young man's body. He got up. The guru asked him: "What did your wife say? And your mother and father." He replied: "They all said, let me die."

### **God's love alone is unselfish**

The guru observed: "The world is impermanent. Birth is a misery, old age is a misery. There is trouble with the wife. Entire life is miserable. Therefore, be careful!" (Sanskrit sloka)

As long as one is alive, all seem to love the body. This is also for purely selfish reasons. God alone is utterly selfless. Loving that God, you can lead your lives in the normal way. There is nothing wrong. Whatever you do, treat it as an offering to God. See God in everyone. Don't have ill will towards anyone. Do not have excessive attachment for anyone. Direct all attachments towards God. Love all. But do not rely on anyone except God. Realise the impermanence of the body and place your trust solely in God. Seek refuge in Him.

This faith is what is most needed today in this Kali Age. It is the loss of faith that is responsible for all the strife and chaos in the country.

Dear students! You are the victims of a purely secular education devoid of roots in spirituality. As often as possible, when you get the chance, meditate on God. That will ensure a good future for you. Earn the esteem of society by your service.

Bhagavan concluded his discourse with the bhajan, "*Bhajan bina*"!

**From Bhagavan's discourse on August 16, 1996**

### **Break with the past**

A new life, a new beginning,

Growing up is letting go of the past,  
Not so easily done, alas.  
A time for change seems so near,  
For a young boy filled with fear.  
Fear of the future as well as the past,  
With hopes those fears will soon be passed.  
His cry can be heard, From distance near.  
A cry for help, To Lord Sai so dear.  
"Give to Me, Your concerns, those tears.  
Give to Me, Your hopes, your fears."  
"I can't" the boy replies,  
"I'm trapped by all I hold so dear. "  
"Just try," He lovingly says,  
"And everything will come clear."  
The boy tried... And he forgot the past.  
It was only then, That His Life began.

—Amrit Kripalani, Miami

### **German Children do it Again**

The German Bal Vikas children had another unique opportunity to stage a drama in Baba's Divine presence on August 15. When the new drama, "We shall overcome", was written, it seemed as if Swami had given it to us and with it a strong message to all of us. Swami confirmed this when He asked after the performance: "Who has written the play?" The answer was: "Swami! You have given it". Swami said, with a beautiful smile, "Yes, that's right!"

The drama is based on the world's children's deep concern about the earth. They want to rescue Mother Earth from all her suffering. They feel they have to do something or else they will have no future. So they have the First International Children's Conference where they discuss the world crisis and share all their problems and sufferings. The animals, trees, water, air and fire all come to share their suffering with them. Then Mother Earth appears and tells the children that God is walking on earth and that He has come to rescue the earth. The children want to see Him. With the help of three extra-terrestrial beings and their spaceship, a few of them are taken to Prasanthi Nilayam. Baba comforts the children and gives them a very important teaching: "Love all-serve all".

After the children return, they fall asleep and all have the same terrible nightmare. In this scene God is telling mankind to change, but man will not change and so God takes away step by step whatever He has given man. The children wake up in a panic and cry out for Baba. Swami comes

situation on earth is man's selfish desires. Baba explains that this problem can only be solved with a ceiling on desires. And the children begin to practise the ceiling on desires programme.

In the end Baba gives Victory (the main actor) a special task. He goes to the President of his country and talks to him about what the children had discussed. The President is so much impressed with Victory that he gives him the opportunity to speak on TV to millions of people. So the message spreads. All ends with the famous song and message: "We shall overcome".

When we started the preparation for this drama, to our utmost surprise the information reached us that in Germany three children's conferences had taken place in the last three years. For each conference 600 children had been invited. The theme was the same as the theme of our drama. "We are one world".

We started the practice in May, and in a very short time 46 children from all over southern Germany came together. Altogether there were 14 Sai-groups and centres working in co-operation with each other. Early in August our exciting journey started. We were 140 people, including 55 children, parents, teachers, speakers, helpers, musicians, singers, artists. The moment we arrived we heard Swami had agreed to the performance. He told us to do it on August 15. During the practice sessions, Swami was often present and was a constant source of inspiration and encouragement. Some of the children fell sick, but they got well before the performance day by Bhagavan's Grace.

After the performance, Swami distributed saris and shawls to all the children and the whole group. The next morning we all got Padanamaskar. After so many blessings we didn't expect an interview, but Swami in His infinite love called all the children and teachers a few days later for an interview.

We feel deeply grateful to our Beloved Baba and we will never forget this unique Divine experience with our Lord! It was a most precious gift.

—Gisela Sebastian

*What is needed is not propaganda, but observance in our daily lives of what we are doing and what we are saying; then alone will it have the desired effect on society. Many of the members of the Sathya Sai Organisations think that they are only to promote Sathya Sai ideals and the name of Sathya Sai. This is not correct. Through the name of Sathya Sai, what has to be promoted is goodness, faith in God and Godliness. What you have to do is to put all on the God-ward path. The name and form of God is not that important because all belong to the One God only. What is required is faith in God.*

—Baba

Just before the “Iron Curtain” separating the former East Bloc Countries from Western Europe fell down, Swami was asked about communism. His reply was: “Communist? Come you next”, and within two weeks the Berlin wall fell and communism came to an end. The Russian people had been suppressed for 74 years—but behind the borders Swami had been known by a few people. Some books on Swami had been smuggled into Russia and were translated into Russian page by page in handwriting. These few translations were passed among devotees and copied many times. Today 30 books from and about Swami have been translated into Russian and more than 150,000 copies have been printed. At present there are 12 centres and 45 groups covering the huge area from St. Petersburg - Moscow - Siberia - Vladivostok.

Centres and groups have also been formed in several cities in Byelo-Russia and Ukraine. The first Russian centre was inaugurated in St. Petersburg in 1992 and since then three Sai-conferences of all Russian speaking countries have been conducted in St. Petersburg. A coordinating Committee was founded in 1995. Three seminars on Sathya Sai Education the last one in May 1996—were conducted by a European teacher—trainer team under the guidance of ESSE Institute, Denmark.

In Poland the Sai Organisation has been developing very fast during the past few years. From initially two groups it grew up to more than 30 groups all over the country. As in Russia a seminar on Sathya Sai Education gave excellent support to the process of forming a solid basis for the groups. Regional and national meetings, the last one in June this year in Gdansk with the main theme “Truth” followed; it was attended by 220 devotees who experienced devotion and unity.

In the Baltic States Lithuania was the first one to start a Sai Organisation, and out of several groups in the two largest cities Vilnius and Kaunas, have now grown two large centres, inaugurated in Prasanthi Nilayam in August this year. Other groups have spread over the country. In Riga, capital of Latvia, one group has been affiliated as nucleus for the country. In Estonia five groups are affiliated and a Coordinating Committee has been formed at the occasion of another seminar on Sathya Sai Education in June this year. Common to all these eastern states who have been under communist regimes, is their deep understanding and natural longing for spirituality, which could not be suppressed. In Russia for example churches were closed during the years of communism. Now they are open again and are attended in large numbers. One can feel in these countries the hunger for spirituality. It is overwhelming to experience this deep devotion in so many of these people despite their generally most severe economic and sometimes also difficult political situation.

The message of Sai is spreading and the Sai Organisations are working with determination and enthusiasm. The power of Sai mission and love will blow away the dark clouds of ignorance, hate and violence which have accumulated during long years. Bernhard Gruber (Central Coordinator, Region 3) and Steen Piculell (Deputy Central Coordinator for the Russian speaking countries).

## **Girl is born**

When you conduct a medical camp in a backward village, you have to be prepared for any emergency, including the sudden advent of a new—born babe.

This was the experience of a group of old students of the Sathya Sai Colleges at Brindavan and Prasanthi Nilayam who conducted a one-day medical camp on September 6, for ten villages at Appala Vandlapalli, 25 km from Prasanthi Nilayam on the Penukonda Road. The old students had come from different parts of India and even different countries like Canada.

As the village had no infra-structure facilities of any kind apart from an apology for a primary school and an old village temple for the Goddess Mariamman all the requirements of the camp, including shamianas had to be put up by the old students. There was a good team of general physicians and specialists drawn mainly from the old students. The specialties covered orthopaedics, pediatrics, ophthalmology, dentistry and gynaecology. About 800 patients registered for treatment of whom 650 were treated by specialists for different ailments. One lady, who was in an advanced state of pregnancy, developed labour pains and quick arrangements had to be improvised for the delivery. Luckily, by the grace of Bhagavan, everything went off well and a girl was born in the camp.

After the check-up medicines were given free to all the patients, together with nutritious Sai protein food sachets and pictures of Bhagavan. The village children received some lessons in human values.

Narayana Seva was conducted for all the villagers who came to the camp. 1500 enjoyed a hearty meal. Woollen blankets and steel utensils were presented to the residents of Appalavandla palli. Earlier, the old students carried out repairs to the village school and temple.

The service programme, which started with bhajans at 4.30 A.M. in the village temple, ended at 4 P.M. The old students could return to Prasanthi Nilayam for Bhagavan's evening discourse and His blessings.

On the 7th, the villagers of Appalavandla palli came to Prasanthi Nilayam to express their gratitude to Bhagavan for the medical camp organised His students. Bhagavan blessed them, allowed them to take Padanamaskar and gave prasadam to them. He said: "Where is the need for gratitude? They did their duty."

When the village headman informed Swami that there was great difficulty in the village for drinking water, Bhagavan immediately called the officials concerned and directed them to put up bore well in the village.

*AMRITA DHARA:*

## **Ways of the Divine: Advent of Sankara**

Clay is one substance. But out of it a variety of products with different names and shapes can be made. Likewise, out of gold a variety of ornaments can be made. The same white milk is got out of cows of different colours. The Supreme Self is one, but dwells in innumerable bodies, with different names and forms.

If you examine the cosmic scene, you will find that out of the same basic substance a variety of objects with different forms are produced. For instance, out of a single seed, comes a tree with various branches, leaves, flowers and fruits. These different things vary in form, name and use. But they have all come from one seed.

"Ekoham bahusyaam". The One chose to become the many. There are three factors involved in this. For making a pot, a potter is the cause (the instrument for its making). The potter is the cause and the pot is the effect. The base for the production of the pot is clay. The pot may break but the clay remains as such. Out of the permanent substance, clay, the potter makes a pot. The fate of the pot does not affect the potter. The clay in the pot also remains as such.

The analogy applies equally to gold, the goldsmith, and the jewels made from gold.

On the same analogy, God is the changeless creator who creates the innumerable objects in creation which are subject to changes in names and forms. The relations between the three entities involved should be properly understood. The potter cannot make a pot without clay. No pot can be made if there is clay alone but no potter. Both potter and clay are necessary for making a pot.

The Creator is the instrumental cause of creation ("nimitha-kaarana"). The bodies are like the pots. They are used for various purposes and are a source of enjoyment. But, like the pots, the bodies are perishable. When their time is up, they fall away. But the Creator is permanent. The elements out of which the bodies were made remain. Only the bodies have gone. The bodies are capable of being put to good or bad uses.

### **Five forms of the Lord**

Divinity has five names. The first is Paranamam. Second, Vyuhnamam. Third is, Vibhavanamam. Fourth, Antaratmanama. Fifth, Archananama. The Divine functions in the cosmos in these five names.

"Paranamam" refers to the abode of the Supreme, Vaikuntha. Vaikuntha means that which is unchanging. There the Supreme Lord dwells under the name "Paranamam". No one can enter that abode of the Lord. The Lord dwells there as an effulgence. He oversees everything. But He is not visible to anyone and no one can see His form.

The second is: Vyuhanamam. This name refers to the Lord who reclines on a serpent on the ocean of milk. The Lord in this form can be seen only by Devas (the various deities). Only those with special powers can see the Lord here. Ordinary beings cannot do so. But the Lord in His Vyuha form fulfils the desires of the Devas. You are aware of the story of Hiranyakasipu. He was harassing the Devas in various ways. So, they went to the Lord's couch on the ocean of milk and prayed to Him. In answer to their prayers the Lord agreed to incarnate on earth.

Third is: Vibhavanamam. This refers to the various human forms in which the Lord incarnates on earth as Avatars of Rama and Krishna to protect the good and punish the wicked and turn them to the righteous path. The incarnations that are adored as the ten Avatars belong to this category of "Vibhavanama". In this form, the Lord manifests the relationship between God and the devotees.

The fourth is: Antaratmanama. In this form, the Lord pervades every part of a human being as an indwelling spirit. This indwelling spirit is Divine.

The fifth is: Archananamam. This refers to the form in which the Divine can be worshipped, praised and adored for securing His grace.

### **Man through the aeons**

Avatars of the Lord in these different forms have been manifesting themselves for aeons and aeons. This may be quite astonishing to children of today. For instance, when they hear about the state of things in the Krita Yuga they will feel that they are amazing and incredible. Human beings in that age used to live for hundreds of years. Moreover, their bodies were not as small as in this age. They were gigantic figures, with arms as long as six feet, what kind of life did they lead? In the Krita Yuga, life remained in the body as long as the bones were intact. All other parts of the body may disintegrate, but life remained in the skeleton.

In Treta Yuga, the height of human beings was less. The longevity was also less. Life remained as long as muscles and flesh remained in the body.

In Dwapara Yuga, life remained as long as blood circulated in the body. As you may know, Bhishma lay on a bed of arrows after he had been wounded in the Kurukshetra war. As long as blood remained in his body, he lived. His life lasted for 56 days.

In the Kali Age, life lasts as long as there is food in the body. Without food man cannot survive.

In Krita and Treta Yugas, men had intimate relationship with God. Food was not so important. In Dwapara Yuga, the head became important.

In the Krita and Treta yugas, Dharma was all-important ("Dharma moolam idam jagat". The cosmos is based on Dharma). In Dwapara Yuga, the decline started and wealth became all important. "Dhana moolam idam jagat". "The world is founded on wealth" The war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas was over property rights.

In the Kali Age, neither Dharma nor Dhana (wealth) is as important as Daya, Compassion. It is because of the absence of compassion that the world today is afflicted with so many troubles.

### **The advent of Sankara**

In the early centuries of the Kali Age, Bhuddhism and Jainism were predominant religions. At that time, a young child was born in a village called Kaladi in Kerala to a couple, Sivaguru and Aryaamba. In those days, there used to be frequent wars between Kings of different territories. These wars generated hatred between peoples of different regions. The feeling of national unity was lost. With the loss of unity, all kinds of bad practices developed. Untruth, injustice, dishonesty and disreputable conduct became the order of the day. Nor was that all. Even the learned pandits, scholars and intellectuals of the time started interpreting the Vedas in perverse ways. The very face of the scriptures was blackened. With the result that the people's faith in the Vedas and scriptures was undermined.

At such times, God or a divinely inspired saint or messiah makes His advent on earth to reform the wicked and restore the reign of Dharma. Such incarnations are known as "Archananama" forms of the Divine. In this "Archana-nama" form, the manifestations are regarded as "Amsa-avatars" - manifestations of aspects of the Divine.

The "Vibhava" avatars (like Rama and Krishna) are "Poorna-avatars" (total manifestations of the Divine). The "Archa-avatars" are "Amsa-avatars" (or partial manifestations). Such avatars incarnate from time to time, not only in India but in all countries.

Jesus declared at first that He was "a messenger of God. Who are these messengers?" They are of two kinds. Avadhuta and Yamaduta. "Yamaduta" are messengers who inflict harm on people. "Avadhutas" are messengers who protect. Jesus belonged to the second category. In due course, he recognised his own inner divinity. Then he declared: "I am the Son of God." Thereby he proclaimed his right to a share in all the qualities of God. When he acquired all the qualities of the Divine, he announced: "I and my Father are one."

The same threefold progress can be seen in the pronouncements of Zoroaster. First, he declared: "I am in the light". Then he said: "The light is in me". Finally he declared: "I am the light." These declarations can be compared to the three systems of Indian philosophy: Dualism, Qualified Non-dualism and Non-dualism. In propagating the doctrine of Non-dualism, Sankara considered himself a servant of God.

### **Sankara and his guru**

Sankara's father, Sivaguru, passed away when Sankara was barely three years old. In this context, it is interesting to note how the Divine operates. Ten days before his passing, Sivaguru had a vision of effulgence. The effulgence conveyed a message to Sivaguru. "Perform the upanayanam of your son", was the message. Sivaguru hurriedly arranged to have the Upanayanam performed for the three-year old child. The little boy started reciting the Gayatri Mantra.



After the passing of Sivaguru, the grief-stricken mother devoted herself to bringing up the little boy. She took him to a guru, who taught the boy all kinds of scriptural knowledge. By the time he was 16, Sankara had completed study of the four Vedas and the six systems of philosophy. Normally even 50 years would not have sufficed for such study. Sankara was a prodigy. He could grasp anything at the first mention of the subject. Even the guru was astonished at the boy's genius.

Meanwhile, the mother was anxious to get the boy married and broached the subject with the guru. The boy was totally opposed to marriage. "I want to be a sanyasi (renunciant)" he said. "I want to dedicate my body, mind and all else to God. They are all gifts of God. I have surrendered myself to God."

### **Sankara's sanyasa**

The mother was in deep distress over the son's resolve. One day she was going to the river to fetch water. The young Sankara followed her earnestly pleading: "Mother! Permit me to take to sanyasa". She did not agree. When she got into the river for her bath, Sankara jumped into the river and going down the river for a while, he raised one hand and shouted: "Mother, a crocodile has caught hold of me. At least now permit me to become a sanyasi." The mother said: "If you can be saved from the crocodile by taking to sanyasa, you better do so, so that you may live". Sankara then came out of the river and told his mother: "In the ocean of samsara I was about to be drowned by a crocodile in the form of a wife. When you let me become a sanyasi I was free from the hold of the crocodile. No one could marry a sanyasi".

Sanyasa does not mean a mere change in the colour of the robe. It is really a change in one's qualities.

Sankara prostrated before his mother and took her leave to embark on his career as an ascetic. At that time, the mother made Sankara take a pledge that he should come and see her at her last moments.

### **TRiumphal tour**

Sankara set out on his wanderings, visiting all the sacred shrines in the land. All travel had to be done by foot. He went to every assemblage of scholars and vanquished them in debates. He propagated the Advaitic doctrine. He declared: "The bodies are different, the forms are different, but the inner Self is one alone. The Divine is present in all like sugarcane juice, which is the same, regardless of the cane from which it is got".

He had an encounter with Mandana Misra, who was an upholder of the Karma siddhantha (the doctrine of action). He defeated Mandana Misra in the debate.

In this manner, Sankara went all over the country from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, several times. He convinced the scholars of the truth of Non-dualism. "Ekam eva Advittheeyam" ("The Self is one only; there is no second").

Adi Sankara was able to convince all the scholars about the truth of Advaita. People are deluded by the multiplicity of names and forms. But the basis for all this diversity is the one Divine. Without the basis nothing can exist. This fact is recognised by all faiths. God is one and the goal is one.

The doctrine of Advaita is not easily understood. It has to be explained to the students in simple and intelligible terms.

Sankara passed away at the early age of 32. But he had completed the mission for which he had come. Before his passing, he collected five lingas and installed them in five different centres: Puri, Dwaraka, Sringeri, Benares and Kanchi. At Kanchi he installed the Yoga Linga. One of the pontiffs was Suresa, who was none other than Mandana Misra before he took to Sanyasa.

By establishing these mutts and promoting the sense of spiritual oneness among the people, Adi Sankara promoted harmony in the country.

Unfortunately some of his disciples started distorting Sankara's doctrines and attributing their own views to Sankara. Vidyaranya was also a disciple of Sankara. Ultimately the disciples fell apart and opposed each other's views.

Similarly, among Christ's eleven disciples differences developed and they fell apart. Only Mathew remained true to Jesus. He propagated the gospel. Peter was the first among Jesus' disciples. But he denied Christ when the authorities questioned him.

Ramanuja who came after Sankara enunciated a modified version of Sankara's Nondualism. Then came Madhvacharya, who propounded dualism. (Swami said that He would be explaining their doctrines in subsequent discourses).

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the song: "*Bhaja Govindam*".

**From Bhagavan's discourse on September 7, 1996**

**AMRITA DHARA:**

### **Veda and Vedanta**

*One may have mastered the Vedas  
Or be a versatile writer  
But, without purity of mind  
He will take to bad ways.  
Hearken, oh son of Bharat!  
To this good counsel.*

### *Embodiments of love!*

Sankara propagated the view that the Vedas uphold dualism (Dvaita) and Vedanta teaches non-dualism (Advaita) on the basis of citations from the scriptural texts. The difference between the Vedas and Vedanta is like the differences between various organs in the same body. The eyes, the ears, the nose, the arms and the feet are different parts of the body. The individual is a limb of society. Society is a limb of humanity. Humanity is a part of Nature (or the phenomenal world). Nature is a limb of the Supreme Self (Paramatma).

In Kashi (Varanasi), at the assembly of scholars debates raged over many philosophical issues. Amused at this spectacle, Sankara remarked: "Vaade Vaade Vardhathe Vairam" (Enmity grows with controversy). Continuous disputation only results in increasing bitterness among the disputants. Argumentation is not the proper method for settling spiritual issues.

### **Dualism of the Vedas**

Man is obliged to resolve problems in life. In daily existence man will never be free from worry. From birth to death man is confronted continuously with worries. The only way out of them is for people to develop love of God (Swami recited a Telugu poem in this context.) Love is the sovereign remedy for all ills.

The Vedas, however, have not given sufficient importance to this love. Their emphasis is more on aspiration (asayam) than on experience (anubhavam). There are innumerable Vedic scholars who ceaselessly chant the Vedas. All this is verbal and not concerned with active practice. This attitude was described by Sankara as dualism (Dvaita). All the Vedic mantras were in the form of prayers for favours. ("I want this, I want that"). Desire is at the root of dualism. Desire arises because of the feeling that there is the "other". The one who desires and the object that is desired are two things apart from each other. True non-dualism is the extinction of this separation by the unification of the subject and the object. Dualism exists when the object that is desired, for instance, a kerchief, is distinct from the person who desires it.

### **Non-dualism**

Non-dualism is a state of consciousness which can only be experienced and not described in words. In this regard, the Advaitin is like a dumb man who has enjoyed a delightful dinner but cannot describe the taste of the dishes he has consumed. There are two kinds of proof for the existence of anything. Pratyaksham (direct perception) and Paroksham (indirect proof). The bliss derived from the Advaitic consciousness is beyond words. It can only be experienced, but cannot be described or explained. In this matter, if indirect proof did not exist, direct perception would be out of the question. Unfortunately, today people attach value to direct perception alone and have scant regard for indirect evidence. This is not the right attitude. For instance, one sees a block of ice. It appears solid, but it is entirely made up of water, which is a liquid. Thus water, whose presence is inferred indirectly, is the basis for the solid block of ice that is seen by direct perception. Thus it can be realised that what is indirect is the basis for what is perceived directly.

Likewise, for this visible phenomenal universe, the invisible basis is the Divine. Not recognising this truth, men go by the Vedic conception of dualism instead of recognising the truth of the Vedantic doctrine of non-dualism.

Man spends his life immersed in worldly affairs. To point out to mankind the more vital inward path, Sankara dedicated his life. His preceptor, Gaudapada, gave Sankara all help and encouragement. Despite being young in years, Sankara showed great determination and strength of conviction. At the age of 16 he could convince the venerable pandits of Kashi about the validity of the Advaitic doctrine.

What is Advaita? The oneness of everything is Advaita. The scriptures have declared that the whole cosmos is permeated by the Divine. It is the desire of devotees to worship the Divine under different forms and names that is the reason for the various creeds and sects.

### **The form and the substance**

An affluent devotee, filled with dualistic feelings, adored the form of Krishna. He wished to offer worship regularly to an idol of Krishna. He got a gold idol of Krishna made by a goldsmith out of 20 coins. He got a golden cow made to match the idol. He got made a peacock and a golden cup to perform the abhishekam for the idol, both of the same weight as the idol. Everyday he used to perform the abhishekam and enjoy the worship of Krishna. But the tide of time brought in its wake a decline in his fortunes and he found himself nearly destitute. He collected all his golden articles of worship and took them to another rich man to sell them. Each of the four items was weighed and valued at Rs. 60,000 each. The old devotee could not bear to learn that his revered Krishna idol was valued at the same price as the cow, the peacock and the cup. He said that more should be paid for the Krishna idol. The intending purchaser said: "Sir, for you the Krishna form is more precious than the other. But for me only the weight matters, not the form."

What is happening in the world today is that men are attaching value to the external forms and not to the Divine substance which is common to all of them. The five elements constituting every being are Divine. Apart from the five elements there is no sixth element. People imagine that there is a sixth element and go after it. This crazy desire is the cause of much of man's misery. Desires are inescapable. But there should be a limit for them. (In this context Bhagavan related the story of Midas who prayed and got a boon that whatever he touched should turn into gold. He soon found that he could not even eat his food as it turned into gold at his touch. He prayed again to the good fairy to take back the boon she had given to him.)

It is evident from this story what will be the grave consequences of insatiable desires. Those who act up to Divine injunctions will be happy and prosperous.

Sankara, therefore, warned mankind against the mad pursuit of wealth and exhorted everyone to reduce one's desires. (Swami sang a Telugu song. "One gets wealth according to his Karma. Therefore be content with what you get".)

## **Control of desires**

Control your desires. Cultivate love of God. That love will confer on you everything according to your needs. There is no need for you to ask for anything from God. "Did He not give to Sabari what she needed without her asking? Did He not bless Jatayu with His grace?" (Telugu Poem) Dasaratha had prayed for so long that his son should perform the last rites for him. But he did not get it, while the bird Jatayu had the privilege of getting his last rites done at Rama's hands. Jatayu got liberation after receiving the saving drops of water from Rama. (Swami related the story of how Sabari was eagerly waiting for the arrival of Rama and how she made all the arrangements to welcome him and offer him the sweetest fruits.) Sabari's intense devotion to Rama got its reward.

God confers His grace according to each one's deserts. The Divine is marked by Grace (Anugraha) and not anger (Aagraha). But devotees tend to judge the ways of God according to their own predilections. A man standing before a mirror will see his moods reflected in the mirror.

No one can escape from the consequences of his actions whatever efforts he may make to run away from them. (Swami sang a song with the refrain, "Karmadaata vasamaa, narudaa""Is it possible to escape from Karma, oh man?") As are your actions, so are the reactions.

In the cosmic context, nature is the mirror. God is the viewer. All that is reflected in nature is Divine. The One alone exists. The object and the image appear because of the presence of the mirror. When there is no mirror there is no image. This is the mystery relating to nature and the wonders of the Lord. The glories of the Lord are multifarious and marvellous beyond words.

God's arithmetic is different from man's. For instance, when a mirror is placed before you, you have three entities. Yourself, the mirror and your image. When you take away the mirror, according to ordinary arithmetic, three minus one should be two. But when the mirror is removed only you remain. Three minus one becomes one!

Many people think, many people say: "Money makes many many things." But I say: "Money makes many wrongs".

Only when the distinction between the worldly point of view and the Divine point of view is understood that people will learn to make proper use of money.

## **"You and I are one"**

This is the distinctive significance of Sankara's non-dualism. Sankara related the experiences of daily life to the doctrine of spiritual oneness (Ekatvam). The Divine is one, but is adored under different names and forms: Allah, Jesus, Buddha, Zoroaster, Rama, Hari or Hara. All are the same. Sankara did not approve of God being described as mother, father etc. The relationship between God and man is oneness. "You and I are one". This is the essence of the Advaitic doctrine. This awareness of oneness can give infinite joy according to Sankara.

This experience does not come easily. One has to undertake intensive enquiry and also practise spiritual discipline (samskaras). When the samskaras lead to the refinement of the spirit, the experience of oneness with the Divine comes. How fortunate is the one who gets that experience! None can be more fortunate.

The one who gets this experience is the Lord of the universe. As the Master of the Self j he is the Lord of the Cosmos. This Atma is present in every cell of the human body. When this nectarine truth is realised, man will not seek the ephemeral. Everyone should therefore seek the nectar of enduring Atmic bliss.

Sankara made all endeavours to propagate the Advaitic message to the entire country and to every person whether he was a king or a commoner, scholar or ignoramus.

### **Pledge to the mother**

Sankara had given a pledge to his mother that he would reach her in her last moments and perform the last rites for her. Being a pure and high-souled being, he was determined to keep his word. For the pure-hearted the plighted word is bound to be kept. Moreover, whatever they say will happen.

(Bhagavan related an episode from the Mahabharata to indicate that the Divine chooses the time and the situation for showering His grace and conveying His message. In the case of Arjuna, the Kurukshetra war was the right moment for Krishna to test Arjuna's total faith in Krishna and his deservedness for receiving the message of the Gita).

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Hey! Girijapati Bhavani Sankara*"!

**From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on September 8, 1996**

### **This is our Home**

Nobody is a stranger in this world:  
This is our home, this is our paradise;  
And God is here, forgiving, giving, curled up sacredly in every form and guise.  
Behold His face in every act of truth, of justice and of wisdom and of truth.

—BFR

AVATAR VANI:

ONAM SANDESH

## **The Greatness of Bali and Prahlada**

### *Embodiments of love!*

In this phenomenal world, physical relationships like parents, brothers, sisters, wife and children are natural. But in the spiritual context, man should develop relations which are permanent, sacred and transcendental.

One's true relations are Sathyam (Truth) as mother, Jnanam (wisdom) as father, Dharma (Righteousness) as brother, Daya (compassion) as friend, Santhi (Peace) as wife and Kshama (Forgiveness) as son. The physical relations are temporary and bound to pass away. But the six great virtues are the true imperishable relations.

"The foremost duty of everyone is to make love of God flow towards all in creation. Every man lives not for his own sake but to render service to society. To forget concern for the body is the way to realise self-satisfaction. Of what use is human birth if you do not manifest unsullied love towards all beings?" (Telugu Poem)

### **Oneness with God**

Man performs a variety of spiritual exercises to achieve self-realisation and the bliss of oneness with the Divine. These include the nine forms of devotion. In these forms of worship God is regarded as mother, father, friend or master. The highest form of worship is to regard God and the individual as one. "You are I and I am you". This attitude frees man from bondage.

Human beings are different in form and name. Oneness amongst them can be achieved only by a feeling of oneness in thought, by a recognition that the whole cosmos is permeated by the Divine.

God is the cause, the world is the effect. In this marvellous universe, why is man unable to recognise his true nature. Divinity is present in every atom of the cosmos. You have to realise that you are that Divinity.

This truth was declared by Prahlada long ago. Emperor Bali, whose return to the earth for one day in a year is celebrated today in the Onam festival, was the grandson of Prahlada. Bali belonged to a line of great renunciants. His father, Virochana was also known for his spirit of sacrifice. He regarded the welfare of his people as his own well-being.

Mr. Wellington (who had spoken earlier) said that service to humanity is service to God. This principle was observed by Virochana. Emperor Bali also followed the same rule.

### **Experiencing God**

Once several persons gathered round Buddha and asked him to teach them something about God as he had been pursuing the spiritual path for a long time. The Buddha remained silent. No one is competent to engage in discussions about God. God is in "yes" and in "No", He is in Dharma and Adharma, in Truth and untruth. How can you have an argument over one who is omnipresent? It is a waste of time. (God is the very embodiment of Dharma, of Truth and of

Ahimsa (non-violence). Hence, Vedanta exhorted mankind: Speak the truth, follow Righteousness.

Some persons gathered round Ramakrishna Paramahansa and asked him: "Sir! Have you seen God?" Ramakrishna had a hearty laugh. He said: "Yes! I have seen God as I am seeing you. All are forms of God. However, your vision is different. You look at all persons as human beings. But all that you see is Divine. Why are you failing to see the Divine? You cry about your wife, your children, your wealth and your position. Have you ever cried for God in the same way? No. When you cry for God intensely, God will appear before you." Once you renounce your bad qualities you will experience God.

### **Vamana and Bali**

When the Lord as Vamana, was approaching Emperor Bali's yaga, the Emperor received him reverentially and asked him what he wanted. He said: "I want three feet of ground measured by my feet." Bali said: "Why come all the way to ask for just three feet of ground?" Vamana declared: "That is all I want." The Emperor's preceptor, Shukracharya warned the Emperor against making the gift, as the seeker was no ordinary person. But the Emperor firmly declared that there is no greater sin than going back on one's promise. He kept his word.

Emperor Bali stands forth as the great upholder of the plighted word. That is the reason why the people of Kerala worship him to this day and celebrate the festival of Onam in his memory.

What is it that is adored today? It is Truth: Without truth nothing has any value. Without the values of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love, all education and other attainments are useless. (Telugu Poem)

Love is the supreme value. It is not mundane love, but Divine love that is precious. That Divine love encompasses every other form of attachment to friends and others. Cultivate the enduring friendship of God.

Emperor Bali was prepared to offer everything, including himself, to God. That is his greatness. It is not the gift of mere three feet of land. He offered himself to the Lord. "I am offering all that is mine, my family and wealth, and myself, keeping nothing for myself. Save me, Oh Lord, who has sought refuge in you". (Sanskrit Sloka) "The heart which you gave to me, I am offering to you, what else can I offer at your Lotus Feet?" (Telugu Poem) This is the spirit in which Bali surrendered to the Lord.

### **Prahlada's Gift**

Many students do not know the full story of Prahlada (grandfather of Bali). If you have to name anyone for his highest character, it is Prahlada alone.

Once, Indra conquered Prahlada and enjoyed Swarga. Later Prahlada overcame Indra and deprived him of Swarga (the realm of the gods). Indra was forlorn and sought the advice of his high-priest for winning back his kingdom. The priest told him that Prahlada was performing a



great yaga called "Vishwajit" and Indra should assume the form of a Brahmin and seek a gift from Prahlada. Prahlada will give whatever one seeks from him. Indra went to Prahlada in the guise of a poor Brahmin. Prahlada welcomed him and asked him what he wanted. As advised earlier by his high-priest, he asked Prahlada to offer him Prahlada's "Seelam" (character). Prahlada enquired of the Brahmin of what use was his character to the seeker. The Brahmin replied that there was no need to go into all that. He had expressed what he wanted in response to Prahlada's offer to give whatever anyone asked at the Vishwajit sacrifice. "Are you prepared to give or not?" Prahlada immediately gave what the Brahmin asked with due ceremony.

Within a few minutes, an effulgent flame emerged from Prahlada. Seeing the effulgent form, he asked: "Who are you?" The effulgent figure prostrated before Prahlada and said: "I am your character. Hitherto I was in you. I fostered your name and fame. Now you have given me away as a gift. Hence I am leaving you."

### **When character is lost**

When "character" left Prahlada, shortly thereafter another beautiful effulgent form issued forth from Prahlada. Prahlada asked him: "Who are you, oh King?" The radiant figure replied. "Prahlada! I am your Reputation (Keerti). When Character has left you, I have no place within you. Hitherto I was the servant of Character. When Character has left you, I have to follow suit."

Prahlada was puzzled. Then came another beautiful radiant female form from Prahlada. Prahlada respectfully asked her: "Mother! Who are you?" "Prahlada! After the departure of Character and Reputation, I, namely, Rajyalakshmi, (the goddess of royal prosperity) have no place within you." Indra, who had come in the form of a Brahmin, took all the three with him.

That very moment, Prahlada lost his kingdom. You can see from this how one's fame and prosperity are dependent on one's character. Character is a supremely Divine quality. Hence God is described as having six great attributes including Righteousness, infinite wealth, boundless prosperity, indescribable fame and unfathomable wisdom.

Prahlada was the embodiment of character. After Indra had taken away his character from Prahlada, the latter got married and had a son by name Virochana.

You may realise from this episode what importance is attached to character in the spiritual process. This character should be offered only to God and none else. God is utterly selfless and therefore offering your character to God will mean no loss to you.

(Bhagavan said that in the relationship between the devotee and God, no other relationship should be allowed to prevail. Bali ignored the warning of his preceptor in carrying out his promise to Vamana. Bharata condemned his mother's action which resulted in his separation from Rama. Prahlada did not submit to his father when it was a question of his devotion to Narayana. Mira did not allow her husband's conduct to come in the way of her devotion to Krishna.)

### **"Do not give up God"**

Whatever may happen you should not give up God. God is the only unfailing protector. (Swami related the story of Abhimanyu and how he obtained his mother's blessings before going into battle at a time when Arjuna was away and Krishna was not available for advice. But her blessings were of no avail when God's strength was not available. Abhimanyu died in the battle valiantly like a hero.)

All forms of strength, physical, material, manpower, etc., are of no use without Divine strength on your side.

Divine support and Righteousness (Dharma) are the two things essential for success. Whatever spiritual exercise one may practise, one should concentrate on achieving union with the Divine as the primary aim.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Bhajan bina sukha santhi nahi*"

**-From Bhagavan's discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on August 27, 1996**

AVATAR VANI:

GOKULASHTAMI SANDESH

### **Krishna's Life and Message**

*Sweeter than sugar,  
Tastier than curds,  
Extremely sweeter than honey,  
Is the chanting of the Divine Name,  
Recite, oh mind, the Nectarine Name  
Of Sri Krishna forever.*

#### *Embodiments of love!*

It is easy to criticise or belittle the "leelas" or infinite potencies of God. But it is very difficult to comprehend the truth about the Divine. The omnipresent Divine is present both in Truth and untruth. He is present both in righteousness (Dharma) and unrighteousness (Adharma). He is present in good and evil. With regard to such an all-pervading Divine, how can anyone determine what is good and what is bad?

From the earliest times men have been proclaiming what is Divine. That the Divine has a form and possesses innumerable auspicious qualities was declared from their experiences.

The cosmos functions on the basis of three types of actions. Creation, sustenance and dissolution are the three processes. The truth of this phenomenon cannot be denied by anyone at any time or place, whether he is a Vedantin or a scientist, an engineer or a man of the world. While this has

enabled people to describe the Divine, it has not served to demonstrate God. But they were able to indicate the means by which one can experience God.

### **Experiencing the Divine**

A distant star like the Pole Star (Dhruva nakshatra) can be pointed to some one by reference to some nearby physical object like a tree. Likewise the Vedas and Scriptures, while not demonstrating the Divine, have helped to indicate the path leading to the realisation of the Divine.

The spectacle of a dense forest confers delight. The sight of a tall mountain excites wonder. Seeing the torrent in a river one rejoices. All these are evidences of the power of the Divine.

The stars shine. The planets revolve. The sun blazes forth. The wind blows. All these are signs of the Divine at work. When you see the spark of a fire, you can infer the nature of fire. If you know the nature of a drop of water, you can understand the nature of Ganga. Likewise, if you understand the nature of the atom, you can understand the nature of the entire cosmos. Recognising this truth, the Upanishads declared: "The Divine is subtler than the atom and vaster than the vastest".

### **Man and atma**

The human is indeed a manifestation of the Divine with numerous potencies. It is the Divine that shines effulgently in every human being. But, because of his attachment to the body, he is unable to develop attachment to the Spirit (Atma).

Recognising the omnipresence of the Divine in all things, the quest for Truth should be undertaken. What is the Truth? Where is it? How to search for that which is everywhere? A distinction must be made between an apparent fact and the unchanging Reality. In daily life the sun appears to "rise" and "set" everyday, but in reality these apparent phenomena are due to the movement of the earth round itself and round the sun. Likewise what is apparently true about you, as is inferred from external observation, is not the real "you". The reality is beyond the body and the senses. It is the effulgent Divine within you.

The spiritual quest involves the churning of the heart by meditation. Then qualities like compassion emerge from the heart. The human heart, which should be an ocean of milk, has been turned into an ocean of brine now, infested with creatures like hatred, lust and greed.

### **Krishna's "leelas"**

The childhood episodes relating to Krishna have an esoteric meaning. For instance, when his mother, Yashoda, chided Krishna for eating mud (as alleged by Balaram), Krishna replied: "Mother am I a child, or a silly brat or a crazy fool to eat mud". In this way Krishna, even though he was a child, was affirming His divinity indirectly. The Divine teaches profound lessons to mankind in this indirect manner. God's actions should be understood not by the external events but by their inner meaning. Moreover, many changes in the ordinary ways of living are necessary to understand the ways of God. Adi Sankara indicated in the "Bhaja Govindam" song how even a

brief experience of the Divine by a devotee fills him with ecstasy. This bliss can be got only through the Atma. The experiences of the Gopikas and Gopalas of Brindavan during Krishna's early years at Repalle have been misunderstood and misinterpreted. Krishna was in the village for five years only. It is absurd to suggest that a five-year child behaved in an objectionable manner. After going to Mathura Krishna did not return to Repalle.

To ascribe anything improper to the pure and Divine life of Krishna is sheer blasphemy. The true nature of the Divine has to be fully understood. Divinity is the all-pervading Cosmic Consciousness present in all. The nature of this consciousness should be understood. It is "chit", which illumines every object in creation. "Chit" illumines what exists and thereby makes it cognisable. Existence is "sat". Cognisability is "chit". The combination of "Sat" and "Chit" confers "trupti" (satisfaction derived from enjoying the object). This is "Ananda" (bliss). "Sat-Chit-Ananda" is thus the very nature of every being. The Divine pervades everything inside and outside. Awareness of the Divine will confer bliss. But few are able to realise this.

### **The dream and the reality**

Once, an individual, unable to bear the difficulties in his family, left hearth and home. Later, after earning some money he set out to return to his house. A young son, who was in the house when the father left, was so grief-stricken over the father's absence that he died after sometime. Before reaching his village, he took shelter in a choultry during a storm. There he had a dream in which he saw himself as a king in a palace living with six princely sons. He was enjoying the dream. A peal of thunder woke him up. He wondered what had happened to all the beautiful things he had been enjoying so far. He realised that it was all a dream. There was no trace of the six sons. He reached his home in the morning. On seeing the husband, the wife broke into tears. On the one hand she was happy over the husband's return. On the other, she was filled with sorrow over the passing of her son. The father asked her: "Where is our son?" She replied that he passed away, unable to bear the separation from the father. The man was stupefied. He did not feel sad or happy. He stood transfixed like a statue. The wife asked: "How is it you are not moved by the loss of the son whom you loved so much? What is the reason?" He then related to his wife the remarkable dream he had experienced the previous night. In that dream his six sons had died. "Am I to grieve over the loss of those six sons or over the loss of this one son? For whose sake should I weep? They were my children in the dream state. This son was my child in the waking state. What was present in both the state is the reality. All other things are transient." This realisation came to him.

### **The path to bliss**

If people today wish to achieve spiritual bliss, they have to follow three principles: First, they must know what has to be known. Second, they must give up what has to be renounced. Third, they must reach the goal that has to be attained. By observing these three, bliss can be realised. What is it that has to be known? What is this world? How long will I live? We see many passing away. Coming and going are continually happening. When the transient nature of the physical world is understood, bliss will be realised.

Next, what is it that you have to give up? The delusion under which what is unreal is considered real and what is real is treated as unreal. People consider that they are in the grip of Maya and that they are caught up in misery. Misery has no limbs to hold you. It is you who are hugging misery. This is due to your ignorance. When you get rid of this ignorance you will experience bliss.

What is the goal you have to reach? You have to go back to the source from which you came. You have come from the Atma and you have to return to the Atma.

This is what the Upanishads sought to convey when they declared: "Asato maa sadgamaya" ("Lead me from the unreal to the Real"). Where there is Truth, untruth exists as its shadow.

"Tamaso maa jyotirgamaya" ("Lead me from darkness to light") What is darkness and what is light? Light alone exists. Darkness is only the absence of light. Discovering the light leads to the elimination of darkness.

"Mrityor-maa Amritam gamaya" ("Lead me from death to Immortality") Birth and death are incidental to the body alone. Your Self has neither birth nor death. What is born (the body) dies. Death relates to the body and not to the Atma. The Atma is eternal. It is the truth. You have to acquire this awareness to experience lasting bliss. To experience permanent bliss one has to develop firm faith in God.

### **Krishna and Rama**

Today we celebrate the birthday of Krishna. Where was he born? In a prison. What were his possessions? Nothing. Born in a prison, he was taken to the house of Nanda and then he went to Mathura. He owned nothing. But he became the greatest figure in the world. What does this show? Worldly possessions are not the secret of greatness. Krishna's greatness consisted in His permanent state of bliss (Ananda).

If you recognise the distinction between Krishna and Rama, you will appreciate better the nature of Krishna. Krishna always smiled at the outset and carried out his task later. For Rama, the deed came first and then the smile. Krishna made women cry. Rama wept for the sake of women. Rama went into the battle only after having a strong cause for it. Krishna first provoked the conflict and then determined its outcome.

The Krishna principle revels in delight. The Rama principle is based on the concept of obligation ("baadhyatha").

The Ramayana is intended to promote the reign of Truth and Righteousness on earth. The Krishna Avatar was intended to give a perennial message to the world. He sought nothing for himself. He kept nothing for himself. He gave away everything to the people. He slayed his maternal uncle, Kamsa. He installed on the throne Kamsa's father Ugrasena. He did not covet the Kingdom. He befriended the Pandavas, defeated the Kauravas and crowned Dharmaja as the emperor. He did not make himself king. He was a king without a crown. He was the king of

kings. He had no kingdom of his own. But he ruled over the hearts of the millions. It is this profound truth that is proclaimed by the Krishna principle (Krishna tattwa).

If you enquire deeply, you will find that every Avatar has incarnated to convey a special message and carry out a particular mission.

### **Krishna's Divinity**

The Gopikas used to complain to Yashoda about Krishna's pranks. But whatever Krishna said in fun or did as a prank was based on truth. Krishna never indulged in untruth even by way of a joke. But those who could not understand the inner meaning of His statements used to accuse him of lying. This kind of misunderstanding has been a disease in all yugas (ages).

When a Gopikas complained to Yashoda that Krishna had entered the house of a cowherd at night and played some mischief, Krishna pleaded before his mother how he could have gone out anywhere when he was sleeping beside her. The truth was that Krishna was in both places because of His Divine power. Krishna displayed any number of such baffling miracles. (Bhagavan sang a series of songs about the complaints of the Gopikas to Yashoda against Krishna). Against each complaint Krishna had a convincing alibi. Indirectly Krishna was revealing His divinity.

Krishna explained to His mother the ways of the Divine in a way she could understand.

Krishna used to visit the houses of the cowherds and drink curds and milk. The symbolic meaning of this action is Krishna's preference for "satwa", represented by the pure white curds and milk.

Krishna explained to Yashoda the reason why he preferred the butter in their homes to the butter offered by Yashoda. The hearts of the Gopikas were pure and filled with selfless devotion to Krishna. Their devotion was superior to the maternal affection of Yashoda, which bore a taint of selfishness. Krishna told Yashoda: "I am attracted to the hearts of those who are pure and selfless."

### **Follow the footsteps**

Krishna had always eluded the Gopikas after playing his mischief. But once, out of compassion for them, he wanted to provide a clue by which they could trace him. One day they all lay in wait round their houses to catch Krishna. Krishna went into a house stealthily, broke a pot of milk and quietly hid himself. The Gopikas found that he had broken the pot and tried to trace him. The milk-white steps which he had left revealed to them his hide-out. Then, Krishna revealed to them the spiritual truth that if they cling to the feet of the Lord they realise Him. "Follow my footsteps and you shall find me", Krishna told the Gopikas.

In the Bhagavatam, the lessons you learn are according to the state of your mind. To understand the glories of the Lord as related in the Bhagavatam, you have to enjoy the "leelas" of Krishna and realise their inner meaning. For instance, the real meaning of the story about Krishna taking

away the clothes of the Gopikas while they were bathing is that to realise the Lord they have to abandon the attachment to the body, which is the vesture of the Spirit. These stories should not be treated in a spirit of levity or profanity.

### **Krishna and Radha**

In that case of Radha, Krishna churned her heart and gave her the nectar of Divine bliss. Radha had no attachment to any of her kith and kin. (Swami sang sweetly a song of Radha expressing her grief over separation from Him). Krishna appeared before Radha before she gave up her life and blessed her. God will give anything for the devotee including Himself. No one can equal Him in the sacrifice He will make for the sake of the devotees. Krishna asked Radha what she wanted at the last moment of her life. Radha said: "I don't want anything except to listen to the music of your flute once before I pass on". ("Sing, Oh Krishna, speak to me to fill my heart with bliss", sang Radha. "Distill the essence of the Vedas and make it flow into the eternal music of your flute, Oh Krishna".) Krishna took out His flute and played on it and when Radha closed her eyes, He threw it away. He never touched it again. He dedicated the flute to give delight to Radha.

Thus, all the mysteries of Krishna served to relieve the distress of the devotees. Krishna used all His powers to serve the devotees. When the purport of the Bhagavata stories is properly understood, one can realise the puissance of the Lord.

In the life of Mirabai, for instance, when the Rana's sister gave to Mira a cup of milk containing poison, Mira drank it as an offering to Krishna. The result was Krishna absorbed the poison and left the sweet milk alone for Mira.

By making an offering of all that you eat to God before taking it, the food gets purified and sanctified.

The Gopikas were illiterate and totally innocent. But their love for Krishna was unalloyed and exclusive. Even while engaged in their daily activities, their thoughts were centred on Krishna. Hence they experience indescribable joy

### **Cultivate unity**

Devotees should cultivate unity, transcending all barriers of caste, creed and nationality. (Swami then related the story of Suguna who was oblivious to her hand getting burnt because she saw the figure of Krishna in the flame of a lamp. Swami sang a song expressing the delight of the gopis on seeing Suguna in the state of Divine forgetfulness.)

Krishna's mystery and miracles are beyond words. He was all things to all people. He is the indweller in the heart of everyone. There is no room for religious differences. Students should resolve themselves to restore the pristine glory of Bharat by leading ideal lives. Proclaim the message of unity to the whole world.

(Before concluding His discourse, Bhagavan made an announcement to the students. In view of the ever-growing number of devotees coming to Prasanthi Nilayam Swami was not in a position to devote individual attention to students. Those who wish to get married and settle down in life, might happily do so and come to Bhagavan for His blessings. Swami will not perform any marriages in the Nilayam. But the Kalyanamantapam can be used for marriages if they desired. Swami will perform, however, mass marriages and mass Upanayanams.) Swami's grace and love will be available to you wherever you may be. You may get married, lead a worldly life as householders and serve the nation.

Today is Gokulashtami, the day celebrated as Krishna's birthday. But it is not this celebration that is important. What is important is the adherence to Krishna's teachings. Krishna is not different from His teachings. Swami cannot be separated from His teachings. The Gita is Krishna and Krishna is Gita.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Govinda Krishna Jai! Gopala Krishna Jai!*"

—From Bhagavan's discourse in the Sai Kulwant Mandap on Sept 4, 1996

## **The Vinayaka Principle**

### *Embodiments of love!*

When you rub a piece of sandalwood on the grindstone, the more you rub it, the greater the fragrance it emits. As you chew a piece of sugarcane, the more you chew the greater the sweet juice you get from it. As gold is heated more and more in the crucible, it acquires greater brilliance, getting rid of all impurities. A noble being displays his good qualities, however much he might be subjected to trials and tribulations. Thereby he stands out as an example to the world (Swami explained the purport of the opening Sanskrit stanza thus).

God is the embodiment of bliss. He is eternal. Every living being originates from bliss, grows on bliss, and merges in bliss.

Among the myriad names of God, the foremost is "Sat-Chit-Ananda". "Sat" is that sacred thing which has no change in the three worlds and in the three categories of time (past, present and future). It is permanent. "Chit" means total awareness. When "Sat" and "Chit" become one, bliss (Ananda) is realised. Hence, the Divine is described as Sat-Chit-Ananda—"Being-Awareness-Bliss". This principle is all pervasive. It is present in all. The scriptures declare: "Sarvam-Vishnumayam Jagat" The cosmos is permeated by the Divine.

Failing to recognise this truth and treating the body as the only reality, man distances himself from bliss. Men identify themselves in terms of their professions or nationality. But all these are



acquired characteristics and not innate to the persons concerned. Essentially everyone is an embodiment of the Atma (the Self). All the other aspects are transient. To identify yourself with the body is to mistake the dwelling for the indweller. When the truth is investigated in this manner, spirituality will become apparent.

The basis of the Advaitic doctrine is the spiritual oneness of the entire cosmos. It is the Spirit that is common to all beings. The Spirit is the source of all beings and their ultimate destination.

The Atmic principle resides in the heart of every being. Hence there is no need to go in search of God. You are the Divine.

### **Quest for unity**

Today the nation is racked by divisions of all kinds based on religion, language and region. People should strive to realise the underlying unity all religions, languages and regions. God is called by different names by people of different faiths. But all names signify the same God. All of them stress the unity that underlies the apparent diversity.

Vedanta indicates the four stages in realisation of the Divine. Salokya (perception of the Divine), Sameepya (proximity to the Divine), Saroopya (experiencing the vision of the Divine) and Sayujya (merger in the Divine). The Divine as such has no form. Whatever the form in which the devotee worships the Divine, the Divine assumes that form for the devotee. However all forms are His. "Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram". Truth is God. Beauty is God. The unity of Truth, goodness and Beauty is Sat-Chit-Ananda. (Swami related the story concerning Emperor Janaka's transformation as a Raja-Yogi after he learnt from Yagnavalkya that his present queen was in his previous birth his mother. This knowledge immediately made Janaka renounce everything and become a seeker of the Divine. Swami pointed out that while Yagnavalkya hesitated to reply to the King's persistent query about his previous birth, once he revealed the truth, the king considered it a blessing and became a yogi).

### **Worship of Vinayaka**

Today we celebrate the birthday of Ganapati. What is the significance of this term? "Ga" means Buddhi (the intellect). "Na" means "Jnana" (wisdom). "Pati" means "Master". Hence, Ganapati is the master of the intellect and wisdom. Another meaning of the term is "Master of the Ganas" (the hosts of spirits). The name "Vinayaka" means one who has no leader above him.

Before we commence any activity we offer prayers to Vinayaka so that the action may be successful without any impediments. Vinayaka is worshipped not only in Bharat but in many other countries. The worship of Vinayaka has been prevailing from the times of the Rig Veda.

The Vinayaka principle protects man from the various hurdles in life and ensures peace and security. Hence on every auspicious occasion Vinayaka is worshipped.

The devout offer worship to Vinayaka with the well-known prayer beginning with the words, "Suklambaradharam" (The one who wears a white garment). Vighneshwara is described as one

who is white like the moon, who has four arms (two for giving worldly protection and two for spiritual benediction), who has an ever-pleasing countenance and to whom obeisance is offered for removing all obstacles. While the pious used this prayer in a devout spirit, the impious misused the words to distort the meaning and make it a prayer to a quadruped which is employed for carrying washed clothes. It is by such misinterpretation that some people have sullied the great culture of Bharat and undermined faith in God.

Students! Instead of filling your minds with scriptural knowledge it is enough if you fill your hearts with love. One ounce of practice is worth tons of spiritual knowledge. Today men should show their humanness in action and not their physical features. Students should be filled with idealism and serve the Motherland in a sacred spirit, with firm faith in God.

The preciousness of human birth is indicated by the declaration in the Gita that every human being is a spark of the Divine. Everyone should look Godward while attending to worldly duties. If you dedicate all actions to God there will be no obstacles. Good thoughts will lead to good actions which produce good results.

Students! You should seek to earn the love of God and His grace. All other acquisitions are worthless and impermanent.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Prema muditha manase kaho!*"

**-From Bhagavan's discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on September 16, 1996**

**AMRITA DHARA:**

### **The Power that Draws Devotees**

*The unwise man thinks about the external world;  
The man of wisdom contemplates on Vishnu  
The former becomes a worldly man;  
The other realises the Divine.  
Hearken! Oh valiant son of Bharat.*

*Embodiments of love!*

Man, although he is inherently the embodiment of Sath-Chith-Ananda (Being-Awareness and Bliss), unaware of this truth, seeks this bliss in the phenomenal world. This is because he considers the physical world as the ultimate reality and forgets his own true Divine nature. This is a mark of his ignorance (Ajnana). When one's vision is turned Godward, this ignorance disappears.

Many persons yearn for God, worship God or contemplate on God. God cannot be realised by any of these means. All these activities are based on separating themselves from God. What is

needed is a sense of oneness. How is this to be obtained? When you cultivate the feeling: "I and you are one". This oneness is beyond the grasp of the mind and the senses. It is only the Buddhi (Intellect) that can experience what is beyond the senses.

There is no need for penance or Japa or other austerities to realise oneness with the Divine. Love alone is enough. This is the message of Vedanta.

When Adi Sankara set out on a tour of the country to propagate Advaita, he met Mandana Misra, a great Vedic Scholar. They wanted to have a philosophical debate. They had to choose a judge to declare who had won in the debate: Adi Sankara, who was a "trikalajnani" (one who knew the past, present and the future), chose Mandana Misra's wife, Ubhayabharathi, as the judge. She was a lady who could rise above personal attachments. The debate was held and Ubhayabharathi adjudged in favour of Sankara. She declared in unqualified terms that Mandana Misra had lost in the debate. Immediately the verdict was declared, Mandana Misra took to sanyasa. Thereafter, Ubhayabharathi also, as Mandana Misra's better half, followed suit and became a renunciant.

### **A lesson for a sadhu**

Ubhayabharathi established an ashram of her own to which only women were admitted as disciples. One day she was going with some of her disciples to the Ganges for a bath. On the way she saw an ochre-robed sadhu resting under a tree with his head on a "Kamandalam" (a vessel used for keeping water). He was a renunciant only in external vesture but not a whole-hearted renunciant. He kept the gourd water container under his head lest some one should take it away when he fell asleep. To teach the sadhu a lesson in genuine renunciation, Ubhayabharathi spoke loudly to her disciples: "Ladies! Look at the man's renunciation! He has not given up his attachment to his worthless Kamandalam and is concerned about its safety." On hearing her words, the 'byragi' got angry. When Ubhayabharathi was returning from the river, he ostentatiously cast off the gourd-bottle. Ubhayabharathi then exclaimed. "What a pity? I thought the sadhu was only a victim of attachment (Abhimanam). I find that he is also filled with egoism (Ahamkara). If he was not so egoistic would he have thrown his Kamandalam at me?" She stood before the sadhu and told him: "Your egoism is growing along with your attachment. This does not befit the robe you are wearing. You cannot be a real renunciant as long as you are filled with attachment and egoism. Give up attachment to the body and develop attachment to the Atma." She taught this lesson in a quiet and convincing manner.

In the sphere of wisdom, there are no distinctions of sex, caste or creed. Hearing Ubhayabharathi's words, the sadhu came running, fell at her feet and sought her forgiveness. He said: "Oh Mother! Because I had no one to teach me the truth in this manner, I was leading this double life. From now on, you are my guru".

### **The Lord's Grace**

In human life, many pursue different forms of spiritual exercises.

*Whatever ochre robe they may don,  
Whatever sacred garland they may wear,*

*However fast they may roll the beads,  
Finally they have to come to Baba  
His grace is essential  
For anyone of any eminence  
Only His grace can redeem you  
(Telugu Poem)*

So many are engaged in formal spiritual practices of various kinds. But of what use are they to win the grace of the Divine? Are you searching for the path that will help you to earn God's love? When you earnestly search within, you will get the answer.

Among the nine forms of devotion, the foremost is the cultivation of the friendship (sakhya) of God. Friendship is followed by total surrender to the Divine.

### **Sanctify the limbs**

A great devotee once lamented that all his limbs and organs were utterly useless unless each of them was used to serve the Divine, to see the Divine or to listen to the glories of the Divine. The same feeling was expressed by Saint Surdas when he said that the gift of eyesight was of no value if the eye did not see the beautiful form of the Divine. Those with ears who would not listen to the songs in praise of the Lord might as well be deaf. (Swami sang a number of songs which deplored the pitiable plight of those who did not use their God-given organs for experiencing the Divine). True humanness consists in using all one's senses and limbs for sacred purposes and not misusing them in various ways.

The man of faith need not worry about who will take care of him if he devotes all his time to thoughts of the Divine. The Lord who is the universal provider will take care of his devotees. This faith in the Lord was emphatically proclaimed by Purandaradasa in his songs.

### **Power of the Divine**

How many realise the wonders in God's creation. There is a chick inside the egg. A huge tree comes out of a small seed. A human being is born from a human being. Who is responsible for all this? Only the Divine will. Without recognising these miraculous powers of the Divine, people make much of human achievements.

Look at what is happening here. What is it that makes people from Australia, Argentina and other countries come here? What is the power that draws them here? (Cheers) Without the power of the Divine, will they come here? Thyagaraja glorified the power of Rama in a song in which he extolled how Rama's Divine power enabled Hanuman to leap over the ocean and how it induced Lakshmana and Bharata to worship Him.

It is the same Divine magnetic power which is attracting people from all over the world to come to Bhagavan.

### **A lesson for Hanuman**

In this context, Swami related a story about Rama's desire to install a linga of Siva while He was going to the south for the recovery of Sita. He had asked Hanuman to bring a linga from the Himalayas within a stipulated time for performing the installation. As Hanuman did not come in time, Rama created a linga and performed the "pratishtha" ceremony. Hanuman, who adored Rama more than any other deity, threw away the linga nonchalantly. Later, while walking Rama's foot hit against a stone in the ground. Rama appeared as if he had lost his balance. Lakshmana asked Rama what had happened. Rama said that it was a small stone. Hanuman came forth and said that he would pull out the stone lest some one else should stumble on it. Rama was inwardly seeking to test Hanuman and teach him a lesson. He remarked: "Hanuman! You are capable of carrying mountains. Why do you bother about this small pebble? I shall walk more carefully. It is no fault of the pebble." Hanuman, however, was determined to remove the pebble. It was a mark of his simian nature. He tried to remove the pebble with his left hand. He could not remove it. Later he used all his strength, but the pebble could not be removed. He was surprised and asked Rama: "Lord! What is this mystery?" Rama remarked: "Oh! It's nothing." He stepped forth and lifted the pebble with a toe and flung it afar. That pebble was in fact the linga which Hanuman had cast away. An effulgence emerged from the lingam and merged in Rama. And an effulgence from Rama entered the lingam. Rama thereby wanted to demonstrate to Hanuman that there was no difference between Him and Siva. He taught that both Vishnu and Siva should be adored alike. Swami said:

Today people have their own preferences regarding the deities they adore: Rama, Krishna, Siva, Sai and so on. Why cherish such differences? God is one. Names and forms differ according to differences in taste. But the Divine is one alone. When you develop the feeling of spiritual oneness of all beings, you become one with the Divine.

Students! Do not consider God as distant from you. Do not also entertain the crazy notion that if you worship Him, He will appear before you. Offer yourself to Him and in a moment you will experience Him within you. There is no need for any other severe penance.

Truth is God. Wisdom is God. Everything is God.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma!*"

—From Bhagavan's discourse on September 5, 1996

### **Towards a Golden Tomorrow**

Mysterious, marvellous and wonder-filled  
Inexplicable, incomprehensible Sai  
His majestic form gliding flowing before us,

kindles the sparks He alone has placed within

O eyes that see naught but fleeting, passing sights!  
O ears that hear naught but senseless, sour sounds!  
See now, hear now His ancient call to wakefulness.  
The moment He decreed is now come at last

He calls ageless youth, His Drama to fulfil  
Renounce time torn by tempests of desire;  
Focus, fix on the firm straight course set within  
Like lions, lead and let His Presence command.

By past deeds earned and deserved you have come  
To cancel the calamities of ages past.  
With every thought, think: Does this really matter?  
Before each action, ask: "Is this what Swami wants?"

Let not this chance be by distractions lost.  
Your steady Love must His Mission fulfill.  
O Instruments of a Golden Tomorrow!  
To you the inheritance of His Divine Will.

—Hal Honig

### **Ganesha Chaturthi at Prasanthi Nilayam**

The Ganesha Chaturthi celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam started on a solemn note on the morning of September 16 when students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning greeted Bhagavan with a programme of hymns and songs in praise of Ganesha and Bhagavan Baba.

Starting with the traditional Kirtan of the great saint composer, Muthuswamy Dikshitar, beginning with the words, "Vaatapi Ganapathim Bhaje", the first part of the programme concluded with hymns from Ganesha Ashtakam. This was followed by songs in praise of Bhagavan, with the Institute orchestra providing the instrumental accompaniments. The regular bhajans followed. Bhagavan, who came to the Sai Kulwant Mandap went round the large crowd of devotees and blessed them. The morning programme concluded with Arati to Bhagavan and the distribution of prasadam to all the devotees.

In the evening, there was a discourse by Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Mandap on the significance of Ganesha worship. (Details of the discourse are published separately.)

The celebrations concluded on September 18th with a long array of Ganapati figures, of different sizes, mounted on various vehicles, taken in procession from the hostels of the Sai Educational Institutions for the immersion ceremony in the Chitravati. The enthusiasm displayed by the students in the preparation of the Ganapati idols for the three-day celebrations and the songs and bhajans with which they brought them to the Mandir for Bhagavan's blessings before the immersion testified to their deep devotion. An interesting feature of the processions was the very large figure of Ganesha which was brought in procession by the doctors and staff of the Super Speciality Hospital. The procession stopped at the Mandir for a time to offer arati to Bhagavan, who broke a number of coconuts as offering to Ganesha.

As the procession wended its way to the Chitravati after circumambulating the Mandir, amidst full-throated cries of "Ganapati Bappa Moria", the town's people and devotees who lined the roads on either side cheered the processionists. Many enjoyed the artistically designed chariots in which the Ganesha figures were carried, including one chariot resembling a "Damaru" and another looking like a peacock.

For all the devotees in the Mandir, it was a memorable experience.

*No matter where you go, always do your duty as you see it, and know that I will be there inside you guiding you every step of the way. In the years to come, you will experience me in many different manifestations of my form. You are my own, dearer than dear to me. I will protect you as the eyelids protect the eyes. I will never leave you and you can never leave me. From this point on, do not hanker after anything. Do your duty with unwavering Love, seeing all as God. Be patient. In time, everything will be given to you. Be happy. There is no need to worry about anything. Whatever is experienced, whatever happens, know that this Avatar willed it so. There is no force on earth which can delay for an instant the mission for which this Avatar has come. You are all sacred souls and you will have your parts to play in the unfolding drama of the new Golden Age, which is coming.*

**—Baba**

## **A Cry from the Heart**

Pray, why that haste and hurry, my Lord?  
‘Tis not my wish to come in your way,  
I only want to say, "I have come."

Why so tantalisingly near and yet so far?  
Fear not that I shall touch your holy feet,  
I shall only adore them afar.

You stand before me in the darshan line,

But speak to the one sitting next to me.  
If it's your will, I shall remain sadly mute.

You pass me by with regal indifference,  
As if to you I do not exist.  
Pray, where shall I hide my face?

Your ceaseless tread on the sands of time  
'Tis not mete for me to impede. Permit me, then,  
to collect and treasure the dust under your feet.

You, the greatest Lord of Heavens High,  
I beg of you grant me this one boon!  
Whenever I come, please, oh! please, say: "How are you?"

—Dr. Jayalakshmi Gopinath

AMRITA DHARA:

### The Glorious Saga of Sankara

*"When the branch of a tree rubs against another branch incessantly,  
fire emerges from the branches.  
When you repeatedly churn buttermilk you get butter  
from which ghee is got.  
By engaging one's self in a continuous process of enquiry  
one realises the Divinity within."*

(Telugu Poem)

By perseverance anything can be accomplished" (says a Telugu proverb.) The Gita declares that by repeated practice one acquires the wisdom that ultimately leads to renunciation (Tyaga). Every activity in life is based on practice. Likewise, to realise the Divine constant practice is necessary. Mere repetition of the Lord's name is not enough. Devotion should express itself in social service. Any service done with social well-being in mind will become service to God.

"The one Self dwells in a myriad bodies like butter in milk, oil in til seeds, fragrance in a flower, sweet juice in a fruit and fire in a faggot" (Sanskrit sloka). This is the truth proclaimed by Vedanta. Today, modern youth, not realising this truth, are wasting their lives in every way.

Adi Sankara demonstrated that underlying all forms, names and qualities, there is one basic reality which alone is real and changeless. This is the doctrine of Advaita or Non-dualism. Out of a mango seed comes a tree with branches, leaves, flowers and fruit each with distinct forms and uses. But all the myriad things that have come from the seed owe their existence to the seed from



which the tree arose. This truth was declared by Krishna in the Gita when He said: "Beejam maam sarvabhoothaanaam" ("I am the seed that is the origin of all beings.") All things in the universe are manifestations of the One Divine.

Yesterday I related the story of how Adi Sankara took to sanyasa at an early age and came to his guru, Govinda. The preceptor for Govinda was Gaudapaada. Gaudapaada distinguished the 'Riks' in Rig Veda, which proclaimed the oneness of the Divine. Sankara received this teaching from Govinda and mastered all the Vedas and Shastras by his fourteenth year. Earnest pursuit of knowledge leads to total understanding (Jnana).

### **Debate with preceptor**

One day, to test Sankara's mastery of the scriptures Govinda engaged Sankara in—a philosophical debate. It was a debate between the preceptor and the disciple. Sankara was full of humility and reverence for the guru. Hence, before entering on the debate he prostrated before the preceptor and prayed to him for permission to argue with him. With the guru's sanction he began his argument with amazing skill and demolished, with due scriptural authority, the propositions of the preceptor and presented his views in accordance with Vedic authorities with due regard to worldly understanding and showed how the inward (Nivritti) path could be harmonised with the external (Pravritti) path.

### **A lesson for pandits**

Sankara was deeply perturbed over the conduct of great Vedic scholars of those times who were more concerned about making money out of their scriptural scholarship than to gain spiritual wisdom from it. They forgot that knowledge should not be used for commercial purposes. Even today many students consider education as a means for earning a living. This is utterly wrong. One should work for a living. But knowledge should be sought for acquiring wisdom. Sankara sought to bring about a change in the use of scriptural knowledge.

"Of what use is the acquisition of all kinds of knowledge if one does not think of God and use his hands for the adoration of the Divine. All such knowledge is a sheer waste." (Telugu Poem)

Sankara was deeply distressed over the conduct of the scholars. His preceptor Govinda observed Sankara's sadness. Govinda's guru, Gaudapaada, also felt unhappy over this state of things. Both of them were elated at the sublime feelings of the young Sankara. They both realised that Sankara was best qualified to use the sacred teachings of the Vedas to combat the prevailing unrighteous and immoral tendencies in the society. They summoned Sankara and told him "Child! There is no need for you to stay here any longer. Leave for Kashi (Varanasi) tomorrow. You must meet the great pandits in Kashi and propagate the doctrine to the whole world. Nobody else can carry out this mission."

Students today should realise that they are the most powerful instruments for rectifying all the evils rampant in our society today.

### **The journey to Kashi**

With the permission of the two preceptors, Sankara set out for Kashi. No modern means of transport were available in those days. Sankara had to walk all the way to Benares. The sixteen-year old lad gathered his disciples and left for Kashi. On the way he saw a pandit sitting under a tree and cramming the rules of grammar. At that moment, he began composing the famous hymn. "Bhaja Govindam." (Swami recited the opening stanza from Bhaja Govindam). "You dull-witted fellow! Why do you immerse yourself in the rules of grammar? They will not save you when death knocks at the door. Instead, worship Govinda!" At the time of death nothing and nobody will follow the departing soul when it leaves the body. Only the remembrance of the name of the Lord will keep you company at all times. Sankara advised the pandit to chant the name of the Lord instead of conning the rules of grammar.

After teaching him this lesson, Sankara proceeded to Kashi with his disciples. Sankara's teachings were spreading far and wide. The pandits of Benares arranged for a grand assembly of scholars in the holy city. Many scholars had gathered there in all their regalia. Nothing was lacking in terms of ostentation at that assembly. Sankara entered in a simple way, wearing a dhoti covering up to his knees and a towel over his shoulder. On seeing him, the pandits seemed to feel that it was all a joke. Some pandits remarked: "He does not even wear a rudraksha mala (a garland of beads). A pandit should have an imposing figure. What is it that this stripling can tell us?" They addressed him thus: "We have come to know that you are proficient in all the Vedas and Shastras, an authority on grammar and logic and a great exponent of the Advaita doctrine".

### **Sankara and the scholars**

Sankara then sang the Bhaja Govindam songs, pointing out the transitory nature of material wealth and exhorting all to give up worldly desires. He declared that pandits should be equal-minded and should give up the desire "r wealth, which is the result of one's actions. "Give up this thirst for money. Develop the thirst for God", declared Sankara in strident terms. Then he gave a superb exposition of the metaphysics of Advaita.

All the pandits and their disciples were astonished at the performance of the young Sankara. They realised that here was one who was not only a great teacher but one who practised what he taught. This unity in thought, word and deed is the mark of greatness. Sankara was the very embodiment of unity and purity in thought, speech and action.

Many pandits got up and plied Sankara with questions. He answered them all with perfect ease. He declared that Advaita means oneness of the spirit and awareness of this oneness is true wisdom (Jnana). Spiritual wisdom alone is true wisdom. Pandits today, he declared, are not having this realisation.

### **Exposition of Advaita**

Sankara pointed out that though names and forms may be many, the Self is one only. That Self resides in everyone's heart. He exhorted the pandits to purify their hearts and follow the dictates of the conscience. Sankara made it clear that creeds may vary but God is one.

Sankara called upon the pandits to be content with moderate incomes and not hanker after riches. Vast knowledge and petty desires go ill together.

### **Students' duty**

Students should realise how a young lad born in Kaladi brought greatness to Kerala and Bharat.

Students should cultivate human values like love, compassion, righteousness and truth and become truly human. Every student should strive to lead an ideal life like Sankara.

In this context, I should like to mention that in "Bhaja Govindam" Sankara commends renunciation of all worldly attachments. People may feel that Swami is telling the students these unworldly teachings. This does not worry me, because what I am saying is the Truth. Is renunciation acquired so easily? No. People who have been listening for years have not changed to the slightest extent. To imagine that a single discourse is going to make a big change is fanciful. Only a fortunate few experience such transformation. If real renunciation is promoted in anyone, there can be no greater blessing than that.

Nearness to God will inspire the spirit of renunciation even without one being conscious of it. In that renunciation lies fulfillment. And one's life is redeemed.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Siva, Siva, Siva, Siva anaraadaa*".

**From Bhagavan's discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on September 7, 1996**

### **Indulgence and Restraint**

Indulgence destroys and sickens;

Restraint restores and strengthens;

Less is more, the least is best

Do your utmost, Sai does the rest     - H.H.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Human life is precious, noble and virtuous. It is a pity human beings do not realise this. The whole purpose and goal of human life is to know one's true nature. Forgetting one's true nature, man is caught up in worldly concerns and plunged in misery.

The ancient sages indicated the path to be pursued for the redemption of mankind. They commended nine forms of worship any one of which could confer bliss and redeem a man's life.

To experience the proximity of the Divine the easiest path is "Namasmarana", remembering constantly the name of the Lord. Sage Veda Vyasa declared that in the Kali Yuga there is nothing greater than chanting the name of Hari for realising God. It is the easiest path for one and all, the scholar and illiterate, the rich and the poor.

In the Gita, the Lord has indicated the qualities which a devotee should possess to enable him to earn the love of the Lord. Among these qualities, Krishna declared desirelessness as important ("Anapeksha"). Today there are few without desires of one kind or other. All sensual pleasures are ephemeral. But most people are content with them. Greater than the sensual is the transcendental path, "Shreyo-marga", which confers lasting bliss.

When one does any action as an offering to God, it gets sanctified. Such an act becomes a desireless (anapeksha) act. Every selfless act of devotion becomes an action free from the taint of desire.

The second quality is "Suchi" (purity). What is required is both internal and external purity. God cares only for internal purity of the mind ("Chittashuddhi").

**Faith and service**

The third quality is "daksha". This means that the devotee should be steadfast and unwavering in any situation. With his mind firmly rooted in God, he should engage himself in service to others and perform actions in a spirit of detachment. Only such a devotee is eligible for God's love. He is unaffected by pleasure or pain, gain or loss or what happens in the mundane world. The fourth quality is "Udaaseenah"—indifference to external happenings. The fifth quality is freedom from egoism and possessiveness. One should get rid of the idea of doership and ownership and surrender everything to God.

Today all spiritual exercises are ostensibly undertaken for realising God. But there is no need for undertaking them. Human birth itself is a mark of Divinity. What is essential is to recognise the indwelling Divinity and live on that basis.

everyone. To experience the Divinity within, one has to see the Divine in all others and render them service in that spirit.

### **Worship of padukas**

Today we are celebrating the worship of Padukas (sandals sanctified by the touch of the Lord's feet). Worship of Padukas is not of recent origin.

Even during the Krita Yuga, the sages used to worship Padukas, experience divine bliss and share it with others. By worshipping the Feet of the Lord, they achieved the goal of their penance.

In the worship of Dakshinamurthy, adoration of the sandals of the Lord as guru (preceptor) is considered important. Even Sankaracharya resorted to the worship of the Lord's Feet as essential. In a famous hymn, he extolled the Lord in many ways and declared that he was taking refuge in the Lord's feet (Sambhu). He declared that Siva's feet were enshrined in his heart and not elsewhere.

The glory of the Lord's feet is demonstrated by a significant episode in the Ramayana. After Rama left for the forest, Bharata came to him and pleaded earnestly with him to return to Ayodhya. Rama was equally determined not to return. Vasishta noticed the equal determination of the two brothers. The sage told Bharata: "Rama has come to the forest to carry out the command of his father. It is not right on your part to ask him to change his mind. Let us take his Padukas to Ayodhya. Those Padukas will reign over the kingdom." Vasishta gave this timely advice and persuaded Bharata to take Rama's sandals and install them on the throne in Ayodhya.

These incidents show that the worship of the Lord's feet and of the Lord's sandals has a long antiquity. The sacredness of this worship was propagated to the world by Bharat from ancient times as part of its spiritual message to mankind. (Cheers) Indians today have largely forgotten this ancient practice. In those days it was the practice of the disciples, after the completion of their education at the guru's ashram, to take with them Padukas of the guru to worship them on their return to their homes. But even the worship of Padukas is an external activity. True devotion calls for the installation of the Padukas in the heart.

This means that starting with the external form of worship, we should in due course make it an internal exercise.

### **Karma, bhakti and jnana**

All these are related to the Karma Marga-the Path of Action. Beginning with the path of action, progressing towards the path of devotion (Bhakti Marga), one should ultimately achieve Self-realisation ("Kaivalya") by the Jnana Marga (the Path of Wisdom). "Jnanaath eva thu Kaivalyam" declares the scripture. "Realisation is only through Wisdom".

from stage to stage. "Karma-Upasana-Jnanam" (Action-Devotion-Wisdom) these are the three steps in Self-Realisation.

Subramania Chettiar has been engaged in these devotional activities for a long time. Looking at his age, you can realise that physically he is not fit to undertake long journeys. But because of his intense devotion and strong faith in Bhagavan, he has been able to carry on this work. The Divine grace has been giving him all this abundant energy.

So far as the worship of the Padukas is concerned, you need not bother about what others think. Every man should take up such sacred activity to get nearer to God.

To get close to the Divine, you have to engage yourselves in activities which please the Divine. The supreme maxims of the Bharatiya culture are: "Speak the Truth, Follow Righteousness". When you adhere to these two maxims all your actions will be sacred.

### **The Purusharthas**

Of the four goals of human life prescribed by the scriptures, the first is Dharma (Righteousness). It is like the feet in the human body. The entire body rests on the feet. "Artha", the second goal, rests on the feet. Hence, the acquisition of wealth should be based on righteous means. The third goal is "Kama" (desires). For the fulfillment of desires you need the strength of the arms ("Bhuja-balam"). Both "Kama" and "Artha" are based on Dharma. Moksha is the culmination of a life based on Dharma.

Today people have forgotten Dharma and Moksha and are immersed only in Artha (acquisition of wealth) and Kama (the pursuit of sensual desires). For the realisation of the goal of human existence, you have to rely on the feet, namely, Dharma, and the head namely, Moksha (Liberation). This is the meaning of the symbolic description of the Cosmic Person in the Vedas. The face of the Cosmic Person symbolises the Brahmic Principle. The feet symbolise Dharma. Thus basing oneself on Dharma, one should pursue Artha and Kama to attain Moksha.

People should seek the Divine in all possible ways. In the worship of the Padukas, devotees should offer worship with all their heart and not as a mechanical ritual.

### **How to recite mantras**

For instance, when the chief priest was reciting the mantras, anyone would have been deeply moved by listening to them. Our pandit pronounced the words with extreme clarity. (Cheers) Let me not be misunderstood when I say that, whether in Tamilnadu, Kerala or even in Northern India, Sanskrit words are not pronounced correctly. But the pandit pronounced all the words very clearly this morning. Every syllable was pronounced in such a way that it appealed to the heart. His assistants were also closely following him.

Governor Burugula Ramakrishna Rao took one group to Badrinath. The priest in the temple there was a Nambudiri and a Sanskrit pandit. Yet, when the pandit was reciting the

massacre our Sanskrit!" The pandit was saying: "Jaanthaagaaram Bhujaga Jayanam Badmanaabham..."(laughter) instead of saying "Saanthaakaaram bhujagasayanam Padmanaabham"..What humiliation is inflicted on the Sanskrit language!

It is praiseworthy that a pandit living in Tamilnadu should pronounce Sanskrit mantras more clearly and correctly than even Andhras. (Cheers)

It is because of the help of such pandits that Subramania Chetty's burdens are lightened.

### **A blissful experience**

The spectacle you witnessed this morning was indeed a blissful experience for one and all. It looked as if all were in Vaikuntha (the Abode of the Supreme Lord) or Swarga (the abode of Indra). (Cheers) It was not at all a command performance. Everyone silently performed the puja (worship of the Padukas) with his/her full heart in it. The pandit explained the meaning of every word in the mantra. It is rare to find pandits who recite the mantras so clearly and explain their meaning intelligently. This has been the problem in Bharat for quite a long time. Very few are concerned about the well-being of society. People carry on their work, professing that "duty" is God. That was not the case with the pandit who officiated at the function today. It is thanks to such pandits that we have devotees who practise the rituals sincerely.

### **Dr. Gadhia and Swami**

Now, let me say a word about Dr. Gadhia (who had addressed the meeting earlier). You know about him. His grandfather, Kaka Dixit, was in Shirdi (cheers). He has not seen the old man. But I have seen him. Kaka Dixit's son came to Bhagavan and stayed with Swami for 30 years in Brindavan (cheers). He showed to Swami the diary written by Kaka Dixit. The Dixit family had relations with Swami which have continued to this day. Dixit stayed with his wife in Swami's ashram. He showed to Swami Kaka Dixit's diary. In it he had written what Shirdi Baba had told him: "Child! You will again be close to Baba. Whatever troubles may come, do not give up your faith." Then Gadhia came to Baba. I sent him to Manipal to study a course in Medicine. After completing his medical studies in Manipal he came to Bangalore. I told him that there was no point in his remaining in Bangalore and directed him to go to London.

In this manner, Gadhia and his ancestors have been associated with Sai! (Cheers) Like this many devotees have been associated with Swami over many lives. Without such association in the past it would not be possible for all of you to come here (cheers). You are not aware of this but I know it all. These sacred associations have been maintained over many life-times.

### **Association with Sai**

Thus, many of you have from immemorial times had links with the Atmic Self. This link is unbroken. It is eternal, infinite. Such sacred relationships should never be given up. All should return to the place wherefrom they came. That is the strident declaration in the Bhagavatam: "It is natural for every living creature to go back to the source from which it came". You have come

lightly the sacred journey of life.

People forget the route by which they came and are searching for new paths. Many approach me and ask: "Swami! Show a way." I tell them: "There is no need for Me to show you a path. You go back by the route you came."

Wherefrom did you come? Not from your mother. Nor from any particular place. The body came from the mother, but the Atma came from the Atma. You are not the body or the senses or the mind. You are the Atma alone. You are the son of immortality. Being an "Amritaputra" ("son of immortality"), why are you seeking this "anarutha" (untruth)? What is the way to immortality? Removal of immortality is the only way to immortality (cheers). If you get rid of evil qualities like attachment, hatred and envy, you will realise immortality. These bad traits make you remote from God. When you get rid of them, God becomes close to you.

### **"The Lord is with you"**

Hence, gradually you have to give up the animal qualities and develop godly qualities such as truth, righteousness, justice and morality. By a process of self-enquiry you can get rid of your animal qualities like anger. How long are you going to remain in the same round of birth and death without realising the goal of human existence? All pujas, rituals and penances are performed for this realisation. You have secured an extremely precious gift by your present birth. Do not waste it. Utilise every available moment for a worthwhile purpose. Devotees are yearning to realise the Divine by worshipping the Lotus feet and offering their worship to the Padukas. Have the conviction that when you have the sanctified Padukas with you, the Lord is also with you (cheers). When you enter the Mandir you leave your shoes out side. But the Lord's feet are present wherever His sandals are kept. Bear in mind this sacred idea. Live up to the conviction that the eternal Divine is omnipresent. Maintain purity and harmony in thought, word and deed. That is the way to secure Divine Wisdom ("Jnana-shuddhi").

Thanks to many meritorious lives in the past, you have got this sacred opportunity. Of the hundreds of millions in Bharat, how many have got this opportunity? Many who wished to come here have been unable to do so for one reason or another. Make the best use of the rare and sacred opportunity that has come your way.

Dr. Gadhia observed that many significant events are likely to take place before 1998 (cheers). (Dr. Gadhia had invited Swami for a big Paduka celebration to be held in Birmingham in 1998). In accordance with this desire, Subramania Chettiar should be blessed with the necessary health and strength (cheers). He is willing to take on any burden, but is physically weak. But his faith and determination will give him the strength he needs. Our Sastri (who officiated at the function in the Nilayam) should also take a resolve. He should spread the message of the worship of the Padukas among wider sections of the people and dispel the darkness of ignorance (cheers). Whoever carries on the divine mission, unaffected by success or failure, joy or sorrow, will be the recipient of God's grace. Krishna has declared that such a devotee is dear to Him. Such a devotee develops detachment towards all worldly concerns and is



pleasure or pain

The next quality a devotee should have is giving up attachment to the fruits of one's actions. Even the egoistic sense of doership should be given up. Everything belongs to the Divine. Engage yourself in good acts and experience the Divine. (Bhagavan then honoured the Pandit with a gold kankanam and fastened a gold wristlet on Subramania Chettiar. The entire gathering broke into applause. Bhagavan also presented shawls to the other pandits who had participated in the function.)

The memorable discourse concluded with the bhajan, "*Bhajan binaa sukha santhi nahi*" and the offer of Arati to Bhagavan.

**From Bhagavan's discourse in Kulwant Mandap on October 3, 1996**

**AVATAR VANI:**

### **The Devotees Ordeals and God's Grace Make It**

How should a devotee view the troubles and ordeals which confront him in life? Bhagavan gave three examples, two from the Bhagavatam and Bharatam, and one from the experience of two students who were involved in an accident in their eagerness to have darshan of Bhagavan, to show how the troubles and mishaps incidental to human existence may be seen as opportunities to think of God and secure God's grace.

In the course of His discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on October 22, Bhagavan said:

You must acquire the friendship of God. Once you acquire that friendship you can achieve anything. All happiness can be derived therefrom.

You know how Kuchela was a friend of Krishna in their boyhood. Because of his prolific progeny, Kuchela was immersed in a sea of troubles. His wife reminded him that if he went to Krishna, who was his boyhood friend at the Guru's ashram and who was now a ruler at Dwaraka, Krishna would relieve him of his poverty. While he had some apprehensions whether Krishna would remember him and receive him, he got over them and set out for Dwaraka. Though Kuchela was in tattered clothes, the moment Krishna learnt that his old friend had come, he rushed towards him and embraced him. He exclaimed: "How long ago is it since we last met? Where have you been all these years? How have you been faring?"

Kuchela remembered the Lord only because of his troubles.

Another example may be found in the Mahabharata. After completing their years of exile, the Pandavas returned to their capital. Happy over the safe return of their sons, Kunti went to

more you want? I shall fulfill your wishes." Kunti said: "Krishna! I don't need anything. I have to enjoy your support, your guidance and your nearness at all times. I must be blessed with troubles always. It is because my children experienced innumerable troubles during our exile in the forest, living on roots and fruits, that we found you were always with us, beside us and behind us and you saved us so many times. If we are to enjoy your proximity we have to face troubles."

### **Experience of two students**

In this context, let me reveal a significant episode in Sathya Sai's career which is not known to anyone. Every year summer courses used to be conducted (in Brindavan). In view of the growth in number of students at Brindavan, we undertook to build a new hostel for them. That year I took all the students to Ooty during the summer. All the arrangements for the summer course were completed successfully. Swami told the students a day before they were to leave Ooty: "Boys! You have had the chance to come to Ooty. You had better go on a sight-seeing trip and enjoy the grandeur and beauties of the Lord's creation." Swami asked them to go out sight-seeing, but they insisted on Swami also coming with them. The boys are a stubborn breed. Swami told them that if He came with them, large crowds would gather wherever He went and they would not be able to see anything. Modern boys have a stubbornness of their own. "They said they would not leave unless Swami also came with them. Swami relented and made arrangements for all the students to leave by buses for Dodabetta, the highest point in the Nilgiris range (above 8000 feet altitude). They wanted to take photographs with Swami on the top of the hill and Swami agreed to follow them to take photographs with them. Swami left half an hour later from Nandanavanam to Dodabetta. Two young men went to Nandanavanam to see Bhagavan. They were told that Swami had left for Dodabetta. Immediately the two young men got up on their motorcycle and started driving at high speed to catch up with Bhagavan's car on the road to Dodabetta. Their only anxiety was somehow to get a glimpse of Swami. Swami noticed the boys and wanted to know who they were. Someone in the car remarked: "They might be some rowdies." Swami remarked: "No, no. Without knowing the truth you should not make such remarks. They might be boys eager for Swami's darshan." When Swami's car was taking a turning, the boys came at high speed near Swami's car. At the turning the motorcycle fell on a side. Both the boys fell down from the vehicle. Immediately, I stopped my car, went near them, wiped the mud from their bodies, and enquired of them: "Boys! Have you suffered any injuries! Why did you drive at such a high speed? You should not have done so. If you wanted to see me, you could have come to Nandanavanam". I sought to comfort them and gave them two Kamala oranges to eat (prolonged cheers). The two boys, who were local college students, said: "Swami! We came to have your darshan. Because of this mishap, we not only got Swami's darshan, but also sparshan, sambhashan and prasadam (cheers). If this accident had not happened, would Swami have come near us, wiped our backs and spoken so endearingly to us? Swami! We yearned for your darshan. We earnestly sought you. We got all three: darshan, sparshan, sambhashan (see you touch you and speak with you). Any trouble is worthwhile if these three can be got. Please give us always such troubles".

in the moment of his troubles, He is not likely to show at other times. Of course, the Lord thinks of the devotee even at happy occasions. For the Lord there is nothing like pleasure and pain.

### **Kuchela's boundless blessing**

When Kuchela was in Krishna's palace he forgot to ask Krishna what he had come to ask. But there is no need to ask the all-knowing Lord. After lavishing all the hospitality on him, Krishna sent Kuchela back in a palanquin. After going some distance Kuchela reflected on his folly. "I enjoyed all the sumptuous feast Krishna gave me, but I forgot all about the plight of my children. I forgot to ask Krishna what I had gone to ask him. What a fool I am!" But when he neared his old home, what he saw was a magnificent mansion. His wife was dressed in fine clothes and was shining with all ornaments. She came out to welcome Kuchela like a queen. Kuchela wondered whether she was some princess or his wife. She approached Kuchela and asked him: "Lord! What did Krishna tell you?" Kuchela described how lovingly Krishna rushed to meet him and embraced him endearingly. "How can I describe his encompassing love. He is love itself. Is there anyone who could confer countless blessings in return for a handful of Kuchela's parched rice!" (Swami sang a Telugu song). "What a fool I was not to realise the boundless grace of such a Lord!" Reflecting like this Kuchela went round the mansion, deeply moved by Krishna's love for him.

### **Believers will never suffer**

Nothing will be lacking for those who believe in God. Many non-believers have suffered in life in various ways, but no one who had full faith in God has ever suffered. There are none such sufferers, none at all (cheers). Unfortunately many suffer because of lack of faith. Very often they suffer disastrous losses. On the other hand, the real believers are often carried from the depths of life to the Abode of the Lord!

Hence, faith is supremely important. Faith is everything. This faith can be acquired and strengthened only through love.

### **Devotion of Andhra villagers**

During the past four days, innumerable devotees from all parts of Andhra Pradesh have come here and experienced the bliss of heaven on earth (cheers). All of them are utterly innocent people. Their hearts are pure and unsullied. They have firm faith in God. Bharatiya culture today survives to some extent only in the villages.

No one can adequately describe the joy experienced by these innocent villagers. That is true devotion. All other devotees present in Prasanthi Nilayam were deeply moved by the devotion of these Andhra village folk. I bless all of them to be happy, to be ever blissful and lead sacred lives.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Prema muditha manase Kaho: Rama! Rama! Rain!*")

### **The Conquest of Attachment**

*With what ingenuity does the tongue  
Manage to move about in the mouth  
Without getting caught between the teeth!  
Man also should behave likewise  
To avoid the perils of life.  
Forget not these good words, Oh man!*

Sankara looked upon man's existence in the world as that of an actor on the stage, who plays his part, by being born, growing and dying. "Man's life is like a drop of water shimmering without rest on a lotus leaf. It is filled with grief and sorrow. Give up attachment to this life and start worshipping Govinda, Oh man lacking in wisdom." (Telugu Poem)

Human life is like a house filled with many rooms in the form of desires. Desires and disappointments are the order of the day. Doubts are rampant. Man is racked by fears. Fear haunts him wherever he goes or remains. He is caught up in a maze of troubles. How is he to escape from it? Even the happiness which he seems to derive from life is coupled with fear. There is no freedom from fear. How is it to be got? Where there is no attachment, there is no fear. How is this state to be got? By proximity to the Divine.

Sankara exhorted mankind to banish fear by cultivating detachment (Vairagya) and journeying towards the Self (Atma). It is through Self-Realisation that the true nature of fear is understood. Joy and sorrow, profit and loss, light and darkness are pairs of opposites in which the absence of one is the sign of its opposite. For both the root cause is the Atma. All things originate from the Atma. Here is a flower. It has many petals. These petals appear distinct from each other. But all petals have emerged from the same single stem. The stem is the seat of the Atma, from which the petals have emanated. But we view the flower as a single object. The flower is one, but the petals are many. The petals have come out of the one stem

### **The ocean, waves and foam**

The analogy is applicable to the endless number of waves arising on the ocean. The waves are many and distinct. But they are of the same stuff as the ocean. From the waves arises the foam, which has the same properties as the waves and the ocean though different in form and name. These three are based on the ocean. The three represent the three kinds of proofs in logic: Pratyaksha (direct perception), Paroksha (indirect evidence) and Anumana (inference). This is the logical basis for Advaita. It is termed "Triputi"—the thee-in-one, the Atmic Principle. In the human, this three-in-one is found in the unity of the body, mind and Atma. The body functions

For humanness, the Atma is the basis. This is the doctrine of Non-Dualism.

Ignoring this truth and pursuing the myriad ephemeral objects of the phenomenal world, people ultimately come to a realisation of the Atmic Principle.

### **Siddhartha's discovery**

(Bhagavan then related the story of Buddha's Enlightenment.) After a long period Suddhodhana had a son, named Siddhartha. The King kept Siddhartha entirely within the palace so that the boy should have no knowledge of the sufferings in the world outside. Once Suddhodhana introduced his son to a high-souled pandit who had come to the palace. The pandit was an oracle. He told the king: "Suddhodhana! This lad will become a renunciant. Moreover he will become a great teacher of wisdom to the people." Suddhodhana was alarmed on hearing this. Apprehending that the prince might develop "Vairagya" (total detachment) if he went out, he kept the prince from going out. The king got him married when he reached his eighteenth year and crowned him Heir-Apparent.

After his coronation as Yuvaraja, Siddhartha desired to go round the kingdom. There was no meaning in a ruler confining himself to his palace. He should know how the people lived. Hence he wanted to go round the country. Despite his apprehensions, the king agreed to the prince's request because he was now married and was unlikely to break away.

### **Old age, disease and death**

Siddhartha got into his chariot and set out on a tour of the capital. He saw an old woman, bent with age, trudging on the road with a stick. He asked the charioteer: "Who is this strange creature moving on the road." "Lord! When one grows old, the back is bent and one becomes infirm. This is an old woman." The prince asked: "Does this happen to everyone as a result of old age?" He replied: "It is inescapable. It is a law of nature".

The chariot went further. A sick man was sitting under a tree, coughing and wailing. The prince asked what the matter was with the man under the tree. The charioteer replied: "The human body is subject to a variety of ailments. That man is suffering from a severe ailment. No one can tell when anyone may be afflicted with disease". The prince took note of this.

The chariot proceeded further. A dead body was being carried by four persons on a bier. The prince asked what it was that the four men were carrying. He replied: "It is a dead body." "What is a dead body?" asked the prince. The charioteer replied: "A dead body is without life". "What about us?" asked the prince. "We are Sivam (alive)". The prince asked: "Does everyone lose his life?" "Yes. Death is unavoidable, sometime or other." The prince heard this. He dropped the sword in his hand and returned to the palace.

He did not eat that night. He went to bed, but could not sleep. By his side, his wife Yashodhara and his young son were sleeping. He looked at them intensely. The thought flashed in his mind: "All is sorrow" ("Sarvam dukham") Then he declared: "Sarvam Bhayam, Bhayam,

("Everything is transient, transient, transient".) Then, he declared: "Sarvam soonyam, soonyam, soonyam" ("All is emptiness") Making these declarations, he left the palace.

What great renunciation is this! We see any number of ailing persons, old people and dead bodies. How many get the feeling of renunciation after seeing these scenes? Only Siddhartha got this feeling. To acquire such a control over the senses (as to give up all attachments) God's grace is necessary.

### **The jitendriya kingdom**

Likewise, a prince went to a forest for hunting. Feeling tired and thirsty, he went to an ashram for rest and water to drink. The sage of the hermitage asked the prince who he was and what brought him to the ashram. He said: "My name is Jitendriya. I have come from the kingdom of Jitendriya. I need some water". The sage offered water and asked him to sit. The sage wanted to find out whether the stranger was one who lived up to his name. ("Jitendriya" means one who has conquered his senses.) There are many persons who have names like "Dharmaraju", but who belie their names.

The sage asked the prince to hand over his royal clothes to him and wear an ascetic's robes himself. He took the prince's clothes, sprinkled some red powder on them and set out for the kingdom of Jitendriya. At the palace gate, the sentry greeted the sage with reverence and asked him the object of his visit. The sage told them that the prince had been killed by a wild animal in the forest and that he had brought the prince's clothes. He asked them to convey this message to the king. The gatekeeper smiled and asked: "Why have you brought these clothes here? Who is free from death? Everyone that is born is bound to die. Birth and death go together". (Swami explained the practice in the railways to stamp on every railway wagon the date on which it has to be returned to the workshop for repair and repainting. Likewise everybody has a "return" date, though it is not visible.)

### **Indifference to death**

After hearing the sentry's words, the sage went in to meet the king himself. He told the king that his son had died and started crying. While the Sanyasi was wailing, the king was having a laugh. The king said to him: "You are wearing the ochre robe. But your words are unbecoming of a renunciant. Why do you cry? This is no matter for grief or worry. At dusk hundreds of birds return to a tree for rest. The next morning they fly away. What is the relationship between the different birds? Likewise on the tree of my family, birds like wife and children rest for a while and depart. No one can tell when and where any of them will leave. There is no cause for grief over their departure. It is a law of nature." The sage felt that the king was a heartless man. He then went to the queen, thinking that as a mother she would grieve over the death of her son. He told her: "Mother! Your son is dead. Here are his clothes." She too laughed. "Oh Sadhu! You are one who has renounced everything in the world. How can you entertain any concern for the ephemeral? Life is like a choultry where wayfarers stay for a while and then pass on. Each has his own time of departure. There is no need to grieve when any one leaves the world."

Then the sage went to the prince's wife to find out whether she at least reacted differently. He broke the news about the death of her husband. She remarked: "When it rains, leaves fall away from a tree. When there is a flood, two pieces of wood come together for a while and separate again. In this ocean of life I am one such piece. The prince was another. We came together and we have gone apart. Why be surprised or lament over this? For all these, the cause is either attachment or possessiveness. The events themselves are not to be blamed. They are bound to happen. Why worry about them?"

### **True detachment**

The sage realised that what the prince had said about the kingdom was all true. Yet, he wanted to test the prince himself. He returned to the hermitage and exclaimed before the prince: "Oh prince! Your kingdom has been overrun by invaders and your father and mother are kept as prisoners. You must leave immediately to recover the kingdom and release your parents. Get ready for war."

The prince replied: "All that has happened is according to the will of God. I did not bring that kingdom with me when I was born. Can I take it with me when I die? Why should I wage war to recover it? It is not my kingdom. My kingdom is the kingdom of the Spirit (Atma). I am striving to realise it. That is the Kingdom of Heaven. That is what I seek to secure. It cannot be got by waging war. It has to be won through love alone. I have no interest in other kingdoms."

### **Be true to your role**

Then, the sanyasi prostrated before the prince and confessed: "We don the robes of renunciants, but we have none of the qualities of true renunciants. How many householders are leading lives free from worldly attachments."

(Swami related another story to drive home the point that whatever role one has to play in life, he should be true to it. Once an actor appeared before the court of a king in the guise of Sankaracharya, declaring in strident terms the unreality of all human relationships and the impermanence of worldly possessions. The actor gave such a powerful exposition of Advaita that the king directed his minister to present the actor with a plate of gold coins. But the "Sankaracharya" firmly refused to accept the present saying that it would be unworthy of him to receive it in his role as Sankaracharya. The next day the same actor appeared in the role of a beautiful dancer and performed an excellent dance before the king. The king was so much impressed with the dance that he directed the minister to present a plate of gold coins to the dancer. This time, the "dancer" declined to accept what was offered as too small a reward for his performance. The minister who realised that the dancer was the same person who had come as Sankara the previous day, then asked the actor what was the reason for his refusal to accept the plate of gold coins the previous day and to ask for more that day. The actor explained that he declined the previous offer in keeping with his role as a renunciant. But, in the role of a dancer he was free to ask for more as it was natural for dancers to make as much money as they could).

### **Sankara's call to humanity**

human values and practise them. Otherwise they would be betraying their true role in life. Sankara went round the country exhorting people to lead spiritual lives, shedding their animal qualities. His disciples imbibed the essence of Sankara's doctrines and became proficient in expounding Advaita. For a time the Advaitic doctrine held sway all over Bharat

In course of time, however, the doctrine lost its hold. Students! I do not want you all to become sanyasins and to give up everything. All that I want you to do is to carry on your duties, place your faith in God and realise that there is one fundamental Reality underlying all things. When you get this realisation, detachment will develop in you of its own accord. Detachment is not acquired by compulsion. As love of God grows, indifference to worldly things develops naturally.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Bhaja Govindam! Bhaja Govindam!*"

### **From Bhagavan's discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 10-9-1996**

#### ***A MEMORABLE OCTOBER:***

#### **Sapthasahasra Kalasa—Abhishekam in Prasanthi Nilayam**

After the "Maha-abhishekam" for 1008 Padukas in the first week of October, yet another stupendous devotional function took place in the third week of October of a magnitude not witnessed in Prasanthi Nilayam ever before. Although described as a "Sapthasahasra Kalasa-Abhishekam"—a ceremony for performing the sacred abhishekam to seven thousand "Kalasas" (vessels containing sanctified water from many sacred rivers)—by the time the actual function took place, the number of devotee couples eager to perform the abhishekam in the Divine presence of Bhagavan had risen to the astonishing figure of 11,000!

The organisers of the Guntur Sathya Sai Seva Samiti were hard put to it to make all the arrangements for the accommodation of eleven thousand couples bringing the kalasas from every part of Andhra Pradesh, besides over ten thousand devotees from A. P. who wished to be present on such a unique and sacred occasion.

The three-day programme included a Ladies' Day on October 19th, the magnificent Kalasa-abhishekam on the 20th and Bhagavan sprinkling the sacred water on tens of thousands of devotees in Sai Kulwant Mandap and outside on the morning of the 21st. The bliss experienced by one and all of the devotees present on the three days is indescribable. Prasanthi Nilayam, with its resplendent decorations, flags and festoons, looked as a veritable paradise for them. The devotees were totally unmindful of the discomfort and inconveniences caused by very heavy rains on the 19th and 20th. Bhagavan's darshan and blessing alone mattered for them.



such a unique and holy function in the Divine presence of Bhagavan.

The Sri Sathya Sai Mahila Vibhag of Andhra Pradesh (the women's wing of the Sai Organisation in the state) had the privilege of celebrating October 19th as Ladies Day. The Sai Kulwant Mandap had been suitably decorated for the occasion with banners carrying the greeting, "Om Sri Sathya Sai Ram", and pictures of the pantheon of Hindu gods and goddesses and symbols of Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram.

Precisely at 7 a.m. Bhagavan was received in the Mandap with Poorna Kumbham and Vedic chants, while a smart troupe of ladies' band played appropriate tunes to welcome Bhagavan.

Bhagavan inaugurated the day's function by lighting the sacred lamps on the stage. After Bhagavan had taken His seat, a crowded programme of folk dances and drama sequences was presented by Bal Vikas children from the different districts of Andhra Pradesh. The items included tribal dances, chakki dance, Rasaleela, Kolattam and a scene from the life of Shirdi Baba. The rally was a pleasing attempt to present the cultural and religious scene in Andhra Pradesh. Children from Vizag brought a boat symbolising the boat of devotion that is needed for man to cross the ocean of worldly existence. A tableau on unity of religions was a fitting finale to the programme. After Arati to Bhagavan, prasadam blessed by Him was distributed to all the devotees.

In the afternoon, a meeting was held in the Sai Kulwant Mandap. Srimati Choodamani spoke about the Divine as Mother and the significance of Durga-ashtami celebrations. Srimati Lalita spoke on the significance of the Gayatri Mantra and hailed Bhagavan Baba as Sai Mata, the Universal Divine Mother.

Bhagavan released on the occasion a special number of "Mahila", the journal of the Mahila Vibhag of A. P. Sai Organisation.

Bhagavan, in His discourse, extolled the role of women in sanctifying the house and moulding the character of children and deprecated the tendency among modern women in Bharat to prefer careers in different professions to the sacred task of making their houses holy shrines for the family. Swami referred to the lives of great women like Sita, Damayanti, Savitri and others, who stood as noble examples of ideal womanhood for all times.

The function concluded with Arati to Bhagavan.

### **Kalasa-abhishekam**

October 20th is a memorable day in Sathya Sai Saga. It was on that day 56 years ago, in 1940, the fourteen-year Sathyanarayana Raju cast off his books and announced His Avataric mission in the authentic accent of the Divine. He left His brother's home, cast off His books and declared: "My devotees are waiting for me". That was the beginning of the greatest spiritual movement of

creed and sect. To celebrate the anniversary of this epochal event and to pay their homage to Bhagavan in the seventieth year of His present incarnation, devotees all over the Andhra Pradesh conceived of a Sathasahasra (7000) Kalasa Maha-abhishekam at Prasanthi Nilayam which would be a unique spiritual ceremony of a kind never attempted before. The moment the idea was announced, devotees vied with each other to participate in the ceremony and what was intended to be a 7000-Kalasams function grew to a prodigious 11,000 Kalasams. The Guntur Samiti rose to the occasion. Arrangements were made for securing 1,000 copper kalasas (vessels) from Jagadrig in Haryana, 11,000 flower baskets and 11,000 steel plates from Guntur, with the Sarva Dharma Symbol inscribed on them. Sacred water from 27 holy rivers of Bharat—from the Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati (Prayag) in the north, to Brahmaputra in the east, the Narmada in the west, Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri and Tambraparni in the south—was brought for the unique abhishekam ceremony, proclaiming incidentally the spiritual unity of Bharat from the most ancient times.

A wooden chariot, a masterpiece of the carpenter's art, was specially made for Bhagavan, with Swami's basic message of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema, painted on the sides. Four sphatika lingams and a sphatika idol of Ganapati were got from Gujarat. For the religious ceremony on the stage, thirteen silver kalasas were made, besides a poorna-kumbham and a plate for washing the feet of Bhagavan during the ceremony. Two giant umbrellas, like those used in temple processions, chamaras and sacred maces were also got for the grand procession to welcome Bhagavan for the ceremony. As part of the ceremony 1125 lamps arranged in the form of a sivalinga to be lit during the Kalasa-abhishekam, were brought from Madras.

Precisely at 7 a.m. Bhagavan got into the beautiful chariot amidst Vedic chants and the playing of sacred tunes by a smart band troupe from Krishna district. Boys and young men performing vigorously the 'chakka' bhajans headed the procession.

The devotee couples who had come with the Kalasas had already taken their seats in the Sai Kulwant Mandap. Those who could not be accommodated in the Mandap were seated in the Poornachandra Auditorium, where through TV and loudspeakers arrangements had been made for their participation in the morning's proceedings.

Alighting from the chariot in the central aisle of the Sai Kulwant Mandap, Bhagavan proceeded to the glittering stage in front of the Ganesha idol and lit four sacred silver lamps to mark the inauguration of the Kalasa-Abhishekam ceremony.

Thirteen silver kalasams containing water from 27 holy rivers of Bharat were placed at the Altar for the Kalasa Aaradhana (worship of the sacred vessels).

The Divya Sphatika-linga was garlanded with a necklace of precious gems. In the Poornachandra Auditorium two Sphatika-lingams were kept on the stage for simultaneous performance of the Kalasa-abhishekam by the devotees there.

with the mantra: "Om namo Bhagavathe Rudraaya". Then the priests recited the "Namakam" and "Chamakam" for the abhisheka "archana", in which the devotee couples joined. The Rudra-abhishekam was done according to the prescribed procedure in the presence of Bhagavan. While the abhishekam was going on, Bal Vikas children from Guntur performed Chakka bhajans.

At the end of the ceremony the sacred water was taken round in a big bowl from which Bhagavan sprinkled the water on all devotees. Everyone felt ecstatic as drops of the sanctified water fell on him or her. Bhagavan was tireless in going round the devotees present in the Sai Kulwant Mandap and the Poornachandra Auditorium and elsewhere around the Mandir. As the great function concluded, full throated cries of "Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Ki Jai" went forth from thousands of devotees.

An effulgent Bhagavan was overflowing with love as he was offered the Mahamangala Arati.

Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees.

In connection with the three-day celebrations cultural programmes had been arranged in the Poornachandra Auditorium. On the 19th, the Mahila Vibhag presented a drama, "Pothana" (the author of Andhra Bhagavatam) by Bat-Vikas children and a Kuchipudi dance drama, "Mohini-Bhasmasura". On the 20th there was a superb performance of "Bhaama Kalaapam" by masterly exponents of the Kuchipudi style. On the 21st, veterans of the Andhra Stage of yesteryears presented a drama, "Krishna Rayabhaaram" (Krishna's peace mission to the Kauravas) in the traditional Telugu opera style.

Bhagavan was present for all the performances and presented shawls to the artistes.

***A MEMORABLE OCTOBER:***

### **Festivals Galore in Prasanthi Nilayam**

Devotees who have been missing in recent years Bhagavan's Vedapurusha Saptah Yajnam could realise this October that the yajnam has given place to mass ceremonies by thousands of devotees which have provided ecstatic occasions for the upsurge of devotion among Bhagavan's ever growing multitude of devotees.

It never rains but pours, says the proverb. What we witnessed in October in Prasanthi Nilayam was not only a very heavy downpour, but also a veritable flood of devotees participating in two memorable series of functions.

The first of these was a four-day programme, which included a series of homams performed in shed number 27 on October 1 preparatory to the performance of "Maha

with scrupulous regard for such rituals. Sri P.S. Jayarama Sastri, the veteran pandit from Tamilnadu, conducted the homams for Ganapathi, Navagrahas, Sudarsana, Dhanvantari and the 1008 Sai Padukas. On the morning of October 2 the Poornahuti was performed.

Thereafter the devotees from Tamilnadu took in procession the consecrated marble idol of Dhanvantari, the presiding deity for health and medicine, to the accompaniment of Vedic chants and Nadaswaram music, to the Super Speciality Hospital in Prasanthi Gram. The beautifully carved idol, about three feet in height showing the Lord of Ayurveda carrying Amrita (the nectar of the gods) in a vessel, was placed on a pedestal specially erected on a circular platform midway between the gates of the Hospital and the magnificent central dome of the Hospital. Precisely at 9:30 a.m., Bhagavan arrived at the hospital, went up the steps and materialised a scroll of mystic symbols to be placed below the idol to sanctify it and invest it with Divine energy. The idol was on a full-blown lotus base serving as the pedestal. Swami went round the idol and gave precise instructions for its proper orientation in relation to the hospital. The installation ceremonies were then gone through and Arati was offered to Bhagavan.

As the people go to the hospital they can have the benedictory vision of Dhanvantari before they go in for treatment. (The Dhanvantari idol is a pious offering of the Sathya Sai Paduka Trust, Madurai, to Bhagavan.)

October 3 witnessed one of the most thrilling soul-inspiring functions to be held in Prasanthi Nilayam. As 1008 devoted couples carrying consecrated Padukas on their heads filed past Bhagavan in a long procession in the Sai Kulwant Mandap, chanting "Om Sai Ram", it was a sight for the gods. The couples were seated in the Mandap and in the Poornachandra Auditorium for an impressive "Maha abhishekam" ceremony of a unique kind. As the high-priest recited each mantra for the abhishekam, explaining its meaning in Tamil, English and Hindi, the ceremony became a real spiritual exercise rather than a routine ritual. All the devotee couples participated in the ceremony with intense concentration and devotion.

The occasion of the mass abhishekam function was availed of by the Sai Paduka Trust to offer to Bhagavan a glittering golden puja Mandap, with Bhagavan's photo installed in it, and a pair of small-sized golden Padukas in the shape of a conch and a discus (shankha and chakra, the symbols of Vishnu), a silver "Akhand Deep" for the Mandir and a revolving ornamental chair with silver carvings. All these were placed on the stage during the abhishekam ceremony.

The Maha abhishekam concluded with Arati to Bhagavan, who honoured the Chief Priest and others with shawls. All the devotees with Padukas simultaneously offered Arati to Bhagavan in their respective places.

In the evening there was a prodigious gathering of devotees in and outside the Sai Kulwant Mandap to listen to Bhagavan's memorable discourse (published separately in the issue). Bhagavan's discourse was preceded by an emotion-packed speech from Dr. Gadhia, who had come from U.K. along with many overseas devotees to participate in the Paduka Maha

had been sanctified by the feet of Bhagavan and charged with His Divine potency. "These Padukas are not ordinary sandals. They have the imprint of the Divine". He compared them to the Padukas of Sri Rama which Bharata took for worship in Ayodhya till Rama's return from exile in the forest. He emphasised the great responsibility resting on the devotees not only to share the Divine benefits flowing from the Padukas with others, but also to combine the worship of the Padukas with the sadhana of spiritual transformation. Devotees must resolve to give up all bad practices like smoking, drinking and meat eating. Starting with self-purification they should practise the teachings of Bhagavan with regard to human values.

In conclusion, Dr. Gadhia prayed to Bhagavan to perm it the U.K. devotees to hold a similar Paduka function in Birmingham in 1998 and bless it with His divine presence.

Dr. Gadhia then sang melodiously a bhajan song beginning with the words: "Omkarapriya Sai Rama!"

On the 4th, all the devotees carrying Padukas went round the Mandir, with Bhagavan blessing them as they passed. There were as many as 746 overseas couples amongst them. The worship of Padukas had been transformed from a limited exercise confined to devotees in Tamilnadu into an international movement in a few years.

The four-day programme concluded with Arati to Bhagavan, with thousands joining in the chorus. "Jai Sadguru Deva".

**AMRITA DHARA:**

## **Sankara's Call to Youth**

*What does it matter  
If the petty-minded  
Slight noble souls?  
Does the mighty elephant lose  
Its grandeur when dogs bark?*

*Embodiments of the Divine Atma!*

All objects in the world which you see display some kind of colour. We think that these colours are natural to those objects. It is not so. The colours are really a reflection of our own vision. The sky appears blue when we look at it. The ocean appears dark blue in colour. We say that the sky is blue, the ocean is blue. This is incorrect. Neither the sky nor the ocean is blue in colour. It is the vastness of space and the depths of the ocean which produce this impression of bluishness. When you take a handful of seawater and look at it you will find that it is colourless. It will not show the colour that you fancy.

object is not perceivable. Equally, the true form is not apparent.

Electrical energy is generated from a hydro-electric power station. The electric current is not visible to us, though the different uses to which the energy is put are obvious. Likewise all beings, all living creatures, emerge from the Atmic Principle. But this Principle is not apparent. We can see the beings arising from this Principle and their behaviour, good and bad.

### **A promise fulfilled**

After Sankara propagated his Advaitic doctrine froth Kashi, there was an assembly of great scholars in the holy city. Sankara, who was in that assembly, closed his eyes for a moment and experienced the vision of his mother in great distress. Immediately he dispersed the assembly and left for Kaladi. He reached his mother in her last moments, as promised, administered Tulsi water to her lips and discharged his duties to the mother.

At that time, the people of Kaladi did not view with approval the actions of Sankara, because in their view, one who had taken to sanyasa should not revert to the activities of a householder and perform rituals. "Sanyasa" means giving up all desires. File view of the orthodox pandits was that once a person had taken to sanyasa he should not perform the last rites for a mother or a father which are the obligations of a householder.

To enable the students to understand the implications of this incident, I shall explain what sanyasa means. Before one takes to sanyasa, the "Viraga Homa" is performed which signifies that the person dies as it were and gives up all his previous worldly commitments and enters on a new life, assuming a new form and wearing a new robe. The old form is cast away and the former name is also given up. He gets a new name related to the ascetic order. The suffix "Ananda" is tacked on to the name, though few of them experience Ananda! After going through this ceremony, where is the place for mother or father?

### **Swami's visit to Rishikesh**

In this context, I should like to recall an incident which happened when I was travelling with Burugula Ramakrishna Rao, the then Governor of Uttar Pradesh. He was a good devotee and was proficient in a number of languages. He was a very intelligent person. He resolved to make the trip to Badrinath and Kedarnath "in the company of the Lord Himself (Bhagavan Baba)". On learning that Swami was going to Badrinath nearly 200 devotees joined Bhagavan's group. The Ramakrishna Rao couple were very pure and pious people and every day they would take their food only after the 200 devotees with Swami had taken their food. Such was their devotion! When the devotees sat for the meals, Ramakrishna Rao himself would serve water for all of them. He would not allow his A.D.C. or others to do this service. He used to declare: "I am a servant of Swami, not a Governor".

### **Ramakrishna Rao's humility**

Ramakrishna Rao was previously Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh at Hyderabad. When Swami went there during that period, thousands of persons were lined up in a queue for darshan

should like the students to realise what a tender heart Ramakrishna Rao had. He joined the queue. "The inspector General of Police approached Ramakrishna Rao and appealed to him to come separately and not join in the queue. Ramakrishna Rao told him: "Politically I may be Chief Minister. Spiritually I am a cheap devotee! I am not such a great devotee." Such was the devotional spirit of Ramakrishna Rao!

### **Swami and Sivananda**

All of us reached Rishikesh. Ramakrishna Rao had arranged for the stay of the entire party in a big guesthouse and nearby cottages. At that time, Sivananda and a group of his devotees came to the guesthouse and requested Swami to visit Swami Sivananda's ashram the next day, which happened to be Sivananda's seventieth birthday. Swami remarked: "It is not Sivananda's birthday but Kuppuswamy's birthday. Before he assumed the name, Sivananda, as a renunciant, his name was Kuppuswamy. He was a doctor. That Kuppuswamy ceased to exist with the taking of Sanyasa. He then adopted the name Sivananda. That was 26 years ago. Hence the Swami is only 26 years old as Sivananda. It is the 70th Birthday for Kuppuswamy and only the 26th Birthday for Sivananda." Sivananda said: "Swami! No one has told me this truth so far in this forceful manner."

This body is 70 years old. People recognise the physical, but do not recognise the basis that sustains it. This truth can be understood only by Divine personalities like avatars and not by others. From the moment of birth till the end of this body it will bear one form and one name.

People, who profess Advaita, often remember their pre-sanyasa life and continue to think of it while carrying on their life as renunciants.

### **Cremation in the backyard**

Sankara was confronted with a difficult situation. No one in his village was willing to help him. He had to perform the obsequies for his mother. The local Nambudiri Brahmins declared that they could not touch the body. "They felt that Sankara was going against scriptural injunctions.

Utterly helpless, Sankara carried the body himself to the backyard of the house and cremated it. What Sankara did then is practised even today in Kaladi. When any elders pass away, their bodies are cremated in the backyard of their houses. There is no separate cremation ground for them.

When you go to Kerala you will find houses facing the street but the backyard will be open space. Anyone who goes there will have to take a purificatory bath.

In this manner Sankara fulfilled the promise he gave to his mother.

the people of Kaladi. Sankara was walking all the way to Kashi, with just a stick in his hand and an oil torch to light his way at night.

### **Advice to the young**

Looking at young men and women going about on leis way, Sankara remarked to his disciples that young people were keener about sensuous pleasures than to enquire about the Atma. It is a pity that people are attached to the body which is a container of many filthy objects. They are carried away by the external physical attractions of the body. It is a crying shame! What a pity that people should be so attached to this impermanent body! How long can youth-hood last? Sankara then and there taught the people about the transitoriness of carnal pleasures.

His message was a warning to youth to be very careful in the life they led. They should give up attachment to the body. (In this context Swami related at length the story of a prince who wanted to marry a merchant's daughter for her beauty. The girl who was devoted to God and wished to remain single, devised a plan to rid the prince of his infatuation. She sent word that she would agree to marry the prince if he approved of her after a week. Meanwhile she took a series of purgatives, collected all the purgings in vessels and went to meet the prince. By that time she was so emaciated that all her youthful charm had gone. She told the prince that the beauty he saw in her was all contained in the vessels. The prince learnt the lesson and decided also to remain single and devote himself to serve God.)

### **Percept and practice**

Sankara sought in this manner to turn the minds of the people away from sensual pleasures to thoughts of God. Sankara did not call upon all young men to take to sanyasa. He exhorted them to do their duty and dedicate the body to the service of the Divine. He preached the truth, practised it and broadcast it to the world.

Young people today have become slaves of the senses and are behaving like the lower animals.

Sankara pointed out how worldly life is like the scenes on a screen. They come and go, but the screen remains. He declared: "Brahma Sathyam, Jagat mithya." (The Self is real. The world is illusory). Sankara also declared: "Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat." ("The Universe is permeated by God.") When scholars pointed out the contradiction between the two statements, Sankara said: Worldly life is illusory because it is continually "coming and going". At the same time, this worldly life is lived like the moving scenes on a permanent screen. In this process the world and the Divine become one as it were like the oneness of the screen and the pictures on it. This is the basis for the statement: "Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat." Hence, the Upanishadic declaration that the whole cosmos is dwelt in by God.

### **Advaita and worldly duties**

This was the non-dualism preached by Sankara. Consider the Divine as the fundamental basis and lead your worldly life recognising its impermanence. Without the Divine the cosmos



beings. It may be called by different names. The Eternal Divine is birthless and nameless.

(Swami described Sankara's successful debates with Mandana Misra and his wife, Ubhayabharathi, both of whom took to sanyasa thereafter. Sankara then went to Kashmir.)

### **Atonement in Kashmir**

The ruler of Kashmir was a great patron of scholars. Sankara wanted to defeat them in debates. The moment Sankara entered Kashmir, the gates of the temple of Kanakadurga closed. All the efforts to open them proved fruitless. All the pandits went to the temple and prayed to the goddess. In answer to their prayers the Goddess spoke in an ethereal voice: "Sankara is a great preceptor (Acharya). But he suffers from one taint. Only when the taint is removed will these doors open." Sankara then sang hymns in praise of Siva. Sankara realised that he had committed a mistake in entering the dead body of the king of Kashi to acquire the experience of a householder for carrying on the debate with Ubhayabharathi, the wife of Mandana Misra. To atone for this lapse he decided on a eleven days' fast, without food or water, to perform a Tapas. On the twelfth day, the doors of the temple opened of their own accord. This showed the power of Sankara's determination and penance.

Krishnamurthy and Sandipan Chatterjee (who had spoken earlier) referred to "Prema" and called upon the students to cultivate love. What is the kind of love they should develop? Sankara has given the answer. The love should arise from the Atma. True prayer should stem from the soul and not the body. That love is God. Live in love.

### **Develop detachment**

Sankara continuously preached the doctrine of detachment to young people because he realised that attachments developed over many lives cannot be shed by listening to one or two speeches (Swami related in this context the story of a businessman who feared that his son might develop aversion to the world if he listened to the discourse of a pandit who was expounding the greatness of renunciation. The pandit assured the merchant that one day's talk was not going to reform his son, when a series of talks had had no effect on the father) When there was need for constant purity in daily life, the efforts at spiritual cleansing should be continuous. This was the way Sankara was preaching to the young the philosophy of renunciation and detachment. Students should hold fast to God as the only true friend and supporter. When you have firm faith, the Divine will manifest Himself to you. This is the truth, the truth and nothing but the Truth.

Today several pandits expound Advaita, but few practise it. Advaita should be lived not merely repeated in words! Realise the truth: "Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma!"

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan: "*Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma!*"

**From Bhagavan's discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 9-9-1996**

## **The avatar has come!**

*Behold! I took ahead and see  
In Revelations' Mystery  
A Holy Man on Steed of white,  
With bow and crown he goes to fight.  
The arrow of His bow is Truth,  
The crown upon His head, the proof  
That He is King to rule this age  
And all in Revelations' page.*

*"Holdback the winds!" the angel said,  
"Till seal of God he on the head  
Of all who praise the Living God,  
who rules with love instead of Rod."*

*Who can afford to jest with truth?  
Who tarries seeking further proof?  
Have faith, have trust, heart full of love  
And trust in guidance from above.*

*Sal Baba, Avatar of Light,  
Is He Who rides the horse of white  
And His the Seal of which was told  
Protecting all who fit the mould.*

*Oh Revelations' cryptic line,  
Unfolding in this very time,  
With cloaks of darkness, cloaks of light  
And winged monsters all in flight.  
A fairytale 'tis surely not,  
Symbolic in its very plot:  
And as the lotus blossoms unfold,  
So will this story tale be told  
And understood at every stage*

*The cryptic code of every page.*

*The Power, Glory, Kingdom Come,  
The Avatar with God is One  
And One with Man who holds the Light  
Of God to help Him win the fight  
To rid this Earth of evil deeds,  
The sorting of the grain from weeds*

*The Mighty Hand of God is spread  
To sort the living from the dead;  
But not the dead in mortal flesh,  
But those whose souls with evil mesh.  
And gently as an Angel's wings  
The Hand will lift the soul that sings  
Of praise to God and Glory Be,  
Of Peace unto Eternity.  
And gently still will hold the cup  
Immortal Life of which to sup.*

*The key is there to fit the lock,  
Take heed of the Celestial Clock  
As fast the hour comet/ near  
Oh ye with ears please listen clear  
And count your blessings, one by one;  
Be staunch and say: "Thy Will be done."  
Hold out your hand to those in need  
And shun materialistic greed.  
The pot of gold at Rainbow's End  
Is there for all who will attend  
The call to fill this world with love  
On Earth as in the Heaven Above.*

*—Joan Miller,  
N.S.W., Australia.*

**"The Son was Born"**

"Easwaramma—The Chosen Mother", as follows:

Easwaramma entered her eighth pregnancy. Her mother-in-law vowed a series of Sathyanarayana pujas in order to be blessed with a grandson. Krishna was the eighth child of His parents!

Years later as Swami sat one day surrounded by His devotees, there was an abrupt interruption. A Pundit well versed in the holy Puranas felt a sudden urge to ask a question. "Swami! Was your Incarnation a Pravesha (an Entrance) or a Prasava (Encience)?" I could not quite understand the relevance of the interruption that jolted everybody away from the jocular mood of the talk, but Swami knew the reason. Turning to Easwaramma seated in front, He said, "Tell Rama Sarma what happened that day near the well after your mother-in-law had warned you". Mother said, "She had dream of Sathyanarayana Deva and she cautioned me that I should not be frightened if something happens to me through the will of God. That morning when I was at the well drawing water, a big ball of blue light came rolling towards me and I fainted and fell. I felt, it glided into me." Swami turned to Rama Sarma with a smile. "There you have the answer! I was not begotten. It was Pravesha, not Prasava."

To get back to the period when Easwaramma was pregnant ...Kondama Raju had dreams of Venka Avadhootha in which he was instructing him to be prepared—but for what, he was not told. And Pedda Venkappa Raju the father was awakened at night by sweet musical notes emanating spontaneously from the string and percussion instruments kept in the `rehearsal room', Angels...Gandharvas... Kinnaras? Musical ancestors? He knocked at the doors of astrologers. Telling me about his attempts to know what these meant, he described his tension at the time and the comforting explanation of an astrologer at Bukkapatnam. "Is the music sweet and soothing?" he asked. "The notes and beats were thrilling." Pedda Venkappa Raju answered. "Is there a pregnant woman in the house?" When told, yes, he predicted that the gods were playing music to charm the baby in the womb. He recited verses in Sanskrit from a book on horoscopes to please the bewildered father.

It had come at last, the moment chosen by the Lord to appear on earth in His incarnated form. It was the month of Kartika. Monday, the day of worship for Shiva was about to glide into Tuesday, the day dedicated to Ganesha. It was 5:06 a.m. I.S.T. on 23rd November 1926, and the reigning star was Ardra. From 4 O'clock that morning Lakshamma, the mother-in-law, was at the Sathyanarayana puja at the home of the priest. She was called back home more than once as the delivery neared but she was determined not to return until she could bring back the deity's prasad for Easwaramma which she could procure only at the conclusion of the ceremony. At last she came, she gave. It was accepted and relished. And the Son was born.

### **"The first miracle"**

A mat covered with a thick bedspread had been readied in a corner of the room, when the labour had begun and now the baby was placed on it, by the grandmother. All of a sudden they found the bedspread rising up and falling down, on either side of the baby. She grasped the child and

creeping through crevices, crawling along the walls and hiding in holes. But a serpent in the lying-in room pretending to be a bed-it was the role of Adishesha for the Vishnu who rested on its coils! This was the incarnation's first miracle. When Easwaramma was asked about this epic event, she confessed she had been so filled with joy at the birth of a son she had never even noticed the agitation all around.

The child was named Sathyanarayana. The association and affiliation of the human and Divine were made plain by the Name. It announced that the child being Narayana was Sathya (Truth). God as Sathyanarayana had entered the minds of the mother and grandmother and filled the house of the Ratnakara Raju with Divine Melody and Fragrance, Narayana coming as Sathya was the consummation for which the world had long yearned.

*Thoughts and desires are not the same. There are many thoughts that are not desires. If thoughts go too deeply into objects, desires arise. If there is a desire, there is a thought. But not all thoughts are desires. Dark clouds bring rain, but there can be clouds without rain. God's grace is in drops like rain, they accumulate and then there is a torrent. If there is a very strong desire for God, even had thoughts just pass through the mind and are not held. Desire directed to God brings discrimination. Intelligence, which is discrimination, is not the mind, nor is it thoughts. Intelligence is the direct Atma Shakti, a direct force of the Atma.*

—Baba

### **Adhere to Sathya and Dharma**

*This motherland of ours gave to the world  
Noble souls renowned in all the continents;  
If is the land which freed  
The nation from Western rulers.  
This Bharat is reputed for its scholarship.  
If is the sacred land which stood forth  
As the master in the realms of music, literature and sacred lore;  
Born in the land of Bharat, noted for its fine arts and natural beauty,  
It is your bounden duty to foster  
The glory and prosperity of the Motherland*

Bharat, which in the past was noted for its educational achievements in various spheres, is today confronted with a crisis in its educational system. The system attaches value only to the acquisition of degrees. Is it for earning a mess of pottage that these degrees should be got? Or should they be acquired for rendering service to society? Or are they to be acquired for getting wisdom (Vijnana)? Neither students, nor the authorities, nor the parents appear to be bothered about these questions.

Can an education which is not of use to society or the nation be called education at all? Every year the colleges are letting loose upon the world lakhs of degree-holders. What is their future? What is the goal of the educational system? What is the essence of all the studies? When you pose these questions, the answer you get is that the educational system has become mechanical. In today's education you find no trace of character building, respect for values and regard for tradition. Education is pursued for selfish purposes and not for serving society.

There are in Bharat today 200 universities, 90,000 colleges and nearly a crore undergraduate students. What is the outcome of all this prodigious educational effort? What is happening to these millions of students and how is the outside world affected by them? The educational institutions appear to be mainly factories turning out graduates. Even the educational authorities seem to be content with statistical progress rather than the real achievements of the educational system. Schools and colleges are mushrooming everywhere, with or without official sanction. There is a pretence of acquiring education, without anyone being aware of what it really means.

### **Knowledge vs. character**

"Of what use is the acquisition of all kinds of knowledge if one has not good qualities and has no moral values?" (Telugu Poem) What for is academic knowledge acquired? Is it for deceiving others? Or is it for promoting one's selfish interests? Or for the selfish enjoyment of pleasures? Education today is being used largely for these purposes than to promote the well-being of society or the nation. An education that serves no useful purpose in daily life is utterly worthless.

Education today promotes largely intellectual cleverness. "What is the good if the head is filled with bad thoughts, if the ears listen only to scandals, if the eyes look enviously and the mind is plotting misdeeds?" (Telugu Poem) All that is noble in human life is being destroyed. The students of today are divorced from all that is ennobling.

Educated youth, instead of going to the relief of the suffering and the needy, are raising problems for society. But they are not to blame. The fault lies with the educational system. Governments in India set up many committees to report on reform of the system. From the time of Morarji Desai till today these committees have been set up. No one knows what happened to the reports of these committees. There is no evidence that anyone in authority is concerned about training our young people to be useful and ideal citizens of the nation. In the place of high ideals, students today are cultivating high ambitions. What is required is not desire ("Aasha") but the ideal ("Aasaya").

Students have no awareness of the greatness of humanness. They do not understand the significance of unity in thought, word and deed. Instead of unity and harmony, you have only discord and division. All problems arise out of this discord.

### **Respect for culture**

What is important is culture (samskara) much more than mere knowledge. "Occidental education has undermined respect for Indian culture, eclipsed Truth and righteousness in daily life, encouraged fascination for foreign languages and eroded the love for native languages, broken the norms of social behaviour, and destroyed the respect for teachers" (Telugu Poem). The higher values of education are being eroded continuously.

Education is getting increasingly commercialised, especially in professional courses like engineering and medicine. I am unable to understand what joy the students derive from going through these excessively expensive courses.

Students should first of all know how to deal with the problems of daily life. They have to acquire general knowledge and common sense. Practical knowledge is more important than familiarity with books. It is this kind of bookish education that has led young people astray and made them lead worthless lives.

### **Serve the motherland**

Students! You are the children of Mother Bharat. You must cherish and foster the great culture of Bharat. Born in this Motherland, you breathe her sacred air, drink her holy water and are sustained by her produce. Follow her sacred footsteps, engage yourselves in service to society in a spirit of dedication. You have to transform yourselves in accordance with our ancient culture. Only then will your humanness be vindicated. Otherwise all your education will be like cultivating a barren land.

Your own conduct accounts for how you live. There is no need to blame anyone else. Begin with the purification of your minds. Then your thoughts, your looks and your behaviour will become pure.

Today men's actions are governed by selfishness and self-interest. Even when one appears to love another, it is only out of self-interest. Self-interest is bound to exist. But there should be a limit to it. As long as they remain as students, the young people appear well behaved. But the moment they get out of colleges and enter the outside world, they get polluted. Students! Wherever you may be, remain in good company. Entertain and do good deeds. Adhere to good conduct.

Inherently all students are good. But the social environment pollutes their minds. They are spoiled by bad associations. Hence they should take good care about the company they keep. They must bear in mind three vital maxims: One, "Sarvabhootha hithe rathah": Rejoice in the well-being of all living creatures. Two: "Sarvajnaana samayuktah". "Have comprehensive knowledge of all things". Three: "Sarvaguna Samayuktah": "Develop all qualities equally". When you develop these qualities, your life becomes exemplary.

Today the world is filled with violence and fear. The root cause of all this is selfishness. Adhere to truth. Truth is your life-breath. Truth transcends the categories of time. It is changeless. It is invincible. "Sathyameva jayathe" is our national motto. The Chinese, though different in culture from us, also adore Truth. Truth is the basis of genuine prosperity.

There is a story relating to Prahlada. Once Indra secured from Prahlada the gift of his character (seelam). When character left Prahlada, the goddesses of Fame, Royal Prosperity and Prowess left him one after the other. Prahlada allowed them to go. But when Truth (Sathya) started to leave, Prahlada prayed to the goddess not to leave him. The moment Truth stayed with Prahlada, the other deities representing Fame, Prosperity etc... also returned.

Students! In whatever situation you may be placed in your official careers, never give way to untruth. You must uphold "Dharma", which means acting according to your conscience. Always follow the dictates of your conscience. This is the meaning of the Upanishadic dictum: "Sathyam Vada; Dharmam Chara" (Speak the truth, follow righteousness). This was the advice given by the Rishis to their disciples when they completed their studies.

Students! This is a great opportunity in your lives. Esteem this day (of the Convocation) as a sacred day. Take to your hearts the good counsel given to you. Dedicate your lives to righteous ways. Earn a good name for yourselves. That is all that I desire. Bring a good name for your parents and for the Institute where you have studied.

Shed all fear except the fear of swerving from Truth. You should not be afraid because you are not an animal; You should not cause fear in others because you are not a wild beast. You are human beings. When you act up to this truth, you will benefit society.

I bless you all with the hope that you will not only lead good lives but make your friends and all others with whom you are associated lead worthy lives (Cheers).

The Convocation concluded with the playing of the National Anthem by the Institute Band.

Bhagavan, the Vice-Chancellor and others then returned to the Mandir in a procession headed by the Institute Band.

*—From Bhagavan's Discourse to the fifteenth Convocation of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on November 22, 1996, in the Poornachandra Auditorium, Prasanthi Nilayam*

## **Another Glorious November to Remember**

Birthdays come and go. But Bhagavan's boundless love grows and grows and grows ...For an ever increasing number of devotees from every continent the birthday festivities are an event eagerly looked forward to with joy and love.

So it was this year, with a notable difference. Having regard to the natural calamities in Andhra Pradesh, Bhagavan deliberately chose to reduce the numbers pouring into Prasanthi Nilayam in November, especially from the Telugu districts. The result was significantly reduced number of devotees participating in the celebrations. Luckily the enlarged Sai Kulwant Mandap and the Poorna Chandra Auditorium could accommodate all the devotees. What was lacking in magnitude was more than made up in the intensity of devotion and intimacy with Bhagavan.

Another memorable feature of this year's week-long celebrations was the variety of cultural programmes presented by Bal Vikas children from various Indian States and plays and ballets presented by the overseas devotees. All the programmes were of a uniformly high standard and most of them provided not only delightful entertainment but served to bring home the spiritual message of Bhagavan in impressive artistic forms.

The week-long celebration started with the annual Rathotsavam on November 18th, when the idol of Venugopalaswami from the Prasanthi Mandir was installed in the Chariot (Ratha) and ceremonially carried up to the end of the road where the temples of Puttaparthi village are situated. Before the idol was taken to the chariot, Bhagavan performed a symbolic marriage ceremony for Rama and Sita. Bhagavan's beloved elephant, Sai Geetha, followed by a host of Veda chanting students went in front of the chariot. The idol was brought back to the Mandir later in the day.

### **"Sampoorna Ramayana"**

In the evening, after the usual darshan and bhajans, an excellent cultural programme was presented by Bal Vikas Children from Tamilnadu. The entire story of the Ramayana was vividly presented in a series of beautifully conceived scenes, culminating in the coronation of Rama after His return from Lanka. This was followed by a "Yaksha Gaana" performance by Bal Vikas Children from Karnataka on the theme, "Mahishasura Mardini".

The Mandir and its environs had been so beautifully illuminated that the whole Nilayam presented a fairy-tale appearance at night.



## **Ladies Day**

November 19 was observed as Ladies' Day. It began with Suprabhatam and Nagarsankirtan early in the morning with thousands of ladies participating in the procession and singing bhajans as they went round the Mandir.

At 7 A.M. Bhagavan was greeted by a band troupe of girl students from the Anantapur Campus and a nadaswaram group consisting of lady artistes from All-India Radio. Bhagavan came in a procession to Sai Kulwant Mandap, preceded by girls chanting Vedic hymns. A number of Bal Vikas children performed folk dances in front of Bhagavan.

The morning's programme began with the singing of devotional songs by Srimati M. S. Subbalakshmi, P. Suseela, Raji Balasubramanian and Sobha Raju. Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees.

In the afternoon, overseas devotees had the privilege of greeting Bhagavan with songs in six different languages, all in praise of the glory of Sai. One of the compositions was a choir song entitled, "Daughters of Sai". The songs were sequentially sung in seven languages: English, Japanese, Italian, Russian, Spanish, German and Telugu. The final number was a Spanish song composed by Spanish-speaking ladies, with the refrain (translated into English): "Come to me, my Sai Brahma. Make my mind a garden where Dharma, Santhi and Prema flourish." At Bhagavan's prompting, a Greek lady sang the Hindi song, "Humko thumse", which was lustily applauded by the whole gathering.

After invocation by girls from the Anantapur Campus Srimati Sarla Shah welcomed the gathering and presented a review of the activities of the Mahila Wing of the Sai Seva Organisation. (Srimati M.S. Subbulakshmi, who was invited to speak on the occasion, confessed her deficiencies as a speaker and paid a heartfelt tribute in Tamil to Bhagavan Baba as mother, father, preceptor and all else for her and for all devotees. She said that Bhagavan blessed everyone according to his prayers. It was the merit earned in past lives that had brought them to Bhagavan. Swami should continue to bless them always.

Bhagavan then delivered His discourse in the course of which He extolled the role of the mother as the moulder of the family and the first teacher for children (Swami's discourse is published separately).

In the evening, there was a cultural programme entitled "Naari Shako", (The power of women), which highlighted the glory of Indian womanhood as revealed in the story of Savitri, who brought back her husband from the Lord of Death. The play was enacted by Bal Vikas children from Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. The second item was a dance-drama, "Meera", by Sri Ram, Bharatiya Kala Kendra, of New Delhi. The ballet presented the travails of Meera, whose ecstatic love for Krishna found expression in immortal songs. Bhagavan materialised a gold chain for the girl who played the role of Meera.

On the 20th morning, Bhagavan inaugurated a pictorial exhibition on "Dharma", jointly got up by the International and Indian Sai Seva Organisations in the premises of the North Indian Canteen.

### **Plays by Bal Vikas children**

In the evening, three dramas were presented by Bal Vikas children from New Delhi, West Bengal and Orissa in the Poorna Chandra Auditorium. The first, entitled "Bulle Shah", was a biographical play in Hindi on a Punjabi Sufi saint who goes on a quest for a right Master and finds him in a spiritually advanced gardener, Mian Mir. Differences arise between Bulle and his Master over the opening of a temple by Mian Mir, but ultimately Bulle is reconciled to his Master in a touching scene. There were a number of beautiful songs with a spiritual message.

Bal Vikas students from West Bengal presented a dance-drama based on Tagore's play, "Pujarini", a court dancer who becomes a devotee of Buddha when he visited the court of King Bimbisara. Her devotion to Buddha continues even after Bimbisara's son, Ajatasatru, renounces Buddhism and takes to Vedic rituals. The Pujarini is slain when she is found worshipping at a Buddhist stupa in spite of the warning not to do so. She dies as a martyr.

The Bal Vikas children from Orissa presented a drama based on the legend relating to the temple of Jagannath at Puri and linking it with the Sai Avatar.

### **Drinking water project**

On the 21st, an overall view of the drinking water project carried out by Bhagavan in Anantapur district was given by Mr. V. Srinivasan, member of the Sathya Sai Central Trust, to the large gathering of devotees in Sai Kulwant Mandap. The project has provided pure drinking water to the people in 761 villages. It is the biggest project ever undertaken by a private charitable trust. It serves an area of 20,000 square kilometers, with 2500 Kms of pipelines, 200 pumps, 250 borewells, 268 overhead tanks, 124 reservoirs, 50 generators and summer storage tanks spread over an area of 100 acres. The project was rendered possible only by the divine power of Bhagavan Baba and the cooperation of officials and the villagers.

Sri Indulal Shah exhorted devotees to prove themselves worthy of the grace and love of Bhagavan.

Bhagavan, in the course of His discourse, attributed all humanity's troubles to insatiable desires and intense selfishness. Only by controlling desires and developing love for God can man hope to achieve peace and bliss.

### **Plays by overseas devotees**

Later in the evening, the overseas devotees presented four plays each with a significant spiritual message. The first was a superb presentation by a group of Greek devotees of three episodes from the life of Emperor Janaka, which had figured in Bhagavan's discourses. The first related to a fearful dream from which Janaka woke up with the questions: "Is this real or is that real" and the answer was given by the Sage Vasishtha: "Neither the waking state nor the dream state is real, but only the Self present in both the states". The second episode showed how the Sage Ashtavakra taught Janaka the means to Self-Realisation by negating the mind. The third episode was the one in which Sage Suka demonstrates the greatness of Janaka's spiritual sadhana compared to that of other disciples who were concerned about the safety of their petty possessions. The entire presentation was excellent from every point of view.

The second play was, "Pachamma, Tierra Madre" (Mother Earth), presented by the Argentine Sai Organisation representing Latin American Culture. They gave exciting singing, music (guitar, drums, flute), dancing and acting in presenting the millenarian ritual known as "Pachamma", which belongs to the ancient pre-Columbian civilization of Northern and Central Andes, still in vogue in countries like Ecuador, Argentina and Chile. In this ceremony the people offer food and water to the Earth as thanksgiving for all it provides to mankind.

The third item titled "Truth needs Heroes", about Chinese culture, was given by Malaysian devotees. A young man tormented by the burden of responsibilities that had fallen upon him ever since his wife died, decides to put his aging father in the old folks' home. The Chinese traditions and culture which exalt filial piety as one of the highest truths begin to prick the conscience of the young grandson. The young lad persuades his father to change his mind and all three remain together. Swami took obvious pleasure in the Bal Vikas girls dancing in their glittering costumes.

The fourth play, a presentation of Ghanaian devotees, was entitled Sankofa Onyankopon Nokware (Return to the True God). Pounding drum beats and dancers on stilts excited an enactment of Sankofa going back to Truth in a practical, traditional way. The chieftaincy institution is the embodiment of African philosophy, religion and culture. African chiefs symbolize Unity, Peace, Right Conduct, Love and Truth. The chief's palace is the university for pure knowledge. Baba joined the team on the stage at the end.

Next came a U.S. presentation entitled "Abraham Lincoln-the Dramatic Leader," which revealed the character of a man whose life was an example of Bhagavan Baba's eternal truth. The play brought out the harsh choice Lincoln as President had to make, faced with a rebellion by Southern states determined to maintain slavery. A flashback scene showed how the Lincoln of "log cabin" days sympathised with young Willie, a black slave, the contrast between a poor white, who was free, and a black lad, poor and not free. Willie sings a moving song, "Nobody knows the troubles I have seen". The drama concluded with a great-great grandson of the slave Willie who as a college professor presides over a celebration of Lincoln's emancipation proclamation that freed the slaves. The final statement of the play was: "By the Lord's grace, we have gone from the glory of Abraham Lincoln the Great Emancipator, to the self effulgent Divine Glory of the Supreme Emancipator, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai, here with us now."

The audience was then invited to join in singing Lincoln's favourite song, the Battle Hymn of the Republic, with lyrics rewritten for Swami, the last of which was as follows: "We have come from distant countries for the darshan of Lord Sai. He has graced us with His Love and Bliss, our lives to deify. He is here to lead us back upon the path that we have lost His truth is marching on".

At the end of the programme all the 200 participants joined in singing "Hallelujah" and proclaiming in unison: "Sai's truth is marching on". It was a thrilling finale to a delightful and meaningful programme offered as homage to Bhagavan.

On the 22nd, the Convocation of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning was held in the Poornachandra Auditorium. (An account of the proceedings is published separately).

## **The Birthday**

November 23 was the day to which every devotee in Prasanthi Nilayam was eagerly looking forward. The beautifully decorated Sai Kulwant Mandap, enlarged to hold a few thousands more devotees, was getting filled up from early in the morning.

Around 6:30 A.M. Sai Geetha, draped in all her glory arrived in the aisle of the mandap to greet her Lord as He came in a procession from the Auditorium, headed by a nadaswaran troupe, the Institute band and a large number of students chanting Vedic hymns. Bhagavan blessed all the devotees and took His seat on the specially decorated dais. Bhajans started with the song, "Dhanyaho Easwaramba"

Precisely at 8:00 A.M., the Vice Chancellor, Dr. G. Venkataraman, offered a flower to Bhagavan and took His Padanamaskar. With Bhagavan's gracious approval, he requested Mr. Justice Bhagavathi, former Chief Justice of India, and a member of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, to address the gathering.

Offering his hearty felicitations to Bhagavan on His seventy-first birthday, Mr. Bhagavathi said that "It is a day of rejoicing and love by one and all, feeling the oneness of mankind. Swami is beyond our human thought and perception. Let us surrender to this Divine phenomenon. He has not gone physically to any country except East Africa but the entire globe is divinised by His spiritual glow. His devotees are present in 140 countries and groups of them are streaming into Prasanthi Nilayam day after day from all parts of the world. One can have a glimpse of Bhagavan if he strictly adheres to the task assigned to him with dedication and love. He is the embodiment of universal love. Let us resolve to live with His love, upholding the five Human Values".

Bhagavan then delivered His birthday message, dilating on the supreme importance of Prema Tattwa. (Bhagavan's discourse appears separately).

Bhagavan then blessed the prasadam which was distributed to all the devotees.

In the evening there was a music recital by several noted musicians from different parts of India. Srimati Subbulakshmi sang two songs specially composed on Swami. These will form part of a cassette to be released shortly.

Other musicians who participated in the programme are: Subendra Rao, Daya Shankar, Deepak Chaudhry, Nishikant Barodkar, Ravindra Yavagal and Devaki Pandit and party. Bhagavan honoured the artistes with shawls and saris (for the ladies).

The week-long celebrations concluded on the 24th evening with a play, "Astha" (Faith)—a Rajasthani version of the Cinderella story—staged by the students of the Sri Sathya Sai College for Women, Jaipur. The story of the play revolves around Ujali, a staunch devotee of Swami. Ujali's step-mother conspires to marry her off to a leper. As the story unfolds, it is revealed that Ujali's betrothed is not a leper but actually a Prince of the serpent kingdom. While experiencing the bliss of matrimony, Ujali forgets Swami and gets engulfed in a series of misfortunes. Her

father brings her back to his house. There one day, while filling water from a well, her step-sister pushes her into the well. At that time Ujali remembers her Swami and cries for help. Swami's benevolent hand rescues her and restores her to the palace. Thereafter, Ujali and her husband, with their unshakable faith in Swami, lead a happy life.

*"Values for Education; Education for Life; Life for Love; Love for Man; Man for Service; Service for Spirituality; Spirituality for Society; Society for Nation; Nation for World; World for Peace:"*

—Baba

## **Chinese New Year to be Celebrated in Prasanthi Nilayam**

During the visit of Chinese devotees from Malaysia, Singapore and other regions to Prasanthi Nilayam for Bhagavan's 71st Birthday Celebrations, a joint request was made to Bhagavan Baba to permit Chinese devotees from all over the world to celebrate the Chinese New Year at Prasanthi Nilayam, in the presence of Bhagavan, in February 1997. Bhagavan graciously agreed to the request. Arrangements are being made to have the celebrations on a grand scale and make them an annual feature at Prasanthi Nilayam in subsequent years.

It is proposed to give a "China touch" to the Prasanthi Mandir and all the Nilayam premises for the celebrations. Chinese devotees from all parts of the world, including Mainland China, are expected to participate in the celebrations. The major objective of the celebration is to instill among Chinese devotees, especially the younger generation, the traditional values and the inner significance of the rituals and practices performed during the New Year Day and to give to non-Chinese devotees a glimpse of the rich traditions of Chinese Culture. Apart from a variety of cultural programmes, it is proposed to present bhajans

AVATAR VANI:

JANMADINA SANDESH

### **Fill Your Hearts with Love**

*Whether one is a great scholar  
Or a ruler living in a mansion,  
Or a hero who has won great victories,  
Or a destitute grovelling in poverty,  
Without love in his heart, he is nothing  
A devotee with love is more worthy of veneration.*

*Of what use are men in Bharat  
Who can make the stones sing in joy,  
Men who can play with the heads of the enemy,  
Men who can wield power over the land,  
If they have no awareness*

*Of the wail of the oppressed,  
When will they respond  
To the cries of the poor?*

*Embodiments of Love!*

The cosmos is filled with love. Love is Righteousness. Love is Truth. The universe is based on love. Lost in the transient pleasures of worldly life, man is forgetting this supreme Love Principle.

What is the reason? Selfishness has grown and selflessness has declined. Narrow-mindedness is widespread. Broadness of heart is on the wane. Desires have increased. Ideals are vanishing. Human life is dominated by selfishness and self-interest.

The ancient sages enthroned sacrifice (tyaga) on the highest pedestal. They adored Righteousness. Today these sublime ideals are forgotten in Bharat. As a consequence the country is racked by every kind of trouble.

A heart without love is a cemetery. Love demonstrates the existence of the Divine. It is all-pervasive. It is the basis for human unity. Only when selfishness goes and faith in the Divine grows will human unity be achieved.

Hence, every human being should fill his heart with love.

*God is Love; Love is God  
Love is linked to love  
When one is full of love  
He is fit for oneness with God (poem)*

It is most vital for everyone to recognise and practise this Love Principle. At all times love has existed among the good and the bad, in the forest or in a palace, in attachment or in separation, in one's conduct as well as in action. It is all-pervasive.

**The power of love**

The most powerful weapon to destroy the forces of evil rampant in the world today is love. Unfortunately men are not pursuing the right path to acquire this sacred love.

Love is the seed of love. It is also the branches, the flowers and the fruit. To enjoy the fruit of love, one has to practise Love.

Instead of seeking to know the true nature of love, man is engaged in the pursuit of wealth and power. No doubt wealth and power are necessary, but only within limits. The vast ocean, when it swells beyond its bounds, is censured for its misbehaviour. The human body and mind will be healthy only when food is consumed within limits. Excessive eating causes various disorders.

Everything in the world is governed by the bounds set for it. However, love has no limits. "Anirvachaneeyam Prema", declares the sage Narada. "Love is beyond the power of words".

The flow of love is the life-giving water for everyone. How is this love to be secured by one? Not by Japa (chanting the Lord's name) or meditation or by studying the scriptures. God does not dwell in the Vedas or the Puranas. God dwells in the heart and should be sought there. People should close their mouths and open their hearts. Then they will experience the divine bliss.

Today love has been almost totally banished. Where love should prevail hatred has taken its place. Petty jealousy has usurped the place of compassion. Man can experience true happiness only when the appropriate qualities reside in their allotted places.

Transform your entire life into a saga of love. You will then lack nothing to make you happy. All wealth and position will be added unto you. Love conquers all.

### **"Total surrender"**

What is the nature of this love? When praying to God, you should have a feeling of total surrender. If you are really keen about realising God, if you are hungering and thirsting for God, then you should cultivate this all absorbing love. Mere expression of desire is not enough. You should endeavour to experience union with the Divine. If your heart is full of selfishness, how can you experience the Divine merely by a wish?

There is love of sorts today. It is related to the body consciousness and not to the Self which is the basis. Spiritual love begins with the concept of "Dasoham" ("I am your servant") and culminates in the concept of "Soham" (He and I are one). Without the feeling of "Dasoham", you cannot experience the feeling of "Soham". "Soham" is the expression of divine oneness. "The Atma and I are one".

That Atma is Brahma. That is love. That is Truth. That is Righteousness.

### **The fifth goal of life**

Men have been concerned with the four goals of human life (the Purusharthas: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha Righteousness, wealth, sensuous desires and Liberation). But there is a fifth goal: Love. Only when love is achieved will the world become an earthly paradise.

Where love prevails, there will be no room for hatred or envy. Love can have too truck with evil thoughts and actions. Love should be steadfast and unwavering. If one goes on hopping from one 'Swami' too another, from one form of worship to another, he will never experience love of the Divine. "One word, One path"—that should be the aim.

Today thousands of people have gathered here. What has brought them together here? Love is the main cause. Without love few of you would have come from such distant places (cheers). How does this love express itself? It is a process of give and take. You have to receive God's love. And you have to offer your love. But both are one and the same love. God's love is

reflected in your bodies. That is the meaning of the Gita declaration: "A fragment of Mine is present in everyone in the cosmos".

That Divine element in you should not be misused. It should be used for the benefit of others. The Divine principle of love is being treated with narrow ideas. From ancient times the sages welcomed this Principle with open arms. Narada declared: "Yallabhdvaa pumaan siddho bhavathi, amrutho bhavathi, thriptho bhavathi " Having gained (Divine love, Parama Prema,) a person becomes perfect, immortal and contented. He considered Divine love as supreme over all things. Just as without sugar, no sweet will have sweetness, without love nothing in life can have any value. Your heart is inherently filled with love. But you are ignoring this plenitude and going after the trivial. Your real sustenance will come from this Divine love and not from other petty pleasures.

Every cell in the human body is filled with love. It is this microcosmic love that fills the entire cosmos.

### **Investment in devotion**

You have no need to go in search of love elsewhere. It is all within you. A man makes every effort to accumulate wealth. An equal effort is needed to acquire the wealth of love. Men today invest their assets of love in pitiful ventures. Instead they should invest all their love in the Divine bank of devotion. This deposit is not only safe but will yield you increasing returns in terms of bliss (cheers). Your heart is the bank where your love for God should be deposited. Deposits elsewhere are insecure. Deposits of money may be in danger of being lost. But the deposit in your heart is immune from any kind of theft or loss. Make your deposit safe by "insuring" it within your heart. It is totally safe, though it has no bolts doors or locks. This love has been characterised as "Amritaswarupa" (the form of eternal nectar). Nectar pleases only the palate. But Divine love confers eternal bliss which is sweeter than nectar. Everyone should resolve to acquire this nectarine Love.

### **Tyaga and prema**

Today your foremost duty is to enthrone sacrifice (Tyaga). Only when sacrifice reigns, love will come into its own. All your latent potentialities will then manifest themselves. You will succeed in all your legitimate undertakings. When love becomes the ruling principle, sorrow and disappointment will disappear. That was why the Vedas declared that sacrifice alone is the key to immortal bliss. "God is love. How can you hope to realise God without love?" (Telugu poem)

How to manifest that love that is within you? You have to engage your hands in clapping as you chant the names of Rama, Krishna and others. Recite the names of the Lord with your mouth. If you really desire to experience God, you must remember the name of the Lord always like Prahlada: "Om namo Narayanaya" Sing the praises of the Lord like Radha and Mira. Worship the Lord like Jayadeva, Gauranga and Tukaram. Shed tears in devotion before the figure of the Lord like Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Then you will experience the Lord. People shed tears over petty things, but do not shed a single tear for the Lord. There are two kinds of tears: tears of joy and tears of sorrow. What you have to shed for God are tears of joy.

### **Power of the Lord's name**



When Krishna was being weighed in a balance, all the jewels of Sathyabhama could not balance His weight. Rukmini then came and declared that the mere chanting of the name of Krishna would be equal to His weight. By the additional offer of a leaf, a flower or a little water, the scales will be tilted against Krishna. So saying she placed a Tulsi leaf on the scale. And lo! it went down. The Tulsi leaf carried the full weight of Rukmini's boundless love for Krishna. All the jewels of Sathyabhama were of no avail. But Rukmini's invoking the name of Krishna and offering a Tulsi leaf with a love-filled heart tilted the scales against Krishna. Such is the power of the Lord's name and a love filled offering to the Lord. The Lord is not swayed by wealth or scholarship, power or position. Love alone can move him.

If you wish to sway the Lord, you must offer your love and love alone. Today unfortunately love has become scarce. Even material love is disappearing. But God's love is boundless. In whatever manner you may love Him, He responds in equal measure. But without love, you have no right to seek His love. Filled with bad feelings and thoughts, if you pray to the pure and unsullied Lord, how do you expect to win His grace? If you remain pure at least in your shrine, you may acquire some fragment of divine love.

There are any number of able exponents of spirituality. But of what use are their discourses if they do not practise what they preach.

### **Manifest your love**

Embodiments of the Divine! If you are really filled with devotion, manifest your love for God who is the very embodiment of love. If you are genuinely hungering and thirsting for God, partake of Divine love to appease your hunger and quench your thirst.

Divine love is the only panacea for all your troubles and miseries arising from insatiable desires and frustrated ambitions. God's love is like a lighthouse beacon. It shows you the right path. Divert the boat of your life towards the lighthouse of Divine love. You are then bound to gain the shore of bliss.

You do not need any special type of penance or meditation. Meditate on love. Fill your mind with love. Even while attending to your daily chores, regard all of them as offerings to the Divine. God is omnipresent. See God in everything and every being. Let love grow in your hearts like the waxing moon. Divine love will not wane like the moon. Let such steadfast love be enshrined in your heart. As Tukaram said: Dilme Rama, haathme kama" ("Ram in the heart and work in the hand").

The duty of everyone from today onwards is to cultivate true, unsullied love. With love of God you can secure anything. Without that love, you will only be steeped in misery.

Let the Buddhist prayer be your guide. First, take refuge in your intellect ("Buddham Saranam Gacchaami"). Divert that intellect to the service of society. ("Sangham saranam gacchami"). Then you will find refuge in Bliss ("Anandam Saranam Gacchami").

Do not divorce yourself from Nature. "Sarvam vishnumayam jagath". The cosmos is permeated by the Divine. Hence recognise the Divine even in your enemy. His heart is bound to

change when you love even the one who has harmed you, he is also bound to change. Do not allow your love to be affected in any way.

When people pray to God, sometimes doubts may arise as to whether and how the Lord will respond. Such doubts arose even in the mind of Radha. But all doubts disappeared when she realised that the whole universe was the mansion of God and there was no need to keep any door open or closed. All that was needed was complete surrender to God. The mystic significance of the songs of the saints and devotees like Radha and Mira should be rightly understood. (Bhagavan sang a Mira bhajan, "Chalo re man" to explain the esoteric meaning of the song).

### **"Sing the glories of God"**

God is moved by the devotee's heartfelt song. He becomes one with the devotee. No other form of worship has the same effect as singing with a full heart the glories of God. It is enough if you do the singing within yourself. (Bhagavan demonstrated by singing the opening lines of a song, "Rama nannu kaapaadu", how a melodious prayer can move the heart of anyone). Make music the passport to merger with the Divine. Music is the gift of God. Only the gifted ones can sing sweetly, appealingly and delightfully. We have here M.S. Subbulakshmi. From her early years, she dedicated herself to music, which filled her heart. This kind of soulful music cannot be acquired by anybody. It can come only through God's grace.

When you sing in public you can give delight to many. But if you cannot do so, you can sing to yourself. It will delight your heart and sweeten it. Immerse yourself in all work with love. Whatever you do, consider it as gifts from God. When you have malaria, you have to take the bitter quinine mixture. But that is the medicine for your ailment. Likewise, when adversity confronts you, treat it as a kind of medicine for your good. Gold has to be melted and beaten to make a jewel. A diamond is cut to make it more brilliant. Likewise troubles in life serve to refine a person. Love should enable you to welcome even hardships as meant for your own good.

### **Bhagavan's love**

*Today this body enters on its seventy first year. This body is made up of the five elements and is essentially impermanent. Do not attach much importance to the body. Take to heart the Love Principle that is being conveyed to you. My entire life is filled with love (cheers). I have never put anyone at any time to any kind of suffering. I have never done any harm to anyone. I have hated no one. I have no aversion to anybody. What is the reason? It is my love that is transforming others. I am now 71. But no one can know what accounts for my condition. I may act as if I am angry on some occasions, but the anger does not stem from the heart but is confined to the tongue. (Cheers). From head to foot I am filled only with love. It is this love which has attracted the whole world.*

*I do not desire anything. I have three Ps. One is Purity. Second is Patience. Third is Perseverance. It is these three which have secured the worlds regard. No invitations were issued to those who have gathered here. Swami's love alone attracted them all like a magnet. Some may ask why they are not attracted to Swami if that magnet is so powerful. The reason is that these persons are like rusted iron which no magnet can attract. Let them remove the rust and dust and they will be drawn to the magnet. Their hatred and desires, their envy and greed are the rust and dust covering them. If you cleanse yourselves of these, wherever you are, you will*

*be mine and I will be yours. The hapless and the forlorn, wherever they maybe, are the concern of Sai. Promote sacred love in your hearts. That love will not only redeem your lives but will promote the well-being of all around you.*

You need not offer anything except your love. In Prasanthi Nilayam no offerings are permitted. Only love is allowed entry (cheers).

Bhagavan concluded His benedictory discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema muditha manase kaho*", in which the vast gathering joined with gusto.

**—From Bhagavan's discourse on November 23, 1996 in Sai Kulwant Mandap**

*The inner motive which prompts the deed—that is what the Lord seeks to weigh. Abdullah was sleeping in a corner of a mosque in Mecca, when he was awakened by the conversation of two angels above his head. They were preparing a list of the Blessed and one angel was telling the other that a certain Mahbub of Sikandar City deserved to be ranked first, even though he had not come on pilgrimage to the Holy City. Hearing this, Abdullah went to Sikandar City and found that he was a cobbler, repairing the shoes of people. He was famished and poor, for his earnings barely sufficed to keep flesh and bones together. He had by severe sacrifice piled up a few coppers during the course of years; one day, he spent the entire treasure to prepare a special dish which he proposed to place before his pregnant wife as a surprise gift. When he was proceeding home with the gift he heard the cry of a starving beggar who seemed to be in the throes of extreme hunger. Mahbub could not proceed any further, he gave the pot containing the costly delicacy to the man and sat by his side, enjoying the blossoming of satisfaction on his haggard face. That act gave him a place of honour in the register of the Blessed, a place which pilgrims to Mecca who spent millions of dinars in charity could not secure. The Lord cares for the feeling behind the act, not the fanfare and the fuss.*

**—Baba**

**XV CONVOCATION OF S.S.S.I.H.L.**

### **Sathya Sai Institute: A Role Model**

The Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning has attracted the attention of national and international educationists and leaders of thought and earned their hearty appreciation as a role model of an educational centre where teaching as well as training of students in the art of understanding and living with values forms the very warp and weft of its curricular offerings, Observed Dr. Chittibabu, former Vice-Chancellor of the Annamalai and Madurai-Kamaraj Universities, delivering the Convocation Address to the Fifteenth Convocation of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on November 22.

Unlike in the past few years, the Convocation was held this year in the Poornachandra Auditorium. The Auditorium had been specially decorated tastefully for the occasion. Although the total gathering of devotees was significantly less than in 1995, it was fully representative of every part of the world.

Precisely at 3 PM, the academic procession started from the Mandir with the Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba, the Chief Guest, Dr. Chittibabu, and the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. G. Venkataraman, leading it and members of the Governing body, the Deans of faculties and members of the Academic Council following them. The Registrar Dr. A. V. Lakshminarasimham, walked in front holding the Mace. The Institute Band headed the procession, playing appropriate tunes.

After the Chancellor and others had taken their seats on the dais, the proceedings began with the Vedic invocation by students of the Institute. Then the Vice-Chancellor requested the Chancellor to declare the Convocation open. The Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba, walked up to the podium and said: "I declare the Convocation open".

### **Vice-chancellor's address**

Welcoming the Chancellor, the Chief Guest, Dr. Chittibabu, and others, the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Venkataraman, referred to Dr. Chittibabu as an "eminent scholar and educationist of international repute". He hailed Dr. Chittibabu as a "historian, orator, broadcaster and prolific writer".

Referring to the major activities of the Institute during the past year, Dr. Venkataraman said the summer course in Indian Culture and Spirituality held in June, 1995, was made memorable by the series of illuminating discourses on the Ramayana and its relevance to our own times, by Bhagavan Baba.

During the year a concerted effort was made to include in the M.B.A. Curriculum aspects related to national problems, especially in the area of rural development. A special effort was made to ensure that Sathya and Dharma form the undercurrent of every subject taught in the M.B.A and M.F.M. courses, be it marketing, labour relations or financial management". This is in accordance with Bhagavan Baba's concern for imparting a spiritual and ethical content to the entire educational process.

A significant change in the methodology of instruction was made by shifting the emphasis from classroom lectures to "participatory learning", which has become very popular with the students.

The Chancellor inaugurated two new facilities, the Laser Laboratory and the Centre of Artificial Intelligence, which are now in full operation.

### **Society oriented research**

Regarding the Institute's research activities, the Vice-Chancellor said: "A notable feature of our research and student projects is that many of them are society-oriented. For example, our Chemistry and Bioscience departments have begun to collaborate in identifying medical plants growing in the neighbourhood, from which chemicals needed in drug manufacture can be extracted. Soon our management experts are likely to join in order to suggest ways and means of making the herb-growing enterprise economically viable as well as a possible means of livelihood for the villagers. Not to be left behind, our computer science students are developing software of various kinds, including imaging software, such as is needed in the Super-Speciality

Hospital, for example. One of these soft wares is due to be installed in the Ophthalmology Department of the hospital shortly. Mention may also be made of the inter-disciplinary project just begun, jointly by members of the School of Business Management on the one hand and our computer scientists on the other, to develop a Geographic Information System (GIS), such as would be needed by national planners. For a start, the data-base being created would be restricted to the Penukonda Division of the Anantapur District (in which we are located). A unique feature of this project is the attempt to incorporate the latest aspects of Information Technology, to make the software efficient as well as user-friendly."

### **Quiet heroism of students**

Recalling the fact that the Sathya Sai Institute is unique in many ways, he said: "I doubt very much whether there is any institution anywhere in the world which offers totally free instruction in such professional subjects as Management and Computer Science. There are, however, more significant aspects to our uniqueness, and allow me now to place before you a couple of examples, just to give you a flavour. One day during the Summer Course this year, there was a drainage block, and the gutter water threatened to flood the entire kitchen, posing a health hazard of frightening proportions. Sanitary experts were sent for but the situation was so alarming that something had to be done immediately, even before the experts arrived. It was then that a student bystander peeled off his shirt, entered through the manhole and plunged into the sewer neck deep totally unmindful of any consequences. Feeling with his hands, he located the obstruction, cleared it, and in no time at all saved the situation. It was all done so quietly and without any fanfare as it were a routine occurrence, that hardly any knew about the major crisis that had been averted; indeed even today few are aware of this incident.

### **Liquid love**

"In case you feel that this was an unusual display of the spirit of sacrifice by an unusually motivated student, let me mention that since the establishment of the Super-Speciality Hospital five years ago, over 1300 of our students have donated blood. Let me add that had our Anantapur and Brindavan students been able to contribute as frequently as our Prasanthi Nilayam students had the opportunity to do, the figure would have been double the number I have quoted.

"Here I should not forget to mention that as many as about fifty of our former students are serving in various capacities in the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences. Needless to say that all these workers, particularly those with M.B.A. degrees, have voluntarily forgone lucrative job offers which they could easily have commanded outside. There is hardly any need for me to point out that it is the spirit of sacrifice which they imbibed as students of our Institute which induced them to make such a career choice.

A large number of our ex-students, wherever they are, closely associate themselves with Seva activities carried on by the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation in their part of the world. Our girl ex-students deserve particular mention in this context; and who can forget the moving and heart-warming play staged a couple of years ago, in this very hall, by handicapped students lovingly looked after by former students of the Anantapur Campus?

### **Bhagavan's inspiration**

"Thanks to our emphasis on all round development, our students can climb steep rocks and carry out daredevil acts during sports, perform like professionals in orchestras conducted by international maestros, chant the Vedas as sonorously as Vedic Pandits, act, sing, dance, organise breath-taking cultural pageants, do social service, and of course do well in studies also. Need I say that all this has been possible only because of the towering and matchless inspiration provided by our Most Revered Chancellor? Chancellor He may be by title but history has no parallel of a chancellor who is not only very much a part of the University, but also unceasingly cares so much about every aspect of it, especially the students.

There is a widespread doubt today whether the motto of our Nation, namely, Sathyameva Jayathe, is valid and holds in practice. While others may entertain such doubts, I can assert without fear of contradiction that where our students are concerned, they not only firmly believe that Truth alone triumphs, but can also be depended upon to uphold Sathya and Dharma under the most trying of circumstances. This, you will appreciate, is no accident for, Sathya is the very heart of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning."

Prof. U.S. Rao then presented the candidates for the various degrees to the Chancellor, who conferred His benediction on them.

The Vice-Chancellor then administered the Convocation pledge to the candidates.

### **Gold medallists**

The Chancellor then presented gold medals to the students who had achieved distinction in their respective examinations. The candidates went up to the Chancellor as their names were read out and received the gold medals from the Chancellor. The following is the list of gold medalists with their respective degrees in brackets:

Rahul Ramesh Nangare (B.A.); Nithin V. J. (B.Com. Hons.); Sridhar T. R. (B. Sc Hons. in Maths); Oruganti Srinivas (B. Sc Hons in Chemistry); Vishnu Vardhan K., (B.Sc. Hon. Physics); Venkata Krishnan N., (B.Sc. Hons. in Biosciences), Nallajerla L. S. Murthy, (M. Sc., Mathematics), M. V. Guru Dev Dutt, (M. Sc. Physics); Sripada Lakshminath (M. Sc. Chemistry), B. Laxmi Narayana, (M. Sc. Biosciences); Harish K. (MBA); N. Harihara Prasad (MFM); M. V. Sai Krishna Chowdary (M. Tech. Comp. Science); Miss Vidhya R. (B.Sc. Home Science); Miss Maddirala Sreevani, (B.Sc. Hons in Botany); Miss Ranjana Sasidharan, (B. Sc Hons. in Zoology); Miss. C. Meenalakshmi (M. Sc, Home Science); Miss Nidhi Sardana, (B. Ed); Miss Suman Raghubir Singh Negi, (B. Ed); Dr. K. V. Srinivasan, Department of Biosciences, for his thesis on "A study of birds of Brindavan, Kadugodi, (Bangalore) and its environs with special reference to their nesting habits, seasonality and nest site requirements."

### **Dr. Chittibabu's address**

Dr. Chittibabu then delivered his address to the new graduates. Congratulating them on their achievements, he said that the students of the Sathya Sai Institute were "exposed to a fascinating spectrum of experiences which are life-centred and value-based." "It is here", he added, "that the true significance, meaning and relevance of what is called integral education has not only come to be emphasised but exemplified as well."

Dealing with what he called the "anatomy of the present crisis", he said: "The crisis today is not so much intellectual as spiritual. Unprecedented changes have overtaken us in recent times and knowledge, particularly scientific and technological knowledge, is today burgeoning at an exponential pace which was not dreamt of some decades ago."

### **Technology vs. culture**

"Elitism and consumerism, pampered by the new technologies and their products such as posh cars, fantastic audio-video sets, refrigerators, washing machines, etc., are creating a growing feeling of social alienation and weakening bonds of good neighbourliness. Then there is the danger posed by the mass media and high voltage advertisements which tell the gullible people what to buy, what to taste, what to think and even what values to regard. Pollution of our environment goes on unchecked, even though it is realised that it is a chemical and biological warfare waged mindlessly, against nature. Technology and culture appear to be at loggerheads in the industrial set-up of our time.

### **The crisis in education**

"Critical paradoxes and dilemmas are plaguing most of the universities which, instead of being time honoured citadels of the mind and Spirit, have been driven to become shelters of academic mediocrity and choking emptiness. Vested interests are stifling change and innovation. Petty intrigues and power politics, lack-lustre performance by teachers, irrelevant curricula, student unrest, spineless administration, dubious examinations and above all erosion of ethical and spiritual values are rampant.

"Real education consists in the teacher's conscientious endeavour to enable his students to discover himself and his realisable possibilities. But what is happening in the class today is spoon feeding of the student in some form or another, when lessons and lectures become the substitute for intellectual exercise and the qualities of the mind like independent study, creative thinking and resourcefulness are chloroformed. No wonder the products of this kind of dull and drab education who come out of the portals of universities and colleges lack initiative and imagination, self-confidence and self-reliance. They can hardly stand erect and very often others have to come to their aid to keep them erect.

### **Bhagavan's beacon-light**

"Bhagavan Baba foresaw the need for a programme of Education in Human Values, sized up the urgency for designing a working model in this regard and set about His Mission of implementing His unique scheme in His educational institutions. It is in this context that the Sri Sathya Sai institute of Higher Learning has attracted the attention of national and international educationists and leaders of thought and earned their hearty appreciation as a role model."

"Today we have in India a higher education system comprising about 220 Universities and University-level institutions and more than 8000 colleges accounting for about 300,000 teachers and around 5 million students. This is indeed a gigantic network of perplexing dimensions which make the mosaic of higher education polychromatic. But the pity of it is that barring some among these universities which have maintained high quality, many are just average and many more are substandard."

## **Value-orientation**

"Value Orientation of Education, to be a success, requires strength of political will on the part of the powers that be, a wholesale metamorphosis of attitudes and habits, genuine commitment of teachers to their exacting professional obligations, student discipline, parental co-operation and societal motivation. What is more, we must have absolute faith in Bhagavan Baba whose Divine Message proclaiming the theory and practice of human values, particularly the five core values, viz. Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence is loud and clear."

## **"Only shining light"**

Dr. Chittibabu concluded his address with a prayer to Bhagavan Baba: Revered Swami, amidst the encircling gloom that materialism, rooted as it is in egotism, greed and ignorance, has generated, You are our only unfailing, sweet and shining Light the Atma Jyoti, the Akhanda Jyoti, the Jeevan Jyoti and the Prema Jyoti all combined together—to lead us towards our liberation from the stranglehold of anarchy, corruption, disgust, dismay and helplessness. May a new awakening come into our hearts and make us steadfast and faithful to your ideals for the resurrection of Atma Vidya.

"Revered Bhagavan,  
*We lift up our prayer unto Thee;  
Fill us with spiritual longing  
That we may give ourselves up more wholly unto Thee  
May we never fail to hear Thy voice  
May we open our hearts wide to Thy Divine Influence;  
May Thy Love enfold us;  
May Thy Care protect us;  
Thou art the Light of our lives  
Shine with Thy full effulgence on our path  
That we may walk with Thee in peace and safety"*

Bhagavan Baba then delivered His benedictory address.

The Convocation came to a close with the playing of the National Anthem by the Institute Band, with the entire gathering joining in chorus.

The Chancellor and others left for Mandir in procession headed by the Institute band.

## **Institute students' drama**

On the evening of the 22nd, students of the Institute presented a play in the Poornachandra Auditorium on a theme based on the age old conflict between God and Mammon, but in a totally contemporary context and with profound relevance to the spiritual message of Bhagavan Baba. The theme related to a difference in opinion between two brothers, partners in a successful business, regarding the utilisation of land in a city. The elder brother wants to build a trading complex to make profits while the younger brother wants it to be used as a devotional centre. The conversion of the elder brother (Navin Sarma) to the views of the younger (Sanathan Sarma) forms the happy denouement of the play. The dialogue and action were very good and the moral



was brought home to the audience very effectively. Bhagavan blessed the actors at the end and was photographed with the group.

AVATAR VANI:

LADIES DAY IN PRASANTHI NILAYAM:

## **The Glory of Bharat's Women**

*Fear of sin has gone  
Evil deeds are rampant  
Devotion to God is waving  
To fight these tendencies  
Chanting the name of the Lord  
Is the only remedy, oh man!*

*If women go out for jobs  
Who will take care of the homes?  
If husband and wife go to offices  
Who will look after the children?  
Earning money may solve some problems  
But how will it resolve domestic problems?  
Truly speaking, working women  
Do not enjoy much happiness*

### *Loving Embodiments of the Divine Self!*

It is not my view that women should not get educated. They should have education. You may also take up jobs. But you should live up to the obligations and glory of womanhood. The first title given to a woman is "Grihalakshmi" (the goddess of Home). A woman is expected to confer all prosperity, honour and good name on the home and the family. She is characterised as "Grihalakshmi" and not "Office-lakshmi" (cheers).

Another title for a woman is "Ardhaangi" (The better half). This means she is the better half of the husband and not a partner in his job.

The third title is "Illalu" (the Mistress of the Home). She is the mistress in the house and not in the office.

"Dharmapathni" is the fourth title conferred on a married woman. This implies that the home is the dwelling for all righteousness. The home is the birth place of all the "Dharmas" (rules of right conduct) hallowed by usage from ancient times.

What we have to safeguard and protect today are Truth and Righteousness and not the nation. When Truth and Righteousness are protected, they will protect the nation.

Hence righteousness should be fostered in the home. A home is no trivial place.

*The home is a veritable university teaching many subjects.  
The home is a centre of comfort and pleasure conferring joy;  
The home is a shrine that can make even the creator,  
Brahma sing and others dance  
The home with the husband is a school for the wife (Telugu Poem)*

The home is the abode of Dharma, which protects and safeguards the country. The home is the beacon which illumines the world and sustains it. Women should realise that, irrespective of their education or position, their foremost obligation is to protect the home. For lakhs of students and children who go to school, the mother is the first teacher. From the moment of birth, for every one the mother is the preceptor. If such a teacher leaves her home to teach other children, who will teach her children?

For Bharatiya women, the first duty is to reform the home and run it along ideal lines.

The home (and the family) is the basic social institution everywhere in the world. When the home improves, the whole world will be better.

In this phenomenal world, whatever pleasures and satisfactions one may derive elsewhere, if there is no joy at home, it becomes a veritable hell. The home is heaven itself. It is the duty of women to maintain it as such.

There is a proverb in the Andhra Country: "First care for the home and then think of other things." Since ancient times, Bharat's name and fame have rested on the greatness of women (Bhagavan sang a song in Telugu, praising the greatness of Savitri, who made the Lord of Death restore the life of her husband, the power of Chandramati, who stood by her husband's determination to sacrifice everything for Truth, the chastity of Sita who went through an ordeal by fire, and Damayanti, who shared all her husband's troubles with fortitude. Bharat was noted for such heroic women whose chastity and courage are an example for all humanity). To be born as women in such a country where there were such heroic women, is indeed a privilege.

Should not the sacred river Ganga be worshipped as a mother? Is not Bharat the home of "Gomata, Bhoomata and Vedamata"—the land in which the cow, the earth and the Vedas are worshipped as a mother? It must be realised that it is not proper for Bharatiya women to forget their sacred vocation and engage themselves in outside activities contrary to their great heritage.

(Bhagavan sang a song glorifying the quality of forbearance, which was the hallmark of people in this sacred land, the love for mother and the Motherland, and the readiness even to sacrifice one's life to uphold one's honour. Unfortunately these values have been lost today). Bharat was the leader for the entire world in the realm of spirituality. Hindu tradition stood for the welfare of all mankind all through the ages. To uphold these ideals the kings and women in ancient Bharat made great sacrifices. Everyone must take a pledge to revive and uphold these great ideals.

The great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and the supreme Purana, the Bhagavata have taught the great lesson for all mankind regarding the disastrous consequences of uncontrolled immoral desires. Ravana, who was a great scholar and warrior, became victim of an evil passion. Hiranyakasipu met with his end because of his intense hatred for God, despite the fact that he was a master of all sciences and had acquired many powers by his penance. Duryodhana was the victim of incurable jealousy and insatiable desire for power and property.

Many women have played a great role in the past in trying to restrain their husbands from indulging in evil deeds. Mandodari was a notable example of such a woman who tried to impress on Ravana the error of his ways. But Ravana paid no heed to her.

Women who are the embodiment of the Divine spirit! At least from now on you must strive to sanctify the home and turn the family towards the Divine path.

Women must realise the enormous power of the mind for good or evil and see that its power is used only for doing good. The mind can make a person a demon or Divine. The mind is under the control of the intellect. The intellect is governed by the Atma. Self-realisation will bring about control over everything.

The dire conditions prevailing in the world are known to everyone. The root cause of all this is the failure of people to realise their inherent divinity. Excessive desires, fuelled by selfishness, are the cause of all troubles. The primary requisite is confidence in one's self. Without that confidence, nothing can be accomplished.

Men are in quest of peace. But how is it to be secured. Faith in God is essential. That faith has to be generated in the family. Then alone the children will develop sublime thoughts. They are the future citizens of the nation. Hence they have to be brought up well. Unfortunately today mothers in affluent families neglect their children. They leave the children in the care of nannies and the children have more love for the nannies than for their mothers.

In ancient times, children who were fed on their mothers' milk developed into good persons. Today the children are fed not on mother's milk but on "tin milk". With the result the children develop a "tin" mentality.

If the mothers take care of the homes on right lines, they will be protecting the nation. Mothers should foster in the children love for truth and righteousness and tell them stories about the lives of great men and women. In olden times, the elders used to tell the young children all about the nation's great heroes and saints. Where are such elders today?

Modern youth even mock at such old people. It is the seed sown by those elders which has kept our ancient culture alive to this day. Only the women of the nation can revive and restore to its glory the ancient culture of our land.

The culture of Bharat is a hallowed one. Everyone got up from bed with the name of God on his lips. You are all aware that in Kashi (Varanasi) there is the practice of reciting the name of

Rama in the ears of dying persons. The idea is to remember the name of the Lord at the time of death because of the belief that one's rebirth is related to one's thoughts before death.

Teach the children sacred things and not nonsense verses. In the old day, the first words a child was taught at school were "Om Namassivaya" (the five-letter Divine mantra) or "Om Namo Narayanaya". Today the sacred ritual of initiating a child is taught a nursery rhyme like "Baa baa black sheep", or "Ding dong Bell, Puss is in the well". Is this the kind of stuff that should be taught to our children? What should be implanted in the hearts of our children are sacred names like Rama and Krishna.

Chaitanya used to exhort his tongue to glory in chanting sweet names of the Lord, "Govinda Damodara and Madhava" (Bhagavan sang sweetly the song of Chaitanya). How should devotees conduct themselves today? Their looks should be cool and soothing like the moon. Their speech should be soft like butter. Their hearts should be sweet like honey.

Seethalakshmi (who had spoken earlier) had quoted part of a poem of Swami. (Swami recited some other passages from the poem). "Oh brother, open your eyes and see the Lord Sai, who is in your hearts and not in Shirdi or Parthi." Fill your hearts with divine thoughts and feelings.

How do devotees behave today? Thinking that God is in Badrachala, Tirupati, Badrinath of Kedarnath, they prepare themselves for long pilgrimages. But they will not appreciate the statement that God is in one's own heart and there is no need to go out in search of Him. They have no faith in the God who is so close to them. They are prepared to incur any expense to go in search of God who is declared to be in some distant place. The statement that God is somewhere else is "bhrama" (delusion). The truth is God is within you. People forget that the divinity within you is there to guide you. Everyone should be good, think good and do good and enjoy good results. This is true Vedanta.

Have full faith in God as your Indweller. Develop pure sublime love. That alone will be lasting. All other qualities come and go. Learn to live in love. Women are the fountain-source of love. Bhakti is considered a feminine quality while Jnana (wisdom) is considered masculine. Let me not be misunderstood if I say that for the presence of all the male devotees present here, women alone are responsible (cheers). It is they who by their sacred feelings brought their men-folk here. Their work is sacred in every respect. They seek not only to sanctify their lives but the lives of all others in the family.

Women are not to be treated lightly. The Gita says that women are endowed with seven kinds of powers while men have only three. It is sinful to look down upon women.

Consider, for instance, this fact. There are any number of women who have tried to bring back their dead husbands or to venerate their memory. How many men have done likewise for their wives? Many hasten to acquire a second wife (laughter).

In this respect, Bharat has been an example to the world.

Wherever women are honoured, there is prosperity and happiness. Women should never be slighted or treated with disrespect. A home in which the housewife sheds tears will be bereft of all prosperity. This is the ancient conception of the role of women in the home.

Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho.*"

**—From Bhagavan s discourse in Sai Kulwant Mandap on 19-11-1996**

*There is none to question me if I do not act; there is nothing I would lose, if I do not engage in activity. Nor have I any great urge to be acting. But, yet you see me ever active. The reason is, I must be doing something all the time, for your sake, as an example, as an inspiration, as a piece of training. Those who are leading must themselves follow; those who command must themselves carryout, what they expect others to do. I am engaged in activity, so that you may learn to transmute every minute into a golden chance to evolve yourselves into Godhood.*

**—Baba**