

Christmas Message

ONLY ATMIC RELATIONSHIP IS TRUE

*The consideration which impelled the Supreme Lord to come
to the rescue of Prahlada;
The consideration which urged the Lord of Veda to come to the help of poverty-stricken
Kuchela;
The consideration which prompted the lotus-eyed Lord to save
Gajendra (king of elephants);
The same consideration has impelled the Supreme Lord, who is adored by the gods of
heaven, to incarnate on earth today.*

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Where is God? Why and where does He incarnate? These are the questions people keep deliberating upon. While every being is bound by cause and effect, God has no such limitations. He is omnipresent. In fact, all are the embodiments of God.

God Transcends Birth and Death

People attribute various names and forms to God like Rama, Krishna and Jesus, and celebrate their birthdays. Truly speaking, there is no birthday for God. To think that God took birth on a particular day of a year is a sign of ignorance. God has neither birth nor any goal to achieve. However, in order to instill faith in the minds of people, He incarnates. If there is birth, there has to be death too. But God is beyond birth and death. In fact, birth and death occur according to the Will of God. He has neither a beginning nor an end. Devotees limit God to physical forms, worship Him and celebrate His birthdays. All this is a figment of their imagination; it does not signify truth.

Everyday, many are born and many die in this world. What is meant by birth and death? To acquire a body is birth and to cast it off is death. It is out of illusion that man experiences the dualities of birth and death, whereas God transcends both. *Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Sruthimalloke Sarvamavruthya Tishthati* (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). God is present in all beings in the form of their life-breath. He manifests in man's breath as Soham. Each inhalation signifies 'So' and each exhalation, 'Ham'. Every moment this process of inhalation and exhalation reminds us of our inherent divinity. 'So' means 'That' (God), 'Ham' stands for 'I' (individual). Though these are two words, namely God and individual, there is no difference between them. They are one and the same.

Since ancient times, people have been making efforts to understand the mystery of birth and death. One need not go that far to understand this mystery. The vesture of body which we put on makes us experience it every moment. The process of inhalation symbolises birth and exhalation, death. Man is unable to understand the inner

significance of this process. When we inhale ('So'), the life principle enters our body and when we exhale ('Ham'), it goes out. So long as there is life-breath, the body is considered to be Sivam (auspicious). Once the life-breath ebbs away, it becomes Savam (corpse). Both birth and death are related to the body. Many changes take place between birth and death in a mysterious way. It is God who is responsible for all these. But some people deny the existence of God and waste their time in vain argumentation. God does exist. He neither comes nor goes. He is present everywhere at all times. Man experiences birth and death because of his body attachment. He will be released from the cycle of birth and death only when he gives up body attachment. He should pray to God and surrender himself completely to the Will of God.

Oh God, I offer the sacred heart to You which You have given me. What else can I offer at Your Lotus Feet? I pray that You accept my humble offering. (Telugu Poem)

Life is a Dream

Everyday in this world, we witness birth and death. Birth and death happen according to time and circumstances. Between birth and death, man develops various relationships at the physical level. He identifies himself with the body and gets carried away by the feeling of I and mine. This is a grave mistake. These relationships last as long as the body exists. Once the body perishes, what happens to these relationships? True relationship is at the Atmic level and not at the physical level. Prior to birth who is related to whom? What happens after death? In fact, both birth and death are the results of Bhrama (delusion) because of which man is unable to realise Brahma (Divinity). As he is enmeshed in worldliness, he is unable to comprehend the transcendental principle.

True spiritual practice lies in understanding one's true identity. One should enquire, "Who am I?" All the spiritual practices are meant to make you realise who you really are. Everyone uses the term 'I' while introducing himself. It means that the principle of 'I' (Self) present in you is the same as the one in others. But man is unable to understand this oneness. He is carried away by the differences based on physical body. Consequently, he gives room to conflicts and unrest.

Embodiments of Love!

Birth and death are related to the body and not to the soul. These are mere imaginations of human mind. In fact, everything in this world is the creation of man's mind. Life is a dream. How can anything that appears in a dream be true? It is all a mere Bhranti (illusion). So long as you are immersed in illusion, you cannot have the vision of Brahma. The moment you get rid of the illusion, you can have the experience of reality.

You can understand your true identity by observing your breathing process. But man is not interested in such an easy and simple path. He is taking to rough and difficult paths and is ultimately getting frustrated. So long as there is a thorn in the flesh, it keeps hurting you. Body attachment is like a thorn which is the cause of all your suffering. Once you give up body attachment, you will know your true Self. You suffer because you identify yourself with the body. It is but an illusion. That is why Adi Sankara prayed thus:

*Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam
Punarapi Janani Jathare Sayanam
Iha Samsare Bahu Dustare
Kripayapare Pahi Murare.*

(Oh Lord! I am caught up in this cycle of birth and death; time and again, I am experiencing the agony of staying in the mother's womb. It is very difficult to cross this ocean of worldly life. Please take me across this ocean and grant me liberation.)

One need not undertake intense spiritual practices to cross the ocean of Samsara. All that one has to do is to contemplate on God incessantly. Though God is within, man is unable to realise Him. In the dream state, man may experience death and feel sad about it. When he wakes up, he heaves a sigh of relief, realising that what he saw was only a dream. Then who was the one who died in the dream? It was just a creation of the mind. Similarly, even in the waking state, whatever man experiences is the creation of the mind. Due to the illusion created by the mind, he establishes relationships and starts saying, my father, my mother, my wife, my children, etc. This illusion is the ultimate cause of his suffering. When man develops pure and unsullied love, he will not experience pain or suffering. Love for the physical body is false and transitory. Love for the Self is true and eternal. In order to understand the truth of your identity, you should enquire within.

Body Attachment Causes Delusion

Once Adi Sankara was proceeding to the river Ganga along with his disciples. On the way, he found a person sitting under a tree and repeating *Dukrun Karane, Dukrun Karane*. He was in fact trying to master the rules of Panini's grammar. Sankara took pity on him and advised him to make efforts to understand his true identity by contemplating on the Lord instead of wasting his time in the acquisition of worldly knowledge. He thus sang:

*Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam
Govindam Bhaja Moodha Mathe
Samprapthe Sannihithe Kale
Nahi Nahi Rakshati Dukrun Karane.*

(Oh foolish man, chant the name of Lord Govinda; the rules of grammar will not come to your rescue when the end approaches.)

Both Bhrama and Brahma are within you. They are not anywhere outside. Since you are immersed in Bhrama (delusion), you become distant from Brahma (Divinity). Once you realise that you are Brahma, you will be free from Bhrama once for all. You suffer because you identify yourself with the body. Once you get rid of body attachment, you will experience everlasting bliss.

Embodiments of Love!

Pleasure and pain are of your own making. They are not given by God. You are the cause of your suffering, none else. Understand this truth. From the spiritual point of view, pleasure, pain and worldly relationships are illusory. They are not real. Right from dawn to dusk, you lead a life full of delusion. Having been born as a human being, you should

try to gain the experience of truth. The physical body grows for a certain period and later on becomes weak and decrepit. Birth and growth are related to the body which is unreal. But man considers body to be real and thereby suffers. With open eyes, you see many people. But when you close your eyes, you cannot see anybody. From where do so many people come when you open your eyes? Where do they go when you close your eyes? You do not know. In fact, you do not know who you really are. That is why you suffer. Once you realise that you are not the body and nothing in this world belongs to you, you will not suffer. Everything in this world is of your own making. Nothing is real.

You are the embodiment of love. Love is with you and in you always. Bereft of love, man cannot exist. Love is life. Love is the light that dispels the darkness of ignorance. Once you have the light of love, you will be able to overcome illusion and visualise the latent reality. One who does not cultivate love will be born again and again. *Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam*. Birth and death are the Prabhava (effect) of the objective world. As he is deluded by Prabhava, man is subjecting himself to Pramada (danger). What is it that man is supposed to do to escape from the cycle of birth and death? He should develop love more and more. Man does not lack love. There is love in him but he is unable to experience it. He should attach value to the principle of love and not merely to individuals.

Embodiments of Love!

Worldly love is transient; it cannot be called love at all. True love is immortal. You should cultivate such love. Physical body grows and decays. How can you consider it to be real? In fact, nothing in this world is real. Body attachment is the cause of delusion. Hence, gradually reduce your body attachment. This is the most important Sadhana you have to undertake. Japa (chanting), Thapa (penance), Dhyana (meditation), etc., do not give you the experience of your reality. What you consider to be real may be unreal. Whatever is unreal has to be given up. This truth has to be understood in the first instance. It is very easy to give up body attachment. I wonder why people are not able to do so!

There is only one fundamental principle in the world. That is the Atmic principle. You can see a number of bulbs glowing in this hall. But the electric current passing through all of them is the same. Bodies are like bulbs and the principle of Atma is like the current passing through all the bulbs. Understand this oneness and share your love with one and all. Do not consider anyone to be your enemy. You consider the one who loves you to be your friend and the one who hates you to be your foe. In fact, there is neither a friend nor a foe. It is only your imagination.

Today people undertake various spiritual practices to experience Divinity. Will God come closer to you because of these practices? Will He become distant from you if you do not perform them? No. It is only Bhrama that goes away from you when you perform spiritual practices. As a result, you become closer to Brahma. You should make every effort to get rid of Bhrama. Give up the feeling that you are the body and you are the doer. Only then can you be free from delusion and fear. Reduce your body attachment. That is the Sadhana you are supposed to undertake. Spiritual practices are not limited to

the performance of Japa, Thapa, Dhyana, etc. You undertake these only for your mental satisfaction and not for having the vision of God. Develop firm faith that you are God. Remind yourself constantly, "I am God, I am God, I am God." Then you will become God. Body is merely the vesture you have put on. It is not your true Self. As the body attachment increases, the suffering also increases.

This is what you are required to do to overcome delusion: *Tyaja Durjana Samsargam; Bhaja Sadhu Samagamam; Kuru Punyam Ahorathram* (Give up bad company; join good company and perform meritorious deeds day and night). You see many people in the world. Does it mean that they are all different from each other? No. All are one. It is only divinity that manifests itself as mother, father, brother, sister, etc. Names and forms may be different but the underlying truth is one. When you imbibe this principle of truth in you, love will flow from you incessantly. Immerse yourself in the ocean of love. Do not give up love under any circumstances. Even if someone were to hate you, treat him as your own brother. If you were to meet him on the road, do not show anger; greet him with love. Your love will certainly bring about transformation in him.

True happiness lies in the spirit of sacrifice. Thyaga (sacrifice) is true Yoga. Man today does not cultivate Thyaga. On the other hand, he seeks Bhoga (pleasure) and thereby subjects himself to Roga (disease). When you develop the spirit of sacrifice, you will be free from suffering. True spiritual practice is that which helps you to overcome delusion. What is the use if you get drowned in delusion more and more with the advancement of age? Do not develop undue attachment to the body and material possessions. You will be redeemed only when you lead your life with the spirit of sacrifice. What you should achieve is Thyaga and not Bhoga. To consider anything as mine is Bhoga. To realise that nothing is mine is Yoga. This Yoga gives you true strength. "I am not the body, nothing is mine." This is what you should know. Question yourself, "Who am I?" You will get the reply, "I am I." When you understand and experience this truth, nobody can cause any suffering to you. You cannot escape from suffering so long as you are immersed in the dualistic feeling that you are a mere mortal and God is separate from you. The feeling of separation is caused by your own imagination.

Develop Inner Vision

Embodiments of Love!

Many people undertake spiritual practices like Japa and Dhyana, which bring about certain changes in you in due course of time. They may give temporary results; they cannot give eternal bliss. You should not worry about temporary results. The feeling of 'I' and 'mine' is the root cause of worry. You will be haunted by worry so long as you don't realise Hari (God). You are worried because you identify yourself with the body. Once you identify yourself with the Self, you will be free from all worries. Hence, you should make every effort to realise your true Self. Under any circumstances, do not shed tears of sorrow. You will be free from sorrow when you give up body attachment. In order to be free from worry and fear and to attain everlasting peace, you should realise that "I am I." When you have firm belief in this statement, nothing can shake you.

To realise this truth, Jesus performed various types of spiritual practices. Once Mary and Joseph took the child Jesus to a fair in Jerusalem. In the crowd, Jesus got separated from his parents. The parents searched for him everywhere but could not find him. They became anxious when they could not find him anywhere. All the while, Jesus was sitting in the corner of a temple and listening to the sermon of the priest. Mother Mary ultimately found him in the temple. She rushed towards him and affectionately embraced him saying, "My son, what happened to you? Where had you gone? We have been searching for you." Jesus told her, "Mother, I did not go anywhere. I have been listening to the sermon of the priest in the temple."

Forgetting his innate divinity, man searches for God in the external world. God is within you. In fact, you are God yourself. For example, you are sitting here. Is it possible for you to find yourself outside? Is it not foolishness to search for yourself in the outside world? Look within; only then can you find God. It is very easy to understand your oneness with God. However, you should have firm faith to begin with. You should develop faith that God is not separate from you. When you enquire deeply, you will realise that God is in you and also outside.

Embodiments of Love!

Turn your vision inward and search for your true Self. Self-enquiry leads to true Sakshatkara (vision of God). Once you have Sakshatkara, you will be free from all worries. It is a mistake to say that you have not experienced God. He is present in you. A person kept a ten rupee note in a book and forgot about it. He was carrying it all along. One day, he was in need of ten rupees. He asked his friend to lend him ten rupees. His friend readily agreed. But before giving the money, his friend wanted to see the book he was carrying. As his friend opened the book, the ten rupee note fell from it. He was happy that he had the required amount with him and that there was no need to borrow it from his friend. Likewise, today man is in search of God, as he has forgotten his innate divinity. Man can realise God only by self-enquiry.

Embodiments of Love! Students!

You are making various efforts to experience divinity. Do not search for God outside. He is in you. Everything is in you. All that you see outside is illusory. Do not be carried away by the illusory world. You do not need to study scriptures to know this simple truth. Develop inner vision and visualise your true Self. Enjoy the taste of divinity within. Only then can you attain peace and ultimately realise the truth, "I am I."
(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Bhaja Govindam ...*")

- **From Bhagavan's Christmas Message in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 25th December 2003.**

A mammoth gathering of devotees thronged Prasanthi Nilayam from all parts of the world to celebrate the holy festival of Christmas and New Year day in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

A Report

JOYOUS CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR DAY

Christmas Celebrations

Christmas is one of the most spectacular festivals of the world. But the glory, grandeur and piety of this festival is worth witnessing at Prasanthi Nilayam where it is celebrated in a most sacred manner. That is why a large number of devotees come from all parts of the world to celebrate it at Prasanthi Nilayam. This year also devotees from all corners of the globe came to Prasanthi Nilayam to celebrate this holy festival. The venue of the celebrations was Sai Kulwant Hall which was so beautifully decorated that it presented the grandest expression of Christmas. In fact, the entire Mandir complex and the adjoining residence of Bhagavan bore a festive look with charming and colourful Christmas decorations. Special decorations were done on the dais where Bhagavan sat in His chair and witnessed the programme. Besides two beautiful Christmas trees, the idols of Mary and Joseph with baby Jesus in the crib as also the idols of three wise men who had come to see the blessed child adorned the dais.

Christmas celebrations began on the afternoon of 24th December 2003 after the arrival of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall. Bhagavan formally inaugurated the proceedings by lighting the candles on the dais at 3.35 p.m. amidst a thunderous applause of devotees. The first item of the programme was a simple enactment of the birth of Jesus presented by the overseas children. They first enacted the scene of Mary and Joseph knocking at the doors of three inns and finally going to stable for shelter. The children were dressed in ancient costumes as the inn-keepers to make the presentation realistic. Mary and Joseph then walked to the display near the dais and placed the baby Jesus in the crib. Thereafter, the children sang beautiful songs on this joyous occasion. More than 100 children from 25 countries participated in this presentation. This was followed by carol singing by the adult choir of 650 ladies and gents. They sang beautiful songs in praise of Jesus and Sai. This programme came to a close at 5.15 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan. Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees in the end.

On the Christmas morning, i.e., 25th December 2003, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.05 a.m. As soon as Bhagavan entered the Hall, the Institute students commenced the chanting of Vedic hymns. After Bhagavan sat in His chair on the dais, the students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School made an excellent musical presentation. They played tunes of various Christmas carols on their violins to the merriment of the entire gathering earning an overwhelming applause from the devotees and the blessings of Bhagavan. Another equally joyous musical presentation was made on orchestra by the students of the Institute. After this magnificent presentation, the students of the Institute sang Christmas carols enlivening the spirit of Christmas in each heart. To add to the merriment and joy of Christmas, a student dressed as Santa Claus distributed sweets and chocolates after seeking the blessings of Bhagavan. Prasadam was also distributed to all the devotees at the end of this programme. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at

8.20 a.m. Before leaving for His abode, Bhagavan lighted candles and cut cakes placed in the verandah of the Mandir.

The afternoon programme began after the arrival of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.30 p.m. Six speakers addressed the gathering before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan. The first speaker, Smt. Rita Bruce from the U.S.A., narrated how she came to Swami with her husband 27 years ago and how the compassionate Bhagavan taught her lessons of love and forgiveness as Jesus did to mankind two millennia ago. Dwelling further on the teachings of Bhagavan, the learned speaker said that Bhagavan always emphasised on the responsibility of the parents to mould the character of their children. Smt. Bruce concluded her speech with a beautiful song in adoration of Bhagavan Baba. The second speaker was Sri Arthur Hillcoat from Australia who explained the teachings of Jesus and Bhagavan Baba, both of whom stressed the need for man to look within and find the kingdom of God. The speaker reiterated Bhagavan's message of unity of mankind and explained that the same divine spirit was present in every living being. Every being, he further said, was invested with divine light of love which he should spread all around in the world. The third speaker, Sri Sanjay Mahalingam, a student of M.B.A. class of the Institute, narrated how Bhagavan was teaching profound Vedantic truths in a most simple manner. In this regard, he referred to Bhagavan's stay at Kodaikanal where He imparted these lessons to the students and devotees in day-to-day conversation. In conclusion, Sri Mahalingam said that Bhagavan had come down to earth to fill the life of man with love and joy. Sri Mahalingam received special blessings of Bhagavan who materialised a gold chain for him when he offered his salutations to Bhagavan at the end of his speech. The next speaker, Dr. Narendranath Reddy from the U.S.A., observed that man today was suffering from the disease of worldliness and Bhagavan Baba as the Divine doctor had incarnated to cure man of all his ills. He emphasised that we should obey the command of Bhagavan implicitly with full faith to earn His grace and love. The next speaker, Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman, Prasanthi Council explained the teachings of Jesus who declared, "seek and thou shall find", "knock and the door shall open." Dr. Goldstein observed that the Lord had incarnated on earth, and this was a unique opportunity for man to serve Him and fulfil the purpose of his life on earth. The last speaker was Dr. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. At the outset, Dr. Venkataraman expressed gratitude to Bhagavan for providing this unique opportunity of celebrating Christmas in His Divine Presence. He observed, it was a great blessing that we were celebrating the birthday of the son of God in the presence of his Father. Further, Dr. Venkataraman explained the teaching of Jesus, "Love thy neighbour as thyself" and remarked that anyone who was in need of help was our neighbour.

Christmas celebrations came to a happy conclusion with the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan who exhorted the devotees to free themselves from the shackles of body attachment which was the cause of all their suffering and bask in the effulgence of Atmic consciousness. (Full text of Bhagavan's Discourse has been given elsewhere in this issue.) The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.45 p.m.

New Year Day

The devotees welcomed the New Year in the holiest of holy way at Prasanthi Nilayam. The entire day from morning till evening was filled with sacred programmes of Divine Darshan of Bhagavan, chanting of Vedic Mantras, singing of Bhajans and presentations of devotional music. The venue of the celebration was Sai Kulwant Hall which was aesthetically done up for this occasion. The decoration with fresh roses of numerous colours was immensely beautiful and enchanting. Bhagavan blessed the devotees with His Divine Darshan in the Hall at 6.45 a.m. amidst the chanting of Vedic hymns by the Institute students. One of the finest programmes on this occasion was a scintillating presentation of devotional music by the Institute students on their orchestra. At the end of this presentation, Bhagavan blessed the orchestra group and posed for photographs with them. This programme was followed by recitation of Stotras and devotional songs by the students. At the end of the morning programme, there were Bhajans in which all the devotees participated in chorus with great devotion. Cutting of cakes by Bhagavan also formed part of the celebration. Prasadam was then distributed to all the assembled devotees. The morning programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 8.20 a.m.

Bhagavan gave His New Year Message to devotees on the evening of 1st January 2004. Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, former students of the Institute presented an excellent programme of devotional music. Bhajans on this day were also led by them. Chanting of Vedic Mantras by the Institute students added to the sacredness of the celebration. There was another spell of devotional music by the Institute students forming the orchestra group to the delight of all. The day's programmes culminated in the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan in which He explained the transitory nature of the world and exhorted the devotees to acquire the wealth of noble virtues in the New Year. Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho Rama Rama Ram ...*" This programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.25 p.m.

JESUS WAS UNDETERRED BY OBSTACLES

Jesus was Karuna (compassion) come in human form. He spread the spirit of compassion and conferred solace on the distressed and the suffering. Noticing the torture of birds and beasts in the Temple at Jerusalem, he reprimanded the vendors and drove them out of the precincts. He was thus exposed to the anger of the priests.

Good work always provokes the wicked. But one should not falter or fear in the face of opposition. The challenge gives joy. It evokes hidden sources of strength. It brings down grace to reinforce the effort. Pleasure springs during the interval between two pains. One has to struggle with difficulties in order to taste the delight of victory. Jesus was the target of many mighty obstacles and he braved them all. As a result, his name and message are shedding splendid light all over the world now.

Not only Jesus, every prophet, messenger of God, teacher of truth and spiritual leader had to wade through ridicule, neglect and persecution. Even if a diamond is cast in a dustbin, its lustre remains; its price will not diminish. Even if a sweet pumpkin grows on a thorny

fence, its taste remains; its attraction will not diminish. Even if a peacock's egg is hatched in a fowl-roost, its charm remains and its nature does not change.

- Baba

22nd Convocation of SSSIHL: Divine Discourse

SATHYA AND DHARMA FORM THE FOUNDATION OF BHARATIYA CULTURE

This land of Bharat is the motherland of many great people whose name and fame spread to different continents. This sacred land was the battlefield wherefrom the foreign rulers were driven out and freedom from foreign rule attained. This land of Bharat acquired great name and fame for erudite scholarship. (Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Bharat has earned great reputation in all fields of human endeavour, be it material, spiritual, moral or ethical. It should be a matter of great pride for anyone to declare, "I am a Bharatiya." Truly speaking, to be called a Bharatiya is in itself a great honour. Having earned this appellation, the citizens of this country should become role models for the rest of the world. It is really unfortunate that some people do not feel proud to be called Bharatiyas in spite of the fact that they are born in this sacred land of Bharat and have enjoyed its wealth, water and food. Many people born in this sacred land earned great name and fame. But, unfortunately, the Bharatiyas today are falling back instead of marching ahead with courage and determination. The culture of Bharat is renowned worldwide for its sacredness. It has demonstrated great ideals to the world in moral, religious and spiritual fields. Having taken birth in such a sacred land, how noble and upright a Bharatiya should be!

Glory and Greatness of Bharatiya Culture

Embodiments of Love!

The noble tenets of the culture of Bharat are widespread in every nook and corner of the country. These should be passed on from one generation to another. Every son of Bharat should live true to his name and bring glory to the motherland. He should uphold the prestige and honour of this country. But instead some are bringing bad name to the country. Even if you do not make any special efforts to bring good name to the country, its glory will keep on increasing day by day; it is enough if you lead your life in an ideal manner like a true Bharatiya.

Embodiments of Love!

Bharat is the crest jewel of all the nations of the world. Love is the very foundation of Bharat. It has demonstrated great ideals in all fields of life. One who forgets such a sacred land will surely bring himself to disrepute. Wherever you go, you should feel proud to proclaim that you are a Bharatiya. People with such spirit of patriotism and nationalism are very rare these days. Instead of bringing glory to the motherland, people are tempted to go to other countries. Forgetting their own motherland, they sing praises of others. You

can very well imagine the fate of a person who forgets his mother. Mother and motherland are worthy of worship by one and all. Bharat is the land of the Vedas. The glory of Bharatiya culture cannot be described in words. You should make efforts to uphold this sacred culture and earn a good name for yourself. You should strain every nerve to uphold the culture of Bharat. But the Bharatiyas who are supposed to demonstrate ideals to others are failing in this regard. Since ancient times, Bharat has been demonstrating great ideals to all nations. The name and fame that Bharat earned has no parallels. Bharat is the centre of righteousness. It lays great emphasis on the principles: *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* (speak truth, practise righteousness). These great principles lend support and strength to this country as well as to others. *Dharayati Iti Dharma* (that which supports is Dharma). The culture of Bharat comprising such great principles is the sheet anchor of the entire world. It is unfortunate that the Bharatiyas themselves are disregarding these great principles today.

Bharatiya Culture Rests on Sathya and Dharma

Embodiments of Love!

Ancient Bharatiyas never craved for name and fame. They attained glory on account of their nobility. The culture of Bharat lays great emphasis on the spirit of sacrifice. Our ancients placed interest of the country above self-interest. They had no trace of selfishness in them. That is why their glory has not diminished a bit with the passage of time. They took refuge in righteousness. They considered truth as their life-breath. Are we making any efforts to uphold the pristine glory of Bharat today? Days are rolling by but Bharatiyas are not striving for the uplift of the nation. Instead they are forgetting their own culture. He is a true Bharatiya who is prepared to sacrifice even his life for Dharma. Bharat is the motherland of many great people who acquired name and fame in all the continents of the world. Bharat Matha (Mother India) was adorned with the garland of such righteous people. This garland is fading today. But the culture of Bharat will never fade with the passage of time. It is eternal and immortal. Ancient Bharatiyas adhered to Sathya and Dharma even in small matters. Sathya and Dharma were their guiding principles. That is why their lives continue to inspire people even after many generations and aeons. But today the Bharatiyas are running after money. How long will the money last? Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows. You can be called a Bharatiya only when you develop morality. Only those who adhere strictly to morality are fit to be the leaders of Bharat.

True Education Inculcates Selflessness

Students – Boys and Girls!

Remember always that your education is not merely to amass wealth or to eke out a livelihood. Money cannot confer true happiness on you. Do not deviate from Dharma for the sake of Dhana (money). Dharma is your life, truth is your breath, good reputation is your wealth. You should not crave for worldly name and fame. Once you practise Dharma, you will naturally attain good reputation. Dharma is related to the heart. Practice of Dharma is termed as Ritam which will make you immortal. But today we do not find anybody adhering to Ritam. Bharat has given birth to many great scholars, poets and men of sacrifice who demonstrated great ideals. We should always remember those who sacrificed their life for a noble cause and try to emulate them. It is the spirit of sacrifice

that has protected and sustained this country for many ages and generations. Sacrifice is the Dharma of the Bharatiyas. You should be ready to sacrifice your life for the protection of Dharma and not for Dhana. Bharat is the birthplace of many noble persons who sacrificed their lives for the cause of Dharma. Thyagaraja said, *Endaro Mahanubhavulu, Andariki Vandanamulu* (there are many great souls; I offer my salutations to all of them). They never craved for name and fame. They led a life of Thyaga (sacrifice). Thyaga is true Yoga. You should practise this Yoga and become deserving of Divine grace.

Embodiments of Love!

Love is the eternal principle that is present in all. There is no human being without love. But man today uses his love for selfish purposes. Eschew selfishness and self-interest, develop the spirit of sacrifice and inculcate the qualities of courage and valour. How can you become courageous? It is possible only when you practise Dharma. Recognise this basic truth that education is not meant to earn money. It should develop the understanding of Manas (mind). Today wherever you see, money is given prime importance. Even music has become a business enterprise to earn money. The divine quality of music enraptures the heart. M.S. Subbulakshmi is a renowned musician of India. She never used music for earning money. She dedicated her music to uphold the glory of Bharat. Everyone should strive for the honour of the country. No doubt, there are many talented people today in the fields of music, literature and fine arts but they are using their talent to earn money. Modern man has become business-minded. Music and other arts lose their true quality if they are used for business purposes. Instead of developing business acumen, man should develop the spirit of sacrifice through self-enquiry. Only then can there be a transformation of the heart. First of all, man should develop self-confidence. Where there is self-confidence, there is self-satisfaction. Where there is self-satisfaction, there is self-sacrifice. And, through self-sacrifice comes self-realisation. So long as you do not give up selfishness, you cannot achieve anything worthwhile in life. Fish is better than one who is selfish. Fish cleans the water in which it lives, while a selfish man pollutes the very society which nourishes him. Leave selfishness and cultivate selflessness. Only then can you earn a good name in society. Students today acquire the knowledge of many subjects. But all their education is useless if they do not give up selfishness.

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

(Telugu Poem)

Acquire the knowledge of the Self. Consider it as your very life. This knowledge is your true energy. But man is wasting his energy due to his selfishness and self-interest. Give up selfishness and self-interest. Only then can you be truly called the children of Bharat.

Aspire for Divine Love

Students – Boys and Girls!

Never become selfish in your life. Develop the spirit of sacrifice. Be prepared to sacrifice even your life for the sake of Sathya and Dharma. Today people are afraid to speak truth. Why should one be afraid of speaking truth? In fact, one should be afraid to utter falsehood. One who adheres to truth is always fearless. You become fear-stricken when you do not follow the path of truth.

Embodiments of Love!

Consider love as your very life and truth as your breath. There is an intimate and inseparable relationship between love and truth. Today people talk of love without understanding its meaning. They use the term love for their attachment at mundane level. They are under the mistaken notion that worldly and physical attachment is love. True love is completely free from selfishness. It blossoms when man develops the spirit of sacrifice. Love is God, God is love. God is the embodiment of love. Love is the very form of Brahman. Connect your love with divine love. Intensify your love for God and sanctify your life. What man craves for is worldly love which is lifeless. He should aspire for divine love which is his very life.

Today there are many highly educated people in the world. But what is the help they are rendering to society? Practically nothing. They are acquiring high degrees just for their selfish ends and for earning money. Bereft as they are of any spirit of sacrifice, they do nothing to serve society. They even lack love for their country.

Embodiments of Love!

Students today are taking to wrong path in the name of love. They do not understand what true love is. Love is the eternal gift of God to every man. It should be utilised for the service of society and community. What is community? Unity is the basis of community. Where there is unity, there is community. This unity is possible when people share their love with others and serve the community selflessly.

Only Love for God is True Love

Embodiment of Love!

Love may appear to be a small word but it is pregnant with profound meaning. However, people use it in a cheap worldly sense. They keep saying, "I love you, I love you ..." in a mechanical way without understanding its true meaning. True love presupposes that you are prepared to sacrifice all that is dear to you. Love for God is true love. Love is God, live in love. Try to understand the true nature of love. Do not misinterpret love in the worldly sense. You should be prepared to sacrifice your life for love. But today nobody is prepared to sacrifice his life for love. Rather people are ready to take others' life to meet their selfish ends.

Students!

You might have acquired high educational qualifications. But all these will prove futile if you do not earn the love of God. Only God's love is true and eternal. Worldly love is transient. It attracts you like a twinkling star for a moment and vanishes. Acquire divine love which is the fundamental principle of your life.

Students!

You should love all. All of you should live like brothers and sisters. All are the children of God. When you realise this truth, you will experience true love. You are born to different parents but the life principle in each of you is one and the same. Consider love as your life. Only then the knowledge acquired by you will be meaningful. If you forget love, your life itself will become meaningless. Live for the sake of love. Share your love with your fellowmen and become deserving of divine love. What you have to share with others is not worldly love. Worldly love is not true love. True love is related to the heart. Share divine love with one and all. What is this divine love? Divine love has no trace of selfishness in it. People talk of divine love but get intoxicated by the deep wine of worldly love. Love everybody without selfishness. You can attain the Divine only when you develop divine love. Lead your life spreading the message of love. Love is the goal of your life. Once you become the recipient of God's love, you will be loved by the whole world. Such is the power of God's love. Hence, always pray for His love.

Embodiments of Love!

Love God wholeheartedly. Love God, live in God. Only then can one be called a true student. Otherwise one is not a student but stupid. Do not harbour cheap worldly love. True love is heart to heart and love to love. Do not have love for money. Money comes and goes. Love is not related to material things either. It is related to the heart. Fill your heart with true love. The heart bereft of love becomes dry and barren. Keep your heart always pure and fresh with love. I am prepared to do anything for you if you develop true love. I am ready to sacrifice even My life for you. Therefore, develop true love more and more.

Students!

What is Vidya (education)? It is not merely the study of matter. True education provides the learners the experience of effulgent love. No other light can match the effulgence of love. Hence, develop love, Bangaru! Only then will your education be fruitful. Knowledge is God's gift. It should be shared with others.

Embodiments of Love!

Love is your life. Love is your goal. The Bhagavadgita also lays great emphasis on the principle of love. Having studied here for a long time, you should fill your life with love. You have immense love for Me. It cannot be described in words. Love others as you love Swami. Give Me your love. Take My love in turn. There is no trace of body attachment in Me. Doctors said they would perform surgery on Me. I told them, "You can do whatever you want. I am not the body. This body is yours." Your love becomes worldly in nature when you have body consciousness. You should develop such love which transcends body consciousness. Only then can you understand the eternal truth. When you truly experience divine love, you will not lead a worldly life. Your love will then flow incessantly towards God.

(The function concluded with the singing of the National Anthem.)

- **From Bhagavan's Benedictory Address on the occasion of the 22nd Convocation of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 22nd November 2003.**

NEWS FROM PRASANTHI NILAYAM

Maharshi Valmiki: Dance Drama

This dance drama portrayed the famous story of transformation of the ruthless dacoit Ratnakara into Sage Valmiki by the power of the Divine Name of Rama. He was initiated into Rama Mantra by the seven sages whom he encountered in his jungle abode during one of his daily exploits of robbery and murder.

Enacted by the Bal Vikas children of Singapore on the afternoon of 5th December 2003 in Poornachandra Auditorium, Prasanthi Nilayam in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba, this drama was an outstanding presentation from all points of view, be it direction, acting, costumes or sets. The drama began after the arrival of Bhagavan Baba in the Auditorium at 3.00 p.m. and came to a close at 3.40 p.m. The children along with their teachers sang a few group songs also after the conclusion of the drama. Pleased with their performance, Bhagavan Baba went up on the stage and blessed the children, distributed clothes and watches to them and posed for photographs with them. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 4.15 p.m.

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

Andhra Pradesh: Karimnagar district carried out various service activities on large scale at different places as part of Bhagavan's 78th Birthday celebrations in November 2003. This district distributed blankets to 442 needy persons, dresses to 37 children in slum areas, new clothes to 22 physically challenged persons, Saris and Dhotis to 108 people, school uniforms to 50 school children, towels to 120 persons, sewing machines to 2 persons, steel plates to 87 people, steel cooking vessels to 9 old women and conducted a free marriage at Husnabad Seva Sadan. This district carried out Narayana Seva for 3995 poor people and distributed Sai protein food packets to 86 children. It carried out 5 medical camps in the third week of November 2003 and treated 992 patients of different ailments and conducted one veterinery camp treating 300 animals.

East Godavari district conducted a mega medical camp in Bandapalli village in Girijan forest area on 2nd November 2003 and treated 1534 patients, giving free medicines along with rice and plantains to them. 12 doctors and 10 paramedical staff worked in the camp. West Godavari district carried out Narayana Seva for 900 poor persons, gave blankets to 78 old people, distributed food provisions (10 kg rice, 2 kg Dal, 2 kg wheat flour, 1 kg sugar and 1 kg edible oil) to 127 poor families at Ganapavaram on 6th November 2003. A free medical camp was conducted at this place on 4th November 2003 treating 300 patients and a veterinery camp on 9th November 2003 treating 212 cattle. The youth of this district distributed Laddu Prasadam, Swami's photographs and Vibhuti packets to about 10,000 school children in several villages during Swami's Birthday celebrations.

Medak district distributed new clothes to 300 people, carried out Narayana Seva for 2600 people, gave milk, bread and fruits to 331 patients in the hospitals, cooking vessels to 30 people, treated 480 animals in a free veterinary camp and enrolled 50 new subscribers for “Sanathana Sarathi”, as part of Swami’s Birthday celebrations.

Hyderabad Samithi carried out a 7-day special programme in connection with Swami’s 78th Birthday celebrations at Sivam from 17th November 2003 to 23rd November 2003. Daily worship in the morning, daily Narayana Seva in the afternoon in different areas of the city and evening cultural programmes by eminent artistes were the highlights of the programme. Similarly, Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam Samithis arranged 5-day programme from 19th November 2003 to 23rd November 2003, carrying out various spiritual, educational, cultural and service activities on all the five days.

Assam, Manipur and N.E. States: The Imphal Sai Organisation organised a public meeting to highlight the teachings of different faiths to promote peace and harmony. Members of all faiths met under the canopy of Sai Organisation at J.N. Manipur Dance Academy, Imphal. Sri M. Nara Singh, Dr. Md. Maniruddin Sheikh and Sri Francis Ngazokpa, all Ministers of the State, hailing from three major religions shared the dais and spoke about the universal teachings of all religions. This unprecedented show of unity in a Sai function is a happy augury for the trouble-torn State as well as the country. A residential Sadhana Camp for Mahilas was organised at Marwari Dharmasala Hall, Imphal from 28th to 30th September 2003 in which 190 ladies took part. Srimati W. Leima Devi, Minister, Government of Manipur, graced the function by her presence. 113 Sai Youth (59 female and 54 male) assisted in running the camp successfully. An inter district Bal Vikas students painting competition was held at Manipur Bal Vikas Centre, Radiant School Lamphelpat of Imphal on 13th September 2003 in which 78 students participated. The children were divided into three groups and to encourage them three prizes in order of merit in each group were awarded. On the following day, i.e., 14th September 2003 Bal Vikas day was observed with various programmes attended by more than 450 devotees and well-wishers. It was inaugurated by Sri D. Biramani Singh, Minister for Revenue, Government of Manipur.

Kerala: Bhagavan's 78th Birthday was celebrated with one-month long programmes of Seva and spiritual activities throughout Kerala.

As part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Baba, an eye camp was conducted at Calicut. Out of 395 patients examined, 85 were selected for operation. Cataract operations were performed on 26th October 2003. A cataract detection camp was held at Karunagapally, Quilon district. The district is arranging 3006 cataract operations before November 2005. From 13th November to 16th November, 78 hours Akhanda Bhajan was held in all districts as part of Bhagavan's 78th Birthday celebrations. Sri Sathya Sai Community Centres were inaugurated in Wayanad, Trivandrum and Palakkad districts. Sri Sathya Sai Books Corner was inaugurated in the library of Kerala High Court. A complete set of Sai literature is now available there.

Tamil Nadu: As part of three-year action plan for our Beloved Bhagavan's 80th Birthday celebrations, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Parvathy Nagar, Kancheepuram district organised Grama Seva activities at Karsangal village. The Grama Seva commenced at 9.00 a.m. on the auspicious occasion of our Beloved Bhagavan's 78th Birthday, i.e., 23rd November 2003 with the chanting of Veda and Grama Bal Vikas programme. The uniqueness of Grama Seva was the construction of 9 hutments for economically weaker sections of the village by our Seva Dal volunteers. On the request of the villagers, the Seva Dal built Ganesh temple and handed over the same to them. Thereafter, 78 Dhotis and Saris were distributed to the selected deserving old people. This being a tribal area, the gesture of providing constructed houses to the economically weaker sections was highly appreciated, and the villagers expressed their gratitude to our Beloved Bhagavan. A unique programme was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences for patients requiring heart surgery with rare blood groups. Normally, heart surgeries requiring such rare blood groups are delayed for want of fresh negative group of blood donors. The States of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala mobilised such blood group donors (both gents and ladies) for the surgeries scheduled between 17th November and 23rd November 2003. The State of Tamil Nadu brought as many as 82 such rare blood group donors. These donors were drawn from different districts of Tamil Nadu and consisted of both members and non-members of the Organisation. They voluntarily assembled at Prasanthi Nilayam without any expectations and donated blood as spiritual Sadhana.

FESTIVALS / EVENTS IN THE YEAR 2004

- 11th Jan. .. Annual Sports and Cultural Meet of SSSIHL**
- 14th Jan. .. Sankranti**
- 18th Feb. .. Sivarathri**
- 21st Mar. .. Ugadi (Telugu New Year Day)**
- 30th Mar. .. Sri Rama Navami**
- 13th Apr. .. Tamil New Year Day**
- 14th Apr. .. Vishu**
- 4th May .. *Buddha Purnima**
- 6th May .. Easwaramma Day**
- 2nd Jul. .. Guru Purnima**
- 28th Aug. .. Onam**
- 6th Sept. .. Sri Krishna Janmashtami**
- 18th Sept. .. Ganesh Chaturthi**
- 23rd Oct. .. Vijaya Dasami**
- 12th Nov. .. Deepavali**

- 13th Nov. (6 p.m.) - *Global Akhanda Bhajan**
- 14th Nov. (6 p.m.)**
- 19th Nov. .. Ladies Day**

22nd Nov. .. 23rd Convocation of SSSIHL
23rd Nov. .. Bhagavan Baba's 79th Birthday
25th Dec. .. Christmas

* Provisional. Any changes will be notified

Inaugural Discourse: Seminar of Vice Chancellors

UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

*One may master all forms of knowledge,
One may vanquish one's adversaries in debate,
One may fight with valour and courage in the battlefield,
One may be an emperor reigning over vast kingdoms,
One may offer cows and gold as an act of charity,
One may count the countless stars in the sky,
One may tell the names of different living creatures on the earth,
One may be an expert in Ashtanga Yoga,
One may reach even the moon,
But it is near impossible to control the body, mind and senses.*

(Telugu Poem)

*God is love and love is God,
You can connect yourself with God only through love,
Develop love and achieve the supreme state of equanimity.*

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

The field of education is the subject of much discussion today. But first and foremost, we must try to know the true meaning of education. One may read all the available books and grasp their meaning but that does not make one educated.

True Meaning of Education

Today there are several so-called highly educated persons in the world. But what is the transformation this education has brought in them? What benefit has accrued to the world on account of these educated people? No one tries to understand and evaluate this aspect. Mere acquisition of bookish knowledge does not connote education. True meaning of education will be revealed to one who looks inward. Contrary to this, man today uses all

his knowledge for worldly ends. A few however look inward to enquire into the nature of Atma Tattwa.

We have introduced M.B.A. course in Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. What does M.B.A. really denote? The letters M, B, A stand for understanding the nature of the Mind (M), Body (B) and Atma (A). It is easy to understand the nature of the mind and body. But to understand the nature of the Atma is not that easy. The Atma has no form. It is pure consciousness. Even educated people have no experience of consciousness. Most people are only conscious. Some of them attain the awareness of conscience. But few today are able to understand the Atma Tattwa or pure consciousness. While conscious is related to the senses, conscience is inner awareness and consciousness is the all-pervading Atma Tattwa. It is only when one is deeply conscious can one understand what conscience is. Again, it is only when one is able to understand conscience can one really understand the principle of consciousness. But few make any serious attempt to know the in-depth meaning of these terms.

Atma Tattwa is the Basis of all Power and Knowledge

Dear Students – Boys and Girls!

You may be thinking that spirituality is too abstract to understand. But it is not so. However, you have to develop fundamental knowledge to understand spirituality. It cannot be understood by material knowledge. In fact, Atma Tattwa is beyond the scope of material knowledge. It is transcendental. Once you develop fundamental knowledge, then acquisition of physical, material and secular knowledge becomes easy. So, never think that spiritual knowledge is beyond your comprehension. Develop inner awareness to understand it.

What is awareness? Our normal understanding of this term is knowledge about the outer form of a particular object. (Bhagavan showing His handkerchief) Take, for instance, this object. When a question is asked as to what it is, the answer comes that it is a handkerchief. This knowledge about the object is considered to be awareness. (Bhagavan showing a flower) Again, when I question you what it is, you reply that it is a flower. This is also considered to be awareness. All these are the outer forms of different material objects. (Bhagavan showing the handkerchief) This is a cloth. What is the basis for this cloth? The basis of this is thread. Again, what is the basis for this thread? It is cotton. Thus, cloth cannot be made without thread and cotton. Cotton is the fundamental object that forms the basis for thread and cloth. We recognise only the cloth, but not the fundamental object cotton which is the basis for cloth. Therefore, it is of paramount importance today to recognise the Atma Tattwa that is at the root of all knowledge. If you know the Atma Tattwa, you can know everything else.

What is Atma Tattwa? For example, we have the physical body. This body has several limbs. All these limbs perform their functions continuously. But what is it that makes the limbs in the body function? We hold a particular object, say, a flower with one hand. What is it that gives power to the hand to hold the flower? We smell the flower. From where do we get this capability of smelling? We do not make any effort to understand and recognise the inner source of all these powers; i.e., the Atma Tattwa. You say, this is

my hand, my leg, my finger, my head, etc. Then, who are you? This 'you' has to be understood first, so that you can say my hand, my leg, my finger, my head, etc. Whose head is this? Whose leg is this? You go on saying that all the limbs are mine but you do not know who you are. It is Vedanta which provides answer to the question, "Who am I?" You go on asking others, "Who are you?" But you do not enquire, "Who am I?" The fundamental question is: "Who am I?" If you know this 'I', you would have known everything else. Spirituality is not a futile exercise. It is the fundamental principle of the universe. We must make efforts to understand this fundamental principle.

Know your Real Identity

Embodiments of Love!

What is love? What is its nature? From where does this originate? Can a human being live without love? Impossible. That is why, it is said: Love is God. Live in love. One has to understand this principle of love which is the basis for everything in this universe. Without love, there can be no life in this world. Love is the underlying power that permeates the entire universe. That is the truth. *Trikalabadhyam Sathyam* (that which remains changeless in all the three periods of time is truth). Not only that; truth transcends time. Truth has no form but it has meaning. We say, "Truth is God. Love is God." We go on repeating the word "God". We make use of this word "God" in different contexts. Even an atheist says "Oh! My God!" whenever he commits a mistake. People use this word "God" even without knowing its meaning. However, none can define the term properly. Similarly, none can define "Truth". You can know it only by your own experience. How can one correctly describe that experience? For example, one can go on repeating $1 + 1 = 2$, $2 + 2 = 4$ and $2 - 1 = 1$, etc., ad infinitum. One can only repeat plus and minus but no one can define the basis for the calculations. We can name different objects in this world. But we do not make any effort to understand the true nature of these objects. The whole world is full of material objects. This is a material world. However, there is something beyond this material world. That is, *Buddhi Grahyamatheendriyam* (that which is attained by the illumined intellect and is beyond the grasp of the senses). That is transcendental. We can count the objects in this world and say that there are so many crores of objects. What is there beyond that number? Thus, when you go on enquiring, you will know the truth. The fact is, there is a fundamental principle that is present in every human being. When you say "Love is God", that love is everywhere, it is omnipresent. This fundamental principle of love is present in every human being, nay, in every living being. When you say "truth is in me" and "I am truth" what does it mean? What is that 'I' and 'me'? If you analyse carefully, this 'I' in you is also the 'I' in others. This is the only truth. This truth can be understood only by spiritual enquiry. And that too by a steady and sincere enquiry into one's own nature. What is meant by the term enquiry? We use certain terms without understanding their real meaning. Try to understand the inner meaning of enquiry.

Embodiments of Love!

Try to know the truth. But do not waste your time in trying to understand some abstract concepts which you are unable to comprehend. Develop firm faith that God exists. Also have the faith that you are God. You cannot understand anything without developing faith. First and foremost, develop faith in the concept of 'I'. Only then can you

understand what is meant by 'you'. Without knowing 'I', how can you know 'you'? A small example. When 'I' and 'you' are joined together, it becomes 'we'. However, 'we' + 'He' becomes only 'He' who is changeless. 'I' and 'you' change constantly. When you are a child, you say "I am a boy." When you are a youth, you say "I am a man." Similarly, when you are old, you say, "I am an old man." Thus, you are undergoing constant changes in different stages of life. Hence, there is no use holding on to this changing principle. Attach yourself to the changeless principle, i.e., 'He'. That 'He' is God. That 'He' is present in you and in every person. He is everywhere, with you, in you, above you, below you and around you. Therefore, this 'He' principle represents the omnipresent Divinity. People should develop firm faith in this Divine principle. Supposing you say "I love him" and none else. How can this be true? It means that you do not love yourself. You say "this is my body". Can you have firm faith in the body? You cannot, since it undergoes constant changes and is perishable. However, the non-dual principle of Atma Tattwa immanent in the body is eternal and transcendental. It is omnipresent. It has no name or form. How can one give a name to such an all-pervading Atma Tattwa? It is only a futile exercise. Do not waste your time in this futile exercise. Develop firm faith in this omnipresent Atma Tattwa. That faith is awareness. (Bhagavan showing a rose) This is a rose. You have recognised it as such. But, who gave that name to this flower? You do not know. You simply repeat a name that is given to a flower in English language. Thus, you go on repeating the words without understanding the underlying truth. Hence, first and foremost, turn your vision inward and contemplate on the Atma Tattwa present in you. This Atma Tattwa can be realised only by constant Sadhana. It is only after realising this Atma Tattwa can one deliberate on it.

Also understand the nature of the physical body. The physical body consists of various limbs. In all these limbs, you will find the principle of 'I' immanent. That is why you say, this is my body, my hand, my finger, etc. When you go on enquiring into the nature of the body, you will realise that the same principle of 'I' is present in all the limbs. It is very difficult to understand the spiritual concepts. But you should not give up your Sadhana on that score. On the other hand, it has to be pursued vigorously. It is futile to run after worldly objects. If you are able to understand the Atma Tattwa, it amounts to understanding everything else. If you go on enquiring "Who am I?", you will ultimately realise the truth that the 'I' principle is nothing but the Atma Tattwa. Develop firm faith in Atma Tattwa. Several people give different names to the principle of the Atma. But it has no name and form. It is beyond all names and forms. It is transcendental. The same Chaitanya Shakti (power of consciousness) is immanent in every being. One has to understand and realise this consciousness. This is possible only by constant Sadhana and enquiry. If you enquire sincerely, you can experience it.

Embodiments of Love! Students!

It is not possible to understand spiritual concepts so easily. However, if you develop firm faith, you will certainly achieve success. But people today have virtually become blind having lost their eyes of faith. There is a basis for everything in the world. Just close your eyes. What do you see? You say that you are seeing darkness. Who is the seer? Nothing can be seen without a seer. This enquiry develops the understanding of one's reality. In order to know the reality, faith is also very necessary. Take faith as your guide in your

journey of life. You embark on a journey. Unless you know where you are going, how can you reach your destination? Only when you make a firm resolve that you are going to the Mandir can you reach the Mandir. Similarly, first and foremost, make Atma Tattwa the goal of your life's journey.

Embodiments of Love!

People talk about Prema (love) without knowing its real nature. You love the physical body and its beauty and call it Prema. You love wealth. Similarly, you love external forms. You love outward behaviour. Wherefrom do all these come? What is their basis? How long will these external forms last? All of them undergo change continuously. What is the use of attachment to these changing external forms? Love the changeless principle of Atma Tattwa. Atma Tattwa does not undergo any change whatsoever. Nothing can be added to or subtracted from it. Therefore, you must develop firm faith in such a changeless principle. You say, you love such and such person very much. But, what is that you love in him? Do you love his physical form? Do you love him for his behaviour? Do you love his sweet disposition? But all these factors are only transitory. Then, what is it that makes you love him? That is the quality of love in you. It is a love to love relationship. Love is God. God is the embodiment of love. There can be no life without love. Here is a small example. A mother had a son. He was 20 years old. After some time, the son died. Then, the mother started crying over the body of her son, "Oh son! You were my very life. How can I live without you?" Such type of grief is the result of attachment. It is not true love. True love is not related to the body. It is related to the Atma. This love is verily your life. It is the Atma. It is God. Atma Tattwa is the only reality.

Attain God by Developing Love

Embodiments of Love!

You can attain love only through love. The Gopikas prayed thus:

Oh Krishna, play on Your sweet flute and sow the seeds of love in the desert of loveless hearts.

Let the rain of love fall on earth and make the rivers of love flow. (Telugu Song)

The rivers of love must flow continuously. It is enough if you can understand the principle of love. Love is everything. Consider love as the be-all and end-all of your life. Do not focus your love on material objects. Love focused on material objects is transitory. Similarly, love for the body is not permanent. All the names and forms are temporary and ephemeral. Do not make them the objects of your love. Consider truth as truth. Do not associate it with material objects. Similarly, do not associate love with material objects. Love is simply love. As such, love is God. You can attain Divinity through such love.

Students! You have appointments (desires) and disappointments in life. You encounter disappointments, because you harbour appointments. If you have no appointments, then there will be no scope for disappointment. It is only your desires that take different forms. Do not give importance to any form. In fact, Atma Tattwa is your true form. Do not limit God to a particular name and form. Rama, Krishna, Govinda are only names attributed by

man to God. Not much importance can be attached to them. However, you need a particular name in the initial stages of your spiritual practice. For instance, it is necessary for you to realise the essence of education. It is also true that you need to acquire different types of education. But for how long? Until you experience that essence. Once you experience the essence of knowledge, all forms vanish. Hence, do not depend upon names and forms. Depend on the fundamental truth. That is the only truth. It has no form. Love is God. Love has no form. Cultivate this divine love. When you take to the path of truth, you will have the experience of this love. God exists. There can be no doubt about it. Without Paramatma (God), there can be no Prakriti (Nature). By knowing this truth of Prakriti, you can get the realisation of Paramatma (Supreme Self). From the realisation of Paramatma comes the realisation of Paratattwa (Supreme Reality). That Paratattwa is Atma Tattwa. Focus your love on Paratattwa. Do not confine it to any particular form because all forms are subject to change. Time permitting, I will dwell on this Prema Tattwa (principle of love) in greater detail. Students today are tossing between appointment and disappointment. When they understand the meaning of this principle of love, there will be no scope for disappointment.

Embodiments of Love!

There is only one path for attaining God. That is the path of love. That is the path of truth. Hold on to this path firmly. Ramana Maharshi used to ask all the visitors this question: "Who are you?" When you go on enquiring thus, you will ultimately know your reality. Do not identify the principle of 'I' with a particular form. Here is a small example. Janakiramaiah (younger brother of Swami's body) passed away recently. There are several people who loved him. They have been making obituary references in the newspapers, saying "Janakiramaiah! You have left your mortal coil, leaving us alone. You please take birth again, so that we may love you." Is it necessary for Janakiramaiah to take birth once again in order that these people may love him? Is that what these people wish for? Should we confine our entire life to birth and death only? In fact, both birth and death are unreal. Where there is birth, there is death surely. The twin stages of life, i.e., birth and death are only for the body, not for the Atma. We have to direct our love towards the Atma Tattwa which is eternal, and not the body which is subject to birth and death. I often address you as "Bangaru!" What is the underlying meaning in addressing you in that manner? Gold as a metal does not perish. Its shape changes when it is melted and made into different types of ornaments. Like gold, Atma Tattwa may take different forms but it does not undergo fundamental change. Strive to attain the changeless principle of Atma Tattwa, not the changing forms. I address you as "Bangaru!", reminding you of your real nature, i.e., the changeless Atma Tattwa. Gold is always gold. It is truth. It is eternal. You should yearn for this eternal reality. Keeping this in view, Adi Sankara in his famous song "Bhaja Govindam" sang thus:

*Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam
Punarapi Janani Jathare Sayanam
Iha Samsare Bahu Dustare
Kripayapare Pahi Murare.*

(Oh Lord! I am caught up in this cycle of birth and death; time and again, I am experiencing the agony of staying in the mother's womb. It is very difficult to cross this ocean of worldly life. Please take me across this ocean and grant me liberation.)

Yearn for that state where you become free from birth and death. Why should you wish to be born again and again?

Embodiments of Love!

You are the repository of divine love which has neither birth nor death. This love is always with you, in you, around you, below you, above you. If you cultivate this love, you will always remain as embodiments of love. Have firm faith in this divine love. Do not put faith in worldly love lest you should get deluded. Worldly love is like passing clouds. Such clouds come and go. They are not permanent. Love that which is eternal. That is the Atma. Love the Atma Tattwa. People who wish to enter the spiritual field and know the path that leads to Divinity should come to Me. I will explain. Do not be deluded by worldly love that causes only disappointment. Cultivate the type of love that will not cause disappointment. Pursue any type of education but understand the inner meaning of education. Put your learning into practice. Only then can you experience bliss. Do not be disappointed by directing your love towards physical forms. Most students get disappointed in this manner. In the end, they are unable to love anybody. That is not the right way. True love is divine; it is eternal. It keeps on growing more and more.

Embodiments of Love!

I always address you as “Embodiments of Love!” So, cultivate love. When you cultivate love, it will, in turn, protect you.

(Bhagavan concluded His Divine Discourse with the Bhajan “*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...*”)

(The programme concluded with singing of the National Anthem.)

- **From Bhagavan's Inaugural Discourse on the occasion of the “Seminar of Vice Chancellors on Value Education and Ethics” in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 28th October 2003.**

Make the Present Moment Holy

With mutual friendship and affection, engage yourself in Bhajan, Puja and Dhyana of the Lord. Utilise the time available in thoughts of the Lord without wasting it in idle talk. Time once lost can never be reclaimed. Neither can the time that is yet to come be claimed as certainly yours. So, to transform each moment into a moment

of joy, make this moment, while it is still with you, holy and pure. Give up all yesterdays and tomorrows and the days after; do now, this very day, the task that is worthwhile. This is My New Year blessing to you all.

- *Baba*

Sankranti Sandesh

MORALITY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF EDUCATION

*It is the power and glory of learning
That inculcates qualities like courage and valour in man,
And reveals the mysteries of the universe.
Comprising rivers, valleys, mountains, waterfalls and the vast sky.*

(Telugu Poem)

Students - Boys and Girls!

The present Vice Chancellor, the former Vice Chancellor, the Secretary of the Central Trust and two students of the Institute have made excellent speeches in beautiful language.

True Devotion Leads to Spiritual Illumination

In this vast world, we find most wonderful and joyful events that awaken our inner being and fill our heart with immense bliss. The talent, skill and expertise demonstrated by our students in the Annual Sports and Cultural Meet have given immense joy to one and all. Whatever activity our students undertake, they do it to please Swami and not for their temporary happiness. Today we are unable to experience the joy of participating in sports and games. There is a winner and loser in all games. We are interested only in the result of the game and not the game itself. Is this the aim of games and sports? No, not at all. Life is a game, play it. Life is a dream, realise it. Life is love, enjoy it. One who understands the import of these statements and puts them into practice in his life is a true student.

Right from his birth, all activities of man are centred round the process of learning and acquiring wisdom. It is absolutely necessary to impart the spirit of idealism to our students so that they fill their hearts with love and give happiness to one and all. Today there are a large number of educational institutions all over the world but nobody seems to have understood what education really means. Students fill their heads with mere bookish knowledge, write examinations, secure pass marks and claim that they are educated. This process of teaching and learning does not reveal eternal truths to the learner.

In spite of his education and intelligence, a foolish man will not know his true Self and a mean-minded person will not give up his evil qualities. Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to total wisdom.

(Telugu Poem)

Vidya (education) means Jnana (wisdom). Jnana does not connote mere worldly intelligence. True education is that which develops your inner vision, provides spiritual illumination and helps you experience everlasting bliss. In what way are the students benefited by the present system of education? They merely acquire degrees without understanding the real significance of education.

Modern system of education is making the students narrow-minded instead of developing their power of discrimination. It neither imparts true wisdom nor does it help them to become broad-minded. Education today has therefore become meaningless. The textbooks that are prescribed for students do not contain the essence of true education. It is surprising how the government sanctions such textbooks! It appears that those responsible for recommending these textbooks are not making the government aware of this reality. The government is not realising that this can bring a bad name to it. In fact, this trend in education is on the rise in the entire world. Students today are interested only in bookish knowledge, not in the essence of education. Their only concern is to get a degree and secure a job. They do not understand the real meaning of education. The parents also do not bother whether the textbooks contain the desired knowledge or not. They are happy if their children score high marks in their examinations. They are not concerned about the numerous bad remarks their children get. If only they care to look into the remarks, they will truly understand the type of education their children are receiving. The sole aim of education today is to get a degree. With the rise of this trend in education, the study of the Vedas and other sacred texts has declined. Nobody is making efforts to understand the glory and sacredness of the ancient Indian system of education. In this situation, how can the present system of education impart real knowledge to the students?

Parents should Take Responsibility for Inculcating Virtues in Children

Students!

You should acquire such education which will be beneficial to society and the world at large. What is the present state of society? In what way can we make it ideal? How should we work for its advancement? These are the questions we should ask ourselves. But nobody seems to think on these lines. The present system of education does not address itself to the needs of society. In this situation, the elders should take up the responsibility to give proper direction to the students. We should follow the teachings of our ancient sages and seers who have given us the true meaning of education. It is a sign of foolishness to become egoistic by merely acquiring a few degrees. We should understand the needs of society and utilise our education for its progress. People say they are serving society. But what is the use of this service without understanding the requirements of society? Such service is not Samaja Seva (social service) but Samadhi Seva (lifeless activity). A proper system of education is essential for the advancement of society and the progress of the people. As the craze for modern education has increased, people have forgotten even the ABC of ancient system of education. Parents should teach their children what is good and what is bad right from their childhood. They are satisfied when their child secures a seat in a college and acquires a degree. They do not care whether their child is imbibing any virtues or not in the process of learning. It is for the parents to see that their son/daughter grows up as a responsible person and utilises his/her

talent in the service of society and the nation. This responsibility cannot be left entirely to the educational authorities and the government. In fact, the parents should encourage the children to work for the country and earn a good name. But nowadays parents do not have such broad-mindedness. The teachers on the other hand think that their responsibility ends with imparting bookish knowledge to the students. They do not even enquire whether the information contained in the textbooks is beneficial to society or not. Even if some teachers raise this matter, they soon get discouraged by the indifferent response of the authorities. In this way, educational institutions have been turned into factories which produce degree holders.

Students alone are not to be blamed for this state of affairs. The mistake lies with parents, teachers and the government also. It is not enough if a student stands first in his class. He should also work for the progress of society and the nation and thus bring a good name to his parents. The parents on their part should monitor the progress of their children from time to time, inculcate virtues in them and mould them into responsible citizens. They should not rest satisfied if their children get good marks. They should also observe what type of books their children read at home. Some students read meaningless novels. But the parents do not bother to correct them. On the other hand, they say, "What is wrong in reading novels? It is enough if they are happy." It is a big mistake. In this way, they spoil their children themselves. They do not care to observe how and where their children play and what they do in their absence. There is no point in merely exposing the children to formal education without correcting their behaviour. Modern parents should emulate the ideals of our ancients who brought up their children in the most ideal way.

Complement Secular Education with Spiritual Education

Embodiments of Love!

The modern system of education needs a total change. Parents today take pride that their children are studying in convents and English medium schools, and they can recite English poems. But they fail to understand what type of impact this modern education is having on their children. The tiny tots in kindergarten are taught nursery rhymes like "Ba ... Ba ... Black Sheep". Because of such education, the children are ultimately becoming black sheep themselves. If the very start of education is like this, then how can we expect them to become ideal citizens? I am really pained to see how the modern system of education is totally spoiling the lives of the students. That is why I have established educational institutions spending crores of rupees to mould the character of the students. Education is totally free in these institutions. I am providing even books free of cost to the students. (loud applause) In the present situation, one has to register well in advance for the admission of one's child even in a primary school. Parents are happy if their wards get admission in what they consider good schools, but they do not bother about the impact such an educational system will have on their children. Today the quality of education has become so 'cheap' that children cannot distinguish between what is good and what is bad for them. How can then such an education make one a 'chief'? Neither the parents nor the teachers nor the students are able to understand how society and the nation can derive benefit from the present system of education. Therefore, all of them should put their heads together and work unitedly to bring about a complete transformation in this system.

At present students' agitation is on the increase. However, it is not their fault. They are in themselves very good. The fault lies with the books they read and the teachers who teach them as also the educational authorities who prescribe such books. There are no two opinions about it that the present system of education cannot bring about any improvement in the life of the students. It is high time that the parents realise the gravity of the situation and take steps to see that their children acquire proper education. What is the use of that education which does not lead one to immortality? What is the type of education which makes one immortal? That is spiritual education. The parents should therefore encourage their children to pursue spiritual education. Of course, secular education is also necessary. But secular education should be complemented with moral, ethical and spiritual education.

Character is your Greatest Protection in Life

Students!

Do not feel proud that you are pursuing higher education. It is not worth even the alms a beggar gets in the street. Instead of craving for degrees, one should cultivate noble qualities. Education without character is useless. In fact, education finds its fruition in character. Today many students read useless books. Such books should not be sold in the market. Students should read only such books which develop their character. They should participate in sports and games in the true spirit of sportsmanship. This advice applies equally to girls students as well. They question, "When boys ride motor bikes, why can't we do the same?" In this way, they argue and waste their time. Nobody says that girls should not ride motor bikes. But one should act according to the time and circumstances. The number of motor cycle accidents of young people is on the rise. Parents make many sacrifices to bring up their children. I am aware of the agony of the parents when their children meet with fatal motor cycle accidents.

Today girls want to compete with boys in every field. They also aspire for name and fame. Their argument is, "In what way are we inferior to boys? Why can't we acquire the same type of education as boys?" However, each one should acquire such type of education that is appropriate and suitable for him/her. It is essential for women to look after their families well and shape the character of their children in an ideal manner. Modern education is leading students in the wrong direction. Parents have to share the blame for this. They want their ward to acquire high qualifications and get married to an equally highly qualified boy/girl. Some parents while trying to fix up marriage alliance ask, "My daughter has completed her postgraduation. She is good looking. What about your son? Has he completed his postgraduation? Is he handsome?" In fact, beauty is related to character, not to the physical appearance. Beauty of character is what one should aspire for. Is it always possible to get a postgraduate bridegroom for a postgraduate bride? The present-day education is leading to unhealthy competition and conflicts. I do not say that girls should not pursue higher education. If I am against women's education, why should I establish women's colleges? I have established various educational institutions with the sole purpose of inculcating virtues in students. I am providing education free of cost. There is no examination fee even. My only aim is that

students should acquire proper education, become ideal citizens and give happiness to their parents.

Students!

Do not misunderstand My words. I am telling you all this for your own welfare and progress. You should acquire such education which will bring a good name to you and uphold the reputation of your family. Do not become egoistic and take to wrong ways in the name of freedom. I often caution the boys not to look here and there while walking on the road. Some boys, while driving their motor bikes, keep looking at girls who are passing by. In the process, their attention is diverted and they end up in accidents. Keep your senses under control. Always maintain high character. If you safeguard your character, your character will protect you. Hence, have a check on your vision, listening and speech.

Why are the eyes given to you?

Is it to look here and there? No.

The eyes are meant to see the beautiful form of the Lord.

Why are the ears given to you?

Is it to listen to vain gossip? No.

The ears are meant to hear the glories of the Lord. (Telugu Poem)

The ears are given to hear good words and lead a virtuous life by putting them into practice. Buddha realised that human life was given to acquire virtues and not to indulge in sensual pleasures. Having thus set a goal for himself in life, Buddha left his home after renouncing his wife and only child. I am not however advising you to leave your wife and children and go to the forest like Buddha. You should look after them well and fulfil your responsibilities towards them. Teach your children noble qualities and bring them up in life. Lead a life of virtue. This is what Buddha taught. Having realised that God had given the sense organs for the purpose of leading a virtuous life, Buddha discarded all other spiritual practices and tried to control his senses. He gave up even the study of scriptures. He realised that conscience was his true Guru. He understood that if the eyes and tongue were brought under control, all the other senses would automatically come under control. If you are able to exercise control over your vision and tongue, the whole world will be under your control.

Do not pay heed to the wrong advice of others. Foster noble qualities. If you can control your senses, that itself amounts to realising the essence of the Bhagavata. The study of the Bhagavata is meant to transform you into a man of virtue. Only when you achieve sense control can you become a learned man in the real sense of the term. Hence, control your senses and become a master of the world. This is what you have to strive for today. Explain to your parents also about your priorities in life. Tell them, "Mother! You expect me to go for a job with a fat salary. But high salaries are not as important as a virtuous life. If we give preference to money over virtues, our life itself will be ruined." You will become a man of virtue only when you keep your senses under control. You will also gain the strength of character. Hanuman, the illustrious devotee of Lord Rama, is an example of such noble qualities. He is extolled as 'Santhudu', 'Gunavanthudu' and

'Balavanthudu' (serene, virtuous and valorous). He became a great Guru because of his noble qualities. We should emulate his example.

Dear Students!

You are like pure gold. You are endowed with noble qualities. Your life is very precious. But some evil-minded people may try to put you on the wrong path. Even if others try to mislead you, do not deviate from your chosen path. Stand firm. You will then acquire a good name and the whole world will praise you. But if you lose your character, you will ruin your life. This is My advice to you regarding your education. Since other subjects have been dealt with by the Vice Chancellors and the students who spoke earlier, I am not referring to them. In today's education you are taught skills which enable you to progress in your career but nobody teaches moral education. Morality is the most important aspect of education. Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows. Therefore, cultivate morality. That will earn you a good name in society.

God is your sole refuge wherever you may be, in a forest, in the sky, in a city or a village, on the top of a mountain or in the middle of deep sea. (Telugu Poem)

Cultivate noble qualities. I am prepared to give everything to those who cultivate noble qualities and to those who teach them. Not only that, I am ready to give even My life for their sake. In fact, I am living only for their sake. I am ready to sacrifice anything to put you on the virtuous path. I do not seek anything in return. Lead a noble life and earn a good name. This is what I expect from you.

Parents are your First Teachers

Students – Boys and Girls!

You are all endowed with noble qualities. However, you are influenced by the modern society. But do not get perturbed by these distracting influences. First and foremost, make proper use of your senses. Respect your elders like your father and mother. Earn a good name by your good words and good deeds.

Join good company, speak and listen to good words, cultivate good vision and pursue good education. In fact, this is what your parents also want. No father or mother will like their children to go on the wrong path. But they are unable to tell their children emphatically out of some sort of inhibition. But I have no such constraints. Therefore, I am advising you with all the emphasis at My command. Thyaga (sacrifice) is the noblest of all qualities. Keep away from Bhoga (sensual pleasures). In fact, Bhoga will lead you to Roga (disease). The Vedas declare: Na Karmana Na Prajaya Dhanena Thyagenaike Amrutatthwa-manasu (immortality is not attained through action, progeny or wealth; it is attained only by sacrifice). Hence, Bangaru! (My dear golden students) cultivate noble qualities. I am prepared to sacrifice anything for you. But you must also be in a position to receive My grace. I am yours and you are Mine. Try to understand Swami's love. All that I am saying is meant to put you on the right path.

Some children do not realise the hardships their parents undergo for their education. Parents take loans and even forgo proper food to educate their children. Do not go against

the wishes of your parents. If, by any chance, you have to differ from them, explain to them lovingly your viewpoint. They will also feel happy that you have respected their feelings. Parents are your first teachers. Never disobey your parents. Speak sweetly and softly to them. I am prepared to sacrifice anything for the sake of such students.

Many students join our educational institutions. Some of them may not be in a position to pay fees. Therefore, we decided that all education in Sathya Sai institutions should be totally free. There is no fees here but only peace. People want peace. But where is peace? Can you buy peace in the market? There is no peace anywhere but only pieces. You can find peace only when you inculcate virtues in your heart. Students want to be good but they follow the wrong path. They want to eat sugar but they get all that is bitter because there is no coordination between their thoughts and deeds. That is why it is said:

Manasyekam Vachasyekam Karmanyekam Mahatmanam

Manasyanyath Vachasyanyath Karmanyanyath Duratmanam

(Those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones; those who lack harmony of these are wicked.) I like such students whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect harmony. Truly speaking, such students are Swami's students. I am prepared to give anything to them. I never say no at any time.

Dear Students!

Knowingly or unknowingly you might have committed some mistakes in the past. But at least now, cultivate good qualities and try to make your parents as well as Swami happy.

- **From Bhagavan's Sankranti Sandesh in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 15th January 2004.**

Publication of Subsequent Volumes

With the Divine Blessings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust has undertaken the sacred work of publishing the subsequent volumes of 'Sathyam Sivam Sundaram'. Prof. Kasturi had authored the first four volumes depicting the life and mission of Bhagavan Baba from 1926 to 1979. We propose to bring out the fifth volume (covering the saga from 1980 to 1985) on Bhagavan's Birthday in 2004. It will be our endeavour to publish one subsequent volume on every subsequent Birthday of Bhagavan.

We request the devotees from all over the world who are in possession of any related authentic chronicles, pictures and documents to send them to:

The Convener

The 'Sathyam Sivam Sundaram' Committee

Sri Sathya Sai Books & Publications Trust

Prasanthi Nilayam

Andhra Pradesh

Pin 515 134.

The devotees may please send the above in whatever medium they are available and in whichever form it is convenient for them (documents, diaries, audio/video tapes, CD's, etc.). A quick and prompt response will be deeply appreciated.

Our E-mail identity is:
sssbpt_psn@rediffmail.com

New Year Day Message

SERVICE TO MANKIND IS THE GREATEST SADHANA

*People can say, all this is Brahman,
There is nothing which is not permeated by Brahman,
God only exists at all times,
The visible world is but an illusion.*

Embodiments of Love!

People today are very enthusiastic about the New Year. Significantly, this New Year has commenced on a Thursday!

It is a sign of ignorance to single out one particular day in a year for celebration. For a true devotee, everyday is a festival. In fact, everyday is New Year day. Hence, we should consider every day, every minute as new and celebrate it with joy.

Service is the Highest Sadhana

All that exists in this objective world is impermanent and unreal. Man should contemplate on that which is eternal and real. But man out of his ignorance wastes his time in brooding over the past and worrying about the future while forgetting the present. The present only is real. Past is past; you cannot get it back, however much you may pray for it. The future is hidden in the womb of time. It is not possible to visualise it. Therefore, only the present is true and real. Instead of wasting your time in thinking about the past and worrying about the future, you should engage yourself in the service of your fellowmen. Service is the foremost spiritual practice. You should therefore always engage yourself in the service of others. There is no greater spiritual practice than this. Considering the nine paths of devotion, namely, Sravanam (listening), Kirtanam (singing), Vishnusmaranam (contemplating on Vishnu), Padasevanam (serving His Lotus Feet), Vandanam (salutation), Archanam (worship), Dasyam (servitude), Sneham (friendship), Atmanivedanam (self-surrender) as important means of salvation, people engage themselves in these activities. They totally forget the importance of service. They should understand that only the fruits of service are eternal. God has given us this body for service to others, and not merely for eating, drinking and wasting our valuable time in mundane activities. We must realise the truth that serving others is the most worthwhile

activity for us. There is nothing greater than service to humanity. All great men redeemed their lives only through service. Therefore, you must involve yourself constantly in the service of society. Out of all spiritual practices, service to mankind is the highest and noblest.

Embodiments of Love!

What, according to you, is service? You may be thinking that helping and serving others in times of their difficulty is service. It is not as simple as that. You should be constantly engaged in serving others. The human body consists of several limbs. All these limbs are meant to be engaged in service. Unfortunately, we have forgotten this basic fact. Every limb of the body must be engaged in Karmopasana (service as worship). Karmopasana is the only means by which human life can be redeemed. We build temples and undertake various spiritual practices. But all this can give only temporary satisfaction, not eternal joy. Therefore, you must develop firm faith in the truth that nothing can provide eternal joy except service to humanity. Undertake service to the suffering humanity. Service is not merely limited to healthcare. Service encompasses every possible help to the fellow human beings.

Thyaga is True Yoga

It is the villages of Bharat which are still preserving its ancient culture. It is being defiled in all possible ways in towns and cities. Therefore, go to the villages, find out the difficulties of the villagers and undertake service activities to alleviate their suffering. Today many people migrate to towns and cities in pursuit of comforts and luxuries. In the process, they end up in suffering and difficulties. Man in fact invites more troubles for himself when he runs after comforts and luxuries. Na Sukhat Labhathe Sukham (happiness cannot be obtained out of happiness). It is only through suffering and sacrifice that happiness can be attained. You should therefore engage yourself in service activities. In fact, the hands are given to you to serve humanity. You will attain glory if you serve those who desperately need help. When you undertake good work, you enjoy peace in your life.

Today the boys who sang Bhajans are former students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. They undertake several service activities to please Swami. God is not interested in ritualistic worship. He is pleased when you undertake service activities. Hence, do service more and more. The best way to love God is to love all and serve all. God is pleased when you love all and serve all. If you can recognise the importance of these two principles and conduct yourself accordingly, there can be no greater Sadhana than this. You don't need to spend any money in performing service. Sanctify your life by undertaking loving service. Today the former students of the Institute have offered 48 lakh rupees to Swami as a token of their love and service. This amount has been saved by them from their salaries after undergoing a lot of difficulties. But, to whom should this amount really belong? This amount is meant to be utilised for service in the villages. It is for serving Daridra Narayana (Lord Narayana in the form of the poor). Therefore, I told them, "My dear ones! You deposit the money in a bank and undertake service activities with the interest that accrues on the amount." Money does not help in developing noble qualities. Sacrifice alone can do it. Real Yoga lies only in Thyaga (sacrifice). That is why

it is said, Thyagenaike Amrutatthwamanasu (it is only by sacrifice that man can attain immortality). Today, however, people want Bhoga (sensual pleasures). Bhoga only leads to Roga (disease), not Yoga. Hence, try to attain Yoga through Thyaga. Only then can you attain eternal joy.

God is the Indweller of all Beings

Embodiments of Love!

You may get some mental satisfaction by contemplating on God. But you can experience bliss only when you recognise that God is the indweller of every living being. The Upanishads declare, *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings) and *Isavasyam Idam Sarvam* (the entire universe is permeated by God). God is not confined to any temple or building. It is said, *Deho Devalaya Proktho Jivo Deva Sanathana* (the body is a temple and the indweller is God). The real temple of God is the body itself. God is installed in the altar of our heart. Heart is called Hridaya, meaning that which is full of Daya (compassion). Hridaya should be full of Daya. So, cultivate compassion more and more. Service undertaken with a compassionate heart only is worthwhile. Consider every human being as the embodiment of Divinity. God is present everywhere. Forgetting the omnipresent God, we hanker after petty and trivial bodily pleasures. The fact, however, is that real happiness cannot be attained through the body which has several limitations. How can you attain limitless bliss through the body bound by limitations?

The body is made up of five elements and is bound to perish sooner or later but the indweller has neither birth nor death. The indweller has no attachment whatsoever and is the eternal witness. Truly speaking, the indweller who is in the form of the Atma is verily God Himself. (Telugu Poem)

Try to know the Atma. Today people worship idols and pictures, thinking that God is somewhere outside. But God is present in every human being. That is why our ancient sages proclaimed, *Daivam Manusha Rupena* (God incarnates in the form of a human being). Of what use is the worship of unmanifest God if you cause suffering to the living beings who are the manifest forms of divinity? Every human being you come across is an embodiment of divinity? No purpose will be served by worshipping the idols and pictures, forgetting the living gods in front of you. Therefore, give less importance to such indirect methods of worshipping God. Consider the human being standing in front of you as an embodiment of divinity.

Even if you come across your worst enemy, talk to him lovingly, addressing him as 'hello brother'. Then, he will also respond by saying, 'hello brother'. On the other hand, if you hate him and start abusing him, he will reciprocate the same. Respect every individual and talk to him lovingly. Man today expects others to respect him but he does not want to respect them. If you do not respect others, how can you expect others to respect you? You are endowed with the form of Manava (human being) which is worthy of veneration. Since you are born as a human being, give respect and take respect. This is the quality you have to cultivate today. When you talk to others sweetly, others will also do the same. When you offer your Namaskar (salutations) to somebody, to whom does it go actually? You are not merely offering Namaskar to the physical body consisting of the

five elements. It reaches, in fact, the indweller who is none other than God. Now, what is the nature of this body?

This body is a den of dirt, and prone to diseases; it is subject to change from time to time; it cannot cross the ocean of Samsara. It is nothing but a structure of bones. Oh mind! Do not be under the delusion that body is permanent. Instead take refuge at the Divine Lotus Feet. (Telugu Poem)

What can you achieve by relying on such a body? It is only sin that you accumulate. You should sustain the body for the purpose of serving others. Develop firm conviction in that truth. What happiness do you derive from the body? In fact, nothing. Whatever be the pleasures you may enjoy with the help of this human body, you will have to leave all those as well as the body itself in a trice one day or the other. Should you undergo so many trials and tribulations for the sake of these momentary pleasures? You should respect the Jiva (soul) in every human body. That is real Daiva Seva (service to God). Dedicate your body to the service of the Divine in human form. Then every day of your life will become an occasion for celebration; your entire life will be a festival. On the other hand, if you undertake service once in a year, that cannot be called real service. Your Deha (body) is Mrinmaya (made up of dust). Human life is precious because of the indweller therein who is Chinmaya (Supreme Consciousness). Realise your innate divinity.

Respect your Parents

You all know how Abraham Lincoln earned a good name. In his childhood, he used to go to school in the company of wealthy boys. Those boys wore costly clothes. Lincoln, however, had to go to school with worn-out clothes that were mended by his mother. One day, his friends made fun of his poor dress. He could not control himself. He went straight to his mother crying and told her, "Mother! I will not attend school hereafter. My classmates are making fun of my poverty. They are looking down upon me as I am unable to wear a decent dress." Then, the mother took him into her arms lovingly and consoled him saying, "My dear son! You need not feel sorry for such a trivial matter. All this is going to help you in your future life. You must keep our family condition in view. Do not give attention to what others say. Lead a life of self-confidence and self-respect. Respect every individual and thus earn the respect of all." The good words spoken by Lincoln's mother made a lasting impression on his mind. From that day onwards, Lincoln put his mother's advice into practice and started respecting everybody. He was courteous to even a cobbler saying, "Sir! How sacred is your life! You are doing great service by stitching sandals for us so that our feet are protected from thorns." Gradually, Abraham Lincoln could command respect from all people by his good behaviour. He earned a very good name for himself. After some time, elections were held in America. His friends and well-wishers tried to persuade him to contest the elections. He expressed his reluctance saying, "I am a poor man. Who will vote for me? I do not have any money to fight the elections. I am not interested in money or position." Today Indians are spending crores of rupees to contest elections but refuse to part with even a rupee as alms to a beggar. At last, he bowed to the wishes of his friends and well-wishers and contested the elections. He scored a spectacular victory and was elected the President of the United States of

America. He was always grateful to his mother as he was able to rise to this exalted position and command the respect of the people of America only because of her noble teachings.

It is the mother who is responsible for her children's reputation and fame. If children wish to earn good name, they should obey the command of their mother. That is why, the Vedas give the supreme position to the mother and father and declare, *Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava* (mother is God, father is God). The mother is like the body and the father, the Atma. Hence, we have to respect our father and mother. Then, we can earn the respect of others. Abraham Lincoln could earn great name and fame and become the President of America only on account of his respect for his mother. What do the children attain today? Nothing. They simply waste the money earned by their parents. They bring bad name to their parents. This is not what the children are expected to do. They should properly utilise the money given by their parents. In fact, every drop of your blood is the gift of your parents. Hence, whenever there is a need for blood donation, you should come forward to donate your blood. Thereby fulfil your obligation to your parents and society. Do not ever work for your selfish interests. In fact, selfishness and self-interest are the main causes which degrade a human being.

Children should cultivate good habits and good qualities and attain good position in life. Thus, they should bring good name to their parents. You can earn good name not by money but by sterling character. No matter how wealthy a person is, his reputation will be tarnished if his character is not good. A wealthy person may be living in a big mansion and enjoying the luxuries of life but all this cannot ensure his peace of mind and happiness. People crave to earn more and more money. But, of what use is the money they earn? They waste all their money in worthless pursuits. They must utilise the money earned by them for undertaking good and beneficial activities for the service of society. They should also cultivate good behaviour and good habits. Only then will they have real peace in life.

Do not Become Slaves of Money

Embodiments of Love!

Today everyone is literally crying for peace. But, where is peace? Peace is within you. Love is within you. But you are losing your peace and happiness that are within you by searching them in money and materials in the outer world. You want to earn great wealth and build big mansions. Devoid of good qualities, all the wealth that you earn is a waste. Therefore, cultivate good qualities. There can be no wealth greater in the world than good qualities. The more you put your good qualities into practice, the more they grow in you. Money is not that important in life; it is character that is most important.

Embodiments of Love – Boys and Girls!

You are highly educated. You can utilise your education for earning more and more money. But it is not the objective of education. Do not become the servant of money. Become the servant of God. It is most important to become the servant of God. Money, of course, is necessary to some extent. But if you become the slave of money, you will bring about your ruination. Too much money will rob you of your peace. You should

earn the wealth of love and truth. Sathyannasti Paro Dharma (There is no Dharma greater than adherence to truth) Redeem your life by adhering to Sathya and Dharma. What purpose will it serve if you keep too much money in the bank? Will it do you any good? You cannot take even a penny with you when you leave this world.

Alexander was a great conqueror. He wanted to conquer the whole world. After returning from India, he suffered a heart attack. As he was suffering, he called his officers near him and asked them how he could get relief from the suffering. He had a big army consisting of a large number of horses and chariots. He had no shortage of money and servants. But nothing could provide relief to him. He could not attain peace and happiness with his enormous wealth and territory. Then he expressed his wish to his officers that when he died, his two empty hands should be stretched out of the coffin for the people to see that he could not carry anything with him after death even though he was a great conqueror and master of enormous wealth. Alexander came to the conclusion that only sacrifice could give peace and satisfaction to man, and not the wealth and riches. All your hidden treasures will also be left behind when you depart from this world. So, do not crave for money. Earn instead the wealth of Jnana (wisdom) and Prema (love). Only these virtues can redeem your life. Develop the wealth of love more and more. When you earn the wealth of love and truth, your life will be redeemed. Serve all those who need help. It is sheer foolishness to think that you can serve God without serving the poor and needy who are before you. What is that which ultimately comes to your rescue? It is sacrifice that can lead you to immortality.

Embodiments of Love!

Imbibe the noble qualities of sacrifice, love and truth in this New Year. Only these will lead you to the ultimate experience of Divinity. Love the needy person who is in front of you. Talk to him softly and sweetly. Help him in every possible way. This is the true spiritual practice. There is no greater spiritual practice than this. One who spends his entire life in sacrifice is the most blessed soul. Be always ready for sacrifice. Everything can be accomplished by sacrifice. A person without any spirit of sacrifice can never attain peace. People of all countries pray for peace. They chant 'Santhi, Santhi, Santhi'. But do they attain peace? No. They are immersed in distress and disappointment. The source of peace is within you. Therefore, look within and realise your divinity. God is with you, in you, below you, above you and all around you. How can you attain Him if you search for Him outside when He is within you?

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

Share your education and wealth with your fellow human beings. In fact, God is the real owner of the wealth acquired by you. The money you earn belongs to God's Trust. God Himself is the President of that Trust. Keep your trust in God and make proper use of your money. Do not hanker after money and worldly possessions. Constantly contemplate on God. You need not go to forests or caves in the hills in search of God. He is always with you. When God who is the embodiment of love is with you, why do you become a victim of the demon of worldliness? Today demonic qualities are prevalent everywhere. People do not hesitate to acquire wealth by sinful means. What ultimately you carry with you at the time of leaving the body is the merit or sin you have earned and not the wealth you have acquired. What you require is only a little food to satisfy your

hunger. You can save the life of a hungry person by sharing your food with him. This is the greatest Sadhana. Leaving this simple Sadhana and forgetting the noble quality of love, you search for peace and happiness in the pursuit of worldly desires. Craving for money has made man mad. Hunger for money can never be satiated. Nor can money remain with you forever. It comes and goes.

Embodiments of Love!

Develop the quality of love. Love everyone. Do not hate anybody. Develop the faith that whatever happens is for your own good. You alone are responsible for your difficulties and suffering. Respect others. That alone will protect you. If you insult somebody, you are bound to receive punishment for it. Pleasure and pain are of your own making. Sins committed by you will follow you like a shadow. Man today is giving sermons to others. But he himself is not following his precepts. What value will such teachings have? All this is mere deception. The teachings you read or listen to can never help you if you do not put them into practice. Help your fellow human beings at least in a small measure. That alone will help you. Do not blame others for your difficulties. Do not criticise anybody. Love all. Treat all people as your brothers and sisters. Cultivate the feeling of Brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God. This will lead you to the path of equal-mindedness.

Embodiments of Love!

The Bharatiyas are really fortunate. They have everything in plenty. But they lack the quality of love. If only they cultivate love, none can excel them. Therefore, enhance your honour and prestige by cultivating the quality of love. Love alone can protect you. Follow the twin principles of Sathya and Dharma with love.

(Bhagavan sang the Bhajan, “*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho ...*” and added)

The tongue is given to you to sing the glory of God, not to criticise others. The hands are given to you for keeping the beat in accordance with the tune. Bharatiyas are those who sing the glory of God with Bhava (feeling), Raga (the tune) and Thala (the beat). Besides, in the word Bharat, 'Bha' stands for Bhakti (devotion), 'Ra' for Raga (love) and 'Tha' for Thyaga (sacrifice). They alone are the real Bharatiyas who imbibe the qualities of devotion, love and sacrifice. Everyone born in the country of Bharat is a blessed person. Participate in Seva activities, chanting the Divine Name. There can be no greater wealth than this. Why should you suffer when you have such a great wealth with you? Consider all your education and the service you undertake as God's work. As Lord Krishna declares in the Bhagavadgita, Sarvadarman Parithyajya Mamekam Saranam Vraja (surrender all your actions to Me and seek refuge in Me alone). Hence, dedicate all your actions to God. Then you will attain peace.

- **From Bhagavan's New Year Day Message in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 1st January 2004.**

Annual Sports and Cultural Meet 2004

A GRAND DISPLAY OF TALENT AND DEVOTION

Sri Sathya Sai System of Education lays as much emphasis on the proper development of a strong and healthy body as it does on the mind and the spirit. The Annual Sports and Cultural Meet of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning held on 11th January every year showcases the success of this integral aspect.

Courage, confidence and fearlessness of the students of the Institute combined with their love and devotion for their Revered Chancellor Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba made the Annual Sports and Cultural Meet 2004 of the Institute a grand and impressive show. Rhythm, beauty and balance displayed by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School in their colourful events added to the grandeur of this spectacular event held in the Hill View Stadium of Prasanthi Nilayam on 11th January 2004 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Inauguration and March Past

The Revered Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba arrived in the Stadium on the cool and pleasant morning of 11th January 2004 at 7.20 a.m. and was led to Santhi Vedika in a ceremonial procession formed by the orchestral band from the Anantapur Campus, the captains of various marching squads and sports teams of the three Campuses and by gaily caparisoned Sai Geetha (Bhagavan's dear elephant). Bhagavan was then reverentially welcomed at Santhi Vedika by the Vice Chancellor, Registrar, Principals, Wardens and the administrative heads of the University.

Bhagavan Baba inaugurated the proceedings of the day by lighting the ceremonial lamp at 7.35 a.m. The March Past by about 2000 students from all the three Campuses of the University, Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Sri Sathya Sai Primary School and Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music was the first grand display of excellence. Each squad, kept in step by the Prasanthi Nilayam campus band, saluted the Revered Chancellor as it passed the dais.

After the March Past, a special squad of students marched up with the Institute flag which Bhagavan hoisted amidst a thunderous applause of the spectators. The sports oath was administered to the students by the Institute's Games Captain. Bhagavan then lit the sports torch and released pigeons and bunches of colourful balloons. Relay teams of athletes carried the torch to the mascot of this year's games, a life-size image of a lion, halfway up the hillside. The mascot, pulleyed up to the hill, carried the sacred torch lit by Bhagavan and kindled the ceremonial Games Flame, even as the theme song, specially composed by the students for this occasion, enthralled the mammoth gathering of spectators.

Stunning Feats by Brindavan Campus Students

Students from the Brindavan Campus selected as their central theme Bhagavan's precept, Master the Mind and be a Mastermind. They presented three items. The first was a stunning display of feats on motor cycles by the "Fearless Riders". Some of the stunts like the ramp jump over several students and later, over bikes, made many hearts skip a beat! The next item was display of gymnastic feats on the vaulting horse, the Roman Rings and the bars, and floor exercises by the 'Jaguars'. The last item was a highly cohesive and systematic drill using flambeaus. The students concluded their presentation with a dynamic closing formation.

Message of Unity by Prasanthi Nilayam Campus Students

Students from Prasanthi Nilayam presented their events with the central theme, A Journey from "I" to "We". Recreating the Vedic allegory of the journey of life, they highlighted how man should progress from Annamaya Kosa (material sheath) to Anandamaya Kosa (bliss sheath) where one sees the grand unity in the diversity of creation. In between are the Pranamaya Kosa (vital sheath), Manomaya Kosa (mental sheath) and Vijnanamaya Kosa (wisdom sheath). This magnificent idea was projected in the colour and variety of creation through a mass item using fluttering colourful flags and spinning rotors.

Next came display on ropes swinging from a 40-feet high grid, bungee jump, floor gymnastics and exercises which highlighted the fruitful use of nature of creation to progress purposefully towards the Creator. Then followed Dragon Dance and martial arts display. The Dragons chasing a round sphere called the Pearl symbolised man's single-point agenda: pursuit of wisdom of controlling the mind and facing all obstacles with strength and courage. (The students had mastered this dance in just a few days which usually takes a few months!)

Feats on four-wheelers and on three-wheelers followed. The closing item displayed hoardings with the first four sheaths of human body while the bliss sheath was depicted as the Pranavanadam (Om karam) resting atop a fully bloomed lotus depicting an awakened mind and heart. The morning programme concluded with this subtle message at 9.45 a.m.

Colourful Display by Primary School Students

The afternoon programme commenced at 3.15 p.m. with the arrival of the Revered Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba. The first presentation by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School was based on the theme, I am I. The children – both boys and girls – presented a number of colourful and creative group dance items, including an umbrella dance, a hat dance, a rabbit dance and a very colourful display with intricate formations. Among the skill-based items, the students presented mini bicycle stunts and gymnastics. The appearance of three tiny motor bikes with three little children atop them caused a sensation and won spontaneous applause. Swami's little ones had once again put up a captivating performance.

Sovereign Theme of Five Basic Human Values and Valiant Archery Skills by Anantapur Campus Students

The Anantapur Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning presented the theme of the five human values – Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. Different colour schemes were used to display each of these values: blue depicted Sathya, orange Dharma, green Santhi, pink Prema and yellow and lavender Ahimsa. Among the array of items presented by the Anantapur Campus students were: archery, Yogasanas on ropes hanging from a 40 feet structure, and a pole drill. Their performance commenced with a display of expertise in archery signifying the human value Sathya. Taking posture in Sarvangasana, some archers hit the target adeptly. They also shot arrows with bent back. There was also an exercise in blindfold shooting. It was wonderful to watch archers finding the bull's eye on a moving bicycle and a moving motor bike.

The girl students showed dexterity and confidence in all their items displaying their total discipline, dedication and devotion. The presentation was brought to a close by a pageant depicting the unity of different faiths and the message that only when an individual overcame six inner foes of man, namely, Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsarya could he live an ideal life based on the five eternal human values given by Swami. At the end of this programme, Arati was offered to Bhagavan who left for the Mandir at 5.10 p.m.

Lord Krishna said in the Gita, “Yoga Karmasu Kaushalam” (perfection in action is Yoga). This great truth was demonstrated in practical form in the Annual Sports and Cultural Meet in the Divine Presence of the Lord Himself. By all standards, it was a unique show by the students of Sri Sathya Sai educational institutions showing their skill, strength, adventure and dexterity, all divinely inspired. All the students and staff of the educational institutions had the unique privilege of being with their Revered Chancellor for more than six hours on this day.

Bhakta Jayadeva – a Dance Drama

Programmes of the day did not end with this grand performance of Sports and Cultural events. There was a magnificent dance drama on one of the illustrious saints of India, Bhakta Jayadeva at 6.35 in the evening in Sai Kulwant Hall.

Jayadeva pined every moment for the Darshan of the Lord. Neither hunger nor thirst disturbed his single-pointed concentration. He thought his life was worthless without the Darshan of Krishna. Jayadeva breathed the name of Lord Krishna with his every breath. His search carried him to the sacred city of Puri. On the way a young cowherd helped him. Later, in the temple he had the vision of Naval Kishore in the sanctum sanctorum and realised that the cowherd was none other than his Krishna. At the command of his Guru, Jayadeva entered Grihasthashrama and together with his wife Padmavathi continued to adore his beloved Krishna with unwavering devotion. He expressed his love for God in his famous composition, “Geeta Govinda,” comprising twenty-four songs. Each of these songs came alive with deep pining of Jivatma for Paramatma. The Lord blessed his work in His own inimitable way by completing a verse in this wonderful book of songs. Jayadeva's songs became famous for their melody and sweetness during his own lifetime. This made the scholarly king of Puri envious who had also composed a work and named it “Geeta Govinda.” The jealous king confronted the saintly Jayadeva in

the temple of Puri which led to Divine intervention. This proved beyond doubt the supremacy of Jayadeva's composition.

The dance drama was a masterpiece in all respects, be it choreography, costumes, sets or the display of histrionic skills. More specifically, the set of the Temple of Jagannath Puri displayed in Sai Kulwant Hall was not only the exact replica of the famous temple of Puri, but it was also a fine piece of art. Beautiful dialogues interspersed with melodious songs were the hallmarks of this drama. Bhagavan Baba sat through the entire performance. He blessed the cast at the end of the drama at 7.30 p.m., posed for photographs with them and accepted Arati. Thus, the eventful day of 11th January 2004 came to a happy conclusion with this dramatic presentation by the students of Brindavan Campus.

Prize Distribution on Sankranti Day

On the holy day of Sankranti (15th January 2004), Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall in a procession led by Primary School girls band, Prasanthi Nilayam Campus band, Anantapur Campus band and flag bearing squad of students. Huge display boards of the themes displayed in the Sports and Cultural Meet and shining trophies added brilliance to the glittering Hall. Bhagavan graciously gave large trophies to the students representing Prasanthi Nilayam Campus Anantapur Campus, Brindavan Campus, Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music, Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School and Sri Sathya Sai Primary School. Bhagavan also blessed the medals and prizes for awarding to the winners of sports events. Commenting on the grand show put up by the students in the Sports Meet, Bhagavan said, "The talent, skill and expertise demonstrated by our students in the Annual Sports and Cultural Meet have given immense joy to one and all."

NOTICE

Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust will stop accepting donations under Section 35AC of the Income Tax Act, 1961 to the Chennai Drinking Water Supply Project on 31/03/2004 since the Project has been completed. We thank all donors for their support.

Secretary
Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust

NEWS FROM PRASANTHI NILAYAM

Joyous Sankranti Celebrations

Sankranti celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam this year were marked by unique distinction as Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in His unbounded grace blessed the devotees with two

illuminating Discourses during the course of these celebrations, the first on the morning of 12th January 2004 and the second on the morning of 15th January 2004.

After bestowing the bliss of His Divine Darshan on the devotees on the morning of 12th January 2004, Bhagavan sat in His chair on the dais and listened to the Vedic chants by the Institute students. Showering His special blessings on the Veda chanting group of students, Bhagavan distributed watches to them. Soon after this, to the pleasant surprise of the devotees, Bhagavan commenced His Divine Discourse at 8.20 a.m. and brought it to a close with the Bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin ...". Sankranti, Bhagavan said in His Discourse, was the festival of joy, but man should lead such a virtuous life that every moment of his life should become an occasion for celebration. Dwelling on the system of modern education, Bhagavan observed that a truly educated person was one who inculcated virtues and developed character; mere accumulation of information and degrees could not be called education in its true sense. Bhagavan advised the students to make efforts to earn the grace of God and bring glory to the institution in which they had studied. The programme came to a close at 9.30 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

On the auspicious day of Sankranti, i.e., 15th January 2004, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.10 a.m. in a grand procession led by girls students and boys students bands amidst chanting of Vedic hymns by a group of Institute students. After blessing the students and devotees with His Divine Darshan, Bhagavan came to the dais and inaugurated the programme of Sankranti celebrations and prize distribution by lighting the sacred lamp at 7.25 a.m.

Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, five speakers shared their views with the audience. Introducing the speakers who were blessed by Bhagavan to speak on this occasion, Sri Sanjay Sahni, Principal, Brindavan Campus offered greetings to all on the auspicious occasion of Sankranti and the valedictory function of Sports and Cultural Meet 2004 of the Institute. Expressing his gratitude to Bhagavan for all His benedictions, Sri Sahni observed that Bhagavan had provided this opportunity of participating in sports and cultural items to the students so that they could express their love for Bhagavan. Thereafter, Sri Sahni introduced the five speakers.

The first speaker was Sri S.V. Giri, Vice Chancellor of the Institute. Referring to the daily chanting of Vedic hymns by the students in Sai Kulwant Hall, Sri Giri observed that this chanting had thrilling and ennobling effect on all. The erudite speaker then explained the meaning and significance of the Purusha Sukta, Narayana Sukta, Mantra Pushpam, etc., and observed that the Veda was addressed to the entire humanity.

The second speaker, Dr. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor of the Institute referred to the northward movement of the sun as an occasion for the sacred festival of Sankranti and explained that the Indians worshipped the sun not only because it sustained life on the earth and helped in the ripening of crops, but they considered sun as a symbol of manifestation of the One who created the universe. The learned speaker referred to the

ever-widening horizons of Sai Mission and remarked amidst thunderous applause that the sun of Prasanthi Nilayam was shining in all parts of the world and it would never set!

The next speaker was Sri K. Chakravarthi, Secretary, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust who expressed deep gratitude to Bhagavan for his innumerable benedictions. God, the learned speaker said, comes on earth in human form so that man could rise to the level of God. Listening to Bhagavan's words and seeing His Divine Form is a thrilling experience, said Sri Chakravarthi.

Narrating an interesting incident that occurred on 8th January 2004 when Bhagavan visited the Stadium to oversee the preparation of sports event, the next speaker, Kum. Bhawani of B.A. (Final) class stated that two girls were arguing at that time exhorting each other to perform before Bhagavan. This, she said, was an illustration of love that prevailed in the environment of the Institute contrary to jealousy, hatred and cut-throat competition elsewhere. She also spoke about the inspiration and motherly love of Bhagavan during the course of the practice of sports and observed that it was possible to achieve anything in life with Bhagavan's infinite divine love. The ABC of sports, she said, was action, balance, courage, which if combined could help one overcome all hurdles in sports as well as life.

Referring to the system of education in Sai institutions, the last speaker Sri Prashant Dixit of M.B.A. (Final) class said that teaching and learning in these institutions was not limited to bookish knowledge but it was geared to the development of a well-integrated personality of the students. The speaker emphasised on the value of faith and said that anything could be achieved with firm faith in the Lord. The speaker received special blessings of Bhagavan who materialised a gold ring for him at the end of his speech.

After these speeches, Bhagavan blessed the devotees and students with His inspiring and illuminating Discourse, full text of which has been given elsewhere in this issue. After His Discourse, Bhagavan gave trophies to students of the Institute and schools and also blessed the medals and prizes for awarding to winners of various sports events. The function came to a conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 10.15 a.m.

Silver Jubilee Celebrations of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Institutions, Alike and Muddenahalli

27th and 28th January, 2004 were indeed red letter days in the history of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Educational Institutions, Alike and Muddenahalli as the Silver Jubilee of these institutions was celebrated on these days in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba at Prasanthi Nilayam in an atmosphere vibrant with devotional fervour, joy and enthusiasm.

Sai Kulwant Hall was tastefully decorated with a variety of bright flowers. Banners and boards of Alike and Muddenahalli campuses added to the magnificence of the Hall and heightened the festive atmosphere. The huge pillars of the Hall bedecked with arecanuts were eye-catching. At about 7.15 a.m. on 27th January 2004 when Bhagavan came from His residence, He was accorded a devotional and ceremonial welcome with Poornakumbham amidst Veda chanting and playing of band music by the students on

different instruments with gusto and devotion. Horse dance (“Keelu-Kudure”) was an added attraction.

As soon as Bhagavan entered Sai Kulwant Hall, devotees and students present in the hall broke into a loud applause. Swami with a blissful smile on His face sent the devotees into raptures. After showering His benedictions on the devotees, Swami came to the dais and inaugurated the Silver Jubilee celebrations by lighting the silver lamp amidst chanting of Vedic hymns by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva institutions. Bhagavan also unveiled plaques marking these celebrations. The programme began with a welcome speech by Sri U. Gangadhar Bhat, Chairman of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust. Sri Bhat became emotional when he spoke about the love, compassion and blessings that Swami had been showering on these institutions all these years. He said that the Silver Jubilee celebrations were conducted to express the deep sense of gratitude of all the Managing Committee members, students and members of staff to Bhagavan for His love and compassion. In his brief welcome speech, Sri Gangadhar Bhat dwelt on the sterling qualities of Sri Madiyal Narayana Bhat, the Founder President of the institutions at Alike and Muddenahalli. He explained how Sri Narayana Bhat trained a band of young people numbering about 50 to lead a dedicated life with an oath of celibacy by precept and example and how he built the institutions confronting many trials and tribulations with unshakable faith in Swami. He said that Sri Narayana Bhat had a strong yearning to offer himself and the institutions at the Lotus Feet of Swami and he always used to pray for it. In response to his sincere prayers, Swami graciously accepted the institutions on 14th August 1978 and since then with His benign blessings and guidance these institutions had achieved remarkable development, said Sri Gangadhar Bhat.

After this, Sri B. Narayana Rao, Secretary of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Institutions, Muddenahalli read out the Report which dwelt on the important milestones in the history of these institutions under the Divine stewardship of Bhagavan Baba. Three books in Kannada were graciously released by Swami on this occasion. One was the Kannada translation of “Sri Sathya Sai Divya Kripasraya” written by Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy, Warden, Sri Sathya Sai Hostel, Brindavan; another was “Prema Varsha”, a collection of the Divine Discourses given by Bhagavan Baba in Kannada during His gracious visits to Alike and Muddenahalli. The third one was a brochure giving introduction of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva educational institutions. After this, three students, Sathyaprakash, K.K. Chetan and Varun Deekshith spoke about Sathya Sai Education, Swami's Divine Love and various service activities undertaken by Swami for the welfare of the people.

To the great delight of the devotees, Swami then gave an illuminating Discourse in simple, sweet Kannada. Swami said that He had accepted the institutions of Alike and Muddenahalli in response to the prayers of Narayana Bhat and had settled all the debts incurred by the institutions in the course of their development. He appreciated the sincere, selfless service of the teachers and staff of these institutions and said that these had developed as ideal educational institutions. The morning programme came to a close with distribution of Prasadam and Mangalarati to Bhagavan at 9.45 a.m.

In the afternoon, Swami came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.45 p.m. Soon after this, the students of Muddenahalli presented two popular folk dances of Karnataka. This was followed by a Yakshagana performance, "The Divine Leelas of Krishna in His Childhood" by the students of Alike. Swami admired the talents of the students. With Mangalarati to Bhagavan, the evening programme came to a close at 5.10 p.m.

Bhagavan graciously permitted the staging of cultural programmes on 28th January also in connection with the Silver Jubilee celebrations. Bhagavan came to grant Darshan at about 7.15 a.m. on 28th January 2004. Soon after He was seated on the dais, the cultural programmes started with an excellent dance drama depicting the assurance given by Lord Siva to Sage Bharadwaja that He would incarnate as Shirdi Sai, Parthi Sai and Prema Sai in Kali Yuga. The drama earned the appreciation of one and all and the blessings of Bhagavan. The next programme was "Astavadhana Seva". "Astavadhana" is a Seva to God at the end of an Utsava (festival) or Puja (worship). This comprises chanting of Veda, singing of devotional songs, dance, music, etc. Swami was pleased with the priests who performed this and conferred Divine blessings on them by presenting them with clothes and talking to them for quite some time.

The festive mood continued in the evening also. As Swami arrived in Sai Kulwant Hall, the students of Alike and Muddenahalli welcomed Him with devotional songs. After this, some very popular folk dances were presented by the students of Muddenahalli. The next interesting and devotional programme was "Jagadoddhara" - a dance drama by the students of Muddenahalli depicting the protection of Dharma by the ten incarnations of God. The presentation included the advent of Sri Shirdi Sai and the incarnation of Sri Sathya Sai. It also depicted the teachings of Bhagavan Baba and the re-establishment of Dharma by Him with the weapons of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema. The students displayed on banners the various milestones of the progress of Sai Mission and the various service projects undertaken by Bhagavan for the welfare of humanity. In the end, there was a remarkable display of flags of all countries showing how the entire world was being united at Prasanthi Nilayam. The drama concluded with the proclamation, "Sai Yuga has come." This drama with beautiful songs, gorgeous dresses and superb acting earned the appreciation of Swami who created Vibhuti and a gold ring for the boy who played the role of young Sathya. He blessed all the participants with the coveted photographs with Him. At the end of the programme, Arati was offered to Bhagavan at 5.15 p.m.

Swami was very much pleased with the playing of different instruments by the band set students and bestowed on them His love and grace in abundant measure. He blessed all the 54 boys by giving watches and clothes to them. He had a special word of admiration for the teacher who trained the band set students and conferred His blessings on him and gave him a watch and clothes.

In short, the two-day celebrations of the Silver Jubilee of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Institutions will remain evergreen in the hearts of the students, teachers and the members of the Managing Committee because Swami showered abundant love and grace on them.

This was an assurance that He would ever be with them and would keep showering His benedictions.

News from Sai Centres

Andhra Pradesh: West Godavari district carried out Sri Sathya Sai Veda Saptaha Yajna in Tadepalligudem from 9th December 2003 to 15th December 2003 conducted by 25 Vedic Pandits of Sri Sathya Sai Bhagavata Sanathana Samajam. On the final day, Narayana Seva was performed in which 1500 persons were offered Prasadam. This district distributed blankets to 79 selected needy people and food packets to every house as Swami's Prasadam at Narasapur on 15th December 2003. It distributed new dresses to 79 blind people, and nylon mats, glasses and dresses to 79 physically challenged persons on 22nd December 2003. This district conducted a mega medical camp on 14th December 2003 at Dora Mamidi, a remote Girijan village, in which 14 specialist doctors treated 3000 Girijan patients giving free medicines worth one lakh rupees. The Youth Wing of this district conducted a free veterinary camp at Mortha village treating 425 animals.

Ranga Reddy district carried out Grama Seva activity in three villages – Muneerbad, Sugaipally and Polkampally on 7th December 2003. It conducted medical camps in these three villages treating 1576 patients, distributed spectacles to 60 patients, conducted veterinary camp at Muneerbad village treating 226 animals, distributed Prasadam packets and Swami's photos in 705 houses, planted 150 saplings in Polkam village, distributed cotton blankets to 105 needy people, distributed food provisions (8 kg rice, 2 kg Dal, 1 kg sugar, 1 kg. edible oil, ¼ kg tamarind), one Sari and one Dhoti to 86 selected families and gave pencils and gift articles to 200 students. It repaired approach roads, cleaned and whitewashed three temples and conducted Bal Vikas classes and cultural programmes.

Assam, Manipur and N.E. States: The State Organisation arranged a special talk on “Humanisation of Administration” at Guwahati on the 26th October, 2003. Hon'ble Mr. Justice Shivraj Patil, Judge, Supreme Court of India delivered the talk covering various facets of how a humane approach by those in authority could help innocent people caught in the vagaries of life. The learned speaker told that as one assumed greater and greater authority, one should be ever vigilant to curb one's poisonous ego. A person of great qualities of head and heart yet humble with no trace of ego is like a beautiful flower in the garden of God, he added. The best cosmetics, Justice Patil explained, were not the external ones available at expensive supermarkets but inner values like truth, compassion, love, graciousness, etc. which lent enduring radiance to one's personality. He appealed to all in authority and in various professions like law, medicine, government service, commerce, etc., to practise human values at every step so that no injustice was meted out to any member of society.

Haryana: The Organisation conducted various district-level health awareness multifaceted camps with a team of medical specialists of different streams in the villages of Maloya, Behlana and Hallomajra (Chandigarh) Burjkotian, Kot, Dhabkauri and Bahera (Panchkula), Amin (Kurukshetra), Dudhla (Yamuna Nagar) treating 2042 patients who

were given free medicines. The villagers actively participated in their respective areas in conducting mass cleanliness and preparation of food for Narayana Seva which was performed at the end of each camp.

State-level workshops for teachers were conducted to promote awareness of Sai Mission at Panchkula and Kurukshetra wherein 129 and 74 teachers respectively participated. Inter-college seminars were also conducted at Sirsa, Hisar, Yamuna Nagar, Panchkula wherein more than 160 students, teachers and other local faculty members participated. Blood donation camps at Faridabad, Chandigarh, Rohtak and Panchkula were conducted with the co-ordination of local authorities wherein 460 units of “Liquid Love” was offered at the Divine Lotus Feet.

**SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER MEDICAL SCIENCES,
PRASHANTHIGRAM - 515 134., ANANTAPUR DT. (A. P.) INDIA.**

E-mail: sssihms@sancharnet.in Phone No. 08555-287388, Fax No. 287544.

Applications containing complete Bio-data and enclosing thereto a passport size photo are invited from qualified medical personnel for the following posts in the departments mentioned below, of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Prashanthigram, Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh - 515 134.

Department	Category of post	Qualifications	Experience
Cardiology	Senior Consultant/ Additional Senior Consultant	DM or its equivalent	12 years / 8 years teaching and / research experience in a recognised Institution after obtaining DM or qualification recognised equivalent thereto
Imaging Sciences (Radiology)	Senior Resident (Radiology) / Medical Officer (Radiology)	MD or its equivalent / M.B.B.S with Diploma in Medical Radiology Diagnosis	

Scales of pay:- Central Government scales of pay are applicable
D.A. & P.F. as per rules of the institute.

Director
SSSIHMS

CAUTION IS ADVISED

Well-meaning devotees from different countries visiting Chapala, Mexico, close to Guadalajara are advised that Dr. Hilarion Dorce and members of his family have not been authorised by the Sathya Sai Organisation to collect funds for any Ashram, clinic, hospital or any other activity using the name Sri Sathya Sai Baba. It is advised that devotees limit their charitable contributions to the established trusts and foundations of the Sathya Sai Organisation in order to avoid deception and disappointment.

Leonardo Pablo Gutter
Chairman Zone 2
Latin America

DIVYA SANNIDHI 2004

Due to unexpected demand, Divya Sannidhi 2004 diaries are exhausted. Kindly note that no further orders will be entertained.

Convener

BACK COVER MATTER

Auspiciousness of Sivarathri

Among the festivals, Sivarathri is of exceptional importance. On Sivarathri night, divine vibrations are close to every human heart. At such a time, when people are engaged in holy tasks, they absorb the divine vibrations. The holy night of Sivarathri is intended to serve as a sacred occasion for turning the mind firmly towards God. As this night precedes the new moon day, it will be pitch dark everywhere outside while the heart will be filled with bright effulgence. Light represents auspiciousness. That is why this day is observed as Sivarathri.

- Baba

Sivarathri Discourse

ATMIC KNOWLEDGE IS TRUE KNOWLEDGE

The Lord of Kailasa has manifested his Divine form with the crescent moon adorning his head, the cool water of the Ganga flowing between the matted locks, with his radiant eye in the middle of the forehead and the purple neck gleaming like the sheen of a blackberry. He wears serpent bracelets and a snake belt, his entire body is smeared with Vibhuti, his forehead is adorned with a Kumkum dot, his ruddy lips glow with the juice of the betel, diamond-studded gold earrings dangle from his ears and his whole swarthy body glows with divine effulgence. (Telugu Poem)

Nachiketa, son of Vajasravasa, prayed to Lord Yama to teach him Atma Vidya. Then, Lord Yama said, "Oh, the son of immortality! Listen. First establish your link with the source from which you have come into the world." He also advised Nachiketa that since the body was perishable like a water bubble and the mind was fickle and unstable, he should transcend both and realise the fundamental truth. "Nachiketa! You need not search for Lord Easwara for He is very much present in you", said Lord Yama.

Realise the Atma Tattwa

Dear Students - Boys and Girls and Dear Devotees!

You have to understand the true significance and philosophy underlying the festival of Sivarathri. First realise that you are not the physical body which is perishable and impermanent. You have to look at this objective world with Jnana Chakshu (eyes of wisdom), not with Charma Chakshu (physical eyes). The animals, insects, birds and beasts look at this world with their physical eyes. If you also look at this objective world with physical eyes, then what is the difference between you and other living beings? If you remain at animal level, then how can you realise your true nature? You have to comprehend the transcendental reality which is beyond the body and the mind. This is possible only with the help of Jnana Chakshu (eyes of wisdom). The body is like a water bubble. It will disappear one day or the other. You are not the body that has birth, growth, decay and death ultimately. Therefore, Lord Yama exhorted Nachiketa to realise the Atma that has no birth and death.

Then, the question arises as to what is the Atma? The Atma is formless, infinite, indescribable and immeasurable. It is Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathana Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam (Atma is attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness). Such an Atma Tattwa is immanent in every individual, nay, in every being in the form of consciousness. Your life as a human being will acquire a meaning and purpose only when you realise the consciousness. Enquiries relating to worldly matters are meaningless and

an exercise in futility. Lord Yama exhorted Nachiketa to realise that principle, having realised which he would have realised everything else. The body has birth, growth, decay and death. But the Atma is not subject to all these changes. It is the eternal witness of everything in the universe. You have therefore to realise the Atma Tattwa. Thus taught Lord Yama to Nachiketa.

The Atma is eternal without birth or death. It has no beginning, middle or end. It is omnipresent and eternal witness. (Telugu Poem)

Look! Several electric bulbs are shining here. Though the bulbs are of different sizes, colours and capacity, the electrical energy manifesting as light through them is one and the same. Similarly, the same divine power is present in every living being and makes it function. That is Atma Tattwa. I often refer to the terms Sathya (Truth), Dharma (righteousness), Santhi (peace) and Prema (love). Sathya is the electricity, Dharma is the wire through which the electric current passes. Santhi is the bulb and Prema is the light. If you want to attain Atmananda (Atmic bliss), you have to follow Sathya and Dharma. That is why the ancient culture of Bharat laid great emphasis on Sathyam Vada (speak truth), Dharmam Chara (practise righteousness). In contrast to this noble principle, what is happening today? Sathyam Vadha (truth is being killed) and Dharmam Chera (righteousness is being imprisoned). No, No. This is not humanness. Speak truth and observe righteousness.

Lord Yama told Nachiketa to realise the Atma Tattwa which is real and eternal. You can recognise that Atma Tattwa, not by your Charma Chakshu (physical eyes) but by Jnana Chakshu (eyes of wisdom). Then, the question arises as to what is Jnana (wisdom)? Is it physical knowledge or secular knowledge or knowledge relating to the objects of Nature? No, none of these. It is the knowledge of the Atma Tattwa. Hence, attain Atma Jnana (the knowledge of the Self). That is true wisdom. People adopt various spiritual practices to attain Atma Jnana. They close their eyes, sit in a particular posture and call it spiritual Sadhana. But nothing of this sort can help to attain Atma Jnana. What is important is Prema (love) which is the undercurrent of all forms of spiritual Sadhana. Realising the perishable nature of this Deha (body), one has to realise the indweller (Dehi), who is none other than the eternal Atma.

The body is made up of five elements and is bound to perish sooner or later but the indweller has neither birth nor death. The indweller has no attachment whatsoever and is the eternal witness. Truly speaking, the indweller who is in the form of the Atma is verily God Himself. (Telugu Poem)

The eternal Atma Tattwa is immanent within us. It can be realised in a moment if you give up Dehabhimana (attachment to the body) and cultivate Atmabhimana (love for the Atma). You think you are the body and develop attachment to it. But how long does this attachment last? So long as the process of inhalation and exhalation continues in the body, you consider it as yours. Once the process comes to a halt, you do not know what is happening around.

The human body, though of perishable nature, teaches one great lesson, namely, 'Soham' (That I am). When you inhale, you make the sound 'So' and while exhaling you make the sound 'Ham'. The process of inhalation represents life and that of exhalation, death. One moment is enough to attain freedom from life and death. You have to give up body attachment, which I am demonstrating right before you day in and day out. This body which I have taken upon Myself undergoes suffering. But I do not attach importance to

this suffering. Many students and devotees have expressed anxiety and concern that I might undergo a lot of suffering while the Linga emerges from My body. No doubt, your apprehensions are true but I do not feel any suffering. In fact, it is only when I identify Myself with the body, I undergo pain. Since I am not the body, I do not suffer any pain. For example, this is a handkerchief (Bhagavan holding a handkerchief in His hand.) As long as you consider this handkerchief as yours, you pick it up, wipe your face and carefully put it back in its original place. Just because the handkerchief is yours, do you accept it if there is dirt on it? No, never. You at once discard it. In the same manner, you should realise that you are different from the body. You should not attach any importance to the suffering of the body. All those objects which you consider as yours have to be discarded one day or the other. When you do not consider something as yours, you do not feel any pain in discarding it. This body underwent several types of suffering, the recent one being a fracture in the hip bone. The body is after all a conglomeration of Indriyas (senses). Whatever has happened is only to the body and not to Me. When you adopt this attitude, you will get peace. Suppose, you find an ant crawling on your hand. If you try to scratch it, you will have more pain. After all, why should you have to suffer so much on account of a small insect like an ant crawling over your body? It is only because you are under the illusion that you are the body. The eye sees something. But what it sees may not be real since it is bound to undergo change after some time. What the ears have heard may undergo change after some time. In the same way, the food we eat will also undergo change after a few hours. There is nothing that is permanent in this world. You have to realise this truth. You have to enquire as to what it is that remains unchanged in the past, present and future. If I teach you this simple truth by quoting Sanskrit Slokas and Mantras, you may not be able to understand. If this is related to your day-to-day experience, you will understand it better.

Some time back, when My hip bone got fractured, I was taken to the hospital. The doctors were planning to perform a major orthopaedic surgery. I told them, "You can do whatever you wish to. This body is yours. I am not the body. I am not under the control of the body. I am I." The doctors performed a major operation on this body. But I did not suffer any pain. Whatever pain was there, only the body suffered, not Me. If you also adopt a similar attitude, you will not feel any pain. Therefore, reduce your Dehabhimana gradually.

Shed all Negative Feelings

All of you are undertaking some sort of Sadhana. What exactly is the real meaning of Sadhana? Give up body attachment and try to experience Atmic bliss. How do you attain that bliss? It can be attained only through Prema (love). If you have pure love, all your suffering will be removed. Therefore, cultivate pure and selfless love. Supposing, you come across a person on the road who is inimical to you. If you hate him and move away from him considering him as your enemy, the hatred between you and him increases further. On the other hand, if you greet him lovingly saying "Hello! how are you?", naturally he would also respond with love. Thus, when you both greet each other lovingly, there will be no scope for hatred persisting any more. As is your feeling towards others, so is their feeling. The same idea is contained in the Vedic declaration: Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati (as is the feeling, so is the result). Sometimes, we may have negative feelings against others. But these negative feelings should be considered just like passing clouds. They come and go. The sun may not be visible when it is covered by

thick clouds. The moment the clouds move away, the sun is visible. Similarly, when your negative feelings scatter away, what remains is pure love. You can achieve anything in this world with love. In fact, you can have the entire world under your control through love. People say they are meditating both in the morning and evening. But, what kind of meditation is this? What benefit are they deriving out of it? How long does its effect last? Not even for a moment. Remember, all worldly matters are like passing clouds. Therefore, do not involve yourself too much in them.

Cultivate Pure Love

Once Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was walking through a market place, chanting the Divine Name. In fact, he was dancing in ecstasy. On seeing him, some people thought he was a madcap. They snatched away his Mridanga. But he did not resent this. He started chanting the Divine Name to the rhythm of the cymbals. The irate onlookers took away the cymbals also. Even then he was not bothered. He thought perhaps God did not like the rhythm of his cymbals. He resolved not to touch the cymbals again. He thought that whatever musical instruments were taken away from him were not to God's liking. God's Will prevails ultimately. Such was his faith. From then onwards, he gave up all worldly attachment and concentrated on Prema Tattwa (principle of love), which none could take away from him. One has to aspire for that which cannot be taken away by others. That is pure love. A printed matter on a piece of paper cannot be separated from it. Likewise, your heart should be like a pure white paper and love, the printed matter. These two are inseparable. Cultivate such love.

Love is your sole refuge wherever you may be, in a forest, in the sky, in a city or a village, on the top of a mountain or in the middle of deep sea. (Telugu Poem)

Wherever you may be, divine love will protect you always. Cultivate such type of love. That is the real Sadhana. Sadhana is not something that is associated with Dhana (money). True Sadhana leads you to Salokya, Sameepya, Sarupya and Sayujya (perception of the Divine, proximity to the Divine, identity with the Divine, merger with the Divine). Unfortunately, today people do not understand the real meaning of Sadhana. Students! You read books written by great men. But mere reading will not help. When you read a Pustaka (book), whatever is contained in it will enter your Mastaka (head). Do not limit yourself to bookish knowledge. Transcend Pustaka and Mastaka. Attain the knowledge of the Self.

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

The Atma is divine. Never forget this fact. Some people resort to physical Sadhana and derive happiness out of it. But the pleasure they derive out of it is only physical and temporary in nature. All that is associated with time is bound to disappear one day or the other. You have to attach yourself to that which is permanent, eternal and real. God's love is beyond all description. It is supreme. On the other hand, physical love is momentary and is associated with physical relationship. Whatever is associated with the body comes and goes. But pure and selfless love which emerges from the heart comes and grows. You have to cultivate such love. It will never diminish. You need not have to beg for it from somebody. You cannot purchase it from the market either since it is not a saleable commodity. God is the only source from which true love flows. It is available only with God. Therefore, find out a way to reach Him. Unfortunately, today people do not aspire to acquire such pure love in spite of being very near to the source of such love. They do not even realise that this invaluable gift is present right in front of them. People crave for

worldly favours and objects, thinking there is great happiness in possessing them. No. They can never give real happiness. The happiness arising out of worldly things is only momentary. Only God's love is eternal. Therefore, love such divine love. You cannot get it from anywhere else except God.

God has neither birth nor death. He has neither beginning nor end. He is present in all beings as the eternal witness. (Telugu Poem)

God's love is the only truth. It will never change. Worship such changeless truth. Seek refuge in that truth. That is the only real Sadhana for attaining Moksha (liberation). What is meant by Moksha? Is it living in some palatial building with air-conditioned rooms, located in heaven above? No, not at all. Moha Kshaya (to get rid of attachment) is true Moksha. You have to give up body attachment in the first instance. Once you get rid of body attachment, you will naturally develop Vairagya (renunciation) which will ultimately lead you to liberation. Love is the only path that can lead you to liberation.

Sacred Teachings of Ubhayabharati

You might have heard the story of Mandana Misra, a scholar of great repute. His wife, Ubhayabharati, too, was a great scholar. When Adi Sankara was proceeding on his victory march, he met Mandana Misra and entered into a scholarly debate with him. It was decided that whoever was defeated in the debate would become the disciple of the winner. Mandana Misra vowed that he would take to Sannyasa if he was defeated. Ubhayabharati was chosen to be the adjudicator of the contest. Will anyone accept such a proposal wherein the rival's wife acted as the adjudicator? But Adi Sankara had no hesitation in accepting her as the adjudicator, for he knew that Ubhayabharati strictly adhered to the principle of truth in letter and spirit. She was impartial in her judgement and declared Sankara to be the winner. Mandana Misra took to Sannyasa in accordance with the terms and conditions of the debate. Ubhayabharati, being his Ardhangi (better half), followed suit.

Ubhayabharati lived in a hermitage near the bank of the river Ganga. Many women became her disciples. Everyday in the morning, they used to go to the bank of the Ganga to have a bath. On the way, there lived a Sannyasi, whom people considered as Brahma Jnani (knower of Brahman). He had renounced the world to attain true wisdom. However, he was very much attached to a dried bottle-gourd in which he used to preserve water. One day he was lying down, using it as a pillow, lest someone should steal it. Ubhayabharati observed this and asked her disciples as to who he was. One of the disciples said that he was known as Brahma Jnani. Then Ubhayabharati remarked, "Though he is one of wisdom, he is attached to his bottle-gourd which he is using as his pillow." The so-called Brahma Jnani heard their conversation and became angry. When Ubhayabharati and her disciples were returning from the Ganga, he threw away the bottle-gourd on the road, just to show that he was not attached to it. Seeing this, Ubhayabharati at once remarked, "I thought there was only one defect in him - Abhimana (attachment). Now I realise that he has another defect also - Ahamkara (ego). How can one with Ahamkara and Abhimana be a Jnani?" Her comment was an eye opener for the Sannyasi. Immediately, he fell at the feet of Ubhayabharati and prayed to her to teach him true knowledge.

Seeing multiplicity is Ajnana (ignorance); seeing unity in multiplicity is Jnana (wisdom). Ubhayabharati imparted such sacred teachings and transformed many people. As she understood the principle of unity, she ultimately attained liberation. On the other hand,

Mandana Misra could not attain liberation as he was immersed in worldly feelings. Ubhayabharati started preaching and propagating the path of wisdom. She became the Guru of one and all. A true Guru is one who dispels the darkness of ignorance and lights the lamp of wisdom in the heart of his disciples. That which remains changeless in all the three periods of time is true wisdom. People accepted Ubhayabharati as their Guru because her thoughts, words, and deeds were in complete harmony.

Manasyekam Vachasyekam Karmanyekam Mahatmanam

Manasyanyath Vachasyanyath Karmanyanyath Duratmanam

(Those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones; those who lack harmony of these are wicked.)

Manonashanam (annihilation of the mind) is what you should strive for. You should have desire for God and nothing else. You should not get entangled in the worldly relationships. That is true wisdom.

The teachings of Ubhayabharati spread far and wide and she became highly reputed for her wisdom. Even today there are many such people of wisdom. Without men of merit and wisdom, how can there be light in the world? However, wisdom cannot be acquired from individuals. It can be acquired only by developing love for God. A beggar who comes to our doorstep begs for alms saying Bhavati Bhiksham Dehi. He addresses Dehi (indweller) and not Deha (physical body). In this manner, you can learn profound spiritual truths even from a beggar.

One may acquire a high academic qualification such as M.A. and B.A. and attain exalted position,

One may amass wealth, perform acts of charity and attain name and fame,

One may have physical strength and enjoy a long and healthy life,

One may be a great scholar studying and preaching the Vedas,

But none can equal a true devotee of the Lord.

(Telugu Poem)

Fix your Thoughts on God

No doubt, worldly education is also essential to eke out a livelihood and to take care of your physical needs. You should not give it up altogether. But it cannot impart true wisdom. Only Atma Vidya (knowledge of the Self) can grant you everlasting happiness. Worldly education is negative and spiritual education is positive. Both are essential for happiness here and hereafter. Students! You should become masters in both forms of knowledge, secular and spiritual. But always remember like Ubhayabharati that only Atmic knowledge is true knowledge. Once you acquire it, you would have acquired everything else.

Last night, I came to Sai Kulwant Hall at one o' clock. It is during the auspicious time of Brahma Muhurtha that the Divine Lingas come from Kailasa. The Lingas come as per the Divine Will. When the Lingas came from Kailasa, then I came here. On coming here, I saw students and devotees singing Bhajans with great devotion. But who are the real devotees? The real devotees are those who sing with real devotion with a pure heart, constantly contemplating on the Divine Name. There are thousands of people taking part in Bhajans. But not all of them are real devotees. Their body may be present in the Hall but their mind is not fixed on God. They participate in Bhajans mechanically. This is not real devotion. Wherever you sit, whether in the prayer hall or elsewhere, if your thoughts are fixed on God, then you are a true devotee, and you will attain His grace. If you feel

sleepy, you can sleep. There is no objection. However even in sleep, your thoughts should be fixed on the Divine.

It is because of your love and devotion for God that you have come all the way to Prasanthi Nilayam to participate in Sivarathri Bhajans. I can understand your devotion. A true devotee does not need any conveniences. He does not want any comforts. Wherever you go, keep the mind under your control and direct all your thoughts towards God. That is real devotion. That is what Ubhayabharati taught to her disciples. If you also cultivate such devotion, your life will be sanctified. Do not run after worldly comforts. (Swami then led the chanting of the sacred Panchakshri Mantra “Om Namah Sivaya” which the devotees followed blissfully.) Always chant the Panchakshri Mantra, “Om Namah Sivaya.” We chant the Om Namah Sivaya Mantra aloud but this can be chanted in silence also. If you merely chant with lips and tongue, it will merge into worldly sounds. On the other hand, if you chant the Divine Name silently with full concentration of your mind, it will spread all over the world as the mind is all-pervasive. Chanting of the Divine Name mentally is the royal path of devotion.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, “*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin...*”)

- **From Bhagavan's Sivarathri Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the morning of 19th February 2004.**

Sivarathri Celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam

DEVOTEES WITNESS THE DIVINE PHENOMENON OF LINGODBHAVA

The Avatar of Kali Age, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba manifested His Divinity once again before a mammoth gathering of devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam by bringing out three Lingas from His body on the blessed Sivarathri night of 18th February 2004. While one Linga was brought out in the Hall, the other two Lingas came out when Bhagavan was in the Mandir. The entire Sivarathri programme including the Divine phenomenon of Lingodbhava was witnessed by millions of devotees as it was broadcast live by a TV channel in India.

Sivarathri celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam began on the morning of 18th February 2004 with the arrival of Bhagavan Baba in Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.00 a.m. As Bhagavan came into the Hall to shower the bliss of His Darshan on the devotees on this auspicious day, Sai Kulwant Hall reverberated with chanting of Vedic hymns by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. After Bhagavan was seated on the dais, the Institute students presented a superb programme of Sivarathri, comprising Stotras and devotional songs interspersed with commentary on the various aspects of Sivarathri to bring out its significance. Bhagavan graced the occasion by His Divine Presence and showered His blessings on the students and devotees. This excellent musical programme came to a conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.10 a.m.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.20 p.m. in a sparkling yellow robe. Bhagavan was led into the Hall in a grand procession led by Panchavadyam and

Nadaswaram musical groups of students amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras by the Veda chanting group. After listening to the Vedic chants for about half an hour, Bhagavan permitted the Sivarathri programme to be started. With the blessings of Bhagavan, three speakers addressed the huge gathering of devotees before Bhagavan's Divine Discourse.

The first speaker of the afternoon was Sri Sanjay Mahalingam, a student of M.B.A. (Final) class from Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute. Narrating an incident from the life of Adi Sankara when Lord Siva encountered him as an outcaste to show him the path of Atmajnana, Sri Mahalingam observed that Sivarathri was an occasion for us to recognise our true identity. The second speaker was Sri Sanjay Sahni, Principal, Brindavan Campus of the Institute. Delineating the true meaning of ritualistic worship of Lord Siva with Bilva leaves, Sri Sahni observed that offering of three-petalled Bilva leaf to Siva as worship symbolised offering of our body, mind and spirit to the three-eyed Lord Siva whose presence had the power to burn all our sins. The last speaker, Sri S.V. Giri, Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, dwelt at length on the importance of the Vedas as the source of supreme knowledge and advised the students to comprehend and internalise the Vedas besides chanting the Vedic Mantras.

After these short speeches, Bhagavan started His Divine Discourse at 5.05 p.m. After speaking for some time, Bhagavan started showing indications that the Linga was about to emerge from His body. Expectations of the devotees ran high when Bhagavan stopped His Discourse in the middle and started drinking water. At 5.45 p.m., Bhagavan settled down in His chair and the students started Bhajans in praise of Lord Siva. While the Bhajans led by the students and fervently followed by the devotees reached their crescendo, Bhagavan showed sure signs of Lingodbhava. All eyes were now riveted on Bhagavan. Exactly at 5.55 p.m., there came relief and joy on all faces when a golden Hiranyagarbha Linga emerged from Bhagavan's mouth. Bhagavan held it aloft in His right hand to show it to the devotees who were beside themselves with joy to witness this rarest of rare Divine phenomenon.

After Lingodbhava, Bhagavan again spoke to the devotees and announced that some more Lingas were about to emerge. After speaking for a few minutes, Bhagavan indicated to the students at 6.10 p.m. to start Bhajans. As the Bhajans progressed, there were signs of emergence of more Lingas from Bhagavan's body. As the devotees became anxious, Bhagavan retired to the Mandir, where two more Lingas emerged from His body. Everybody heaved a sigh of relief when Sri Anil Kumar announced that two more Lingas had emerged from Bhagavan's body. At 6.20 p.m., Bhagavan returned to the dais in His normal health and there was no sign of fatigue on His face which sparkled more brilliantly after the emergence of the Lingas. At about 6.30 p.m., Bhagavan started His Discourse again and reassured everybody that He was in His perfect health. Bhagavan then sang three Bhajans in His mellifluous voice which the devotees followed in chorus. Bhagavan addressed the students and showered His blessings on them before bringing His Discourse to a close. After the conclusion of the Divine Discourse, Sivarathri Bhajans started again at 6.45 p.m. Before retiring to His abode at 7.00 p.m., Bhagavan announced that He would come back to the Hall during the night. The Bhajans continued for the whole night. At about 1.00 a.m., Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall and sat on the dais listening to the Sivarathri Bhajans for about an hour before going back to His residence.

On the morning of 19th February 2004, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 6.50 a.m. Soon after occupying His seat on the dais, Bhagavan blessed the Prasadam by materialising and sprinkling Vibhuti on it. Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy, Warden, Brindavan Campus of the Institute addressed the mammoth gathering of devotees. The erudite speaker referred to the dialogue between Nachiketa and Yama from the Kathopanishad and observed that a real man of valour was one who could turn the senses and the mind inward and realise the Atma.

After this, Bhagavan commenced His Divine Discourse at 7.25 a.m. and exhorted the devotees to rise above body consciousness and recognise their true identity. After the conclusion of the Discourse at 8.15 a.m., Bhagavan led the chant of “Om Namah Sivaya” and the devotees blissfully repeated this elevating Mantra after Bhagavan. In the end, Bhagavan sang the Bhajan “Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin ...” The programme of Sivarathri came to a happy conclusion with these sacred chants and Bhajan at 8.20 a.m. Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan was then distributed to all the devotees.

Divine Discourse – 12th January 2004

LOVE IS MY BIGGEST PROPERTY

The sun appears serene and peaceful. The days have become shorter, and the cool wind is blowing. The fields are ripe with golden crops. Marigold flowers are blossoming like garlands of pearls on the banks of rivers. The farmers are rejoicing and singing. The sweet festival of Sankranti has come in the month of Pushya (a month in Indian calendar), filling our homes with the newly harvested grain.

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Sankranti is the foremost among all the festivals of India. It is a festival of gaiety and rejoicing as the farmers bring home the harvested crop and perform acts of charity to help the poor and needy. It fills the heart of all with liveliness and enthusiasm. On this occasion, Vedic scholars get up at Brahmamuhurtha (early morning time), chant the Vedic Mantras to purify their hearts and realise the Supreme Being.

Sankranti is Marked by All-round Rejoicing

This festival has a special significance even for the householders. They invite their newly married sons-in-law to their house, offer gifts and new clothes to them, filling the entire house with mirth and joy. In this context, there is a Telugu folk song:

As Sankranti is the festival of festivals,

Oh newly married bridegroom, visit your in-laws' house,

Come, spend your time in fun and frolic with your brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law,

The entire household and the neighbourhood will honour you with love and affection.

(Telugu Song)

It is also an occasion when the bullocks are decorated elaborately and taken to various houses in the village. The bullocks are worshipped and fed sumptuously as an expression of gratitude for all the hard work they do in the fields. Even the bovine members of the

household are feted, a symbolic marriage is performed between a bull and a cow, naming them as Rama and Sita. They are taken along the streets amidst rejoicing and dancing. People address their bullocks as Ramudu, Bhimudu, etc. Similarly, cows are named after Sita, Gowri, Lakshmi, etc. The inner meaning of this is that even animals are treated with the same concern and care as human beings. They decorate the cows and bullocks with Saris and Dhotis and take them out in a procession. In this manner, the festival of Sankranti bestows great joy and auspiciousness on the farmers, householders, priests and children. Not only the human beings, even the birds and animals rejoice with the arrival of the sacred Sankranti festival. At sunset, it is a wonderful sight to see the birds flying back to their nests chirping merrily in their own language, filling the air with their joyous, loud singing. It is an equally delightful sight to see the cows rushing back from the grazing fields to feed their calves who crave for the caresses of their mothers, mooing loudly. Sankranti festival is so sweet and endearing to one and all. Cool winds, mellifluous songs of birds and sweet sugarcane crop herald the arrival of Sankranti. People celebrate this festival by preparing and distributing sweets and rice puddings. This festival drives away all disappointments and despair and fills our hearts with hope and enthusiasm. People get up early in the morning, have a sacred bath and worship their chosen deities such as Ganapati, Subrahmanya and Lord Easwara. However, nowadays people are not celebrating Sankranti in its true spirit. Their celebration is confined to mere performance of rituals. They lack purity and sanctity. They are unable to enjoy the bliss of Sankranti because of hatred, jealousy and conflicts.

On this auspicious occasion of Sankranti, children aged five years are initiated into the process of learning with the chanting of sacred Vedic Mantras. Our ancient sages declared, Vedahametham Purusham Mahantham Adityavarnam Thamasah Parasthath (I have visualised the Supreme Being who shines with the effulgence of a billion suns and who is beyond Thamas - the darkness of ignorance). The Vedas extol the Supreme Being in manifold ways. The Rig Veda contains Mantras extolling God and His blissful form which attracts one and all and fills their hearts with bliss.

Festivals Remind us of the Need for Transformation

Birds and animals lead their lives happily in accordance with their natural qualities. But man has forgotten his true nature and is consequently leading a miserable life. Birds and animals lead a better life because they live in unity and harmony. But due to the impact of modern education, man has degenerated to a level lower than that of an animal. He has lost the virtues of honesty and integrity. Birds and animals have a reason and a season but man has no reason or season. Go to any house, go to any street, see any human endeavour, you will find that money is given the utmost priority. People are ready to stoop down to any level for money. They even barter their honour for the sake of money. Animals are satisfied once their hunger is satiated. But man has no sense of satisfaction; he goes on eating endlessly even when he has no appetite. When a dog is sick, it stops eating food. If you have a pet dog, you might have observed this. Even if you forcibly feed it with milk, it refuses to drink. It likes to remain without food. But man observes no such restraint with regard to diet when he is sick. Even when he runs a high temperature of 101.0, he likes to eat sweets like Mysorepak, Burfi, Gulab Jamoon, etc., which will only aggravate his sickness. Thus, animals are observing dietary discipline as man should do while man is behaving more like animals in his eating habits. When a person misbehaves, the elders reprimand him by asking, "Why do you behave like an animal?" It

is under the impact of modern education that man is behaving in this perverted manner. He prides over his high qualifications like B.A. and M.A. But what is the use when he is adding dirty qualities (signified by the letter D) to his qualifications, thus becoming BAD and MAD? This type of perverted behaviour is unbecoming of a human being. Man should develop good thoughts, good qualities, good conduct and good character. But man's craving for money has become so great that he does not hesitate to use unfair means to earn money. He even barter away his morality for the sake of money. Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows.

Embodiments of Love!

Festivals are celebrated to remind man of the need to transform himself. At least from this Sankranti day, make efforts to cultivate good qualities and bring about a change in your behaviour. All the festivals of the Bharatiyas are meant to impart sacred teachings for transforming human behaviour. They are not meant merely to eat, drink and make merry. First of all, there should be transformation at the individual level. There should be unity in the family. In olden days, people used to live in joint families. Young couples lived with their parents, in-laws and other elders of the family in harmony. Whenever there was any difference of opinion between the couple, the elders in the family would give proper guidance and pacify them. The daughters-in-law would implicitly follow the advice of their in-laws. As a result, there was little scope for conflicts in the family. But the modern trend is such that the daughter-in-law does not want to live in the house of her in-laws. She wants the family to be divided. Because of such divisive mentality, conflicts in the family are on the rise. Consequently, Kali Yuga has become Kalaha Yuga (age of conflicts) and Kalmasha Yuga (age of blemish).

Modern Education is Making Man Narrow-minded

People in olden days always talked to each other in a pleasing manner. They would welcome guests wholeheartedly by exchanging pleasant words like "How are you? Please have your food with us," etc. More than the food, it was the warmth and affection of the host that appeased the hunger of the guest. But nowadays, even on a festival day, people do not like to entertain guests. When a guest comes to their house, they greet him with the remark, "Hope you have already had your food; please come and be seated." Man has become so narrow-minded that he does not want to offer any hospitality to the guests. Such being the sorry state of affairs, how can you expect the children to be ideal citizens? Due to the influence of such parents, even children are becoming narrow-minded. Parents want them to acquire modern education and earn a lot of money.

Some mothers work in offices and leave their children to the care of Ayas (female attendants). Consequently, the children are unable to experience the love of their mother. They shed tears when the Aya dies, but not when the mother passes away! The children should be brought up under the loving care of the mother. They should listen to her sacred teachings. How can they make progress in life in the prevailing circumstances? The system of modern education does not foster virtues in children.

What is this education? It is leading only to agitation. Students study merely to acquire degrees and not to broaden their mind. True education is that which brings about transformation of the heart and expansion of love. But the present-day education system is leading to narrow-mindedness. High academic qualifications merely inflate the ego of the students. They do not foster morality, honesty and integrity in them which are the very essence of Indian culture. That is why these virtues are not seen anywhere today.

How can man attain Ananda (bliss) without imbibing these virtues? How can education bereft of morality redeem his life? Today the students go to countries like America, Japan, Germany, etc., as soon as they get their degrees. Sometimes, when their parents visit them, they ask them to have their food in restaurants. They are not so fortunate as to serve food to their parents with their own hands. Not only that, they do not show due respect and gratitude to their parents who have brought them up with love and care. This is the worst sin. You should look after your parents well. You should take care of their needs in their advanced age and serve them with love and concern. Today when parents grow old, children come forward to demand a share of their property. They are interested in the property but are not ready to develop a proper mind. Develop proper mind; cultivate virtues. That will lead you to the supreme state. That is what you should aim at. The more one is educated, the more virtuous one should become.

Respect your Parents if you Want to Progress in Life

Here is a small example. There was a Hindi scholar who had admitted his two sons in a college at Allahabad which was reputed for its modern education. Once he was going to another place by train along with his wife. He wrote to his sons to come and meet them at the railway station on that particular date. The train halted at the station and the parents stood at the door of the carriage. They saw their sons hurrying towards them. The elder one touched the feet of both the parents before talking to them, while the younger son did not show such respect and reverence. The parents enquired about their health and studies. The elder son said, "We are fine here. Please take care of your health. Your happiness is our happiness." On the other hand, the younger son did not talk to his parents in a pleasing way and kept on demanding more money from them. As the train was about to start, once again the elder one bent down and touched the feet of his parents while the younger one just waved his hand and said goodbye. As the train was leaving the platform, the parents were watching their sons through the window. The elder one was offering his Namaskar with folded hands till the end, whereas the younger son looked indifferently with pride and ego, keeping his hands in his pockets all the time.

The father became worried seeing the behaviour of the younger son. He said to his wife, "We have sent him away for the sake of his education. But he is behaving like an animal as there is no one to guide him properly." The mother pacified him saying, "After all, he is young. He will learn and improve in course of time." But the father was not satisfied. He said, "He is already doing his degree course. If not now, when will he learn?"

After completing their education, both the boys returned to their native place. The elder one got a high position while the younger could secure only a clerical job. In spite of his best efforts, he could not get a better job because of his egoistic manners and discourteous attitude towards others. The elder son attained a high position in society by virtue of his diligence and good behaviour. He was very much respected for his good manners and courteous behaviour. After getting this high position, he came to his parents, prostrated before them and said, "It is because of your blessings that I have come up in life." The parents shed tears of joy and blessed him profusely, "Son, it is because of your good qualities that you have attained such an exalted position in life."

While everybody saluted the elder one, the younger son had to salute everyone. How can one who does not respect his parents be respected by others? Later, the younger son lost the job of the clerk also due to his negligence and carelessness. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as is the feeling, so is the result). Our future depends upon our present behaviour. What

to talk of men, even dogs would not look at you if you do not respect your parents. Therefore, wherever you go, you should never forget to respect your parents. The Vedas declare: *Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava, Acharya Devo Bhava, Atithi Devo Bhava* (revere your mother, father, preceptor and guest as God). Our ancients promoted these noble qualities but the Bharatiyas today are neglecting these sacred teachings. Whoever respects his parents and obeys their commands will certainly attain high position in life. In fact, the festival of Sankranti exhorts us to cultivate noble qualities. 'Kranti' means transformation. Therefore, the festival of Sankranti is celebrated to remind us that we should bring about transformation in our life. But, how are we reacting to this? Are we able to achieve transformation in our life? No. The purpose of celebrating festivals is to get rid of bad qualities and cultivate good qualities. This is the significance of all the festivals of India. But people today are not realising the inner meaning of these festivals.

Embodiments of Love! Students!

Your parents undergo many hardships to provide food and education to you and meet all your needs to bring you up in life. They may go without food but they see to it that you are fed well. They look after you with great care. They struggle hard to promote your welfare so that you may attain good position in life. They give you good food, good clothing and good education. If you do not respect your parents, then how do you expect the world to respect you? In Western countries also, there were many great men who respected others and were respected by all. (Here Swami narrated the life story of Abraham Lincoln who became the President of America as he put into practice the teachings of his mother and developed the virtues of self-confidence and self-respect.)

It is self-respect that protects man and takes him to an exalted position. You may be poor financially but if you uphold your self-respect, you will be respected by all. Do not look down upon the poor. Respect them and treat them with love. This should become a part of your nature. Lincoln's mother inculcated such noble qualities in her son. That is why Lincoln revered her. Whoever inculcates noble qualities in you should be revered as God. God is not to be found elsewhere. You can realise His presence within you.

Understand the Inner Meaning of the Traditions of Bharat

Dear Students!

You must respect your parents, in whatever condition they may be. Listen to them with respect and obey their commands without any reservation. Bow your head before them with respect. Only then will you be able to command respect from society. All great men of the world obeyed and respected their parents and set an example to others. Try to know the underlying meaning of the ancient customs and traditions of Bharat. For example, our ancients used to build big houses with small doors. Do you know why? We think that these small doors were meant to prevent thieves from entering the houses and escaping with ease. No, that was not the reason. These doors were purposely kept low to enable the people to observe the custom of entering the house with their heads bent in reverence. Thus, every custom and tradition of Bharat was meant to promote mutual respect and goodwill among people. These customs were established with great care and wisdom. But even the Bharatiyas have forgotten such noble traditions. Nowadays you do not find even a Gadapa (threshold) to the main entrance of the house. Without understanding the inner meaning of these traditions, people today consider them unnecessary. But it is not so. The ancient traditions and customs of Bharat were meant to promote humility, respect and reverence among people.

Students – Boys and Girls!

You should learn and observe such great traditions and earn the respect of others. Fill the life of your parents with joy. The parents must feel happy that their children are obeying them. It is enough if you earn a good name. God's grace cannot be attained by performing mere ritualistic worship. Modern education makes man egoistic. Be humble in spite of your high education. Your education should develop in you humility and respect towards parents and elders. You can become the future leaders of the country when you develop these qualities. It is not necessary that you become great. It is enough if you become good. Greatness may come today and go tomorrow. But good name will last forever. Therefore, earn a good name. Instead of trying to become great, try to earn the 'grace' of God. Do not crave for the 'grass' of worldly desires. Only cattle eat grass. Do not become a cattle by running after grass. Strive to earn God's grace and become a good person.

Dear Students!

We are celebrating the sacred festival of Sankranti. On this occasion, we must cultivate the quality of giving respect to others and taking respect. I am giving you a small example here. (Swami called a student of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School) This boy has come from America. He has secured first class not only in his studies but is also outstanding in Veda chanting. (loud applause). In whichever portion of the Vedic text you question him, he will be able to chant the relevant Mantra beautifully. Such illustrious children are very rare today. In fact, it is the good fortune of the parents to have such children. It is only because of such parents that children are able to cultivate good qualities. Though the parents of this boy are the citizens of America, they have admitted him in our school to enable him to acquire good qualities and good behaviour. In fact, they have all the facilities available in America to educate their son there itself. But they prefer our institution so that their son could imbibe the noble values imparted in it. In fact, the children love India and yearn to inculcate the great virtues of its sacred culture.

Here the children acquire education coupled with love. The children bow down to touch the feet of their parents with respect and reverence. Such noble qualities have impressed these parents and therefore they have brought their son to pursue his education in our institution. He has given immense joy to his parents by his good qualities. His father is very happy that his son has earned a good name and is appreciated by one and all. (Swami called his father to the dais and showered His blessings on him.) This boy's mother is working in our Primary School and spending her time blissfully. The boy's parents have earned the love and respect of all because of the exemplary behaviour of their son.

In this manner, every one of you should strive to bring good name to your parents. Only then will your parents experience the real joy of begetting you as their son. You may earn a lot of money and build big mansions but they cannot bring you good name. They are temporary. Once you earn good reputation, it will remain with you forever. Bring good name to the institution in which you have studied. Observing your noble qualities, people should be able to recognise you as Sathya Sai students. You are aware that we are not charging even a paisa from our students. Further, I am also providing books and other facilities for the needy and deserving students. The students have immense love for Swami and Swami also showers His love and grace on them. They do not shed tears when they leave their parents at home. But when I return to Puttaparthi from Brindavan,

the students of Brindavan start shedding tears as they are unable to bear the separation from Me. How did they acquire such intense love for Swami? It is Swami's love that is responsible for this. (loud prolonged applause) It is only love that I give to all. My property does not consist of big mansions and palatial buildings. My biggest property is Love. I give love and receive love. I often tell the students, "Give Me your love, I will give you whatever you want." That is why the students have such intense love for Me. Develop love more and more. Love your parents. Obey their command. Your life will certainly be redeemed.

Think of God always. Wherever you are, in a forest or in the sky, in a village or a city, on a hilltop or in the middle of the deep sea, God alone can come to your rescue. God is always with you, in you, around you, above you and below you.

Chaala Santosham (very happy).

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin ...*")

- From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 12th January 2004.

Excerpts from Sri Sathya Sai Divya Kripasraya

EXQUISITE FLOWERS AT THE LOTUS FEET

Anna (Sri Madiyal Narayan Bhat, founder of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust, Alike and Muddenahalli) stands out in my life as my guide and mentor; I lived and worked under his benign guidance for twelve years, which shaped my life to a great extent during that period. But the greatest good fortune of my life has been my meeting Swami in my late teens and having His divine guidance there-after. Also, by His grace and by virtue of living in His proximity both at Prasanthi Nilayam and Brindavan for a number of years, I have met a great number of good people and a good number of great people from all walks of life. Also, I had the opportunity to live and work with a few of them.

Among others from whom I have derived inspiration to walk on the Godward path, two good and great persons are prominent. One is the grandsire of Sri Sathya Sai literature and a shining star of Kannada literature in the sphere of humour, Sri N. Kasturi. The other is a giant in Kannada literature and has a special place in the galaxy of Indian English writers; he is Dr. Vinayak Krishna Gokak. Both were great and inspiring teachers and educational philosophers. Also, both were wonderful orators. Once they met Swami, they surrendered themselves to Him and led their lives as per His guidance till the end. Both were gifted with child-like innocence, which blossomed into sage-like wisdom. Sri Kasturi was an ardent devotee of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa before he came to Swami and Dr. Gokak was a staunch follower of Sri Aurobindo. To put it figuratively, Sri Kasturi and Dr. Gokak were two flowers offered at the altar of Swami by Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Aurobindo respectively. Dr. Gokak wrote in his book *Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba: The Man and the Avatar*: "What overawes one is the catholicity of Baba. It does not matter for Him what master a disciple comes from. All are one. He becomes to each disciple the master he has accepted." Both Sri Kasturi and Dr. Gokak visited Sathya Sai Grama a number of times when I was there. My relation with them

grew more intimate after I went to Prasanthi Nilayam in August 1983. I feel fortunate to have enjoyed their love and affection and to have received their valuable guidance at a very important phase of my life after Anna had departed from this world.

Sri Kasturi's relation with Swami was unique. He came to Swami for the first time in 1948. Swami was twenty-two years old at that time and Sri Kasturi was fifty-one years old. When Sri Kasturi passed away in 1987 at the ripe old age of ninety, Swami was sixty-one. In the first interview itself, Swami told Sri Kasturi that he would have the good fortune of writing His biography! For nearly forty years, Sri Kasturi had the opportunity to be in the divine proximity of Swami. He also had the rare privilege to observe from close quarters the blossoming of the Avatar's life and speak and write about its important milestones.

Sri Kasturi was a Karma Yogi who found fulfilment in the selfless service of spreading joy and inspiring all those, who came into his contact, through his words and writings. He did all his work as an offering to Swami. When Sri Kasturi retired from service in Mysore University in 1954, he was offered the post of Director of All India Radio Station at Bangalore by the government. (It may be of interest for readers to know that the phrase Akasha Vani was coined by Sri Kasturi.) But he wanted to settle down at Prasanthi Nilayam and serve Swami. When he approached Swami to get His approval for refusing this offer of the government, Swami told him to take up the assignment in Bangalore. Sri Kasturi pleaded with Swami saying, “Swami, I long to serve You; I want to do Your work!” Swami asked him, “Kasturi, do you think All India Radio's work is not My work?” Then it occurred to Sri Kasturi that everything in the world belonged to God and that all work had to be done as God's work. That was the essence of Karma Yoga. Only after completing his assignment in All India Radio Station at Bangalore, Swami permitted him to settle down at Prasanthi Nilayam where he played multiple roles in running the Ashram. At one point of time, he was simultaneously the postmaster, manager of the printing press and editor of “Sanathana Sarathi”, the monthly magazine started in 1958! But his labour of love was speaking and writing about Swami and His teachings ...

Sri Kasturi told me more than once the importance of complete surrender to Swami for those who were blessed with the wonderful gift of living in proximity to Him. He would explain with great enthusiasm how Swami brought about his spiritual growth by eliminating gradually his sense of ego or identification with the body. Swami would sometimes melt the ego with a torrent of His limitless love and also He would not hesitate to use the 'knife' to prune it at other times. Sri Kasturi used to say, “Swami is a true Guru who is very keen on spiritual uplift of His devotees and that makes Him a hard taskmaster specially for those who live and work in His close proximity.” Wielding of the 'knife' for spiritual growth is a painful experience for both the disciple and the master. Sri Kasturi would often quote Swami Himself in this regard: “I am Nataraja – the dance master, the first among dancers. You are all dance pupils. I alone know the agony of teaching you each step in the dance!” Sri Kasturi also underwent the spiritual surgery many times at the hands of the divine master. But he believed that whatever Swami did was for granting him the highest gift of unity with the Divine.

During the fifty-fifth birthday celebrations of Swami in 1980, I had the opportunity to stay with Sri Kasturi for a fortnight. He was the State President of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Karnataka at that time. One of those afternoons, he went to meet Swami

in the Mandir and came back within a few minutes. That was very unusual; generally he would be with Swami for at least an hour in the afternoons. He came quietly into the room and almost collapsed into his chair covering his face with both hands. He sat silently for more than ten minutes and then he told me what had happened. He was severely chastised by Swami for some mistake in connection with the discharge of his duties as State President. He felt sad that he had hurt Swami's tender heart by his mistake during the grand celebrations of His birthday. He thought that the position of the State President was coming in the way of his good relations with Swami. He was in deep despair for nearly three days. After the birthday celebrations, he told me very happily that Swami had forgiven him and narrated how the reprieve came. Also, I have heard him speak about it in public a few times and so I write it here in his own words –

Two days after the birthday, I went to Swami and very humbly submitted to Him, “Swami, please forgive me if I am wrong. I pray to You to relieve me of the assignment of State President so that I can stay peacefully at Your Lotus Feet as a mere worm!” Swami stared at me for a while and said, “Kasturi, why do you call yourself a worm? If that is the case, why do you think that you are not a worm when you are the State President? What difference does that make? There is nothing wrong in being a State President. The mistake is in your thinking that the assignment of the State President makes a difference in your stature! Such thinking is caused by the ego.”

I fell at His feet and prayed for His pardon. Swami smiled and said, “Don't worry, do your duty properly. You are not a worm and there is God in the worm also. Why do you belittle it? Realise that you are divine!”

And then Sri Kasturi would add, “If I had served any other Ashram as much as I have served here, the head of that Ashram would have ruined me by boosting my ego with titles like Bhakta Sikhamani or Bhaktagesara! But Swami is merciful to me. He has conferred on me the highest fulfilment in life!”

Swami granted Sri Kasturi the great boon of His Divine Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan in his last moments at Prasanthi Nilayam on the 14th of August 1987. Is it not the highest fulfilment that any human could aspire for? On that morning, Swami had gone to the Institute auditorium to oversee a drama rehearsal of the students. The drama was to be staged on the 21st on the occasion of the third anniversary of the opening of management courses in the Institute. When Swami was halfway through the rehearsal, He got up abruptly at 11-30 a.m. and left for the hospital. Sri Kasturi, who was in the hospital, was almost unconscious whole of that morning. Swami reached the room where Sri Kasturi was and looked around. There was complete silence except for the sound created by drops of water trickling into a bucket in the bathroom. Swami asked one of the persons around to stop that sound also. Then He went to the bedside of Sri Kasturi and called out in His mellifluous voice, “Kasturi!” Sri Kasturi who had not responded to anyone that morning gently opened his eyes and looked at the Lord. Swami materialised Vibhuti and put it into his mouth. Sri Kasturi closed his eyes and a complete serenity enveloped him. Swami asked those around the bed to do Namasmarana and left. An hour later, Sri Kasturi breathed his last. The river had merged in the ocean. The news spread and a stream of devotees paid their last respects to him at the hospital. Next morning, his mortal remains were taken for cremation to the bed of Chitravati river in a procession, with students chanting Vedic hymns and Bhajans.

Speaking on the occasion of the sixtieth birthday of Dr. Gokak at a function held on the lawns of Carlton House at Bangalore in August 1979, Swami compared him to Sage Vasishtha and said that he had the Vishala Buddhi of Sage Vyasa. Dr. Gokak was a towering personality physically, mentally and spiritually. I got a glimpse of the sublimity of his thought one evening in 1979. Swami was at Brindavan at that time. After Swami had retired for the day, we were sitting on a bench in the garden in front of the Mandir in Brindavan. Dr. Gokak was composing his Kannada epic 'Bharata Sindhu Rashmi' at that time. The epic was about the life and thoughts of sages and kings in Vedic times. During the course of the dialogue, I asked him, "Sir, when will 'Bharata Sindhu Rashmi' be published?" Instead of answering my question, he reflected for a while, looked up at the sky and said, "Narasimha Murthy, look at the sky!" I looked up at the sky; it was dusk, stars were beginning to twinkle. Even as I was looking up, Dr. Gokak questioned me again, "What do you see there?" "Sir, stars are just appearing in the sky!"

"Narasimha Murthy, it is not just appearance of the stars; it is the epic being composed by God! ... Can you see those stars in the morning after sunrise?" I felt uplifted by the glory of his thought. I answered, "No, sir!"

"God composes a great epic every evening in the sky and wipes it clean every morning. It is like the divine child writing his poem on a slate and wiping it clean after some time. Does he have the desire to publish it?" I was lost in an ethereal joy. I had no answer to his question; I kept quiet. He himself continued, "He writes the glorious epic in the sky out of sheer joy of its existence. Isn't it?" "Yes, sir!" "He does not even bother whether anybody watches the celestial beauty of His creation! Is that not so?" "Yes, sir!" "It is only we humans who want to publicise our little creations. Isn't it?" "Yes, sir!" "Do you know why?" "Kindly enlighten me, sir!" "It is because we have not yet found the complete joy of our existence!" The loftiness of his thinking and feeling humbled me completely and I could feel a glimpse of the majesty of complete joy that he was talking about. The dialogue melted into silence and nothingness.

Dr. Gokak had his first Darshan of Swami in 1965 at Hyderabad. At that time, he was the Director of Central Institute of English there. Swami's instrument in bringing Dr. Gokak to His fold was Dr. B Ramakrishna Rao who was well known for his illustrious life in politics and who was earlier the Governor of Uttar Pradesh. He was an ardent devotee of Swami and an important member of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha founded by Swami for the revival of Indian cultural values. Dr. Gokak was invited by Dr. Ramakrishna Rao to deliver a lecture in a meeting of the Sabha at Hyderabad in the Divine Presence of Swami. Dr. Gokak had an exhilarating experience while delivering that lecture. As he started speaking, he felt a gradual expansion of his consciousness and by the time he finished, he experienced a divine presence, which filled the void in his heart caused by the physical absence of Sri Aurobindo on the earth. Swami had already entered his heart. Later, speaking about that experience of his, Dr. Gokak said, "An Avatar has effortless command over metempsychosis, Paranthakarana Pravesh or entry into the innermost hearts of others, the power to open up new channels of thinking and feeling!" Within a few days of his first meeting with Swami, Dr. Gokak and his wife were called for interview by Swami. That interview became a milestone in the couple's spiritual journey. Swami had touched and opened up the heart of the intellectual. Later, Smt. Sharada Gokak wrote in her autobiography, "It is Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who made Dr. Gokak give more importance to devotion and love in his life. Baba drove home an

important truth to Dr. Gokak that devotion was not opposed to intellectual exploration.” Within a year, Dr. Gokak had a number of experiences including a few dreams, which made him realise that Swami had in Him Sri Aurobindo and the Mother also.

Later, when Dr. Gokak moved to Bangalore as the Vice Chancellor of Bangalore University, the bond between the Lord and His devotee grew stronger day by day. And after his stint as the Vice Chancellor of Bangalore University and the Director of Central Institute of Higher Studies at Simla, Dr. Gokak came to stay with Swami at Brindavan and became Swami's chosen instrument in His divine experiments in education. Finally, when Swami established Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (a deemed university) with headquarters at Prasanthi Nilayam, Dr. Gokak became its first Vice Chancellor and formulated Sri Sathya Sai philosophy of integral education with the divine guidance of Swami, its Chancellor. He continued to be the Vice Chancellor of the deemed university till he was seventy five. Swami arranged a beautiful function at Prasanthi Nilayam in August 1984 to felicitate him and his wife on his seventy-fifth birthday. Speaking on that occasion, Dr. Gokak said, “I have learnt one important lesson in my life. That is to surrender to Swami completely and to do what He commands me to do. I know very well that there lies the fulfilment of my life!”

I had the great opportunity to work as Warden of the university hostel at Prasanthi Nilayam when Dr. Gokak was the Vice Chancellor of the university. I learnt many valuable lessons from him in the field of higher education. I should say, he guided me with fatherly affection. In the first few months of my experience as Warden there, I felt that Dr. Gokak was not taking much initiative in moulding the character of students. In my youthful immaturity, I took the liberty of submitting to him, “Sir, kindly excuse me if I am wrong. I feel you are not involving yourself much in shaping the character of students. I am sure, there should be some reason for it!” He looked at me with sympathy, smiled and said, “Narasimha Murthy, I am glad you raised this point with me. I have found out from my experience that Swami is the best moulder of personality of students. We are here only to assist Him. I am sure, you will also realise this truth soon. The sooner you do it, the better it is for students and also yourself! ... It should be our constant endeavour to see that we do not become obstacles in His path!” That wise advice applies to all those who are granted the boon of working in Swami's proximity in any of His projects!

I will conclude my tribute to Dr. Gokak with two of his dialogues with Swami as shared by himself. Once he asked Swami, “Swami, will You kindly enlighten me as to what is the difference between Yourself and Sri Aurobindo?” “He was Vyaktinatha and I am Lokanatha!” said Swami

During one of the summer courses in Indian Culture and Spirituality at Brindavan for which he was nominated as the Director by Swami, Dr. Gokak was amazed to see Swami quoting exhaustively from the Vedas and the Upanishads and their commentaries by eminent scholars including some from the West. He had not seen Swami studying any Vedic literature at any time. In his child-like simplicity, he ventured to ask Swami, “Swami, when did You study all this?”

Swami smiled and answered, “Gokak, I don't have the bad habit of studying books and quoting from them! All knowledge that is in the universe is also in the head of every man. There are many centres of knowledge in human brain, each pertaining to one field of knowledge. If you learn to focus your mind on any of these centres, all knowledge in that

particular field will open up itself for you! That was how the Vedas were revealed to the sages of the yore!” The intellectual in Gokak felt totally humbled by the reply and he fell at the Lotus Feet of Swami!

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The Vedas and the Upanishads are the very foundation of Sanathana Dharma. There is one interesting feature to be noted. Sanathana Dharma has no founder as the others have. That invisible, unknown founder is God, the source of all wisdom. He is the prophet of Sanathana Dharma. His grace and His inspiration manifested through the pure sages and they became the spokesmen of this Dharma. When the moral purity of men degenerates, God takes form as grace and inspiration in sages and teachers. He has also given through the Upanishads the Sathya-Jnana, the wisdom concerning the Reality. – *Baba*

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

News from Inland Sai Centres

Assam, Manipur and N.E. States: A two-day meet on “Global Peace and Harmony” was held on 19th and 20th December 2003 at Diphu, the headquarter Karbi Anglong hill district of Assam which has witnessed major upheavals in recent times, disturbing the peace and harmony amongst various ethnic groups living there. Eminent speakers drawn from many parts of the State dwelt at length on the various facets of the Sai Mission. The highlights of the programme were sale of Sai literature and holding of an exhibition of Sai Mission and activities.

Gujarat: State-level Grama Seva Workshop and Youth Conference was held on 13-14th December 2003 at a village near Ajwa Lake underneath 108 ft. statue of Lord Hanuman. 200 youth from the State attended. The following activities were carried out by the youth:
Juna Rampura: Smokeless Chula, Shosh Khada and cheap toilets by Baroda youth.

Sanoli: Adult education by Navasari youth.

Shuklipura: Vocational guidance by Surat youth.

Amlipura: Study circle and medical camp by Ahmedabad youth.

Rayan Talavadi: Veterinary care, Bal Vikas and benefits of blood donation by Valsad, Anand and Ahmedabad youth.

Shantinagar: Freedom from bad habits by Ahmedabad and Valsad youth.

Haryana and Chandigarh: With the grace of Bhagavan Baba, various activities were taken up in all the districts in the months of November-December 2003, celebrating Bhagavan Baba's Birthday.

Grama Seva was done in all the adopted villages by respective districts of the State wherein Nagar Sankirtan, cleanliness drive and Narayana Seva were also conducted. Health awareness cum medical camps were also conducted in these villages, namely, Dhanas and Kaimbala (Chandigarh), Nada and Kot (Panchkula), Naya Gaon (Ambala), Dhaani Gujran (Hisar), Dhanauli (Yamuna Nagar). A total of 1036 patients were treated

by the teams of specialist doctors who also distributed free medicines to the patients. At Kharia (Sirsa), a veterinary camp was conducted treating 200 animals. In Narayana Seva, 6900 Narayanas were served food and 230 families were given dry ration. A regular drinking water/tea Seva was done at Karnal and Kurukshetra railway stations during this period serving approximately 10,000 passengers.

Vastra Seva was also done at Chandigarh (92 woollen sweaters and 152 blankets), Panchkula (60 frocks and 400 blankets), Ambala (33 Saris and 25 sweaters), Kurukshetra (75 shawls, 80 sweaters and 101 blankets), Hisar (36 shawls, 30 sweaters and 50 blankets), Gurgaon (clothes to 300 families) and Faridabad (150 blankets), benefiting more than two thousand people.

Kerala: First State Conference of lawyers and doctors was held on 8th February 2004 at Sai Centre, Alwaye, in which more than 300 lawyers and doctors participated. The Conference was inaugurated by Sri V.Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, who also gave the keynote address. After the keynote address, separate sessions were held for doctors and lawyers. Topics covered in the session for doctors were: Human Values in Communication Styles, Ethics in Medical Practice, Medical Practice and the Law, Role of Human Value Orientation and Sai Views on Human Values in Medical Practice. The topics discussed in the session for lawyers were: Application of Human Values for Holistic Evolution of Justice System, Integrity of Individuals Leads to Creditability of Institutions. Eminent jurists and doctors addressed the participants.

Keys of three houses constructed for Adivasis of Kava village were handed over to the beneficiaries by Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President. Here, Sai Organisation is providing 81 houses to Adivasis under Sri Sathya Sai Vasthudara Project of 80th Birthday Programme of Bhagavan.

As part of Bhagavan's 80th Birthday celebrations, Calicut District is continuing with cataract detection camps. In two such camps, 571 patients were examined and 78 of them selected for cataract operations.

News From Overseas Sai Centres

North America

Southern California: On 6th September 2003, many Sai Centres along with Sai Youth organised 'A Day at the Beach' for over 50 physically and mentally disabled children and adults. Nearly 125 volunteers participated in this project, bringing joyful smiles to the faces of these children. Owing to their disabilities, these children do not enjoy a normal childhood; some of them had never been to the beach before. Swami often reminds that self-confidence is the very foundation on which the mansion of human life is built. Inspired by the vision of "looking beyond disabilities, focusing on capabilities, expanding possibilities", the entire day comprised of therapeutic projects involving music, dance, human values songs and games aimed at helping the children express their innate God-given abilities.

In downtown Los Angeles, where a majority of the homeless population resides, Sai Centres serve food to nearly 500 homeless men, women and children every Sunday. On 28th December 2003, on the occasion of Christmas, over 425 warm blankets were distributed to the needy, along with nearly 600 bags of toiletries. Sai Centres have also initiated Sri Sathya Sai Food Bank Project. Following the example of Swami's Grama

Seva, devotees visit the homes of poor families in dire need of assistance for food. Based on the nutritional needs of each family, devotees then assemble food items from Sathya Sai Food Bank and deliver food packages to the needy people.

Latin America

El Salvador: Inspired by Bhagavan's massive water projects in India, the Sathya Sai Organisation has completed 10 water projects in El Salvador. One of these projects was in the community of Talpetate which was ravaged by earthquakes in January and February of 2001. Sai devotees first visited this area with food and clothing along with medical relief immediately after the second earthquake. The community is very difficult to reach as it is on a dirt road close to the Guatemalan border. When asked how best they could be helped, the locals spoke of the very difficult access to water, for their only source of water was about two kilometres down the mountainside. Everyone had to carry water up from the spring for drinking, while bathing and washing clothes was done at the spring. With Bhagavan's grace and the cooperation of the community, the Sai Organisation could complete the water project in just three months for only \$4,000 including the pump, pump house, five kilometres of pipes, electrical installations, the well tank, and the school tank. 21 community taps were installed serving 105 homes, bringing water right to their doorsteps.

Venezuela: In November 2003, the Sai Organisation in Caracas, Venezuela conducted an eye camp, which was the third in a series of camps that had started in 2001. These camps involved the removal of cataracts and insertion of multifocal lens implants for patients with little or no economic resources. Two hospitals offered their operating theatres with the latest equipment free of charge, and several pharmacies donated medicines. A total of 66 operations have been performed so far, some of which have restored full vision to those who were previously completely blind. While eye doctors from the Organisation brought medical relief, devotees from Sai Centres provided food, transportation and other supplies, as well as cleaning, nursing and loving attention for the patients. There is now a long waiting list for future camps, and with Swami's grace, this service will be expanded to include more patients and more camps.

Asia

Singapore: The Sai Centres in Singapore have launched a service programme called Sai Action For Family Relief Of Needy (SAFFRON) that offers opportunities for selected guardian Sai families to adopt needy families in their communities. At the International Seva Conference held at Prasanthi Nilayam in July 2002, a resolution was adopted to serve 80 SAFFRON families by November 2005 as a gift to Bhagavan for His 80th Birthday. At this time, the programme has matched 26 needy families with guardian Sai families. The volunteers teach basic housekeeping and childcare skills; assist in the schoolwork of children; assist in utilising community resources such as psychological services, childcare services, schools and family service centres; and provide essential provisions in extremely needy cases. This family Sadhana enriches the entire family and motivates the children to become caring and compassionate citizens with enhanced self-confidence.

Sri Lanka: On 7th July 2003 the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Sri Lanka held an inter-religious symposium on the theme "Role of Religions in Building a Nation and Creating a Caring Society" in the prestigious Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall in Colombo with the objective of charting out a common programme for

the inculcation of human values in children and youth through the teachings of the four major religions of Sri Lanka – Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam – which nourish the spirit of the nation. Hon. Ranil Wickremasinghe, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, was the Chief Guest. Several ministers, religious dignitaries, spiritual leaders, educationists and other distinguished personalities were among the invitees. The event, which was open to the public, had a packed audience. In his address, the Hon. Prime Minister touched upon the history of efforts made to uphold spirituality and human values by great sages, in whose names the major religions of today had been founded. Commenting on the present-day situation and the degeneration of values, he admitted that all governments had so far failed to arrest the deterioration. He added that only the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and his mammoth education projects with human values as the base offer the solution. He congratulated the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Sri Lanka for arranging the symposium. Religious dignitaries and resource persons of all major religions addressed the gathering, highlighting the teachings of their religions. On this occasion, two eminent speakers from the International Sathya Sai Organisation dwelt on the projects launched under the guidance of Bhagavan Baba for the inculcation of human values in children and youth, and the wonderful results achieved with the co-operation of all religious groups.

Europe

Russia: An International Medical Camp was held in Kochubeevsky district of the Stavropolsky Region (Cossack villages Barsukovskaya, Nadzomoye, Zurabovka and others) from 27th June to 5th July 2003. More than 200 members of the Sathya Sai Organisations of Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia, Kazakhstan, England, Germany, Poland and other countries took part in it. The aim of the camp was to help rebuild a town destroyed by severe floods. The whole team worked together tirelessly in rebuilding a new school, orphanage and a prayer hall for the local people. Repair and construction work was also done in the hospital and the ambulance station as well as in the houses of the elderly and the disabled. It was indeed inspiring to see the commitment of the local volunteers. Some of them had travelled long distances from Ural Mountains (Siberia) and had taken 5 days to get to the disaster area. Concerts were held for the patients and the local population everyday. Around 8,800 people were examined by the medical team and a further 1,250 patients received eye consultations and treatment. The nearby medical college invited the team leader to address local doctors about the uniqueness of the Sai vision in providing compassionate, selfless service combined with the best medical technology to the remotest corners of the world.

On 18th and 19th October 2003, a Medical Camp was held in the village of Novoselye, not far from St. Petersburg. More than 40 volunteers of the Sathya Sai Organisation took part in it. The medical team treated over 250 patients. Volunteers repaired the outpatient department and helped to clean the homes of the disabled. Food and clothes were distributed to families with children, disabled people, pensioners and others in need.

United Kingdom: Joy, peace and love entered the lives of around 500 UK children from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds in 2003 as they attended nine Sathya Sai EHV Holiday Schools held in different parts of the country. Eight weeklong schools were held during the spring and summer, and a weekend school during the autumn. In keeping with the character and expectations of the UK educational system, all the Holiday Schools were non-denominational in nature. The focus was entirely on the experience and

practice of human values. For most children who attended, many of whom had special needs and came from difficult home situations, this was their first experience with human values education. Transformation was evident after just two or three days as the children became calmer, happier, kinder, more confident and better able to concentrate. The children with the greatest behavioural problems at the outset appeared to benefit most; in far too many cases, they were starved of love, and began to flourish as soon as their hearts were touched. Some of the Holiday Schools were conducted in the premises of local neighbourhood schools and were attended by head teachers of those schools. Every teacher that witnessed Sathya Sai EHV in action expressed their amazement at the effectiveness of the programme, and declared their intention to adopt it on an ongoing basis, thereby augmenting the list of more than 100 UK schools that already teach Sathya Sai EHV during the school year. Two of the Schools were also visited by government officials who expressed warm support for Sathya Sai EHV and a desire to see it incorporated into the UK's National Curriculum. Feedback from parents and children was truly heart-warming. Without exception, the children and the volunteers alike had profoundly joyful experiences.

Africa and Middle East

Africa: In recent years, Africa has been plagued with serious water shortage, and with its population estimated to reach 1.5 billion in about 20 years, this looming crisis is threatening to become a major issue for peace and stability in the region. The Sathya Sai School in Zambia has launched, with support from the United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (UN-HABITAT), a very successful programme to impart water education through human values. To sensitise pre-school, primary and secondary school children to the importance of water for the survival of humanity, the programme is integrating human values in water education in the curriculum of the schools of Africa, starting with 6 countries – Ethiopia, Kenya, Zambia, Ghana, Senegal and Ivory Coast. The Times of Zambia wrote on 20 January 2003, “The human values approach to water education in Africa lays great emphasis on the values rooted in African culture, and trainees are encouraged to bring out their cultural values. The human values approach emphasises five universal core values as their basis. These are: Truth, Love, Right Conduct, Peace and Non-violence, which have numerous practical modes of expression.” Impressed with the success of this pilot programme, efforts are now underway to expand the scope of this programme to the entire world (especially Third World countries), through the UN Millennium Task Force on Water and Sanitation.

Back Cover Matter

Rama as Avatar of Vishnu

The Rishis depicted Rama as an ideal man, though they knew that He was an Avatar of Vishnu come to save mankind, including themselves. They subordinated the Divine aspect and highlighted the human aspect, so that He may serve as a model to inspire man. Each of the Rishis who dwelt in the

forest through which He passed knew the Avatar but they did not reveal it since the purpose of the incarnation was the destruction of the Rakshasas (demons). Sarabhanga, one of these Rishis, was invited by Indra, the king of gods, to accompany him to heaven. But he declined the offer, for, he said, Rama was about to pass through the forest and he did not want to miss His Darshan!

- *Baba*

EDUCATION THAT LIBERATES

ACCORDING TO AN UPANISHADIC STORY, a father sent his son to a Gurukul for education. The son, after finishing his education, came back home and told his father that he had mastered all the subjects taught by his teacher. The father, who was himself a learned man, then asked his son, “Has your teacher taught you That, by knowing which everything else becomes known?” When the son replied in the negative, his father told him, “In that case, your education is incomplete.” In a similar story given in Mundakopanishad, a householder went to Sage Angirasa and asked after showing proper respect: *Kasminoo Bhagavo Vijnate Sarvamidam Vijnatam Bhavateeti* (Oh master! What is That which being known, all this becomes known?) After giving a detailed description of two types of education, namely, Para Vidya (higher knowledge) and Aparavidya (lower knowledge), the sage told the questioner that it was through Para Vidya that one could know the Supreme Being. By knowing That only, everything else becomes known.

Para Vidya is also called Brahma Vidya because its main subject is Brahman (Supreme Being). The main source of Brahma Vidya are the Vedas which are called Srutis, or those texts which were originally heard or received by the sages directly from the Supreme Being in a state of heightened illumination and deep silence, and were then passed on to their disciples in an excellent oral system of teaching and learning till they were compiled and classified by Sage Vyasa into four Vedas, namely, Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharvana Veda. This precious treasure of Divine knowledge has been directly handed over by God to man to make his life sublime, noble and ideal. This is perhaps the greatest gift of God to man. The supreme wisdom of the Vedas thus forms the eternal philosophy or what Aldous Huxley calls the ‘perennial philosophy’ of man’s life. Though it is universal and belongs to the entire mankind, and not to any particular religion, race or country, yet Bharat has the proud privilege of safeguarding it in its original form and spreading it to other parts of the world.

In a unique system of teaching and learning fostered by what is called Guru Sishya Parampara (teacher-pupil tradition), this Divine knowledge was passed on from a realised Guru to a deserving disciple without any monetary consideration. This tradition remained alive and uninterrupted in Bharat even in its worst periods of history when the country was invaded and enslaved by foreign rulers. This sacred land of Bharat has therefore remained suffused with Brahma Jnana (knowledge of Brahman) all through the known history of the world and has produced illustrious Gurus like Adi Sankara, Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Sri Aurobindo, to name only a few. It has also the proud privilege of giving to the world such apostles of peace as Buddha, Ashoka and Mahatma Gandhi. That is why Bhagavan Baba always says that Bharat is *Punya Bhumi, Thyaga Bhumi, Yoga Bhumi* (land of merit, sacrifice and spirituality). It is the land which shines with the effulgence of the knowledge of the Supreme Being, the letter Bha in its name connoting effulgence.

Bhagavan Baba often refers to the ancient education system of Bharat as the ideal system of education, in which the principles of ethics, morality and spirituality formed the core of education. The ancient sages of Bharat lived these principles and made them as principal part of their teachings. Dividing the life-span of man into four parts of 25 years each, they set apart first 25 years for education and gave it the exalted name of Brahmacharya Ashram. The word Brahmacharya is used today in its narrow sense of celibacy. It actually

means adopting a style of life conducive to gain the vision of Brahman. The students therefore led a pure and disciplined life and put the knowledge of the Vedas into practice to attain this objective. The teachers who imparted this Divine knowledge to their students were completely selfless as they had no worldly desires to fulfil. They were imbued with such noble ideals of Bharat as *Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all the people of the world be happy!). Not only the knowledge imparted by them was universal in nature but their outlook was also broad and catholic. Imparting of knowledge was considered a sacred act like any other spiritual practice. The question of charging any fee for such a sacred act therefore never arose. This glorious tradition of passing on the Divine wisdom to the next generation without any monetary consideration continued throughout the Vedic period. Even when big universities like Nalanda, Vikramasila, Valabhi, etc., were established some time in the beginning of the Christian era, education was totally free. During his visit to India (A.D. 629-645), when Hiuen Tsang stayed at Nalanda for five years, there were nearly 10,000 teachers and students in this university, some of the students having come from foreign lands like Japan, Korea, Tibet, Nepal and China. Besides free education, all the students were provided free food, clothes, bedding and medicines. As Bhagavan says, Bharat has been a teacher of the world since ancient times.

Today the Bharatiyas themselves have forgotten these glorious traditions of their country. The parents no longer tell their children that their education is incomplete without the knowledge of Brahman. Their only concern today is that their children should acquire a degree and find lucrative employment. Under the impact of materialistic trend of modern times, the sacred field of knowledge is also being commercialized. Commenting on this deplorable trend of modern education, Bhagavan Baba often recites a Telugu poem which can be considered as an appropriate assessment of this system of education. The essence of this poem is : “In spite of his education and intelligence, man does not give up his mean-mindedness and evil qualities. He has no knowledge of the Self. Modern education leads of argumentation, not to total wisdom. What is the use of worldly education if it cannot lead you to immortality? Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal.” Secular education without a sound spiritual base is therefore inadequate and incomplete. It may help man to earn his living and seek power and position in society but it does not enable him to realize the profound truths of his inner being. It is therefore necessary to have a system of education which integrates worldly education with spiritual knowledge. But, the question arises, how this can be done to suit the scientifically and technologically advanced society of Modern times.

The answer to this question has been provided by the Divine Being Himself who, in the human form of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, has set up Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at Prasanthi Nilayam which has already become well known in the world for its integral system of education. The environment of the Institute is surcharged with spiritual vibrations by the soul-stirring devotional songs and Vedic chants of the students. In the spiritual ambience of the Institute, the students not only read about the values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa but assimilate and internalize them to make them a permanent part of their life. If one wants to see a real Divine miracle at work, one should see Bhagavan Baba interacting with students and transforming their lives by His loving guidance. It is to be seen to be believed how under the direction of Bhagavan the students become the embodiments of virtues and men/women of sterling character. Blessed were the sages of the yore to whom the Divine Being revealed the knowledge of

Brahman through the Vedas. Immensely blessed are also those who have got this rare opportunity to receive Brahma Jnana directly from Veda Purusha Bhagavan Baba Himself. And the students of this Institute are a thousand times more blessed as they receive this Divine knowledge directly from the Divine Being almost everyday.

This Institute, where education is totally free, has been adjudged by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council as one of the top ranking educational institutions of the country for its academic excellence. Besides, 25 Vice Chancellors of reputed Indian universities who attended the UGC Golden Jubilee Seminar on “Promotion of Value Education and Ethics” at Prasanthi Nilayam last year unanimously recommended that this Institute should be recognised as the National Centre of Excellence for Value Education and a model which could be followed in other universities and educational institutions. The pioneer and founder of this unique system of education, which integrates the ancient Gurukul system of education with modern secular education, is the Chancellor of this Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba under whose direction and guidance, this integral system of education has achieved this spectacular success and is now spreading in all parts of the world through Sathya Sai educational institutions. This is the type of education which can liberate man and usher in an era of peace, harmony and love in the world.

- Editor

RECOGNISE THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF ONENESS

Good and bad coexist. None can separate them. But one with Sraddha (steadfast faith) will always experience goodness. What else is to be conveyed to this august assembly?
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

TODAY MARKS THE BEGINNING OF another new year. Many new years have gone by but there is no change in the life of man. What is the reason? The reason is that man is not making efforts to experience the principle of divinity which is present in all in the form of

love. Love is the true form of God. It is your foremost duty to recognise this eternal principle of love.

Today you are in search of divinity. Where is the need to search for that which is everywhere at all times? You are in search of God as you are unaware that God is always with you and in you. You are trying to have the vision of God through meditation. However, you should not be satisfied by merely performing such spiritual practices. What is meditation? Adherence to truth is true meditation. The eternal, immortal, wonderful and blissful principle of divinity is present everywhere. You should make efforts to realise this truth. This is the royal path to attain the goal of life.

Recognise your Innate Divinity

People are making efforts to realise truth but their efforts are not yielding the desired result. Divinity is the very embodiment of eternal bliss and is present in all of us. How can you visualise it? Firstly, you should understand that there is nothing superior to truth in this world. Your foremost duty is to recognise the principle of truth that is present in you. But you are forgetting your innate divinity. You are undertaking a number of Sadhanas (spiritual practices) to experience divinity. In fact, you do not need to perform any special Sadhana to have the vision of God who is always with you, in you, above you, around you.

Embodiments of Love!

It is a sign of ignorance to search for God who is all-pervasive. People perform various spiritual practices such as Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi to have the experience of divinity. What is meant by Samadhi? It should be termed as Sama-dhi, meaning equanimity in all situations. Equanimity is, in fact, present in every individual. It is a misconception to think that only those who perform Sadhana are capable of attaining it.

Do you go about searching for yourself in the outside world? Such a person can only be called foolish. In fact, you are distancing yourself from your own sacred Self by searching it outside. This mad search will not lead you anywhere. You are endowed with the sacred principle of love. Wherefrom does it come? Where does it go? It neither comes nor goes. It is always present in you. You waste your time just in the name of doing Sadhana. Instead, realise the truth: 'I am I'. All spiritual practices become superfluous for one who realises this truth. Where does this 'I' come from? It is in you. Without realizing this truth, you search for it outside. It is therefore necessary for every human being to recognize this truth. He is a true Sadhaka who realises the divinity present within him. Those who search for it outside follow the wrong path. Many people made efforts to fathom Krishna Tattwa but none could succeed. Where is Krishna? Where is God? God is present within you. Do you ever go in the street and ask others, "Have you seen me?" Try to look within and realise this sacred principle of 'I'. You can know it the moment you turn your vision inward. You see all external objects except your true Self when you see with open eyes. Once Arjuna asked Krishna about his true identity. Then Krishna said, "Arjuna! I am yours and you are Mine. You and I are one." We should try to realise this principle of unity.

Give up False Identification with the Body

The boy who spoke earlier said that he was doing Sadhana to attain the vision of God. One need not search for God in some distant corner. *Sarvata Panipadam Tat, Sarvatokshi Siromukham, Sarvata Sruthimalloke, Sarvamavriya Tishthati.* (With hands, feet, eyes, ears, heads and mouth pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). Where is the need to search for God when He is present everywhere? Whatever you see is permeated by God. There is no place or form in which God is not present.

God is love and love is God. You can connect yourself with God only through love. Develop love and achieve the supreme state of equanimity. (Telugu poem)

God is present everywhere as truth. The same truth is present in you. Some people think that Lord Krishna was born at a particular place and He left His mortal coil at such and such place. No! This is a misconception. Krishna is everywhere. Whatever you see, it is Krishna. Krishna is in every form, and all forms are divine. Only the names change; God is only one. Instead of searching for God outside, close your eyes and see within to know the divinity immanent in you. Enquire who you are. Do not identify yourself with the body. It is only when you identify yourself with the body, the question of 'I' and 'you' arises. When this 'I' and 'you' merge into one, there will be unity. But people are unable to forget 'I' and 'mine'. Right from your birth, you are accustomed to identifying yourself with the body. Therefore, you are unable to give up your false identification with the body. Once you realise that the same Atma is immanent in every individual, the differences of 'I' and 'you' will vanish.

Embodiments of Love!

Love, truth, peace and divinity are not different from each other. They are all one. You will be able to realise this truth only when you strengthen the spirit of unity. Love is not something that is acquired from outside. It emerges from within. When you develop and expand love, you will be able to realise the truth that all are one. (Bhagavan showing His handkerchief) What is this? This is a cloth. It is made up of thread. Thread, in turn, is made out of cotton. Cotton is the basis of the cloth. But cloth is made by weaving the threads. Similarly, the mind is also made up of the threads of Sankalpas and Vikalpas (resolutions and aberrations). You should know your real identity by transcending the mind.

Embodiments of Love!

You have to enquire as to what extent you have understood the principle of love which is uniformly present in all. Man is carried away by his identification with the body and, therefore, he perceives diversity in creation. In fact, it is unity alone that is behind the apparent diversity. Whatever differences are there, they are only the creations of your mind. If you want to eliminate these differences and realise the principle of unity in diversity, you have to realise your true nature. You experience diversity when you turn your perception away from this fact of unity. Recognise the principle of unity. You are God. God is not separate from you. It is a mistake to consider yourself separate from God. This difference is the result of your deluded vision. When you rectify this defect in

your vision, you will realise “I am I”. When you identify Sai Baba with the physical form, you become separate from Him. It is only these feelings of identification with the physical form that create differences between individuals. The feelings of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ are behind all this multiplicity of forms. If you stand before a mirror, you see your image. Even if there are many mirrors, you see the same image. Though the mirrors are many, the image is one. You should realise this oneness behind multiplicity.

Embodiments of Love, Students – Boys and Girls!

You should try to know the fundamental principle of oneness. If you know this, everything else will become known to you. This world has a plethora of forms but there is one divinity that permeates all these forms. Know this truth. *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (Truth is one but wise men call it by many names). You see diversity due to the effect of Maya (illusion). There exists only unity everywhere, not diversity. It is your illusion that causes diversity. Forget this diversity and contemplate on divinity. You may ascribe any number of names and forms to God but God is one. At one time, Radha realised her oneness with Krishna. But later she was overcome by delusion and started considering herself different from Krishna. This feeling of separateness is a big mistake. Reminding Radha of her true identity, Narada told her that she had no separate identity. It was her mistake that she had identified herself with her name, he said. He added that she was not separate from Krishna, and was, in fact, Krishna.

Embodiments of Love!

Whatever you see, whomever you come across, consider every form as nothing but the manifestation of divinity. Do not entertain differences of ‘I’ and ‘you’. You look into a mirror and say that you are in the mirror. In fact, you are not in the mirror. It is only your reflection that appears in the mirror. When you go behind the hill and shout “Oh!”, you will hear the echo of your voice. You may think that someone is shouting at you with the same intensity. But it is not so. That voice is yours and nobody else’s. Similarly, all that you see in the world is only your reaction, reflection and resound. It is a mistake to consider the reflection as reality. When you understand the true nature of the reflection, you will know the truth of oneness. Here is a small example. Once a young cowherd took his cattle to the forest for grazing. While the cattle were grazing, he began singing loudly. The song created an echo from the hills. The innocent boy thought that someone was imitating to make fun of him. He grew angry. After he returned home, he told his mother, “Mother! I will not take the cattle to the forest tomorrow. There is someone in the forest who is imitating whatever I sing. I feel humiliated.” The mother said that she would accompany him to the forest the next day. He took her behind the hills and started singing loudly. Again, an echo of the song was heard. Then the mother said, “Son, it is not that someone else is repeating your song to make fun of you. Whatever you sing, its echo is being heard by you.” Similarly, you should understand that everything in this world is your own reflection, reaction and resound.

Understand the Principle of Unity

If you want to see God, you should firmly believe that you are not the body. You identify yourself with the body due to your illusion. Students should try to understand this clearly. All that is seen outside is only a reflection and not the reality. You see Sai Baba in front of you. You identify Sai Baba with the body. But I am not the body. You and I are one. Once you understand this truth clearly, there will be no difference whatsoever. If you slap someone on the cheek, it amounts to slapping yourself.

If you abuse others, it amounts to abusing yourself. You are bound to face the consequences of your actions. You are the cause of your happiness or suffering. Others are not responsible for it. In fact, there are no others. All are one. It is your own thinking that creates the feeling of separateness in you. You should make efforts to understand your true identity. You are the very embodiment of love. The principle of love is one and the same in all. You share your love with your children, parents and spouse. The feeling towards each of them is different but the fundamental principle of love is the same. You should recognize this fundamental truth. The fundamental truth is one without a second. That is the Atma.

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

The Atma is one, not two. Once you recognize the truth that the same Atma is present in all, you will be free from all differences and conflicts. Develop firm faith that the same Self is present in all. Understand this principle of unity. Only then can you experience truth. All the students have immense love for Me. They are happy that Baba loves them. Understand that it is only Baba who loves all. (*loud prolonged applause*). You see differences in individuals. But in My view, all are one. I am you and you are I. Have firm faith in this unity. Only then can you transcend duality. When you enquire deeply, you will be able to understand this truth. Have patience. Do not feel disappointed that you are unable to have the vision of God. When you understand the principle of unity and hold on to it firmly, you become Sai Baba yourself. You are 'divine'. But you are unable to realise it as you are intoxicated with the 'deep wine' of worldly desires. All are the embodiments of divinity. I am not different from you and you are not different from Me. We are one. When you go on contemplating on this thought of unity with the Divine, you become one with Him. Then, all differences will disappear and you will attain the experience of unity with God.

(Bhagavan concluded His Divine Discourse with the Bhajans, "*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin*, and "*Govind Krishna Jai Gopala Krishna Jai*")

- From Bhagavan's Ugadi Sandesh in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 21st March 2004.

DIVNE BLESSINGS ON UGADI AND SRI RAMA NAVAMI

UGADI IS THE FESTIVAL WHICH the people of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka celebrate with gaiety and piety. This festival of joy was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 21st March 2004 in the Divine proximity of Bhagavan Baba. Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue of the celebrations, bore a festive look on the Ugadi day when a large number of devotees came to receive Bhagavan's blessings and listen to His Divine Message on this auspicious day of new year.

The celebrations started after the arrival of Bhagavan Baba in Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.35 a.m. on the morning of 21st March 2004. After blessing the devotees with His Divine Darshan, Bhagavan sat in His chair on the dais and listened to Vedic chants of the Institute students. After the chanting of Vedic Mantras, the students presented an excellent programme which brought forth the real meaning of celebrating this festival. Interspersing their dialogues and skits with beautiful songs, the students provided virtually a feast for the soul on this joyous and holy occasion. The programme started with Tandava dance of Siva which marked the origin of time. The next item dwelt on the concept of time and its significance in the life of man. The students explained that actions done in the present determined the future of man. Another item explained the legends behind the celebration of Ugadi and the significance of the new year. A group of students then explained the significance of different delicacies which are traditionally prepared on Ugadi. Thereafter, a group of students recited Telugu poetry which forms a unique characteristic of Ugadi celebrations. Another important customary item related to Ugadi celebrations is Panchang Sravanam (forecast on the basis of planetary position). This was very beautifully enacted by students who explained that Navagrahas (nine planets) could have little effect on those who attained the Anugraha (grace) of God. This novel way of Ugadi celebrations earned the blessings of Bhagavan and appreciation of the audience. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.00 a.m. In the end, Prasadam was distributed to all.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan listened to the chanting of Vedic Mantras by the Institute students for nearly half an hour after coming to Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.10 p.m. Before the Discourse of Bhagavan, three speakers shared their views with the audience. The first speaker was Sri Ranganath Raju, a student of M.A. class who spoke in Telugu. Commencing his speech with a beautiful Telugu poem, Sri Raju remarked that man should imbibe the divine quality of love in his heart to make his life sublime and ideal. He said that the new year celebrations would be

meaningful only when we filled our hearts with selfless love. Referring to a story narrated by Maharshi Ramana, the next speaker, Sri Sanjay Mahalingam of MBA (Final) class of the Institute, observed that man was hankering after mean worldly pleasures, forgetting the source of eternal bliss that was within him. The last speaker was Sri S.V. Giri, Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Sri Giri expressed his gratitude to Bhagavan for His blessings on all on this auspicious day of Ugadi. The learned speaker then spoke about the importance of Dharna (concentration) in the Ashtang Yoga which consists of eight steps, namely, Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharna, Dhyana and Samadhi. Sri Giri observed that equanimity attained through the practice of Dharna could help us to control our mind.

After these short speeches, Bhagavan gave His Ugadi Message to the devotees and exhorted them to hold on to the eternal principle of love to make their life sublime and ideal. Full text of Bhagavan's Discourse has been given elsewhere in this issue of "Sanathana Sarathi." Ugadi celebrations came to a close with this Divine Message of Bhagavan. In the end, Arati was offered to Bhagavan and Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees.

Sri Rama Navami Celebrations

The devotees and students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at Prasanthi Nilayam were blessed by Bhagavan with a nectarine Discourse on the holy Sri Rama Navami day on 30th March 2004. In His Divine Message on this sacred day, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba exhorted the devotees to follow the path of Dharma as exemplified by Lord Rama in His life. Rama, He said, was righteousness in human form.

The programme of Sri Rama Navami celebrations started in the morning in Sai Kulwant Hall after the arrival of Bhagavan at 7.05 a.m. After showering the bliss of His Divine Darshan on the devotees, Bhagavan sat in His chair on the dais and listened to the Vedic chants of the Institute students for about 15 minutes. Thereafter, the students of the Institute presented an excellent programme on the life and teachings of Sri Rama, enacting selected incidents from the Ramayana. But the real beauty of the presentation was scintillating music and melodious devotional songs which embellished the entire programme. The entire programme was so meticulously planned and executed that the audience remained spellbound for nearly one hour. The innovative skill of the students was seen at its best when band music was used to highlight the different events of Sri Rama's story, particularly the incidents of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita crossing the river, Sita garlanding Sri Rama, and Ahalya coming back to life at the touch of Lord Rama.

After this beautiful programme, Bhagavan gave His Divine Message and concluded it with the Bhajan "Ram Ram Ram Sita...." at 9.10 a.m. This was followed by group songs and distribution of Prasadam. In the end, Bhajans in praise of Sri Rama were led by the Institute students and followed in chorus by the devotees with great devotional fervour. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.30 a.m.

LOVE IS THE ROYAL PATH TO REALISE GOD

The sacred feet of the Lord are as vast as the cosmos, as pervasive as the sky. They reach even Patala Loka (lower world). His sacred crown lies beyond Bhrahmanda (cosmos). He is inaccessible, imperceptible and incomparable.

(Kannada Poem)

Embodiments of Love-Students, Teachers and Educators!

I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO DELIVER A speech in Kannada language. It requires regular practice. If you do an activity regularly, you become adept in it. I get a chance to speak in Kannada very rarely, not always. N. Kasturi stayed at Prasanthi Nilayam for about 30 years and he was always with Me. He made good use of this golden opportunity for Seva Sadhana. Kasturi was a well-known creative writer in Kannada. He was popularly known as “Kannada Kasturi.” He was very pure and sacred. Just by looking at his respectable personality one could make out the fragrance and sacredness of Kannada language. It is likely that I may make some mistakes here and there while speaking such an extremely fragrant language.

Pioneering Efforts of Narayana Bhat

Narayana Bhat established two schools in Karnataka - one at Alike in Dakshina Kannada district and another at Muddenahalli in Kolar district. Following Sathya Sai educational principles, he worked very hard for a long period of time to develop them into model schools (*loud applause*). In order to develop the schools, he had to take loan from various sources and also from a large number of his well-wishers. But he had to struggle hard to pay off the loan. He and his mother went to so many villages and towns and approached several persons for raising money. But the debts went on increasing and never showed any sign of coming down. On one occasion, Narayana Bhat approached Me and briefly explained how those outstanding debts were causing him a lot of worry. He prayed to Me, “Swami, Anyatha Sharanam Nasti, Twameva Sharanam Mama, Tasmad Karunyabhavena....(I have no other refuge except You. You are my saviour. Show mercy on me and protect me.) Swami, I beg and plead with You, please take over these two schools and put new life into them..” Then I said to him, “Narayana Bhat! Health and education are essential for all. I know that. But right now, don’t give them to Me. You look after them as long as you can.” I encouraged him to go ahead with his service activities. I blessed him and said, “Be happy. Carry on teaching spiritual truths.” Later on, Narayana Bhat worked with much more zeal and vigour. These institutions made rapid progress. They were hailed as model schools. He was indeed a beacon light for all spiritual-seekers and service-minded persons. Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavathi (As is the feeling, so is the result). Soon many good

teachers joined him. They were all men of character, intelligence and sacrifice. They renounced everything and stood by him steadfastly. Presently, all those dedicated teachers together are running the institutions very efficiently.

Noble Ideals Set by Alike and Muddenahalli Institutions

Narayana Bhat carried on his mission and worked tirelessly day in and day out. But his time was drawing near. This body goes with time. 'Kalaya Namah, Kala Kalaya Namah, Kaladarpa Damanaya Namah, Kalatheethaya Namah, Kalaswarupaya Namah, Kalaniyamitaya Namah (salutations to time, to the one who is beyond time, to the one who has conquered time, to the one who transcends time, to the one who is the embodiment of time, and to the one who ordains time). Time is supreme. Everyone has to bow down to time. As time moved on, all of a sudden, Narayana Bhat met with a car accident in 1978. The accident proved to be fatal and he left his mortal coil at once. The organization lost its mother. It was orphaned. Then Gangadhara Bhat, Narayana Rao, Narasimha Murthy and others came to Me and said, "Swami, that day You made a promise that You would look after these institutions. Kindly take over these schools and protect us all." They intensely prayed and pleaded with Me.

My intention is to give proper direction to the present educational system. I always encourage any good move in this direction. Vidya has an important role in the life of man. Life without Vidya is useless. One has to learn real Vidya and share it with others to lead them on the righteous path. It is what I intend to do in the field of education. If I took Alike and Muddenahalli institutions, I had to bear the burden of those debts standing against them. It was not a meagre sum. It was ten lakh rupees of those days! But all the teachers were praying; "Swami, You are our Lord, You are our saviour. You have to save us." My heart melted at their sincere prayer. Instantaneously, I took over those institutions and cleared all their outstanding debts once and for all.

From then onwards, I used to visit Muddenahalli while travelling between Prasanthi Nilayam and Brindavan. I would talk to those dear children and enthuse them. Darshanam Papa Nashanam, Sparshanam Karma Vimochanam, Sambhashanam Sankata Nashanam (sight of the Lord destroys all sins, His touch frees from Karmic consequences, conversation with Him destroys all sufferings). Thus, I gave them Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan. The teachers too felt encouraged and happy. Being free from all worries and problems, the teachers worked with relaxed mind and brought the institutions to this level. Now the institutions do not have the burden of debt. The schools have made a considerable progress attracting the attention of the world. The teachers are very good. They recognize the good qualities in each other and adopt them in their lives and thereby raise their moral-spiritual levels. They do not get into bad and demeaning company. You are judged by the company you keep. *Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are.* Association plays crucial role in one's spiritual

life. Teachers should always relish the company of the good and thereby work for the growth of the institution. The teachers of Alike and Muddenahalli are doing it. They are developing the inner strength of the schools. The schools have been showing excellent progress. They have now reached college stage. They have already won a lot of fame. People call them Sathya Sai Loka Seva Colleges. They will become full-fledged colleges in a few years. To reach the same standard, the remaining institutions of the Sai Organisation will have to put in a lot of effort.

The day-scholars in these institutions come from distant places. Some students walk some distance and then catch a bus and reach the schools. The heads of the schools and teachers cooperate with each other and help each other to make good progress and march towards perfection. The students there have a high moral and spiritual standard. Students should totally avoid bad company. You should always associate with the good. You should always join the group of students who are good in their speech, behaviour and actions. By doing so, you will reach the height of eminence. In Treta Yuga, Lakshmana closely observed Hanuman and reported to Rama: “Swami, Hanuman is virtuous and mighty. He serves Sugriva very competently. It is Sugriva’s good fortune to have the Satsanga of Hanuman. The company of Hanuman will help Sugriva and remove all his sufferings.” In the same way, students should become good by associating with good company. Going to Muddenahalli is what I always like. In the past, I frequently went there and saw those children and guided the teachers with timely advice. But the times have changed. Under these changed circumstances, I cannot go there so easily as I was doing in the past. Now hundreds of vehicles follow Me. It is very difficult to provide even a minimum hospitality to so many people. Why should I put those teachers to trouble unnecessarily? That is why I have reduced the number of these visits.

Dedication and Devotion of Gangadhara Bhat

Let us talk about Alike now. Alike was also handed over to Me along with Muddenahalli school. It is not near but far from here. It is not possible to personally go there quite often. That does not mean that I don’t like to go there. They have been praying for My coming to Alike for so many years. Especially on one particular occasion, Gangadhara Bhat pressed Me so much that I had no option but to yield to his intense prayers. He, in fact, said, “Swami, we are getting old. Once at least You should come to our village. You are our Redeemer. You have to grant us salvation.” He prostrated and intensely prayed to Me. I finally yielded to his feelings and emotions. At once I rented a helicopter and went there. You must know why I had to hurry to Alike. Gangadhara Bhat’s prayer came straight from his heart.

Even now, except Gangadhara Bhat, there is no one who can shoulder that great responsibility and lead the institution towards progress. That is why I said to him, “Gangadhara Bhat, you must stay there only. You remain there as My reflection. For every action, there is a reflection, reaction and

resound. You have to conduct yourself in such a way that your words should reflect My views. You must have a feeling that the places you go about are the ones Swami has already trodden. While carrying out your duty, do it with a feeling that it is in fact Swami personally doing it. You must not leave the institution.” After I told him firmly, Gangadhara Bhat took up the assignment as per Swami’s command and marched along by putting his heart and soul in all the duties he performed. Right now both the institutions are making good progress. Seeing them itself gives Me great pleasure and happiness. Now they are developing at a quick pace. What you saw there yesterday, you will not see it now. Growth is rapid there. It has become possible because of the efforts of the dedicated teachers.

Understand the Real Meaning of Educare

Our schools and colleges (Prasanthi Nilayam, Brindavan, Anantapur) have also shown considerable progress. As the growth is inward, it is not possible for all to recognize it. This inner growth is educare.? Educare brings out our latent sacred values. Values are not to be taught but manifested. Mere accumulation of information from various books is not educare; it is education. Educare is the blossoming of the Divine Lotus in our heart. Educare enables us to be not just receptors but vibrators and radiators of values to all the creation. Values are to be translated into action. That means, both precept and practice are equally important. How to put the principles of educare into practice? Many modern boys and girls have no knowledge about these principles. It is absolutely necessary that every student should know all about educare and its importance. The latent powers in each student have to be brought out. These powers must play their part in all his activities as reflection, reaction and resound. Thus, the process of education has to work in such a way as to transform the students into the reflection of their latent powers. They are to be moulded properly and shaped beautifully. Our institutions bring out ideal students and present them to the world.

Sathyannasti Paro Dharma. (There is no Dharma greater than adherence to truth). “You shall not tell anything but truth. What has happened should be reported truthfully. What all you have done, you should say it exactly.” This is what most people say and believe when they give the meaning of truth. But this is only one dimension of the vast interpretation of truth. Similarly, you must understand that Educare has much more deeper meaning. In fact, Sathya (truth) is educare; Dharma (righteousness) is educare. It is truth and righteousness which protected India from all dangers. Sathya and Dharma do not come from outside. All that comes from outside is not permanent. Today it comes, tomorrow it goes. But what comes out from one’s heart is permanent. Educare comes from the heart and it has to go to other hearts only.

Recently, Vice Chancellors of 25 famous universities of India came to our Institute to take part in a Seminar on Value Education. They were all very eager to know about educare. They also wanted to know the workable method for introducing it into their curriculum. “Vidyannasti Parodharma.” (There is no Dharma greater than Vidya). Therefore, one has to acquire real Vidya. Heart is the source of real

Vidya. Mere accumulation of information is not Vidya. Vidya is eternal bliss. Real Vidya is educare. But head is the source of education. Educare starts from the source of the heart and comes out through Buddhi (intellect) whereas education is merely bookish knowledge emerging from the mind. Educare is Buddhigrahyamateendriyam (Educare transcends the senses and can be grasped only by the intellect).

Saturate all your Actions with Love

Whatever activities you do, love should be their foundation. There is no Prana (life) without love. Life without love is of no use at all. Education system should be so transformed as to develop love principle in one's heart. Sathya (truth) and Dharma (righteousness) are the reflections of Prema (love). They give you the much desired Prasanthi (supreme peace). If love springs out from your heart, it is enough. It will give you salvation. In Dwapara Yuga, Gopikas said to Krishna, *"Lord! Kindly pour down the nectar of love on our barren hearts. Sow the seeds of love. May the flood of love flow from our hearts!"* (Kannada Poem) They earnestly prayed to Krishna to fulfil their heart's yearnings. If the world is to prosper, the rain of love should pour on it. The sacred land of Bharat has been laying great emphasis on the importance of devotion and surrender since ancient times. It has set lofty ideals to mankind in all spheres of life.

Every being has love in his heart. If we do not have love, we are not human. Love is with us from our birth. We have got this body because of the merits of our previous births. The body becomes sacred only if it is saturated with love. So, you must cultivate love principle. Then your life becomes holy. You must cultivate love towards all beings regardless of what they are like or what they do. It is natural for children to show love towards their parents. But it is important that they should be so moulded that they develop love for the entire mankind. Love comprises all aspects of Vidya.

The knowledge that the students acquire in schools and colleges is only information-oriented. Mere bookish knowledge is not of great importance. Expansion of love is very important. Your thoughts have to be purified. Only pure hearts comprehend God. Intellectual reasoning does not help you to realise God. Pure thought is another name for pure life. Love is God. God has no form except love. I wish that you all install love principle in the deep recesses of your heart.

Love is your Prana (life). It is enough if you have love. Love redeems all. Love wards off all suffering, hardships, pains and agonies. Love is nectarine in form. *"Srunvantu Viswe Amrutasya Putra"* (Oh, the children of immortality! Listen). You are Amritaputra, not Anritaputra (sons of untruth). Do not weaken yourself by considering yourself as sons of untruth. Feel that you are Amritaputra. Then the tree of love will grow in your heart and give you the fruit of Atmic bliss.

Do not be attached to the body. Get rid of body attachment. You have to realise the Atmic principle. Immerse yourself in the ocean of Atmic consciousness. As long as you have body attachment, you will not understand the Atmic principle. You have to do self-inquiry “Who am I? From where have I come? Whither am I going? How long will I be here?” The entire spiritual inquiry begins with these questions. When you feel that you are the Atma, you start contemplating on the Atmic principle. “What is Atma, what is Atma?”, you think seriously about it. By making such an inquiry, you will understand the Atmic principle.

All objects have both name and form. But the Atma has no name or form. If you understand the Atmic principle, you will understand the Paramatma principle. That is Parama Thriпти (supreme satisfaction), Parama Asha (supreme hope), Parama Gamyā (supreme goal), Parama Sathya (supreme truth). In order to realise Amrutwa (immortality), you have to become the embodiment of love. You have to radiate love. You have to treat everyone as your brother and sister. Whether others talk to you or not, you have to consider them as your own brother. If you are able to put it into practice in all walks of life, love will grow in your heart. You may have some enemies. You think that they hate you. Don't consider them as your enemies. Don't hate them. Instead whenever you happen to meet them talk to them lovingly and ask, “How are you, brother?” Then their feeling of enmity will suffer defeat in an instant. Their extreme dislike towards you will vanish and love will spring forth from their heart. Naturally, you will become friends. When love occupies your heart, jealousy, hatred, etc., cannot enter it. You will get absolute peace. People say, “We want peace, we want peace.” Peace does not fall from heaven. It has to come from love. Love is the royal path to realise God.

What is the purpose of your birth as a human being? It is not just eating, loitering and merry-making. You must understand that you are born to realise the love principle. If love blossoms in your heart, you yourself will become Paramatma (God). You need not look for God here and there. He is in you. He is in the form of love. There is no escape from dualism as long as man does not recognize his inherent divinity. You should expand your love. Live in love.

Selfless Service is Real Penance

At this juncture, I would like to say something more about Gangadhara Bhat. He was Narayana Bhat's trusted follower and a dependable person. He was verily his right hand. Once Narayana Bhat said to him, “Gangadhara Bhat! Serve sincerely for the well-being of the institution. Whenever you run into difficulty, pray to Bhagavan Sathya Sai. Then He will personally take care of you all.” From that day onwards till today Gangadhara Bhat has fully depended on Swami. He has unshakeable faith in Swami. Swami is his Paramatma. He firmly believes that Sai Paramatma will lead him. He has such a feeling of surrender. He performs his duties with devotion and dedication. He is working sincerely for the progress of both Alike and Muddenahalli institutions. In fact, they have flourished under his honest leadership. I went to Alike two years ago (in 2002). I was wonderstruck on seeing the total

transformation of Alike. When I went to Alike for the first time in 1979, there were only a few small buildings. Now Alike has become a town. That itself is not greatness. Its greatness lies in its inner strength. Mere buildings will not suffice. People construct expensive houses and tall buildings in towns and cities. They consider their houses as everything. They don't have purity of heart. Their hearts brim with evil thoughts and evil schemes. Such men do not understand the love principle. Purity in thought, word and deed are a basic requisite for man.

Thus, Gangadhara Bhat has been running the organization braving all hardships and unpleasant situations. Once he said to Me, "Swami, it is not possible for me to manage all the affairs effectively. I am getting old. It requires both physical and mental strength. Swami, I request You earnestly to appoint any good person who will manage everything very well." As a matter of fact, all are good in My view. No one is bad. People think that they are bad. That is all. It is their feeling only. Badness exists in our thoughts. As love is in everyone, all are good. I said to Gangadhara Bhat: "Don't leave your post. You remain in the same position. Do not worry. I will always help you and lead you. I will look after everything."

My words gave him courage and confidence. He has been continuing his work with enthusiasm. Where can he go if he relinquishes the post? He will have to go somewhere else and do Thapas (penance). What is penance? Simply spending time, doing nothing is not penance. Simply sitting at a place and reciting "Rama, Rama, Krishna, Krishna" is also not penance. Real penance lies in doing good work constantly, having good thoughts always and developing good qualities in oneself. Leaving one's home, going to forest, doing Shirshasana (standing on one's head) and publicizing, "I am doing penance", is not at all penance. It is indeed false penance. Foster love in your heart; talk lovingly; do all work with love. Be in love. This is real penance. The teachers of Alike and Muddenahalli are doing real penance. (*loud prolonged applause*). This is how these schools produce students with purity of heart. I am happy to see all these students who have come here for the function. Today small children came to the dais and spoke beautifully. They gave a beautiful description of the Atma. Especially one high school boy spoke with heart full of love. What a sincere feelings he has! I am really delighted. That is real Vidya. I often tell the authorities of our Institute to give topmost priority to the boys of Alike and Muddenahalli while making selection for our colleges. Sometimes, these students may lag behind a little in Jagath Sathya (worldly knowledge). But they know Atma Sathya (Atmic knowledge) very well. I am always telling everyone here not to leave them. Here, a little boy spoke with feeling of love. He expressed his love for Me in beautiful words. I am very much pleased. It is what I want. I do not want that you come forward to offer the whole world to Me. I want your love. Give me your love. This is enough for Me. The seed of love should sprout in the field of your heart. Later on, it will grow into a Kalpavriksha (wish-fulfilling tree). Then the world will flourish.

Students!

You have to follow the instructions of your parents. Mathru Devo Bhava, Pithru Devo Bhava (Revere your mother and father as God). You have come from your

parents. Mother is the maker of your fortune. She is responsible for your progress. Don't act against her wishes. Don't oppose her words. Treat your mother with love. Then you will get your mother's grace. Mother is Lokamatha (mother of the universe), Jaganmatha (mother of the world). Don't think that she is related to your body only. She is the Jaganmatha who has come in the form of your mother. Gangadhara Bhat served his mother tenderly and lovingly. As a result of his sincere service to his mother, he got Swami. That is why Swami has kept him so near and dear. (*loud applause*)

Our Narasimha Murthy (now Warden, Brindavan) came to Prasanthi Nilayam and took charge as Warden. One day, he came to Me and said, "Swami, my mother is serious. She has cancer." I asked him, "Foolish boy! You are telling me, mother is serious. Which mother? That is your body's mother. Body's mother is not permanent. You take hold of the permanent mother, eternal mother." After some days, he came to Me again and said, "Swami, mother passed away." I comforted Narasimha Murthy and said, "Narasimha Murthy, stay here itself. Don't leave Puttaparthi. This is your birthplace. Swami is your mother. I will look after everything." Narasimha Murthy's mother was a noble soul. She would often say, "Narasimha Murthy, even in adverse situations, don't go away from Swami. Stay with Him always." (*loud applause*). All mothers are suffused with love principle. They pray to so many gods and goddesses for the well-being and progress of their children. Try to understand your mother's selfless love. All should look after their mothers lovingly.

- From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Kannada on the occasion of Silver Jubilee Celebrations of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Institutions (Alike and Muddenahalli) in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 27th January 2004.

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

Nigeria: With the goal of providing loving and quality service to the remote slums of Nigeria, Sai devotees of Nigeria started a pilot service project with a tour to a slum in Ajagunle, Lagos. Upon analysing the data acquired from the tour, a detailed implementation of the service project in four phases was planned. The four phases are: (1) Feeding of 300 families, (2) distribution of soaps/detergent powders/germicides to 500 families, (3) medical camp, (4) distribution of

clothing/shoes. Three of these above four phases are already in place, regularly serving and bringing joy to the less privileged. Very soon, the fourth phase will also be started. Plans have also been made to extend this pilot service project to several other slums in different parts of Nigeria.

Philippines: On 10th August 2003, 750 children and adult beneficiaries received treatment at the Fifth Sathya Sai Preventive Healthcare Medical Camp from a team of 100 doctors, dentists, ophthalmologists, nurses, pharmacists and volunteers, coordinated by the Sathya Sai Organisation. Teacher-students and alumni of the Institute of Sathya Sai Education, San Pedro gave talks on health and hygiene and the practice of human values. Youth volunteers painted brilliant posters on human values and healthcare that were displayed on the walls, and compiled tips for good health in a pamphlet that was distributed to all families. All patients received the prescribed medicines and multi-vitamins from the pharmacy, and food packets while leaving the camp venue. That day, the starting of the monthly Sathya Sai Health Centre (Sai Klinika Ng Kalusagan) at the ISSE San Pedro was also announced. The Klinika began operation on 28 September 2003, and served 68 patients on the first day.

United Kingdom: A small group of specialist doctors (including youth) from the UK was invited to work in a recently rebuilt hospital in Sarajevo, Bosnia. This hospital was completely destroyed by the shelling during the war in Bosnia. The focus of the medical camp was in the area of retinal examination. A large number of patients were seen and specialist treatment was offered. In addition, seminars were held for medical professionals in the medical college and for the general public. The team also took new clothes for the orphanage. A very cordial relationship was formed and the local doctors were given training in modern surgical procedures. Following the camp, Bosnian officials have requested the Sathya Sai team to train a few doctors in specialised eye surgery.

On 7th September 2003, the UK National Youth Wing organised ExCEL 2003 – ExCEL standing for Excelling in Careers, Exams and Life! The aim of this workshop was to dispel the myth that it was impossible to balance a successful career and outstanding academic achievement with spirituality and active involvement in the Youth Wing or Sai Centres. To dispel some of these misapprehensions and to inspire a new generation of Sai Youth, the National Youth Wing decided to hold a National Youth Seminar that was attended by over 150 participants from across the nation. The proceedings commenced with an inspirational keynote speech from a Sai youth in Scotland who had overcome severe dyslexia with Swami's grace to find her true calling in life – as a career advisor. Her uplifting speech described her problems with studies due to severe learning disabilities and her triumph over adversity through the power of prayer alone. The delegates attended a variety of drop-in clinics for a range of professions including accounting, banking, computing, mass media, medicine, sciences, engineering, teaching, law, architecture, commerce and more. The programme included a specially prepared youth exhibition of Swami's teachings and three special workshops on Study Skills, Job Skills and Work Life Balance based on the 5 Ds (Duty, Devotion, Discipline, Determination and

Discrimination). This multi-faceted approach and practical demonstration of the applicability of Swami's teachings to every human endeavour energized the youth to divinise their daily lives and excel!

El Salvador: In October 2003, the Sathya Sai Institute of Human Values in El Salvador conducted a Human Values Music Festival in the Presidential Theatre with 15 participating schools. The public schools that participated were those whose teachers had received credentials from the diploma courses in human values given by the Institute. Each course is of 70 hours duration, and the teachers return to their classrooms to impart human values using the different techniques that they have learnt in the diploma course. Songs are an important part of the human values classes and students from kindergarten through high school levels enthusiastically participated in the festival. In an auditorium with 1000 children seated for over 4 hours, one would expect a lot of noise and disorder from ordinary students. However, there was no disorder whatsoever, and students and teachers listened intently to each presentation. Prizes were given for the best presentations, taking into account the song lyrics, choreography, and harmony. With Swami's grace, this will become an annual event.

Northern California :The Ashland community, with a population of about 30,000 residents, is a significantly underserved territory located in the San Francisco Bay Area. Beginning in February of 2001, the Bay Area Sai Young Adults, with the involvement of local Sai Centres, expanded their basic computer skills training courses to provide training for the residents of Ashland. With these skills, students of these classes have been able to find new jobs or advancement in their current jobs. Other community-building activities and events have provided the Sathya Sai Organisation opportunities to work shoulder to shoulder with the residents of Ashland. Ashland Beautification days are organised regularly to clean the streets and re-instil community pride. Sai volunteers have also joined the residents for celebration of holidays and festivals. They have collected toys for children for the past two years through the Ashland Holiday Gift drive, which has served over 100 local families. A local Ashland school approached the Bay Area Sai Young Adults to teach enrichment classes to 10-year-olds. Working with this charter public school, Sai volunteers teach, on an ongoing basis, chess, soccer, business, art, computer skills and robotics to children who otherwise would not have had this opportunity. In recognition of these efforts in Ashland, the Sathya Sai Organisation was nominated for the Ashland Good Neighbour Award. A certificate of commendation was presented to the Sathya Sai Organisation on 6th February 2004, expressing the gratitude of an entire community to Bhagavan.

Andhra Pradesh: The Begumpet Samithi of Hyderabad carried out Grama Seva in Kusangi and Dadaipalli villages of Medak district on 3rd and 4th January 2004. A medical camp was held along with other services in which 33 very needy patients with major problems were identified, brought to Hyderabad and got operated upon in four well-known nursing homes. The to-and-fro transport, lodging and boarding, lab tests, operations, medicines and post-operative care were provided free to all, besides giving them a pair of new clothes and Vibhuti Prasadam.

Medak district along with Hyderabad doctors conducted (1) a free medical camp treating 1209 patients, (2) a veterinary camp treating 1025 animals, (3) an eye check-up camp giving spectacles to 88 people, and (4) planted 100 saplings in Kusangi village on 4th January 2004. Similarly, the district carried out a free medical camp treating 300 patients and a free veterinary camp treating 465 animals in Dadaipalli village on 5th January 2004.

Adilabad district carried out Grama Seva in Khamana village on 25th January 2004. It conducted a veterinary camp treating nearly 1000 animals for different ailments and a medical camp treating 400 patients. It also renovated a Siva Temple and carried out cultural programmes.

Srikakulam district distributed new Saris to 865 needy women and new Dhotis to 665 men and undertook daily Narayana Seva for 72 selected persons in the district. It carried out a major service camp involving 145 Ladies Seva Dal and 138 Gents Seva Dal at Arasavelli, a town near Sun God Temple on Ratha Saptami day (28th January 2004) providing (1) shelter, (2) cloak room facility, (3) drinking water, (4) food, and (5) help in carrying luggage to thousands of pilgrims.

Kurnool district distributed footwear to 140 students in the B.C. Hostel at Adoni on 15th January 2004, gave clothes to 100 leprosy patients and performed Narayana Seva at Nandyal on 30th January 2004.

Guntur district carried out Grama Seva in Uppalapadu village on 11th and 18th January 2004. It gave food provisions (10 kg rice, 2 kg dhal, 1 kg. oil, etc.) to 4 poor families, Sai protein food to 10 people, blankets to 5 persons, spectacles to 4 eye patients and a pair of Dhotis to a poor man. This district gave footwear to 80 leprosy patients on 30th January 2004 and performed Narayana Seva.

Assam, Manipur and N.E. States: A Sai Centre was inaugurated in a remote village Nongmingsang in the State of Meghalaya on 28th September 2003 on the auspicious day of the Birthday of Shirdi Sai Baba. The place though situated within Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya State, has a rural and scenic atmosphere. The devotees felt ecstasy and bliss of the Divine omnipresence and were charged with spiritual vibrations.

Rajasthan: "Sri Sathya Sai Sanathan Siksha Exhibition," a mobile exhibition containing 150 charts and Sai activities photographs was shown in five cities - Kota, Chittorgarh, Udaipur, Bhilwara, Ajmer. The exhibition was held in a large hall for 3-4 days at a place. Nearly 15,000 students of educational institutions, their teachers and parents saw the exhibition. Sai literature and Sri Sathya Sai Darshan video shows were made available within exhibition area.

Tamil Nadu: A Seminar on Education for Human Excellence was organized at Kamban College of Arts & Science for Women, Thiruvannamalai on the forenoon of 30th January 2004 by Sri Sathya Sai

Seva Organisation, Vellore district. The Seminar was attended by 325 students and 24 members of the teaching faculty. The subjects discussed during the Seminar were: Time Management, Man Management, Sri Sathya Sai Educare Programme, Science and Spirituality. The students and the faculty were fully involved in the programme and also took active part in the interactive sessions. A training programme was organized for the students of Kamban College of Engineering in the afternoon which was attended by 220 students and 22 faculty members from the Engineering College.

Chennai Metro West district organized an eye camp for the inmates of the leprosy colony at Saidapet, Chennai. A total of 84 inmates (50 men and 34 women) of the colony were screened. 48 inmates were provided with spectacles, 84 blankets were distributed to the inmates and Narayana Seva was performed for all the inmates.

On 24th January 2004, a fire broke out in a hamlet comprising 10 to 12 hutments in the village of Thirukkurunkudi in the district of Tirunelveli. On observing the smoke emanating from the two huts which had caught fire, nine Sai Youth of the village, trained in Sri Sathya Sai Disaster Management, immediately swung into action, and with the help of fire hooks they dismantled the thatched roofs of the other huts in the vicinity and doused them with water in order to prevent the fire from spreading to other huts. This action by the Sai Youth contributed in no small measure in containing the fire only to the two huts and thereby saving valuable property and lives. This serves as an example of the utility of the training being given to Sai Youth in Disaster Management.

CHINNA KATHA

Lighting the lamp of wisdom

Once a Sadhaka (seeker), with an intense yearning for God realization, went to a realised sage. As he entered the cave where the sage was residing, he saw a small light. As he moved forward, even that little light got extinguished. In darkness, one feels frightened. And in fear, one thinks of God very intensely. Thus the seeker uttered loudly the Mantra 'Namah Shivaya'. On hearing this, the saint asked him who he was. He said that he had come to seek his grace.

The great saint, who was sustaining himself in the cave only by breathing the air around him, had the power to know the mind of the visitor. The sage told him that he would answer his questions later but he should light the lamp first. He tried but did not succeed. He told the sage that he had finished all the matchsticks and yet he had not succeeded in lighting the lamp. The sage asked him to see if there

was oil in the lamp. On seeing the lamp, he found that there was no oil in the lamp. He reported to the sage that there was only water in the lamp. The sage then asked him to remove all the water and pour oil in it and then try to light it. The person did this but could not light the lamp even then. The sage then said that the wick was probably wet with water and asked him to dry it nicely in the open and then attempt to light the lamp. He did this and succeeded.

Then the seeker prayed to the sage for Atma Jnana (knowledge of the Self). The sage expressed surprise and said that the appropriate answer was being given all the while. The visitor pleaded that being an ignorant man he was not able to understand the significance of the teaching and requested the sage to explain in clearer terms.

The sage said: In the vessel of your heart, there is the wick of Jiva. That wick has been immersed all these days in the water of your sensuous desires. Therefore, you are not able to light the lamp of wisdom. Pour out all the water of desires from the vessel of your heart. Take the wick of Jiva and squeeze out of it all the water present in the form of desires. Then dry it in the bright sunshine of Vairagya (detachment). Pour into the vessel of the heart the oil of devotion and Namasmara. Only then will it be possible for you to light the lamp of wisdom.

RAMA NAVAMI DISCOURSE

The Vedas are the quintessence of profound, immeasurable and infinite wisdom. In Treta Yuga, the four Vedas assumed physical form and incarnated as Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna. While Rig Veda assumed the form of Rama, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharvana Veda manifested in the forms of Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna, respectively.

Divine Power of Mantras

Rama symbolized Rig Veda. He was Mantraswarupa (embodiment of Mantras). Lakshmana was Mantradrasta (one who contemplated on the Mantras) and he put the teachings of Rama into practice. He followed Rama faithfully. He considered Rama Nama as the Taraka (liberating) Mantra. He, in fact, considered Rama everything - mother, father, Guru and God. Bharata was the embodiment of Sama Veda and chanted Rama Nama incessantly with Bhava, Raga and Tala (feeling, melody and rhythm). While Bharata was engaged in Nirguna worship (worship of formless God), Lakshmana rejoiced in Saguna worship (worship of God with form). Atharvana Veda manifested itself as Satrughna who followed his three elder brothers and conquered not only the secular world but achieved victory over the kingdom of senses also. The Vedas thus incarnated in Treta Yuga to impart most precious message to mankind. The two great sages Vasishtha and Viswamitra declared to the world that the four Vedas had taken birth in human form as Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna. As a consequence of great merit earned by Dasaratha, the four Vedas incarnated as his sons. If anyone asked Sage Viswamitra any questions about the Vedas, he replied, "All the four Vedas have incarnated as the four sons of Dasaratha to set an ideal to the world." Hence the Vedas are not formless; they have a form.

The Mantras contained in the Vedas are of immense significance. When Sage Viswamitra realized that the Rakshasas (demons) wanted to stop the chanting of Vedic Mantras and destroy righteousness and truth on earth, he sought the help of Rama and Lakshmana who symbolized the divine forces that descended on earth to destroy the demonic forces and establish peace in the world. With the power of Mantras taught to them by Sage Viswamitra, Rama and Lakshmana annihilated the Rakshasas. This incident signifies the fact that with the power of Vedic Mantras man can destroy his demonic qualities. By engaging themselves in the chanting of the Mantras, the people of Treta Yuga annihilated their demonic qualities. Symbolising the divine powers of the Vedas, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna destroyed demonic forces and fostered divine forces in the world. The four brothers thus established the supremacy of the Vedas as manifestation of the aspect of God with form. Each Mantra has a form. It has also its own inner significance. When chanting is done with contemplation on form, it leads one to the path of self-

realisation. The Vedic seers declared: *Vedahametam Purusham Mahantam Aditya Varnam Tamasah Parastat*. (I have seen the Divine Being who shines with the splendour of a billion suns beyond the realm of darkness). The seers and sages transcended the darkness of ignorance and visualized the effulgence of the Divine. They chanted the Mantras, contemplated on the form of the Divine, performed Yajnas and attained peace and bliss. They made use of Mantra, Tantra and Yantra in the performance of Yajnas which ensured peace and prosperity of the people in Treta Yuga. With the help of the Mantras, they quelled the Rakshasas and established the reign of gods.

Namasmarana for Man's Liberation

But the people of Kali Yuga have forgotten these Mantras with the result that Kali Yuga has verily become Kalaha Yuga (the Age of discord and conflict). Even brothers quarrel with each other. They live and eat together in the same family, yet there is hatred and conflict between them. Different means for man's liberation have been prescribed for each of the four Yugas. While meditation is prescribed as the primary means of liberation in Krita Yuga, performance of Yajnas and chanting of Mantras forms the means of liberation in the Treta Yuga. Similarly, Archana (worship of God) is the chief means of liberation in Dwapar Yuga. But it is Namasmarana that is the main means of man's liberation in Kali Yuga. As the people of Kali Yuga do not have the strength and capability to carry out rigorous Sadhana, they have been advised to do Namasmarana.

Harernama Harernama Harernamaiva Kevalam; Kalau Nastyeva Nastyeva Nastyeva Gatiranyatha.

(In Kali Yuga, there is no other means more effective than the chanting of Divine Name for man's liberation).

The Ramayana is not an ordinary story. It contains the direct message of the Vedas. Rama symbolizes the wisdom of the Vedas. Rama married Sita who represents Brahma Jnana (knowledge of Brahman). When Sita is taken away by demonic forces, Rama and Lakshmana search for her desperately. The Ramayana contains thousands of Slokas. As it was not possible to remember all the Slokas of the Ramayana, the sages recommended the chanting of the Name of Rama. When the disciples of Vasishtha asked him what Divine Name to chant, the sage said, "It is enough if you chant the Name Rama. The Name of Rama will make you free from Raga (attachment) and Roga (disease)". As I often tell the students, the name Rama has two syllables, 'Ra' and 'ma'. These two powerful syllables are derived from the names of Vishnu and Siva. The syllable 'Ra' comes from the Ashtakshari (eight syllabled) Mantra 'Om Namō Narayanaya'. It is the life-breath of the Ashtakshari Mantra. Similarly, 'ma' is the very soul of the Panchakshari (five lettered) Mantra 'Om Namah Sivaya'. The Astakshari Mantra 'Om Namō Narayanaya' and the Panchakshari Mantra 'Om Namah Sivaya' become meaningless

when 'ra' and 'ma' are respectively removed from the words of these Mantras. Without 'ra' the Ashtakshari Mantra becomes 'Om Namō Nayanaya' which is meaningless. In the same way, the Panchakshari Mantra without 'ma' becomes 'Om Nah Sivaya' which is inauspicious. The Name Rama is the life-breath of both the Vaisnavites and Saivites (worshippers of Vishnu and Siva).

In Treta Yuga when the sages and seers were engaged in the chanting of the Divine Name of Rama, Ravana, Kumbhakarna and other demons tried to put hurdles in their way. They thought that if they abducted Sita, who symbolized Brahma Jnana, Rama would lose His power. The Name would lose its potency without Jnana just like sugarcane loses its sweetness without Rasa. Hanuman resolved to bring this Rasa back to Rama and rejoiced in drinking Ramarasa (ambrosia of Rama's Name). The people of Treta and Dwapar Yugas considered the Name Rama to be the essence of all sweetness and enjoyed its nectarine taste. Instead of tasting the delicious spiritual sweetness of the Name of Rama, people today devour worldly sweets, and expose themselves to the risk of becoming diabetic patients. Worldly sweets cause diseases whereas the delicious sweet of Rama Nama rids one of all diseases. In ancient India, even the cowherds and shepherds chanted the Divine Name while tending their cattle and sheep. There were not many diseases in ancient times. Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna propagated the glorious power of Vedic Mantras to free the world from diseases and suffering.

Never Neglect the Teachings of the Vedas

Mandodari, the queen of Ravana, strived hard to save her husband Ravana. She gave wise counsel to him but Ravana paid no heed to her. When husband takes to evil ways, a virtuous wife acts as his wise minister to put him on the right path. Mandodari was one such wife. Bharya (wife) is not the one who provides worldly pleasures to her husband; she is the one who does good to him by leading him to the path of wisdom and righteousness. Mandodari was a true Sati (wife) who tried to mend the ways of her Pati (husband). Sita also tendered wise counsel to Rama and advised Him not to destroy all the demons. She suggested that only those who committed the evil deeds should be punished. Justice does not lie in destroying the entire clan. Women are great because they show the right path to man. They are, in fact, the light of wisdom in the world. They, therefore, deserve protection and reverence. Sita symbolizes Jnana Tattwa (principle of wisdom). Sita told Rama that goodness was universal, irrespective of caste, creed and community. It is because of women like Sita that men have made progress in life.

There are numerous species in this world. Every one of them has a definite purpose to fulfil in God's creation. Some of them may appear more beautiful than others. One cannot say whether a cow is more beautiful or a bull. But virtues are more important than physical beauty. Observing the good and bad in the world, the students should develop

discrimination to choose the former. They should strive hard to cultivate virtues. Right from early age, they should inculcate good qualities and develop good character. Wherever you go, character is of utmost importance. When the students develop good character, the entire country will become good and great. It is virtues that lend greatness to any person. Rama shines in the Ramayana because of His sterling virtues. Virtues are more important than bookish learning.

In spite of his education and intelligence man does not give up his mean-mindedness and evil qualities. He has no knowledge of the Self. Modern education leads to argumentation, not to total wisdom. (Telugu Poem)

Students - Boys and Girls!

You should try to attain total wisdom. You should make right use of eyes, ears and tongue which God has gifted to you. Whoever is able to control these three will achieve greatness. One should therefore cultivate right vision, right hearing and right speech. Always speak sweetly and softly. One who cultivates these three virtues will verily become divine. This is the primary objective and fundamental basis of all your education. Those bereft of these virtues are virtually demons. This is the essence and the message of the Ramayana. The four Vedas and other scriptures exhort man to follow these principles. Dear students! Never neglect the teachings of the Vedas. They are for the emancipation and redemption of mankind. Put them into practice in your life.

(Bhagavan concluded His Divine Discourse with the Bhajan “*Rama Rama Rama Sita...*”)

- From Bhagavan’s Sri Rama Navami Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 30th March 2004.

DIVINE DISCOURSE ON YOUTH SADHANA CAMP

Embodiments of Love!

God does not need anybody’s support or help. He takes care of everything of His own accord and bestows His grace on all.

Humanity cannot Exist without Divinity

Devotees! Do not think that God is confined to a particular place and that you have to search for Him. It is a sign of ignorance to search for God who is everywhere at all times. First and foremost, you should enquire and understand who God is. He is the one who

pervades in every particle and every atom of Prakriti (Nature). Nature is the direct manifestation of God. There is nothing that God cannot accomplish. He sees everything at all times. Without recognizing the divine power of God in Nature, it is a mistake to think that God does not respond to your prayers and come to your rescue. Devotion and divine grace are interrelated and interdependent. Man is unable to understand the divine power of God because of Maya (illusion).

Whatever God does is for the welfare of the world. Not a single act of God is without a purpose. Man gets confused as he is unable to understand the inner meaning of God's actions. The earth rotates on its axis at the speed of one thousand miles per hour causing day and night. Rising and setting of the sun as well as waxing and waning of the moon promote all activity on earth. Not merely that, the earth revolves around the sun at the speed of 66 thousand miles per hour, giving rise to various seasons. The seasons benefit man in many ways. Formation of clouds and occurrence of rainfall help man to grow food. In this manner, the earth provides food and sustenance to all beings. Can a human being or a government for that matter accomplish such a mighty task? No, no. Without recognizing these beneficial acts of God of such enormous magnitude, man wastes his life in delusion and doubt. If you enquire deeply, you will know that divine power is at work at all times. Every Kana (cell), every Kshana (moment) and every Yuga (aeon) is governed by Divine Will. God is everywhere and is in the form of Nature. Unable to realize this truth, people develop doubts regarding the existence of God. Everything is supported and sustained by God. There can be no Manavatwam (humanity) without Daivatwam (Divinity). Your life will be sanctified when you understand this truth.

Offer all your Actions to God

God does not waste even a single moment. All the time, He is engaged in action for the welfare of all. He is the sole refuge of all at every moment of time. Nothing is impossible for God who permeates Anda, Pinda and Brahmanda (terrestrial, celestial and cosmic planes). Every second of our life is dependent on the Divine Will. Every breath of our life is governed by God. We cannot take even one breath without His Will. People are unable to recognize such omnipresent, omnipotent God and waste their time in vain argumentation regarding His existence. They do not experience even an iota of joy due to their lack of faith in all-powerful God.

Once Arjuna asked Lord Krishna, "Swami! What is the reason that You are always engaged in action?" Krishna replied, "Arjuna! I perform Karma (action) in order to demonstrate an ideal to the people to emulate. When I perform action, people follow My example. The entire world will come to a standstill if I do not perform action. The value of action is beyond all description."

Na Me Parthasthi Karthavyam

*Trishu Lokeshu Kinchana,
Nanavapathamavapthavyam
Vartha Eva Cha Karmani.*

(Oh Partha! There is no action that I need to perform in all the three worlds. Nor is there anything worth attaining unattained by Me, yet I am constantly engaged in action). I do not perform actions for My sake nor do I gain anything out of them. There is nothing that I need to achieve by performing actions. Whatever I do is for the welfare of the world. You should understand this and emulate My example. God is teaching you everything not merely by precept but by practice. Only through proper enquiry can you understand this truth. You should enquire with sincerity and steadfast faith. If you lack faith, you cannot understand anything, however long you may try. Each step of Mine has a definite purpose. Each act of Mine reflects a certain facet of Dharma. Nothing can happen in the world without My Sankalpa (Will). But you are unable to understand My Sankalpa and Dharma. God has incarnated not for His sake but for the sake of all beings. God is the reality and the world is its reflection. It is natural that the reflection follows the reality. Whatever God does is for your welfare. Likewise, whatever you do should be pleasing unto Him.

Morality Earns Divine Grace

You may proclaim in public that all your actions are meant to please God. But that does not mean that He is really pleased with you. God will be pleased only when you cultivate Papa Bheethi, Daiva Preethi, Sangha Neethi (fear of sin, love for God, morality in society). Bereft of morality, you cannot be called a human being in the true sense of the term. Morality is the hallmark of a human being. That which adheres to Neethi (morality) is true Manava Jathi (human race). First, you should develop love for God. Daiva Preethi gives rise to Papa Bheethi which in turn develops Sangha Neethi. Hence, Daiva Preethi is the basis on which the mansion of human life rests. Humanity can progress only when there is morality in society. But modern man has no clear understanding of the term morality. Even birds and animals adhere to the code of conduct prescribed for them. But man is not following the rules of morality. If only he adheres to morality, God will certainly bestow His grace on him. Morality is not something that you should force upon yourself. It is your natural quality. Therefore, first and foremost develop morality. Only then will divinity blossom in you. The entire world will prosper when man adheres to morality. Only then can man lead a happy life. Wherever you are, whatever you do, consider morality as the basis of your life. Morality is, in fact, your true reputation. You can earn Divine grace when you have morality.

Truth is the Real Name of God

What is true worship? It is not merely offering flowers to God and performing some rituals. You should implicitly obey the divine command and strictly adhere to morality in your daily life. That can be termed as true worship of God. Today people think that they are praying to God and singing His glory. But God does not need all this. You pray to God only for your sake and not for His sake. You undertake various spiritual practices such as Japa, Thapa, Yoga, etc., only for your satisfaction. In fact, you need not do all this to worship God. It is enough if you discharge your duty properly. Then, God will certainly bestow His love and grace on you. If you do not do your duty sincerely, how can you expect to be the recipient of God's love? God thinks of your welfare every moment. Where is God? He is everywhere. Wherever we are, there God is. *Sarvata Panipadam Tat Sarvatokshi Siromukham, Sarvata Srutimalloke Sarvamavirtya Tishthati* (With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe).

It is sheer ignorance to think that God is confined to a particular place. As Mukundan (an earlier speaker) has said, truth is God, God is truth. Hence, we have to safeguard truth. *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* (speak truth, practise righteousness). Truth and righteousness are the two main pillars on which the entire world rests. If we protect truth and righteousness, they will in turn protect us wherever we go. Truth is the source of all happiness. If you do not adhere to truth, how can you expect to attain happiness? Truth is the fundamental principle of life. But today man's thoughts, words and deeds are tainted with untruth and unrighteousness. That is the reason he is unable to enjoy happiness in life. The culture of Bharat teaches, *Sathyam Bruyath, Priyam Bruyath, Na Bruyath Sathyamapriyam* (speak truth, speak pleasantly and do not speak unpalatable truth). God protects those who protect Sathya and Dharma. There is nothing superior to truth in this world. Truth pervades the entire universe. But people ignore such all-pervasive principle of truth. They try to suppress truth and indulge in falsehood. Consequently, unrighteousness is on the rise in the world.

Embodiments of Love!

Truth is your life. There is no God other than truth. Only truth can protect you always. Since ancient times, the culture of Bharat has been emphasizing on the need to follow truth and righteousness. I am pleased to note that the devotees of Kerala are leading their lives in an ideal manner by cultivating love for God, fear of sin and morality in society. If you have love for God, you can achieve anything in life. Once you put Sathya and Dharma into practice in your life, every moment of your life will be filled with happiness. Those who are unable to experience everlasting happiness should come to Me; I will show them the path to happiness. If you uphold truth and righteousness, God will be with you always to protect you. What is truth? *Trikal- abadhyam Sathyam* (Truth is that which transcends the three periods of time). That which undergoes change with the passage of

time cannot be called truth at all. But today children are not being made aware of the real significance of truth and righteousness. Small children do not understand the correct meaning of truth. It is not enough if you teach them to adhere to truth in their speech and conduct. We should teach them that truth is God and that it is truth alone that can protect them. Without teaching the correct meaning of truth and its importance, how can we expect the children to adhere to truth? Our entire life is based on truth and righteousness. There can be no Dharma without Sathya. *Sathyannasti Paro Dharma* (There is no Dharma greater than adherence to truth). Truth is the root, righteousness are the branches and sub-branches and happiness is the fruit of the tree of life. Hence, we should lead our life keeping truth and righteousness as the basis of all our actions.

Many people perform ritualistic worship of God with great pomp and show. I feel like laughing at their ignorance. These are not the true spiritual practices. How can such Sadhanas (spiritual practices) lead to Sakshatkara (vision of God)? Instead, you should put Sathya and Dharma into practice in your life. Without Sathya and Dharma, all that you do is mere show. Truth is changeless and eternal. It transcends time, space and circumstances. It should form the basis of all your actions. If your actions are not based on truth, they become artificial. Truth emerges from your heart and it should be put into practice. We should pray to God with purity of thought, word and deed. You should never give up truth at any time and under any circumstances. Only then will you be protected by truth.

Body Consciousness is the Cause of your Delusion

Embodiments of Love!

There is no point in adhering to truth and righteousness with a negative attitude. It is like building castles in the air! Whatever you do with a negative attitude is bound to yield negative result. Hence, develop positive attitude. Fill your life with love. Man has accomplished mighty tasks, but what is the use? He is unable to understand the importance of Sathya and Dharma. In fact, there is none superior to man. There is divinity in humanity. But man is unable to realize his innate divinity because of the influence of Maya (illusion). Man should make efforts to recognize his divinity. Only divinity can redeem humanity. Instead of realizing his innate divinity, man is getting entangled in worldliness. What is that we have to experience today? It is divinity, divinity and divinity alone. It is eternal and is always with you wherever you go. You should never forget this positive power even for a moment. Give up negative feelings and develop faith in the positive power, i.e., divinity. It is very much present in you in the form of conscience, guiding you and guarding you. If you take to wrong ways, your conscience will immediately caution you. It shows you the right path. It is impossible to experience divinity if you ignore the dictates of your conscience.

All that you see is only God, and nothing else. You may point to an individual and say, “I see him as another person. How can he be God?” Wherefrom has he come? He has come from God. Everything is God. How can you have the vision of God if you see multiplicity in unity? In this world, wherever you see, there is unity and unity alone. Truth is only one. It cannot be two. Likewise, God who is the embodiment of truth, is only one. *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). You may call Him by any name, worship Him in any form but always remember that there is only one God. You may call Him Allah, Jesus, Rama or Krishna but He is one. Once you understand this principle of unity and get established in it, you will certainly attain divinity.

You should always speak truth. Truth is the real name of God. If you want to pray to God, it is enough if you say, “Sathyaswarupaya Namah” (salutations to the embodiment of truth). All other names are His duplicate names. Truth is God. This truth is installed in your heart. If you realize this truth, you can achieve the ultimate goal of life. It is possible to realize this truth in a moment. The same divine principle is present in all - in mother, father, child, etc. But you have forgotten this divine principle. You think that God appears only in a specific form. In fact, God has no specific form. Wherever you see, He is there. All are His forms. Conduct yourself with such sacred feeling. That is true devotion.

Give up body attachment. Whomever you come across, right from a child to an old man, consider everyone as the embodiment of God. When you develop such a sacred feeling, your devotion will become steady. If you do not give up body attachment and if your mind wavers every moment, you will end up in utter confusion. Body consciousness is the cause of your delusion. Hence, get rid of body consciousness and develop God consciousness. Do not be carried away by the illusory world. Develop love for God. Then gradually you will be able to overcome body consciousness and your devotion will become strong and steady. What is the reason that people lack steady devotion? They do not contemplate upon one name and one form. Your devotion becomes steady when you install one name and one form in your heart. When you do Laksharchana, you chant many names such as Kesavaya Namah, Madhavaya Namah, Narayanaya Namah.... (salutations to Lord Kesava, Madhava, Narayana....). You may chant any number of names but you worship only one God. Keeping such principle of unity firmly established in your heart, you should pray to God.

Wherever you see, only God exists. *Never doubt that God is here and not there. Wherever you search for Him, He is there.* (Telugu Poem). When you contemplate incessantly upon the the Atma, you will see divinity everywhere. Hence, make efforts to recognize unity, realize it and become one with it. If you want to realize divinity, it is

enough if you hold on to the principle of truth. Truth has a name and a form. Hold on to it firmly. Follow it implicitly. Only then will divinity reveal itself to you.

Everything is the Manifestation of God

Do not get deluded by names and forms. The youth of today lack steady mind because they are carried away by names and forms. Have firm faith that God is one, truth is one. Consider God as your sole refuge. Then wherever you go and whatever you see, you will find His manifestation. Wherever you see, He is there. He is not confined to one place. He is everywhere. What happened to the wicked Kamsa who followed the Pravritti Marg (path of worldliness)? Whenever he uttered the name 'Krishna', He was there. But he thought it was a mere illusion. He could not realize the divinity of Krishna because of his body attachment. You can have the vision of the Divine only when you develop Atmabhimana (love for the Self). Atma is one and only one. Consider, for instance, the three words - Dehatma, Jeevatma and Paramatma. Atma is common in all. You should always contemplate upon Atma. Develop firm faith that Atma is God. Atma is always with you, in you, around you, above you and below you. Other than the Atma, there is no other entity in this world.

Embodiments of Love!

Do not waste time. You waste not only your Kalam (time) but also your Kayam (body). You may be performing spiritual practices but you are unable to overcome worldly illusion. Consider everything that you see as the manifestation of God. Even a mosquito is a form of God. An ant is a form of God. That is why Saint Thyagaraja sang thus, "*Oh Rama! You pervade everything right from a Cheema (ant) to Brahma. You are in Siva and Kesava as well. Please come to my rescue.*" (Telugu Poem). There is divinity even in an ant. You all know very well what the pain is like when an ant bites you. Not merely that, ants build big anthills which become the dwelling places for snakes. If not for the presence of divinity within, how can a small insect like an ant be endowed with such power? Divinity pervades everything, right from microcosm to macrocosm. Never disregard microcosm since divinity is all-pervasive.

Modern youth do not understand what divinity is. This is the effect of their age. In youth, one's blood is hot and mind is unsteady. How can one understand divinity with a wavering mind? First, you should keep your mind steady. Only then can you realize divinity. Truth is the best friend of love, and righteousness is related to both truth and love. The terms such as truth, love, righteousness, etc., may be different but the underlying principle of divinity is one and the same in them.

Embodiments of Love!

Today three thousand youth have come from Kerala out of their immense love for Swami. Develop such love day by day. Consider love as God. Only love will come to your rescue in times of need. When Surdas, a blind devotee of Lord Krishna, was travelling in a dense forest, Krishna came to his help in the form of a small boy. He told him, "Surdas! I am going to Brindavan. Hold My hand. I will take you with Me." When he heard the name Brindavan, Surdas's joy knew no bounds. The boy had told him to hold His hand. Being under the influence of Maya, Surdas held the stick which Krishna had in His hand. With Krishna's Divine Will, gradually the stick became smaller and smaller. Consequently, Surdas's hand was about to touch Krishna's hand. It was then that Krishna revealed His identity. He told him, "Surdas! God is your sole refuge wherever you may be, in a forest, in the sky, in a city or a village, on the top of a mountain or in the middle of deep sea. That is why I have come to your rescue." No sooner did Surdas's hand touch Krishna's hand than he attained divinity. Till then he was speaking to Krishna and was listening to His sweet words but he had not touched Him. The moment he touched Krishna, he became ecstatic and called out loudly, "Krishna! Krishna!" It is said, *Darshanam Papa Nashanam, Sparshanam Karma Vimochanam, Sambhashanam Sankata Nashanam* (Vision of the Lord destroys all sins, His touch destroys the bondage of Karma, conversation with Him destroys all troubles). God incarnates to grant Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan to His devotees. Krishna came to Surdas in order to show him the way to Brindavan. Then He started conversing with him and ultimately granted him His Sparshan and thus relieved him of the bondage of Karma. Hence, Darsan, Sparshan and Sambhashan, all the three are essential. You should not be satisfied with mere Darshan. You should aspire to attain all the three.

Treat everyone as the form of God. It means that every individual is the embodiment of divinity. All names and forms are His. Here you are able to see thousands of forms of God. How lucky you are! It is a sign of ignorance to consider yourself weak, forgetting your innate divinity. Truly speaking, you are not a mere mortal, you are the embodiment of immortal divinity. God Himself is playing the role of a human being in this cosmic drama. *Daivam Manusha Rupena* (God assumes the form of a human being). Hence, develop firm faith that all are divine. Then you will lose your individual consciousness and become one with Divinity. Seeing multiplicity in unity is due to Maya (illusion). When you understand unity, your Jeevatwa (individual self) will be transformed into Daivatwa (Divine Self).

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare...*")

- **From Bhagavan's Inaugural Discourse on the occasion of Second Sadhana Camp for Kerala Youth and students in Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall, Brindavan, on 11th April 2004.**

SADHANA CAMP FOR SAI YOUTH AND STUDENTS FROM KERALA

With the blessings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, more and more youth from various States of India are coming forward to take part in Bhagavan's Divine Mission. In April 2003, 1,170 youth from Kerala came to Brindavan to participate in the first Sadhana Camp organized by Kerala State Sathya Sai Organisation under the Divine guidance of Bhagavan. In October 2003, nearly 8,000 youth from Andhra Pradesh came to Prasanthi Nilayam and pledged their participation in the service and spiritual activities in rural areas of Andhra Pradesh. This year, nearly 3,000 youth and students from Kerala participated in the second Sadhana Camp held by the Kerala State Sathya Sai Organisation at Brindavan from 11th to 14th April 2004. The main theme of this Sadhana Camp was "Youth for Transformation".

Inaugural Session

The inaugural session of the Camp was held on the morning of 11th April 2004 in Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall, Brindavan (Bangalore). Sai Youth of Kerala welcomed Bhagavan Baba with Vedic chants and a beautiful welcome song when He came to inaugurate the camp at 8.00 a.m. Soon after His arrival, Bhagavan inaugurated the Camp by lighting the sacred lamp amidst a thunderous applause of Sai Youth of Kerala and devotees gathered in the Hall. Before the Inaugural Discourse of Bhagavan, two speakers addressed the participants. The first speaker was Prof. E. Mukundan, State President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Kerala. Prof. Mukundan reminded the youth that they should be ever grateful to Bhagavan for the love and grace Bhagavan had been showering upon them. The speaker observed that youth implied firm determination to see good, do good and be good. The youth, he said, should reflect Sai's Message in their lives. He concluded with the remark that if we gave our little hand to the Divine, and let it stay there, we would be protected forever. Prof. Mukundan then introduced the next speaker. The next speaker was Sri Sanjay Mahalingam, a student of M.B.A. (Final), Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Quoting the Biblical saying "Seek, and ye shall find....." Sri Mahalingam exhorted the youth to attain the goal of their life by holding on to the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan who has incarnated to redeem mankind.

After this, Bhagavan Baba blessed the youth with His nectarine Discourse and advised them to offer all their actions to God. Full text of Bhagavan's Discourse has been given elsewhere in this issue of "Sanathana Sarathi". The inaugural session of the Camp came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.35 a.m.

Proceedings of the Sadhana Camp

Soon after the inaugural session in Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall, the participants assembled in Sai Krishan Kalyana Mandapam where the proceedings were conducted on 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th April 2004. A galaxy of erudite speakers addressed the participants to explain to them the role of youth in the Sai Mission of transformation of mankind. Besides lectures, there were question and answer sessions in which the learned speakers cleared the doubts of the participants and replied to their spiritual enquiries. Another special feature of the programme was an interaction session in which the participants of the Camp actively participated with great interest.

The programme on the 11th morning began with a speech by Sri Sanjay Sahni, Principal, Brindavan Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on the topic “Message and Messengers”. This was followed by a very scientific and logical elaboration of the topic “Transformation” by Dr. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor of the Institute, who also answered the questions of the participants. Other speakers who interacted with the participants of the Camp were Dr. Ravikumar, Lecturer, Brindavan Campus, Sri G. Rangarajan, Lecturer, Prasanthi Nilayam Campus, Sri Deepak Anand, Ph.D. scholar of the Institute, Sri Shashank Shah, M.B.A (Final) student of the Institute, Sri Nimish Pandya, District President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Mumbai, Sri Ruchir Desai, Lecturer, Brindavan Campus. There was a special session of the Camp on the evening of 13th April 2004 in which Sri Anil Kumar, a faculty member of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute, addressed the participants and answered their queries.

The concluding session of the Camp was held on 14th April 2004 which was addressed by Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy, Warden, Brindavan Campus of the Institute. Besides giving the concluding message to the participants on the morning of 14th April, Sri Narasimha Murthy earlier spoke to them on 12th and 13th April also on the topic “ Love and Glory of Sai”. The four-day Sadhana Camp came to a happy conclusion with the concluding remarks of Sri Narasimha Murthy.

Bhagavan Baba showered His blessings on the participants on all the days of the Camp and granted them the bliss of Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan. With Bhagavan’s message of love and service imprinted on their hearts, the participants returned to their native places after celebrating the sacred festival of Vishu on 14th April in the Divine proximity of Bhagavan.

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST

Ghana: The Sri Sathya Sai Service Organization, Ghana, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service organized a very successful drama festival on Human Values on December 9, 2003, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Emmanuel Acquayer, Director, Basic Education. The venue was the National Theatre in Accra. The Guest of Honour was Hon. Christine Churcher, Minister of State for Basic, Secondary and Girl-Child Education. The competition was opened, initially, to Secondary Schools in Greater Accra Regions only on pilot basis. Eleven schools showed interest and these were grouped into three for the preliminary competitions. The winners of the three groups namely: Accra High School, West Africa Secondary School and Osu Presbyterian Secondary School were then asked to compete in the Grand Finale.

At the end of the competition West African Secondary School emerged as the overall winner. Osu Presbyterian Secondary came second while Accra High School was placed third. The judges, drawn from the University of Ghana and the Ghana Education Service, were very much impressed by their performances.

Giving his perception of the Drama Competition, the Headmaster of West Africa Secondary School said: "All these values are inter-related and do not operate in isolation. Diligent application of these values ensures harmony in society".

The Chairman, on his part, noted that in facilitating the growth of a child from birth it is not only facilitating acquisition of knowledge and skill that matters but more importantly the desire to use the knowledge and skill acquired in one's life so that one would be able to live peacefully together with others or his neighbours in society. There is, therefore, the need to sharpen the attitudinal behaviour and human values like Love, Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, and Non-violence and other psychosocial aspects like listening, tolerance, understanding and patience of the child.

The Minister was full of praise for the programme. She said that even though the programme focuses mainly on the youth, the future leaders of the nation, the adults who should serve as role models for the youth should equally embrace the programme. Children imitate their parents a great deal. Hence, it is very relevant for parents to uphold this human values concept and therefore live a life worthy of emulation by their children. The introduction of this laudable programme, she said, could not have come at a better time. She assured the Organization that her government would continue to support the programme. She hoped the competition would be extended to the remaining regions of Ghana.

ASIA

Hong Kong: In May 2003, Sai devotees in Hong Kong initiated the 'Heart to Heart' project involving monthly distribution of rice and basic necessities to 108 needy local families including the elderly and recent immigrants from China. Inspired by Bhagavan's Grama Seva, this undertaking seeks to bring much-needed relief to suffering and vulnerable members of the community. To date, 12,395 kg of rice have been distributed, together with large quantities of many basic household items like soap, soya sauce, pencils, towels, etc. The Sathya Sai Organisation of Hong Kong is committed to distributing 40,000 kg of rice before Bhagavan's 80th Birthday. Alongwith nourishment for the body, the mind

and heart are also nurtured through skits and leaflets that embody Swami's teachings on W.A.T.C.H., good health, good company etc. Swami often reminds us that "love without duty is divine" and the project name 'Heart to Heart' is a constant reminder of His message to all volunteers.

EUROPE

Greece: The European National Chairpersons, Central Coordinators and Zonal Chairmen of Sai Organisation met at the beautiful premises of Sai Prema in Athens, Greece in order to coordinate the activities of the 45 European countries. The delegates at the meeting discussed about:

- a) starting programmes to involve youth between 15-18 years
- b) training the office bearers
- c) encouraging the newcomers to take part in Sai activities, and selecting the responsible volunteers from Europe for service in the Chaitanya Jyothi Museum at Prasanthi Nilayam.

With great love and care, brothers and sisters of Sri Sathya Sai Centres in Greece performed Narayana Seva at the suburbs of Saint George and Perama on 7th of Febraury 2004. At Saint George, the members of the Sai Centres provided a lot of bread, chocolates and pastries in addition to the cooked food to the needy people to their hearts' content. The sisters of Sri Sathya Sai Centres in Greece distributed 288 tins of milk and several packets of groceries to the families who needed help and care. At the suburb of Perama, large quantities of cooked food, packets of groceries and lots of pies and pitas were given to the needy families. Greatly inspired by Swami, who lovingly provided clothing in addition to food for the families as part of Sri Sathya Sai Grama Seva project, the Sai Centres in Greece distributed clothes and shared their love of Swami with the needy families.

On 25th February 2004 the members of the Sai Centres in Greece visited an asylum for the people who are affected by paraplegia and other incurable diseases in Skaramanga. No one visits these patients and so they needed more love and care. Brothers of the Sai Centres entertained the patients with their band by playing music and singing various songs in view of the carnival festival. The inmates and also the Sai brothers felt the stream of love that filled the asylum for the whole day.

Russia and Russian Speaking Countries

More than one hundred devotees attended a three-day Sathya Sai Conference that was held in January 2004 in Moscow. Another Sathya Sai Conference was also organized from 30th January to 1st February 2004 in Ukraine with about hundred participants. A teacher-training seminar was conducted for devotees from St. Petersburg and Ukraine.

Similarly, in February a three-day Sai Conference and a teacher-training seminar were organized in Vologda in the North West Region of Russia. More than eighty devotees participated in the programme and benefited from it. On 27th, 28th, 29th February 2004 more than seventy people attended a three-day Sai Conference in Belarus. About seventy young people attended a youth conference conducted in March 2004 in St. Petersburg and discussed about selfless service with unity, purity and divinity as the goal of life.

LATIN AMERICA

Panama: In the year 2000, the Sai Centre of Colon, Republic of Panama, was inspired to hold Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's 75th Birthday celebrations by initiating the Seva activity of organising 75 cataract operations to needy brothers and sisters without medical insurance. All the operations were performed free of charge by the doctors and nurses who volunteered their services at no cost, aided by the loving assistance of the devotees. This Seva activity was continued during the years 2001 (51 operations), 2002 (31 operations) and 2003 (22 operations). There are no

w o r d s t o d e s c r i b e t h e j o y o n
t h e f a c e s o f t h e p a t i e n t s w h o
received this gift of sight. In addition to 179 cataract operations done over the past four years, the doctors also performed 86 hernia operations on children during 2002. Members of Sai Centre of Colon extend their heartfelt thanks to all those anonymous donors who were chosen instruments for this noble cause. And, the members are grateful to Swami for giving them this opportunity to serve, and pray for His grace and blessings to continue this sacred work in the coming years.

NORTH AMERICA

Atlanta: The Sai Youth of Atlanta serve at the Another Chance shelter, which provides a safe haven for teenagers who have been removed from their homes as a result of abuse, neglect or at-risk environments. These teens, aged 12-17, cannot be re- united with their families because the family is either unwilling or unable to take them back. Throughout 2003, the Atlanta Sai youth conducted a series of human values based workshops for these teenagers to develop their character and help them build a better foundation for themselves. These workshops were conducted generally once a month and about 24 teenagers were present in each session. The workshops included topics such as Anger Management, Patience, Peer Pressure, Self Discipline, Self Confidence and Conservation of Resources.

Each workshop started with an activity, skit or game where volunteers illustrated different scenarios associated with the theme. The teens were then divided into smaller groups of 4 to 6 individuals to encourage active participation. Volunteers used games, role-play, skits, and discussion to teach them several practical techniques for developing human values. Popular games such as obstacle courses and scavenger hunts were transformed into tools to teach causes, outcomes and techniques. The workshops concluded with a short story highlighting the benefits of practising human values.

During a visit to Prashanti Nilayam in February 2003, the Atlanta youth were presented with an opportunity to further expand upon this project by creating programmes for Radio Sai Global Harmony based on these workshops. The purpose of these radio programmes is to inspire and motivate listeners to conduct similar projects in their communities, as well as provide them with a framework for the same. A pilot radio programme on Anger Management was created in July 2003 and has since been broadcast on Radio Sai Global Harmony.

BHARAT

Andhra Pradesh: West Godavari district distributed blankets to 79 old people on 18th February 2004 at Nidamaru and carried out Sivarathri services such as food packets and milk distribution, providing cloak room facility to devotees and cleaning temple premises at Natta Rameswaram and Pattiseema. This district carried out Narayana Seva in Mortha village on 22nd February 2004 for 9,000 people.

Vizianagaram district carried out free medical camps in 11 remote villages and treated 990 patients in February 2004. This district selected 20 needy ladies and trained them in making incense sticks so as to provide them self-employment at Vizianagaram. Similarly, 185 ladies were trained in LPG gas stove repairs on 22nd February 2004 and were given tool kits free of cost.

Assam, Manipur and N.E. States: To spread the Divine Message of Bhagavan for upholding moral values and restoring women to their high place in society, Mahila devotees of Guwahati with the assistance of Mahila members of Sonapur Samithi organized the Shakti Swaroopini Day on 19th March, 2004 in Jalukbari village inhabited mostly by tribals. This was also a part of awareness programme for rural areas for women in general and young women of rural areas in particular. The speakers highlighted various facets of Sai Mission and the role of women in His Divine Mission of Sathya, Dharma Rakshana, Grama Seva as Rama Seva, holistic healthcare and medicare. The people of the village were so impressed that as a part of Grama Seva, a rural Bal Vikas centre was inaugurated and the rural youth pledged their active participation.

Kerala: To equip selected active workers to do effective and planned Seva, a camp was conducted on 21st and 22nd February 2004. More than 300 active workers from different parts of the State participated. These workers are divided into small groups and are taking the Divine Message of Sai to uncovered areas. 110 active youth members were trained in Disaster Management. Now these members are taking awareness programmes on Disaster Management to colleges and other youth groups.

FESTIVALS AT BRINDAVAN

SHOWERS OF DIVINE GRACE AT BRINDAVAN

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba showered His blessings and grace on the devotees of Tamil Nadu and Kerala who came to Brindavan in large numbers to celebrate the holy festivals of Tamil New Year and Vishu in His Divine proximity on 13th and 14th April 2004, respectively. The devotees of Brindavan and students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning were recipients of Bhagavan's special blessings on the Anniversary of Trayee Brindavan which was celebrated on 26th April 2004.

Tamil New Year Celebrations

Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall was beautifully decorated with colourful buntings and banners to celebrate Tamil New Year day. Bhagavan was offered a warm welcome amidst sweet notes of Panchavadyam music when He came to Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall at 7.55 a.m. on 13th April 2004 to bless the devotees on this auspicious day. On the arrival of Bhagavan in the Hall, the devotees of Tamil Nadu presented a musical garland of melodious Bhajans at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan. The soul-stirring Bhajans led by the devotees of Tamil Nadu touched every heart as the devotees followed them in chorus in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan who Himself was thoroughly engrossed in their sweetness. After about one hour of this spell-binding Bhajan session, Arati was offered to Bhagavan. The morning programme came to a close with distribution of Prasadam.

The afternoon programme began at 4.00 after Bhagavan's arrival in the Hall. The first item of the programme was a beautiful dialogue in Sanskrit presented by two Bal Vikas children of Tamil Nadu. The theme of dialogue was: The Supreme Lord of the universe, whose glory even the Vedas were unable to describe, had incarnated on earth in the form of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The devotees of Bhagavan were fortunate like Vanaras of Treta Yuga and Gopikas of Dwapur Yuga to attain His proximity. Every moment passed in His Divine Presence was therefore most precious.

After describing the glory of Bhagavan in dialogue, a musical offering was made at His Lotus Feet, consisting of instrumental and vocal music. In their programme of vocal music, the devotees presented devotional songs in Tamil, Hindi and Sanskrit. The instrumental music programme consisted of classical items on violin and keyboard as well as percussion fusion of Tabla and Mridangam. The programme ended with a beautiful Quwali in praise of Sai. Tamil New Year celebrations came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 4.55 p.m.

Vishu Celebrations

Besides holding a Sadhana Camp for youth and students from 11th to 14th April 2004, the devotees of Kerala presented programmes of instrumental and vocal music and a drama entitled "The Ultimate Solution" as part of Vishu celebrations at Brindavan.

The drama was presented on the evening of 11th April 2004 in Sai Krishan Kalyana Mandapam in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. It began after the arrival of Bhagavan in the Kalyana Mandapam at 5.25 p.m. The drama was based on the teachings of Bhagavan Baba who has been exhorting devotees to transform themselves through the practice of 5 D's, viz., Devotion, Discipline, Discrimination, Determination and Duty. The simple story of the drama conveyed the message of man's transformation through effective dialogues and superb acting of the Bal Vikas children of Kerala. At the end of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the cast and posed for photographs with them. Arati was offered to Bhagavan in the end at 5.55 p.m.

The programme of devotional songs was presented on the afternoon of 12th April in Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall after the arrival of Bhagavan in the Hall at 4.25 p.m. Three renowned musicians of Kerala enthralled the audience with melodious devotional songs for over one hour. They were : Sri Kavalam Sreekumar, Sri Madhu Balakrishnan and Sri T.S. Radhakrishnan.

The holy festival of Vishu was celebrated on 14th April 2004. Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall, the venue of celebration, was beautifully decorated in typical Kerala style on this occasion. Special floral decorations adorned the dais. Traditional Vishukkani below the dais was an another decorative attraction. Bhagavan came to the Hall at 8.05 a.m. and blessed the devotees with His Divine Darshan for nearly half an hour. Bhajans on this morning were led by Kerala devotees. After Darshan and Bhajan, Arati was offered to Bhagavan at 9.05 a.m. The morning programme came to a close with distribution of Prasadam to all. After Prasadam distribution, Narayana Seva was performed by the Kerala devotees. Food and clothes were distributed to more than 1200 needy persons.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan came to the Hall at 4.45 p.m. and graciously permitted the Kerala musicians to start their musical presentation. This beautiful programme of classical music entitled "Swaralayam" enthralled the devotees for nearly 45 minutes. At the end of the programme, Bhagavan blessed the musicians and distributed clothes to them. The joyous programme of Vishu celebrations came to a close at 5.35 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

Trayee Anniversary Celebrations

Anniversary of the inauguration of Trayee, Bhagavan's residence at Brindavan, was celebrated on 26th April 2004 with great devotion and solemnity by the devotees of Bhagavan and the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. On this occasion, Bhagavan's newly renovated residence was aesthetically decorated with flowers. The students of the Institute set up a beautiful exhibition in one of its lawns. Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall was also profusely decorated with flowers and buntings. Special floral decorations were made on the dais.

Bhagavan Baba saw the exhibits displayed by the students when He came out of His residence to shower the bliss of His Darshan on the devotees in Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall at 7.50 a.m. Bhajans were started as soon as Bhagavan entered the Hall. After the usual round of Darshan, Bhagavan sat in His chair on the dais. Bhajans ended with offer of Arati to Bhagavan at 8.25 a.m. Thereafter, the students distributed Prasadam to all the devotees. On return to His residence from the Hall, Bhagavan had a closer look at the exhibition set up by the students by going round the area of display. He blessed the students, cut the cake placed in the centre of the exhibition and posed for photographs with the students. Trayee building and Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall presented a grand spectacle when hundred thousand candles were lighted in them in the evening, making it a grand finale of the Anniversary Celebrations.

Easwamma Day Discourse

MAKE YOUR MOTHER HAPPY

When man emerges from the womb of his mother, one does not find any garland around his neck. There are no jewels made of pearls nor are there glittering gold ornaments. There are no chains studded with precious stones like emeralds and diamonds. But there is one garland around his neck. Brahma strings together the consequences of his past deeds into a heavy garland and puts it around his neck at the time of his birth. (Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

In this world, everyone has four Gurus (teachers). The Vedas proclaim: *Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava, Acharya Devo Bhava, Atithi Devo Bhava* (revere your mother, father, preceptor and guest as God). The mother is, in fact, your first and foremost Guru. The teachings of the mother carry immense inner significance. Every word uttered by her has deep inner meaning. You should try to understand her instructions and follow them meticulously. Your mother may appear to you like any other ordinary individual but when you delve deep into her teachings, you will realise that she is a great Guru. However, those who do not follow the spiritual path may take all this lightly.

Words of the Mother have Great Significance

Once Mother Easwamma was returning from the river Chitravathi with a vessel full of water. An old woman was also walking along with her with a heavy vessel of water on her head. Unable to bear the burden of the vessel filled with water, she was walking with great difficulty. Easwamma enquired, "Mother! Are you feeling difficulty in carrying the vessel full of water?" The old woman replied, "Yes, it is very difficult for me to carry this heavy vessel for such a long distance. But I am helpless. I have no children to help me in this task. I myself have to carry this vessel full of water everyday." Easwamma was distressed at the helplessness of the old woman. After walking some distance, she saw a small boy going to his school in Bukkapatnam, carrying a heavy load of books in a bag. Easwamma enquired of the boy, "My dear son! Why are you carrying such a heavy load of books?" The small boy replied, "Mother, I am carrying these books so that I can read and write all that the teachers teach me." This incident also had a deep impact on the tender heart of Easwamma. Later, she once came across a frail woman proceeding towards Bukkapatnam, carrying her sick child on her back with great difficulty. Easwamma enquired of this woman, "You look so frail and weak. Then, why are you carrying the child all the way to Bukkapatnam?" The woman replied, "Mother! What else can I do? In this remote village, there is no doctor who can treat even simple ailments like cough and cold. So, I am taking

my sick child to the hospital in Bukkapatnam for treatment.” This incident also made a deep impact on the mind of Easwaramma.

Noble Ideals Set by Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar

There lived a mother and a small child in a village near Kolkata. Soon after the birth of the child, his father had died. The mother somehow brought up the child with the meagre income earned by her by doing odd jobs. There was not even a lamp in the house for the boy to study during the night. He had to study under street lights. The name of this boy was Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar.

Every year, a big fair was held in Kolkata. Vidyasagar’s mother also went to the fair. While everybody else was going to the fair wearing expensive clothes, Vidyasagar’s mother went in an old worn-out Sari. Unable to bear the sight of his mother going to the fair in an old Sari, Vidyasagar asked, “Mother! Why are you going to the fair wearing such an old Sari?” The mother replied, “My dear son! I am happy with whatever I have. Please do not worry. You continue with your studies and come up in life.” Vidyasagar continued his studies in the face of great difficulties and earned many degrees.

Soon after completing his studies, Vidyasagar was able to secure a good job with a decent salary. He bought some good Saris with his first month’s salary and offered these to his mother. Then, his mother told him, “I will not be really happy with these costly Saris. If you help the poor people of our village and alleviate their suffering at least to some extent, that is enough for me.” She further told that she wanted him to fulfil her three desires. Immediately, Vidyasagar fell at her feet and prayed, “Mother! It is my duty to fulfil your desires. It is the responsibility of a son to fulfil the desires of his mother and make her happy. Please let me know what your desires are.” The mother replied, “My dear son! There are several poor, illiterate and sick people in our village. Who will relieve them of their suffering? I will be really happy when you remove their difficulties. The children in this village have to walk a long distance to go to school because there is no school in our village. I am really moved by their suffering. Should they have to undergo so much difficulty for the sake of education? I want you to build a small school in this village itself so that these children can comfortably study here. This is my first desire.” Vidyasagar built a small school in his village as per the wishes of his mother. This made her very happy.

On another day, Vidyasagar found his mother sitting in a pensive mood and enquired what the reason was. She told him, “My dear son! The people of our village are suffering a lot for want of drinking water. They have to fetch water from long distances, walking all the way. The well in our village has completely dried up. How can old ladies like me fetch water from such a long

distance? If you can arrange for the digging of a well in our village, it will be a great boon for them. This is my second desire.” Vidyasagar assured her, “Mother! I will certainly fulfil your desire. I will try to solve the drinking water problem of our village.” Initially, he got two or three bore wells sunk in the village, but they were not of much use. The borewells supplied water only during the rainy season. During summer, they would dry up. Therefore, his mother advised him to find a permanent solution of the problem. Then, Vidyasagar arranged for digging a big well and solved the problem of water scarcity permanently. This made his mother happy.

After some time, Vidyasagar got promotion in his job. His salary also increased. Then, he approached his mother and enquired, “Mother! What is your third desire?” She replied, “My dear son! You have built a school. You have provided drinking water to the villagers. But the mothers in our village are compelled to take their children to the neighbouring town for treatment whenever they fall sick. I am unable to see their plight. Hence, I will be happy if you can arrange to build a small hospital in our village.” In accordance with his mother’s wish, Vidyasagar got a hospital built in his village. Thus, he fulfilled all the desires of his mother.

As time passed, Vidyasagar earned good qualifications and secured a high position. His salary also increased accordingly. One day, his mother called him and advised him, “My dear son! I am happy that you have attained a very high position in life. But do not become arrogant.”

Excessive wealth gives rise to ego which in turn paves way for many wicked qualities. When wealth leaves you, ego also vanishes and as a result the evil qualities disappear. (Telugu Poem)

In due course of time, Vidyasagar’s name spread far and wide. He became well known as a great orator. Educated people also came to hear his speeches in large numbers. But he was always humble and courteous. Once a meeting was arranged in a neighbouring town where Vidyasagar was to address the gathering. Vidyasagar started for that town. An I.C.S. officer was travelling in the same railway compartment in which Vidyasagar was travelling. The officer was going to that town to hear Vidyasagar’s speech. However, he had only heard his name but had never seen him before. As soon as the officer alighted from the train, he started shouting, “Coolie! coolie!” As this was a small station, no coolie was available there. On seeing this, Vidyasagar approached him and enquired what luggage the officer had. The officer replied that he had only a small suitcase. Then, Vidyasagar asked him, “Is it necessary for you to engage a coolie to carry this small suitcase? I will carry it for you. But, where are you going?” The officer replied, “I understand that a great scholar and orator by name Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar is going to deliver a speech. I am going to listen to his speech.” Vidyasagar then took the suitcase in his hands and

started walking along with the officer. Both of them reached the venue of Vidyasagar's lecture. There, Vidyasagar handed over the suitcase to the officer. The officer then took out his purse and enquired how much money he had to pay to Vidyasagar as portage charges. Vidyasagar politely refused his offer, saying, "Sir! You have given me an opportunity to serve you. I don't need anything more." He silently walked away from that place.

Considering Vidyasagar to be a madcap, the officer proceeded to the venue and sat in the audience. The organisers of the function were waiting to garland Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar on his arrival. In a few minutes Vidyasagar arrived there, dressed in very simple clothes. He was accorded a warm welcome and profusely garlanded by the organisers of the function. The officer who was observing this welcoming ceremony realised to his utter astonishment that the person who had carried his suitcase from the railway station was none other than Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar himself. He felt ashamed. In his heart of hearts, he reverentially offered his Pranams to this great, yet humble individual. Then Vidyasagar began his speech. He explained that humility was the foremost quality of an educated person. He said, "Wealth and high position make people proud and arrogant. A proud person forgets his basic human nature and consequently loses his humanness." After the conclusion of the programme, the I.C.S. officer met Vidyasagar and offered his sincere apologies for his mistake. He said to Vidyasagar, "Sir, your speech was a great eye opener for me. I behaved arrogantly due to the pride that I was a highly educated person. Please forgive me."

In course of time, Vidyasagar's reputation as a scholar and orator increased. But he continued to serve the people. He got several poor students educated. He provided drinking water to several villages, where there were no such facilities. His mother felt very happy that her son was doing great service to the poor and needy. She prayed to God that every mother should be blessed with such noble children.

Mother Easwamma's Noble Desires Fructify into Giant Projects

In the same way, Sathya Sai has undertaken several community welfare activities in Puttaparthi, like constructing residential houses for the poor, educating their children, providing drinking water and medical facilities to the villagers, etc., as per the wishes of His mother. What Mother Easwamma expressed in those days were small desires. But in course of time, they became historic gigantic projects. Mother Easwamma was very happy at the great service rendered by Swami to the villagers. She expressed great joy and satisfaction and said, "My dear son! You built houses for the poor, You solved the acute drinking water problem of the villagers, You provided electricity to the village which was reeling under darkness. Not only that, You have

also built a school and a hospital. You have fulfilled all my desires.” She felt extremely happy that her son had undertaken and completed such great tasks. She used to tell the ladies gathering round her, “I requested Swami to build a small school in Puttaparthi village. But Swami established a great educational institution.”

Thus, the humble wishes of Mother Easwaramma fructified into great projects, providing immense benefit to humanity at large. What the country needs today is children who follow the teachings of their mothers. The teachings of the mother may appear to be very simple and insignificant but in course of time, they provide great happiness. Easwaramma’s desires were very simple. She wanted drinking water to be made available to the small village of Puttaparthi. But Swami provided drinking water to the entire district of Anantapur. She wanted Me to build a small school. But Sathya Sai built huge buildings and established great educational institutions. In those days, villagers used to suffer due to lack of basic medical facilities. Therefore, Mother Easwaramma requested Me to build a small hospital. But Swami built great temples of healing, the Sathya Sai Super Specialty Hospitals, one in Puttaparthi and another in Bangalore. Thus, small wishes of the mother resulted in the establishment of great institutions.

Embodiments of Love!

You need not follow anybody. It is enough if you do that which would satisfy your mother. If your mother is happy and contented, that will confer great blessing on you. Whatever your mother says, obey her command sincerely and become recipient of her love. That is what is required today. Then the whole world will recognise you as a man of character. You need not undertake any other acts of merit. Devote your life to fulfil the wishes of your mother. It is because Sathya Sai fulfilled the wishes of His mother and provided satisfaction to her that His glory has spread far and wide. (*loud applause*)

Sathya Sai has built big hospitals and provided expensive medical treatment absolutely free to everyone, even to the poorest of the poor. In the field of medical services, there are no institutions anywhere in the world which can stand comparison with Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences. In Sathya Sai hospitals, medicines, operations, food – everything is provided free of cost. Nobody is able to understand how we are able to provide all these things free of cost in modern times of sky-rocketing costs. Unfortunately, people are not able to realise the great value of the services being rendered by our hospitals. Today many hospitals advertise their facilities through electronic media, attract people and loot them of their hard earned money and even go to the extent of causing death to patients by negligence. This is not right. Poor people should be given free food, free education, free water and free medicare. There can be no greater

service than providing all these services free of cost. I wish that all the students, past and present, should undertake such services. We are not collecting even a paisa from our students as fees. The Sathya Sai educational institutions provide education totally free of cost. People have to spend huge amounts for acquiring higher education in other institutions. But our students need not spend anything for their education here. I am providing totally free education from KG to PG to all the students. In fact, all our services are provided with loving care and free of cost.

Education should Cultivate Broad-mindedness

(Bhagavan pointing towards a student who spoke earlier) He is a Sikh, a Panjabi. He tried his best for a long time to acquire higher education. But he could not afford the high cost of education in other institutions. Hence, he took up a small job. Later on, he joined our college and secured his MBA degree. He is now contributing his services to the hostel to express his gratitude to Swami. There are several students like him who are undertaking service activities in Swami's institutions. The boy who spoke after him hails from Delhi. He also had a great aspiration to pursue higher education but had no funds. He joined our institution and qualified himself with an MBA degree in first class. Since then, he has remained here in the service of Swami. He has decided to dedicate his life to the institution which produces such students. Thus, all the students of Sathya Sai institutions cultivate broad-mindedness and spirit of service. All our students are broad-minded. You do not find any narrow-minded students here. They are filled with love and treat their fellow students with love. The students in Sathya Sai institutions develop this great value of love. It is My endeavour to train such ideal boys and girls. It is My wish that all our students should willingly undertake free service activities to society with a spirit of love and sacrifice.

Many of our students are having highly paid jobs in big cities like Delhi and Agra. Our students working in these places are also undertaking service activities like providing free education to poor students. Wherever they are, our students are undertaking various service activities with a spirit of sacrifice and broad-mindedness. In spite of being highly qualified, they are very unassuming and without ego. It is My firm resolve to help such students. Education is not mere bookish knowledge. Developing broad-mindedness, spirit of sacrifice, sharing one's resources willingly with the fellow members of society and making them happy are the true qualities of an educated person. There are many students in our Institute who take great delight in undertaking service to society. My main task is to prepare such boys and girls. I am ready to do everything for them. (*loud applause*) I even send some students abroad for higher education, if necessary.

You all know Dr. Padmanabhan who is sitting here. He qualified as a dentist at a very young age and wanted to set up a small clinic here in Bangalore. I called him and told him, “Doctor! You must acquire higher education. You should not stop your education with the present degree. Your family circumstances may not be permitting you to pursue higher education. But I am with you. I will provide for your higher education.” One day, I called him for dinner and later sent him to Vienna for higher education. Accordingly, he went abroad and obtained higher degrees. He is now doing wonderful service at Brindavan. He is not money-minded. The great name he has acquired in Swami’s service is all that matters to him. Can there be greater wealth than a good name? Even though he has undergone a heart surgery, he continues to serve poor and sick patients. He is doing a great service in our hospital. Thus, Swami has moulded him as a loving, soft-hearted and selfless individual with a sacred heart, and prompted him to serve other people.

No Disease can Afflict Me

There may be some minor problems now and then to this body. However, they do not bother Me. They are natural to the human body. Last year, one boy was hanging colour buntings on the door while standing on an iron stool. Meanwhile, I opened the door and came out of My room. As soon as he saw Me, he became nervous and fell down from the stool. As he was falling, the iron stool got tilted and fell on Me. That was the time when My hip bone was fractured. That is how it happened. It is not due to any past Karma. I did not bother about My injury.

Yesterday, as I was entering My room, I casually took the support of a brick. The brick, however, got loosened and fell down on the floor. Consequently, I also fell down. It was an accident. This happened yesterday and today I am here with you. I perform My duty, come what may. Of course, accidents do happen due to past Karmas but this is not of that kind. Such disruptions may happen now and then but no disease can ever afflict Me. I carry on My work unmindful of such incidents.

(Bhagavan pointing towards some boys, after instructing them to stand up). There are seven boys here. All of them have done their postgraduation. They want to stay with Swami permanently, doing service here. I am looking after them. I told them “My dear children! You must progress in your education. You need not depend even on your parents for this. I will take care of all your requirements. You study well and earn a good name. Set an example to others.” Thus, I am making arrangements for their higher studies. I always help others. I never harm anyone. As for Myself, I will never be afflicted with any disease whatsoever. Some minor incidents may happen. But I will carry on My work without caring for such incidents. Yesterday, when I fell down, there was a loud noise and people present there were very much afraid that

some major accident had taken place. They thought to themselves, “What has happened to Swami! Till recently, He was not able to walk properly due to the hip fracture. Now His hand is injured. What a misfortune has befallen us!” But I told them that nothing serious had happened and they need not worry. The devotees had arranged a meeting here, in which I had to participate. I do not like to abdicate My duty, whatever may happen to this body. I put on My dress. The students wrapped a shawl around Me to cover My gown, so that I may not be inconvenienced with the bandaged arm. The doctors advised Me not to move. They were right in their advice. But I volunteered to come down against the doctors’ advice, with the help of two boys. I love My boys so much, they also love Me intensely. They constantly attend on Me and look after Me very well.

Real Value of Education Lies in Selfless Service

These boys have come from far off places like Delhi and other cities. They studied here at Brindavan and Prasanthi Nilayam. They are all doing great service to Me. My ailment cannot be cured by medicines. The love of these boys is My medicine. Love can cure all ailments. (Bhagavan pointing towards another student) This boy has done his Ph.D. All these boys are highly educated. Still they would like to stay here and serve Swami. It is the love of these boys that protects the body of Swami. There are some more boys inside Swami’s residence. For example, Satyajit and some other boys are constantly attending on Me like a shadow. Such boys are My only property. (*loud prolonged applause*) Many people ask Me, “Swami! How much is the value of Your property? Where is it located?” I tell them, “My dear! My property is invaluable. It is not possible to estimate the value of My property. My students are My property! Any description of the love of My boys will be incomplete. I cannot live without them and they cannot live without Me.” These boys are setting a great example to the world by their service.

The real value of education lies in Seva (selfless service). I cannot describe the amount of loving service they render. No one can adequately estimate and express in words the loving nature of our students. No one can understand their broad-mindedness. They look like small boys. But all of them are highly educated, with double postgraduate degrees. Such boys can truly help the world. They are performing invaluable service to Me in many ways. There are many different ways of service: Sravanam (listening), Kirtanam (singing), Vishnusmaranam (contemplating on Vishnu), Padasevanam (serving His Lotus Feet), Vandanam (salutation), Archanam (worship), Dasyam (servitude), Sneham (friendship), Atmanivedanam (self-surrender). Starting from the first step, one has to reach the state of self-surrender. These are the nine ways of devotion with which they are serving Me.

Doctors advised Me bed rest. In spite of that, I decided to fulfil My commitment to My devotees. Having known My firm resolve, the boys stitched a shawl to cover My robe and brought Me downstairs. This service may appear to be small. But if you enquire deeply, you will understand that it is very valuable. These boys do all service with total dedication without caring even for their food. It is only because of their loving care that I was able to come down without much inconvenience and to speak to you. Is it really possible in My present condition? In fact, it is their love that brought Me down here. These boys have developed good character along with acquiring good education. The service rendered by our students here or in the Primary School or Higher Secondary School or other institutions in Puttaparthi is beyond all description. Even little boys in these institutions conduct themselves in an ideal manner. I am standing before you to tell you the good qualities of My students and the great service they are rendering to society. I exhort the new entrants, who are joining the institution this year, to cultivate noble qualities, be healthy and happy and humble like these boys and render good service to society. I conclude My Discourse with blessings to one and all.

– From Bhagavan’s Divine Discourse in Trayee Brindavan, Whitefield (Bangalore) on the occasion of Easwaramma Day on 6th May 2004.

EASWARAMMA DAY CELEBRATIONS AT BRINDAVAN

Easwaramma Day was celebrated at Brindavan with great piety and solemnity in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. The entire Brindavan Ashram was beautifully decorated for this auspicious occasion with banners, buntings and flowers. Special decorations were done in Trayee Brindavan where the function was celebrated on the morning of 6th May 2004.

The celebrations began with Bhagavan’s Divine Darshan from the balcony of Trayee Brindavan at 8.20 a.m. Soon after this, Bhagavan came down and sat in His chair amidst the students and BalVikas children, who led the Bhajans on this occasion. After a brief Bhajan session, the programme commenced with chanting of Vedic Mantras by the Bal Vikas children.

Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, two students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning addressed the gathering. The first speaker was Sri Jaipreet Singh Bhandari, M.B.A. (Final) Class student. Sri Bhandari began his speech with a story which described mother as the guardian angel of man on earth. Narrating the noble qualities of the Divine Mother Easwaramma, the speaker then told that she was the guardian angel of the entire mankind whose only concern was the welfare of others. The second speaker, Sri Sanjay Mahalingam, also an M.B.A. (Final)

Class student, quoted the words of Bhagavan to say that Bhagavan Himself chose His parents as do all Avatars. He also described how Bhagavan prepared Mother Easwamma to become His foremost devotee by revealing to her His Divinity and by giving her Darshan as Lord Rama.

After these brief speeches, Bhagavan gave His Divine Message to the devotees. (Full text of Bhagavan's Discourse has been given elsewhere in this issue.) The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 10.15 a.m. In the end, Prasadam was distributed to all. Soon after the conclusion of the function, Narayana Seva was performed, and food and clothes were distributed to a large number of needy people.

Besides the celebrations at Brindavan, a series of social welfare and Bal Vikas programmes were conducted at various places in Bangalore city. These included distribution of food, clothes and other items of daily need to needy people in slum areas, hospitals, etc. On 9th May 2004, Sai Youth of Bangalore Urban District, Karnataka Sathya Sai Seva Organisation made a unique offering of 'Divya Sai Maa Prasadam' and distributed various items of food, clothes, blankets, shawls, notebooks, rice, etc., to about 2800 inmates of 32 institutions comprising orphanages, blind schools, mentally challenged homes, old age homes and slums. The valedictory function of Easwamma Day celebrations was held at Sai Gitanjali, Bangalore on 12th May 2004.

NOTICE

It has come to our attention that a person named Ms. Raja Rajeswari from India has represented herself to be an intermediary between Sai devotees and Bhagavan Baba. This is utterly false and has been declared so in India.

It is brought to the notice of all devotees once again that Bhagavan Baba has reiterated on numerous occasions that He has a heart-to-heart connection with all people and has no intermediaries.

Please do not therefore permit Sri Sathya Sai Organisations in your country to be associated with this lady's activities or solicitation of funds.

Dr. Michael Goldstein
Chairman, Prasanthi Council
Sri Sathya Sai Overseas Organisations

Bhagavan's address to the Youth of Andhra Pradesh

ATMA TATTWA IS ONE IN ALL

Oh foolish man! Why do you go in search of God here and there when He is very much within you? Turn your vision inward and you will find Him there. (Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

In order to have the vision of God, you adopt various spiritual practices such as Japa, Dhyana, Bhajan, etc. So long as you think God is present elsewhere, you cannot find Him. He is present in you. Look within to realise the indwelling divinity.

On 20th October 1940, while going to school after returning from Hampi, Baba's collar pin was lost and could not be found. The collar pin represented worldly ties. (Telugu Poem)

Early Manifestations of Divinity

The collar pin was presented to Me by Rama Raju, the then Municipal Chairman of Bellary after our return from Virupaksha temple in Hampi where we were taken by him. After reaching the temple, I expressed My reluctance to go into the temple. Then Seshama Raju (elder brother of Swami) told Me to keep a watch over their belongings as they went inside to have Darshan of the deity. I readily agreed and remained outside. They went inside the temple. To their utter astonishment, they found Me standing inside the sanctum sanctorum in place of Lord Virupaksha. (*loud applause*) Seshama Raju could not believe his eyes. He said to himself: "Why has He come here when I told Him specifically to remain outside and take care of our belongings?" He thought it was improper on My part to have entered the sanctum sanctorum. He at once came out of the temple only to find Me there! He again went inside and found Me there also! Still he was having doubts. He told his wife, "You go outside and keep a watch over Sathya. Do not allow Him to go anywhere. Meanwhile, I will go inside and see whether He is still there." She did accordingly. He again saw a smiling Sathya standing in the sanctum sanctorum. He wondered whether it was a dream, a hallucination or reality.

In those days, wearing a collar pin was considered a fashion. The Municipal Chairman presented the collar pin to Me with the prayer that I should remember him always. On 20th October 1940, the collar pin dropped on the way while I was proceeding to the school holding books in one hand. It could not be found. But I was least affected by its loss. Yet, I pretended as though I was anxiously searching for it. Some boys who were coming behind Me enquired, "Raju, what are You searching for?" I told them that I had lost the collar pin. They too started searching all over the place. I laughed and remarked, "You are going to school to study. Why are

you bothered about the collar pin? Don't worry about it." They said, "It looked so good when You were wearing it." One of those boys ran to Seshama Raju's house. At that time, Seshama Raju and Rama Raju were discussing as to what could be inferred from My mysterious behaviour. When the boy reported the matter to them, they at once rushed to Me. Rama Raju very lovingly put his hand around My shoulder and asked, "My dear, what are You searching for?" I said, "I am searching for something." He understood that there was some inner significance in My reply. He said, "Raju, how can You search for something that You do not know?" I told him that I had lost the collar pin which he had presented to Me. He said, "I will give You ten such collar pins. Don't worry about it. Come, let's go home."

The day the collar pin was lost, that day was the day of change. The link with the world had gone in the form of the pin; the pilgrimage to Hampi also served its purpose. Baba left home saying that Maya could not bind Him any longer. (Telugu Song)

Everything is in My Hand

Man has two types of desires, worldly and spiritual. It is said, worldly education is for life here while spiritual knowledge is for life hereafter. However, man gives importance to worldly education only. He is always in search of worldly happiness. But I am not interested in such happiness. I told Rama Raju that the bondage of worldly attachment was lost in the form of collar pin. On coming to know of this incident, the Excise Inspector Anjaneyulu came in his car and said to Me, "Raju, what are You looking for? Please come with me. I will give You whatever You want." He had intense love for Me. I told him that I was not searching for anything. People around Me asked, "Are You searching for God?" I replied, "One need not search for God, for He is everywhere. Nor am I searching for a trivial thing like a collar pin." Then I was taken to the house of one of the teachers at Uravakonda H.S. Venkataramana, who was a lecturer in English. They questioned Me, "What do You want? Is it the pin or God?" I told them, "I don't need a pin. I can get any number of pins, for everything is in My hand. Then, do you think that I am searching for God? He is everywhere. I don't need to search for Him." Rama Raju asked, "Where is God? Can we see Him?" Earlier I had given him a ring. It disappeared from his finger and appeared on My finger. He was stunned. He asked, "How did it happen?" I said, "I can do anything. Everything is in My hand." (With a wave of His hand, Swami materialised the same ring which He had given to Rama Raju. He held it aloft and showed it to the congregation.) Watching all this, Seshama Raju was also astonished. He gave up the feeling that He was My elder brother. Shedding tears of joy and repentance, he asked, "My dear, You are all-knowing; everything is in Your hand. Then, what are You searching for?" I also did not address him as

brother. I told him that I was no longer bound by worldly relationship. I held the hand of Rama Raju and asked, “What is this?” He said, “It is my hand.” I took out the pen from his pocket and asked, “What is this?” “It is my pen”, he said. “You say, it is my hand, my pen, my body, my mind, my senses, etc. The word ‘my’ indicates that you are different from all this. Then who are you?” I asked him. Then everyone started thinking, “Yes, what Raju says is correct. We say, this is mine and that is mine, but we do not know who we are.” Everybody was silent. They accepted that they did not know their true identity. I told them that I had come down in human form only to make people realise their true identity.

Teaching Vedantic Truths in Childhood

It is the eye that sees and the mind that thinks. (Showing the ring and handkerchief, Bhagavan said) Your eyes can see the ring and the handkerchief. On what basis can you call this a ring? Similarly, what makes you say that it is a handkerchief? You say, the mind is the basis for all this. What is mind? Whom does it belong to? You do not know. What you think you know, in reality, you do not know, that is your true Self. Make efforts to realise it.

From that day onwards, many seekers of truth started visiting Me. They discussed among themselves, “What Raju says is, of course, correct. But how are we to realise our true identity?” People quote from the Vedas and talk about other scriptures but they do not know their real meaning. “You say, this is my ring, my body, my handkerchief, so on and so forth. Then who are you?” I questioned them. They had no answer. Then I started explaining thus: “There are two important aspects that you have to consider, one is Drishyam (seen) and the other is Drashta (seer). *Yad Drishyam Thannasyam* (all that is seen is bound to perish). So, whatever you see is only an illusion. You are Drashta; that is your true identity.”

H.S. Venkataramana was a noble person. His house was on the way to My school. He used to sit in the front verandah of his house. As soon as he saw Me, he would take Me into his house and offer Me coffee and snacks. But I was not interested in these things. Earlier, I used to address him as ‘Sir’. But from that day onwards, the worldly relationship of teacher-student had ceased between us. I used to tell him that all that was seen by the eye was merely Drishyam which was perishable. One had to go beyond all that was seen and become Drashta. From that day onwards wherever I went and whomever I met, I used to teach these higher principles.

One day Venkataramana called Seshama Raju and told him, “Seshama Raju! This boy is delving deeper and deeper into the mysteries of life. It is not possible for anybody to fathom His true nature. Let us wait for some time and see”, saying thus, he took Me into his house and offered snacks, coffee, meals, etc., with great love. Poor man! He did not realise that I was never

interested in these things. I did not touch any of these foodstuffs. In My view, they were all worldly things which underwent constant change. As they were not permanent, they could not be real. Thus, I started teaching them higher Vedantic truths. H.S. Venkataramana was astonished at My knowledge of these higher principles. Till then, he was addressing Me as “Raju! Raju!” But from then onwards he started addressing Me as ‘Guruji’! Holding My feet, he prayed, “Guruji! Please come to my house.” Those who were witnessing the scene were amazed that this elderly gentleman who was a teacher was holding the feet of this young boy, his student. Seshama Raju was stunned to see this. Then Venkataramana declared in front of all those people, “Not only me; a day will come when the entire world will fall at His feet.” (*loud and prolonged applause*) Among the people gathered there on that occasion were some who were highly educated, holding high positions in society. There was a neighbour by name Narayana Sastri, who was an astrologer. He was called in and apprised of all those higher truths of life which I was explaining to them. When Sastri heard Me explain Vedantic truths at such a young age, he started shedding tears. And his tears fell on the feet of Sai Baba. From then onwards, everybody in Uravakonda started addressing Me as Sathya Sai Baba. How did this new name come about? The name of this body is Sathya; this divine play manifested the truths propagated by Sai Baba (of Shirdi). Thus, the name Sathya Sai Baba. This is not a new name, nor was this name given to Me at birth. I told them that I had incarnated to reveal to them the truth of their reality. Unable to comprehend the full truth about My revelations, some of them questioned Me, “How can You declare Yourself to be Sai Baba?” I just took some flowers in My hand and threw them on the floor. Lo and behold! The flowers arranged themselves as ‘Sathya Sai Baba’ in Telugu letters. On witnessing this miracle, they were wonderstruck and dumbfounded! Then, everybody started repeating “Sathya Sai Baba”, “Sathya Sai Baba”! I declared on this occasion thus:

Know that I am Sai in reality,

Cast off your worldly relationships,

Give up your efforts to restrain Me,

The worldly attachments can no longer bind Me,

None, however great he may be, can hold Me. (Telugu Poem)

I got up and started walking away. Meanwhile, all those assembled there including Venkataramana and Sastri tried to follow Me. I advised them, “Do not come after Me; instead, strive for self-introspection and mental transformation. Since I am not the body, none can hold Me. Follow My ideals. Only then can you realise My true nature.”

In this vast expanse of the universe, right from the minutest atom to the mightiest object, everything is permeated by the Atmic reality. It appears as the minutest of the minute and mightiest of the mighty. In fact, the principle of oneness that permeates both the microcosm and macrocosm is the fundamental reality which you have to enquire into. That is why Ramana Maharishi used to ask everyone this question: "Who are you?" Once when I was taken to Sri Aurobindo Ashram, I visited him on My way. He propagated, the principle of Atma is one and the same in everyone. Atma has no form. You are not one person but three - the one you think you are (body); the one others think you are (mind) and the one you really are (Atma).

The Atma is nothing but Chaitanya (consciousness). It is the most important part of your being. That which relates to the body and the senses is conscious. That which is beyond the senses is conscience. But consciousness is of the nature of the Atma. To realise the Atma, the aspirant has to attain the level of super consciousness. Sri Aurobindo attained the state of super consciousness by his intense Sadhana.

In earlier days, not many people knew who Sai Baba (of Shirdi) was. He was considered a Muslim saint. When I first returned to Puttaparthi declaring Myself as Sai Baba, people thought that I had taken a Muslim name. But no one can bind Me to a particular religion like Hinduism or Islam.

The Vaishnavites say that Lord Vishnu is the greatest while the Saivites declare that Lord Siva is the greatest of all. The worshippers of Ganapati declare that Ganapati is the greatest. The scholars say that goddess Sarada is the greatest. The worshippers of Allah say that Allah is the greatest of all. The worshippers of Shakti proclaim that goddess Shakti is the greatest. My devotees say Sai is the greatest. Some others say that all are one.

(Telugu Poem)

Brahma Tattwa is Formless

Different people may ascribe different names to the Atmic reality and try to define it in different ways. But the underlying Atma Tattwa is one and the same. This truth has to be explained to the people in an understandable language. You see some houses there. In the front portion of the house, you will find a verandah; then a living room and then a kitchen. Thereafter, you will find a bathroom and a toilet. Thus, there are different names for different rooms. How did they acquire these names? It is only because they are so divided by walls for different purposes. But the truth is, they are all parts of the same house. Similarly, different people have different names and they establish different relationships with others like mother, father, brother, etc. From where did you acquire these relationships? Everything is of your own making. Remove

these barriers. What remains is a vast expanse of oneness. One person refers to Divinity as Atma, another refers to it as Brahman and the third one calls it as Vishnu. These are only names ascribed by human beings to the nameless, formless, attributeless Divinity. The Brahma Tattwa is one; it has no name.

What is Brahman? It is the Atmic principle permeating every living being as consciousness. When it is individualised, it is called conscience. It is also referred to as Jiva. When the Atma Tattwa is encased in a body, it becomes an individual. The individual, the Atma and Chaitanya (consciousness) are one and the same. People think they are different because they are given different names. Remove the names. There is only one Atma Tattwa. The Atma has no form. It assumes the form of the individual in which it is encased. (Bhagavan showing His handkerchief) This is called handkerchief in common parlance. But it is not merely that. It is thread. It is not thread either. It is cotton. Whether we call it handkerchief or thread or cotton, it refers to only one object. Different names are given to the same object. Take, for instance, the names of Rama and Krishna. Rama was not born with that particular name. He was christened Rama only after His birth. Similarly, the name Krishna. Since He is the embodiment of bliss, He is referred to as Krishna. *Karshati Iti Krishna* (because He attracts, He is Krishna). But His real nature is Ananda. He is Anandaswarupa (embodiment of bliss). The same principle of Ananda has taken different names. This principle of Ananda is: *Brahmanandam, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnanamurtim, Dwandwateetam, Gagana Sadrisham, TattwamasyadiLakshyam, Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam, Bhavateetam, Trigunarahitam* (God is the embodiment of supreme bliss, He is wisdom absolute, the One without a second, beyond the pair of opposites, expansive and pervasive like the sky, the goal indicated by the Mahavakya Tattwamasi, the eternal, pure, unchanging, the witness of all functions of the intellect, beyond all mental conditions and the three Gunas of Sattwa, Rajas and Thamas). Divinity has no attributes. How can one give a name to it? Divinity permeates every being as Atma. It has no specific form.

Explaining thus, I told Municipal Chairman and other people that it was only for making the people realise this principle that I had taken birth in human form. Then, Seshama Raju put a big question. He was a Telugu Pandit. So, whatever question he put, it had a certain value. He questioned Me, "Who are You?" I answered, "Since you call Me Sathya, I am Sathya. When you refer to Me as your brother, I am your brother. My teacher calls Me a student, so I am a student. You call Me by any name, I assume that name and form. But fundamental truth does not change. The reality is that I have no relationship with anybody. And I have no name. Call Me by any name, I will answer. (*loud applause*) If you call Me Sai, I will answer. If you call Me Baba, I will

respond. By whatever name you call Me, it is the same for Me. All these are mere names ascribed to Me by you. I have, in fact, come to make you realise this truth.”

Supreme Devotion of Classmates

In the classroom in Uravakonda, three of us used to share a desk - Myself in the middle, flanked by Ramesh and Suresh on either side. Both of them were very young. One was eight years old, the other nine years old and I was 8 ½ years old. They had great love for Me. But they were not good in studies. Whenever the teachers asked them questions, they would give the answers prompted by Me. It was the time of our E.S.L.C. public examination. The roll numbers of our seats in the examination hall were so arranged that we had to sit separately, quite at a distance from each other. It was not possible for them to get any help from Me. They were much worried. I infused courage in them saying, “You need not write anything. You just attend the examination. I will take care of the rest.” I completed My answer paper in a few minutes. I took some more answer sheets from the invigilator and wrote the answers in Ramesh’s handwriting. After completing it, I took another set of answer sheets and wrote the answers in Suresh’s handwriting. I also wrote their names on the answer sheets. When the final bell rang, all the students got up, and I silently placed all the three answer sheets on the table of the examiner. When the results were announced, only we three got first class. The teachers were surprised as to how Ramesh and Suresh also got first class. The mathematics teacher called the three of us in the evening. He asked Ramesh and Suresh whether they had written the answers on their own. Prior to this, I had cautioned Ramesh and Suresh to tell that they themselves had written the answers, and that they remembered the answers then but had forgotten now. They obeyed My command and told the teacher that they had written the answers on their own. He examined the answer sheets again. He found that these had been evaluated correctly. There was no scope for any doubt. They could not have copied from Me since we were seated far from each other. Their answer sheets were in their own handwriting.

The local people were overjoyed at our success. They garlanded us, and took out a grand procession. There was a businessman by name Kote Subbanna. He came to know that I could compose excellent poetry. One day he came to Me and pleaded, “Raju, there is a new medicine in my shop. Please write a song on the efficacy of the medicine which would serve as an advertisement. I will give You whatever You want. I am prepared to pay You any amount of money.” I told him, “I am not here to sell My poetry. You give Me the details of the medicine. I will certainly compose a song for you.” Kote Subbanna told the name of the medicine and its qualities. The name of the medicine was Bala Bhaskara. Then I composed the following song:

There it is! There it is! Oh, children! come, come!

There is the medicine Bala Bhaskara;

Be it an upset stomach or a swollen leg;

Be it a joint pain or flatulence;

Be it any ailment, known or unknown;

Take this Bala Bhaskara for an instant cure!

If you wish to know where it is available:

There is the shop of Kote Subbanna;

It is in that shop that you can pick it up.

Come here boys! come here!

It is an excellent tonic

Prepared by the famous physician Gopalacharya himself,

Come here boys! come here! (Telugu Song)

This song was taught to ten children who went about carrying placards and singing the song composed by Me in the streets. Everybody came to know of the medicine and all the stock was sold out in no time. Kote Subbanna became very popular. His joy knew no bounds. He brought a new dress stitched for Me as an expression of his gratitude but I refused to accept it.

After declaring My identity on 20th October 1940, I left the school. All the students felt sorry about it. I had to leave Uravakonda. Ramesh and Suresh were very much attached to Me. Such intense love cannot be found even between parents and siblings. When I left Uravakonda, other children in the school shed tears. Ramesh and Suresh could not bear the separation from Me. Ramesh, utterly dejected, fell into a well and died. The second boy went on repeating "Raju, Raju, Raju ..." and ultimately turned mad. He was taken to various mental hospitals but there was no improvement. Finally, his father came to Me and prayed, "Suresh will be cured of his madness if he sees You at least once. Please come and see him." I went to the mental hospital to see him. He was continuously repeating "Raju, Raju, Raju ..." Seeing Me, he shed tears and breathed his last.

Birth and death are natural phenomena. One who is born will die one day or the other. Similarly, one who dies will be born again. Later, Ramesh and Suresh were born as two dogs and were brought to Me by an officer from Bangalore. They used to be with Me always when I was in the Old Mandir. They were named Jack and Jill. One day, the Maharani of Mysore came for My Darshan. She was a great devotee and a very orthodox woman. She would always maintain distance from others. She would not touch anything that was touched by others. She was so

orthodox that she would insist upon giving a bath to the cow before milking it. As there was no proper road to Puttaparthi, she alighted from the car at Karnatanagepalli and walked the rest of the distance to the Old Mandir. How did she come? She did not want to put her feet on the road used by others. Hence, she brought four wooden planks with her. She put her steps on each of those planks and reached the Mandir. The Maharani decided to rest for the night in the Mandir. The driver had his dinner and was returning to Karnatanagepalli where the car was parked. During night, there was heavy rain. Jack went with the driver to show him the way. At night the driver slept in the car and Jack slept under the car near the wheel. Next morning, the driver started the car, not knowing that Jack was sleeping under it. The wheel of the car ran over the back of Jack and its backbone broke. Jack dragged itself across the river, wailing all the while. A washerman named Subbanna used to take care of the Old Mandir day and night. He came running to Me and said, "Swami, Jack might have met with an accident. It is coming wailing in pain." I came out at once. Jack came close to Me, wailing loudly, fell at My feet and breathed its last. It was buried behind the Old Mandir, and a Brindavanam was erected there. As Jack had passed away, Jill stopped eating food and died after a few days. It was also buried by the side of Jack. In this manner, Ramesh and Suresh did penance to be with Me always. Even after their death, they took birth as dogs to be with Me. Their life was redeemed and they ultimately merged with Me.

Helping the Cause of Freedom Fighters

During My childhood, I used to compose several songs with deep meaning and gave joy to the villagers by having them sung. One day, some people along with a political leader by name Narayana Reddy from Bukkapatnam approached Me with the request to compose some songs which could inspire our freedom fighters. A doll was placed in a cradle on the stage. I then composed a song in the form of a lullaby to the doll.

"Do not cry, my child, do not cry.

If you cry, you will not be called a valiant son of Bharat.

Go to sleep, my child, go to sleep.

Did you get scared because the terrible Hitler has invaded the invincible Russia?

Go to sleep, my child, go to sleep.

Do not cry, my child, do not cry.

For the Red Army is marching under Stalin.

They will put an end to Hitler.

Why do you cry my child?

Is it because the country is suffering under foreign rule?

Do not cry, my child, do not cry.

All the countrymen shall unite and fight to win freedom;

Go to sleep, my child, go to sleep.”

(Telugu Song)

The villagers listened to the song with appreciation and amazement. Many of them wondered as to how this young boy Sathyanarayana Raju had come to know about Hitler and Stalin. These names were unknown to the people in this region. This song was printed in a pamphlet and distributed in the villages. People from political parties started coming to Me, requesting Me to write songs for them. Seshama Raju scolded Me, saying that I should not involve Myself in political affairs. I told him, “I have nothing to do with political parties. I do not belong to any party. All parties are Mine. I belong to all.” (*loud applause*)

The song became very popular in the village. They brought a few pants, shirts and towels for Me. But I refused to accept them. I distributed them to other children right in their presence. I told them, “I composed the song only to encourage you, not for any monetary benefits.” From that day, I stopped writing such songs. Nowadays, I don’t even compose Bhajans. I am not writing any articles even for “Sanathana Sarathi”. Kasturi used to plead with Me to write articles. He would say, “Swami, unless Your Name appears in “Sanathana Sarathi”, it has no value at all.”

All My schoolmates were very fond of Me. I too loved them dearly. Whenever there were any special preparations at home like Vadas and Pakodas, I used to take them to school and distribute to other children. I was friendly with all. I had no enmity towards anyone. Seeing My noble deeds, Ramesh and Suresh developed great attachment towards Me and ultimately sacrificed their life for Me. Because of their love and devotion, I helped them in their examinations. After that, I never involved Myself in matters related to examinations. Once a government official asked Me, “Swami, how could You write exams on their behalf?” I replied, “Why not, Ramesh and Suresh are also My names.” In this manner, I can go on narrating various incidents of My life story. There is no end to it. In fact, words are inadequate to describe My story.

I have special love for My students. Similarly, the students have intense love for Me. They seek My guidance whenever they have any problem. Even yesterday, a research scholar prayed for My guidance. He is writing his thesis on Mahabharata. He asked Me a few questions about Bhishma, Bhima and Dharmaraja, etc. I told him that he should find the answers by himself. Right now, this research scholar is sitting in the verandah. I told him to enquire within to find the right answers.

Swami is as full of love for His students as the students are for Him. They consider Swami as their mother, father and everything. They address Me as Sai Matha. In their songs also they sing,

“We are the children of Sai Matha.” When they consider Me as their mother, how can I fail to respond to their prayers? Hence, I too shower motherly love on them. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as is the feeling, so is the result). It is only a reflection of the love they have for Me. The love that exists between Swami and His students is that of a mother and her children. Let anybody say anything, Swami is Your mother. I am the mother to those who consider Me as their mother, father to those who believe I am their father. I respond to you in accordance with your feelings. Even your own mother cannot give you as much love as Swami showers on you.

Students!

Work hard and study well. The two boys who are sitting by My side are feeling anxious that Swami has been standing for a long time. They have been praying that I should sit.

- **From Bhagavan’s Divine Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 21st October 2003.**

A Bibliographic Classification for Sai Literature

This classification has been developed by Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust, to be used exclusively for Sai literature by institutions and libraries that have a significant collection. Those institutions and libraries desiring to have a copy of this classification, may write to: “The Convener, Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam, Andhra Pradesh, India, PIN: 515 134.”

Convener

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

PRELUDE TO 8TH WORLD CONFERENCE INITIATED BY PRASANTHI COUNCIL IN OVERSEAS COUNTRIES

DIVINITY walks among us in the beautiful form of our Beloved Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. We must appreciate and apply the Blessings of God’s Gift – His Presence in this world in human form during the course of our lives. Toward this end, the Prasanthi Council of the Overseas Sri Sathya Sai Organisations has engaged in a series of meetings throughout the world as a prelude to the 80th Birthday Celebrations and the 8th World Conference. These meetings include a Pre-

World Conference for the devotees of all countries in that world zone, followed by a public meeting on the following day, open to all. The theme of the Pre-World Conference is UNITY PURITY DIVINITY. During these conferences, Sai devotees delve deeply into our Lord's Divine Message: learning, experiencing, and being transformed by Him. The theme of the public meeting is *Sri Sathya Sai Baba: His Universal Message and Humanitarian Works, an Inspiration to Mankind*. During these public meetings we bear witness to the Truth. We share the selfless love and knowledge of eternal truth that we have experienced as devotees of our Beloved Swami. These meetings have already been held in London, Rome, and Buenos Aires. Three more meetings prior to Guru Poornima will be held in Singapore, Los Angeles, and New York. The public response was overwhelming and Bhagavan Baba's Divine Loving Presence was deeply felt during the meetings already held. Accounts of these meetings follow.

London (United Kingdom)

The Pre-World Conference for devotees, held on 7th February 2004, was attended by over 400 office-bearers and active workers. A multimedia presentation reviewed the achievements in the UK in the areas of healthcare and social upliftment projects for the needy, education involving 1500 Sai Spiritual Education students and 250 teachers, and the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values programme spanning 10 holiday schools and over 100 mainstream schools. Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman of the Prasanthi Council, gave an inspiring talk about the deepening of spiritual understanding and reinvigorating the commitment to follow the message of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Brother Kishin Khubchandani then spoke about the vision of the Sai Mission for UK. The presentations by the Headmistresses of the Sathya Sai Schools enthused the assembled participants, as did an exhibition on the various activities in each region of the United Kingdom.

The public meeting was held at the Becks Theatre in Hayes (near London) on 8th February 2004. A capacity crowd of over 600 people was in attendance, with several distinguished guests among the attendees. National television crews were present to cover this inspiring event. The National Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation, UK, presented the welcome address, which was followed by a beautiful rendition of English songs by the National Youth Choir. Dr. Michael Goldstein gave an inspiring presentation on Bhagavan's teachings, translating them into simple concepts understandable by all. He illustrated how we should truly understand ourselves as embodiments of Divinity. The second speaker, Brother Victor Kanu from Zambia, shared anecdotes and stories of his time with Sathya Sai Baba and how he had witnessed miracles and ceaseless love, as Sathya Sai Baba expounded through His every action and word that His Life is His Message. An officer from the Indian High Commission Office made brief comments

appreciating the work of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. A specially commissioned film titled *His Work: The Work of Sri Sathya Sai Baba* was then screened, which captivated the assembled gathering. *His Work* is a moving portrait, highlighting the sweeping scope of humanitarian projects initiated and inspired by Bhagavan Baba – free super specialty hospitals, schools, colleges and a university, free drinking water to millions, rural outreach programmes – all bearing testimony to His selfless saga of love and compassion. Dr. Goldstein concluded the meeting by reading a message of Sri Sathya Sai Baba given to the Western devotees.

Rome (Italy)

21 years ago, an historic Sai Conference was held in the city of Rome in 1983. Bhagavan Baba sent His Divine Message to the conference which began with these words:

“Embodiments of Divine Atma!

The ancient saying ‘All streets lead to Rome’ has today come true. So many people from many different countries are meeting in this historical city. They have come from so far away and incurred heavy costs, not for the sake of knowing new people or enjoying a two days’ holiday in Rome. You should realise that you have come here to learn things you have never heard about before and derive inspiration from new ideals to live the human adventure.”

History repeated itself on 17th April 2004 when over 1100 delegates from 27 European countries gathered at the Ergife Palace Hotel in Rome to attend the Pre-World Conference. Considering the scarce financial means of most Eastern European countries and their great difficulty in obtaining visas, the response was amazingly high. Besides Italy which had over 600 delegates, the largest delegations were from Croatia with over 170, Spain with over 130 and Germany with over 70 delegates. The other countries present were: France, Slovenia, Switzerland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Estonia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Russia and Georgia. All the speeches were accompanied by a translation on stage from Italian into English and vice versa with simultaneous translations into French, Spanish, German and Croatian.

The Pre-World Conference with devotees started with a welcome address by Marco Pesce, National Chairman of the Central Council of Italy. In his opening presentation, Marco Pesce shared Swami’s words given in regard to a previous conference held in Rome in the same hotel in 1983, but amazingly suitable and inspiring also for the present one. The first speaker of the day was Prof. Dr. Thorbjorn Meyer, Zonal Chairman, who illustrated the agenda of the day and briefly explained the meaning and objective of the Conference. He then introduced Dr. Michael

Goldstein, Chairman of the Prasanthi Council, who, before giving his presentation, invited to the stage Pietro Marena, Central Coordinator of South Europe, who also served for many years as National Chairman of the Central Council of Italy, to thank him for his long years of service and dedication. Following separate workshops on Service, Devotion and Education, the convenors of each workshop conveyed the results of the discussions to the general assembly. The meeting concluded with a question-and-answer session with Dr. Goldstein addressing the queries of the delegates.

The public meeting on 18th April 2004 attracted hundreds, with the delegates and the public anxiously waiting at the hall entrance nearly two hours before the scheduled start. The hall was over its full capacity with more than 1700 participants. Marco Pesce presented the welcome address. Dr. Michael Goldstein's inspiring presentation was greeted with a spontaneous standing ovation. Prof. Antonio Rigopoulos, an expert in Indian philosophy and religion, was the next speaker who spoke on the spiritual meaning of Swami's Presence and Message. The screening of *His Work* enthralled the assembled multitudes, infusing and inspiring them with the life and teachings of Bhagavan Baba. Dr. Goldstein concluded the meeting by reading a message of Sri Sathya Sai Baba given to the Western devotees.

Buenos Aires (Argentina)

The Latin American public meeting was held on 8th May 2004 at the Gran Rex Theatre in Buenos Aires, Argentina. People began lining up outside the theatre two hours before the start of the meeting, with the queue extending almost two blocks surrounding the theatre. The theatre was filled to capacity with over 3200 people. The Ambassadors of Chile, Ukraine, Croatia and Vietnam and prominent personalities from public and private institutions were in attendance. Photographic exhibits depicting the service activities undertaken by the Sathya Sai Organisation throughout Latin America were also on display, which the public followed with much interest. After some melodious devotional songs in Spanish, the august gathering was addressed by Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman of the Prasanthi Council, and Leonardo Gutter, Member of the Prasanthi Council. The speeches were greeted with very moving and sustained applause from the public. At the end of the screening of the special film *His Work*, hundreds of faces were covered with tears with the love it had aroused in their hearts. Dr. Goldstein concluded the meeting by reading a message of Sri Sathya Sai Baba given to the Western devotees. After the meeting came to a close, hundreds stayed back in the theatre lobby for more than 45 minutes, as if mesmerised by our Beloved Lord.

The Pre-World Conference for devotees was held on 9th May 2004 at the Plaza Salguero Centre. Nearly 1200 devotees from 20 countries of Latin America attended this meeting. The speeches by Dr. Michael Goldstein and Leonardo Gutter were simultaneously translated into Portuguese, as there were more than 100 devotees from Brazil among the attendees. Three workshops on Service, Devotion and Education were held and the summaries of these discussions were placed before the general assembly. The presentations of the Central Councils, Sathya Sai Institutes and Sri Sathya Sai Trusts of Latin America enriched and enthused all present with the grand scope and vision of the Sai Mission. Following a screening of a movie on the Argentine Sathya Sai Institute and its activities, the meeting concluded with an uplifting session of devotional singing in Spanish and Portuguese, transporting one and all to the Divine Lotus Feet of Sri Sathya Sai Baba who is enshrined in all hearts.

BHARAT

Andhra Pradesh: The Mahabubnagar district, to celebrate the day of Swami's visit 25 years ago at Nagar Kurnool, started the 3rd Annasatram at Nagar Kurnool on 30th March 2004 and took out a huge rally consisting of various cultural programmes in the evening to the place where Swami addressed the public on 30th March 1979. On this occasion, the district gave to selected 80 poor people sewing machines, wet grinders, tri-cycles, etc., to enable them to seek their livelihood. This district started one drinking water distribution centre, gave new clothes to 9 selected people and also carried out Grama Seva in selected villages. The State President took part in the function.

Gujarat: Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Navsari youths organised an awareness programme 'Sri Sathya Sai Avatar Darshan' for the villages. They visited different villages thrice a week. They personally contacted all the villagers and invited them to the programme, wherein a video film was shown on Swami's life and teachings, activities of Prasanthi Nilayam as well as local and Gujarat State. They spoke on the life and message of Swami as also on spirituality and values. On an average, more than 500 villagers witnessed the programme. In some villages, the number of villagers rose to 1200. This programme was started on 8th November 2003 and continued till 30th April 2004. In all, 23 villages were covered. It has been decided to cover 81 villages before November 2005. Many villages have now started Bhajan Mandalis.

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Vapi has started a new project 'Cattle Care Guidance Camp' in which owners of the cattle were given proper guidance and advice on how to keep their cattle

healthy so that it can give more milk. They have covered five villages. It had a good response from the villagers.

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Valsad arranged a 'Tricycle Distribution Programme' in which 9 tricycles, 2 sewing machines and one pair of wooden crutches were distributed to needy people. A total of 147 tricycles have been distributed free of cost to physically challenged persons in the last two years.

Madhya Pradesh: Every 12 years, Kumbh Mela is held at Avanti (Ujjain) which is situated on the banks of holy river Kshipra and was the capital of King Vikramaditya. Ujjain is known as the place of Mahakal, since one of 12 Jyotirlingas is situated here. This is also a place of one of 52 Shakti Peethas as narrated in the Puranas. Lakhs of people came to Ujjain in April 2004 to take part in this sacred festival.

Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Madhya Pradesh set up a huge Pandal (Shamiana) which accommodated the following facilities:

An information centre provided information regarding location of railway and bus timings, medical services, police administration, etc. The maps of total area for Kumbh Mela were also displayed.

Two OPD medical centres provided allopathic and homeopathic medicines for general ailments.

A big hall was set up with front entrance where the main altar was made, displaying a bust pose of Swami and Shirdi Sai on either side. A throne for Swami was also kept. Daily Omkaram and Suprabhatam was held at 5 a.m. Bhajans were held in the morning and evening followed by talks on Swami's life and mission. Arati was offered to Swami at both the times. The hall could accommodate 500-600 persons and was tastefully decorated with lights, etc. Bhajan cassettes were also played in the day time.

An exhibition on the Life and Mission of Swami was put up along with photographs of service activities of the State. The exhibits were made available by Tamil Nadu State Organisation who provided the CDs. The captions were given in both English and Hindi. An altar of Swami's portrait was kept at the entrance and exit points of the Exhibition Hall. Every person after seeing the exhibition was given Vibhuti Prasadam packets, a brochure of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation and abstracts of a talk given by Swami on the birth and life of his previous incarnation, Sai Baba of Shirdi.

One of the major service activities undertaken was providing drinking water where about 30 volunteers were deployed bearing cans of drinking water, who went around about 2 to 3 km and provided cool drinking water in a glass.

Swami's blessings and presence was felt by one and all. Vibhuti manifested from two photographs of Swami and the visitors felt blessed to have Swami's Darshan. On an average, 600 to 700 persons visited the Pandal everyday.

You are the Light

Simple faith in the words of the wise is more profitable than years of study and discussion. Meditate on such a Mahavakya as Tattwamasi (That thou art). As you go on revolving it in your mind, meanings will dawn upon you without the help of any commentary. Commentaries only tend to confuse you. Think of 'Tat', analyse 'twam', and then you will be convinced that 'asi' is the only solution. You are in the Light; the Light is in you; you are the Light – these are the steps.

- Baba

DIVINE DISCOURSE: 15TH APRIL 2004

DEVELOP LOVE TO EXPERIENCE DIVINITY

All names and forms are but the manifestations of the Supreme Being who is the embodiment of peace and auspiciousness. He is Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute and non-dual. He is Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram (Truth, Goodness, Beauty). (Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Many describe at length the power of Sai, the love of Sai and the truth and peace that He embodies. But, do they really practise Sai's teachings? The answer is an emphatic no. That is why I do not feel like giving discourses these days. People are heroes in giving speeches but zeros in practice. What is the use of speaking to those who do not put My teachings into practice? People are interested in acquiring bookish knowledge but not in practising what they have learnt. No benefit accrues by merely learning the teachings by rote. You only strain your throat when you do not practise what you preach. Different people have different opinions about the path of spirituality. However, spirituality can neither be described in words nor be understood by merely listening to discourses. Spiritual teachings cannot fill your heart with bliss unless you put them into practice.

Krishna Permeates every Atom of the Universe

It was the time of the Mahabharata war. One day, Abhimanyu approached his mother Subhadra with the request to grant him permission to enter Padmavyuha (lotus-shaped military formation). He prayed to his mother to bless him so that he could vanquish the enemy and emerge victorious. Subhadra said, "My dear son, I will certainly bless you to emerge victorious but ultimately it is God's Will that prevails. Everything depends on His grace. How can I permit you to enter Padmavyuha knowing fully well the danger involved in it? Padmavyuha is not an ordinary formation. It has been devised by the great military genius Dronacharya himself. Moreover, your wife is in the family way. We do not know whether the time is favourable for us or not. Your father Arjuna and uncle Krishna are also not here to give you necessary guidance and support. Hence, give up the idea of going to the battlefield." Abhimanyu replied, "Mother, there is no place where my uncle Krishna is not present. He is everywhere." Bestowing her blessing on her son, Subhadra said, "Krishna is the embodiment of love. Every atom of the universe bears the touch of His love. His love can be experienced through love only; there is no other way to experience His love. But, my dear son, how can you experience it in the battlefield? You see Lord Krishna everywhere. But do not act out of ego. Do not think that your views have divine sanction."

Lord Krishna permeates every atom of the universe. *Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Sruthimalloke Sarvamavruthya Tishthati* (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe).

He is love personified. One can experience Him only through love. You can earn His grace only through love. Love can be conquered only through love. When there is love, the question of war does not arise at all. Love confers peace, prosperity, success, auspiciousness and bliss. They are not separate from each other; they are the various aspects of love. The principle of love is present in everyone in the form of Atma. The Atma is infinite and eternal. That is why the Vedas declared, *Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma* (Brahman is the embodiment of truth, wisdom and eternity). Where is God? He is everywhere in the form of Atma. He is present in all beings. All names and forms are His. He is the embodiment of truth and bliss.

Everything is Good in God's Creation

God's ways are mysterious. People develop doubts as they are unable to understand His actions. You consider something as good and some other thing as bad but everything happens according to God's Will. You say yes for good and no for bad but both are the manifestations of God. Man tries to judge something as good for him and some other thing as bad. It is impossible for man to make correct judgement. How can he know what is good for him? Good and bad happen according to Divine Will. Certain forms may not be pleasing to the eye but for God everything is Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram (truth, goodness and beauty). How can you describe such a principle? There is beauty in whatever God does. But none can fathom His ways. From a worldly viewpoint, some things may appear bad to the eye but when you enquire deeply, you understand the truth that everything is good. Since you have only external vision, you consider something as beautiful and some other as ugly. Whatever God creates is beautiful. But people are not able to appreciate real beauty because of their external outlook. If you enquire into the truth, you will know that everything in God's creation is beautiful. To every mother, her child appears to be beautiful. None can deny this fact. A child may appear to be ugly to you but his mother sees only beauty in him. You have no right to dispute the judgement of the mother in this regard. Similar is the case with God's creation. Then, how can you say that something is good and some other thing is bad? The entire world is full of beauty and charm. Can you show Me anything right from microcosm to macrocosm that is bad in this vast universe? It is impossible. You should accept everything as God's Will with an open mind. Consider everything as good. You do not have any right to pass judgement on God's creation or on what He does. The ways of God are highly mysterious and wonderful.

The Sankalpa (Will) of the Lord and His stories are most wonderful and sacred in all the three worlds. They are like sickles that cut the creepers of worldly bondage. They are most ennobling and elevating. They confer bliss on the sages and seers doing penance in forests.
(Telugu Poem)

See Divinity in God's Creation

Prahlada was a great devotee of the Lord. He incessantly chanted the Divine Name of Narayana and consequently experienced his oneness with the Lord. He could see the entire world as the manifestation of Lord Narayana. God pervades the entire universe. Such being the case, how can you say that God is present here and He is not there? You see the world

but you fail to recognise it as the form of God. In fact, everything is divine. Do not get deluded by whatever you see with your eyes.

Man does not have any power of his own. It is divine power that makes him function. But man, out of his ignorance, is carried away by a sense of doership and develops ego. This is what we witness in the world today. Under these circumstances, it is not possible to differentiate between truth and untruth. It is better to consider everything as good. When God is all-pervasive, how can there be anything bad? Try to visualise God everywhere. Do not superimpose your feelings on His. It is impossible to understand the principle of Divinity through the study of scriptural texts or worldly education. Even sages and seers of yore were unable to comprehend Divinity. He is beyond the three worlds. How can anyone understand such Divinity? What Ajit Popat (an earlier speaker) has said is true. But one should be realistic in one's views. You say that you have seen the form of Lord Vishnu. How does He look like? You say that He has Shankha, Chakra, Gada and Padma (conch, discus, mace and lotus) in His four hands. Shankha, Chakra, Gada and Padma are only symbolic. Such a form does not correspond to reality. It is only a superimposition of your feelings but not the ultimate truth.

Suppose, you find a snake in front of you while walking on a road. You think it is poisonous. Who is relatively more poisonous? Is not man more poisonous when all his thoughts, words and deeds are full of poison? In fact, he is more dangerous than the snake. Whatever is seen may not correspond to reality. You have to enquire deeply to know the truth. The Mahabharata is full of these teachings. He is a true human being who understands the teachings of the Mahabharata and puts them into practice. The sacred teachings of this epic are a great contribution of Bharat to mankind. With your limited understanding, you have no right to pass judgement on anything. True wisdom lies in accepting everything as good and following the path of truth.

Embodiments of Love!

There is love in each of you but you cannot experience it unless you give up body attachment.

This body is a den of dirt, and prone to diseases; it is subject to change from time to time; it cannot cross the ocean of Samsara. It is nothing but a structure of bones. Oh mind! Do not be under the delusion that body is permanent. Instead take refuge at the Divine Lotus Feet.

(Telugu Poem)

How foolish is it to develop attachment to such a transient body? The world appears to be permanent but in reality it is not so. What appears good to the naked eye may not be so in reality. To see bad in good is a great sin. You should try to see good even in bad. Never condemn anything as bad. Even if something appears to be bad, you should enquire deeply and try to visualise the positive aspect in it. You find innumerable forms in this vast world. However, all forms have emerged from the same source. They are the different aspects of the same divinity. All forms are essentially divine. Such being the case, how can you condemn something as bad? Everything is good. When you eat food, you consider it sacred. So long as the food remains in your stomach, you feel it is good. But when it comes out as waste, you cannot bear its sight and smell. If it is so disgusting, how could you keep it in your

stomach earlier? Good and bad depend on your likes and dislikes. Leave aside your likes and dislikes. You have to keep in mind what God likes. Only God knows what is good for you. Hence, surrender to His Will and take refuge in Him.

True Love is Changeless and Eternal

Embodiments of Love!

The principle of love cannot be described in words. All descriptions will only reflect a part of the whole truth. So, instead of trying to describe it, make efforts to become deserving of God's love. Love is the form of God. He may bestow His love on you in any form. Love is your ultimate goal. Only love can sanctify your life. Hence, develop love more and more. Love alone will protect you. Love for the physical body is attachment. A child becomes a youth and a youth becomes old, and accordingly the physical body undergoes change and gradually loses its beauty and charm with the passage of time. But love remains constant at all times. The term Prema (love) is not just a word; it has a form. There is no place where love does not exist. Love is all-pervasive. It encompasses Anda, Pinda and Brahmanda. Love is the basis of all our activities such as eating, talking, walking, etc. In fact, love sustains our life. People tend to forget such a sacred principle of love even after knowing its significance. How foolish they are! One should experience love, enjoy it and share it with others.

Embodiments of Love!

It is impossible to describe the principle of love in full. Love attracts all. Love of God has manifested in the form of Nature. Therefore, Nature attracts all. *Karshati Iti Krishna* (Krishna is one who attracts). God attracts everyone and confers bliss on all. He is the embodiment of sweetness. People prepare various types of sweets but sugar is the same in all. Similarly, divinity is the same in all names and forms we see in this world. God cannot be limited to any particular form. Consider all forms as His. You may go anywhere, worship any form. All forms are divine. When you develop such love for and faith in God, you can see Him everywhere and experience His love. It is not possible to experience divinity without developing love. That is why the Gopikas prayed to Krishna thus:

Oh Krishna, play Your sweet flute and sow the seeds of love in the desert of loveless hearts.

Let the rain of love fall on earth and make the rivers of love flow. (Telugu Song)

The Gopikas yearned for Krishna's love and nothing else. You are the drops of nectarine love. A number of drops join to make a stream which ultimately merges in the ocean. But today man is not able to understand what true love is. If he likes a particular object, he thinks he loves it. When you have likes, you will also have dislikes. But when you have love, there cannot be anything negative. Love is changeless and eternal. It is divine. It is truly the form of divinity. *Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam, Bhavateetam, Trigunarahitam* (One without a second, eternal, pure, unchanging, the witness of all functions of the intellect, beyond all mental conditions and the three Gunas of Sattwa, Rajas and Thamas).

It is not possible to describe love in worldly parlance. It is foolishness to think of love in a worldly sense. You cannot find a term equivalent to love. You may describe love in various

ways for your own satisfaction. But none of them corresponds to the reality. Only love equals love. It is not possible to describe it in any other way. It is this divine principle of love which you have to understand and practise.

Embodiments of Love!

You may get immersed in love, experience it and enjoy it. But your hunger for love can never be satiated. Love can be experienced only through love. There is no other path to experience love. Love is love and that is all. Have firm faith that God is the embodiment of love. Love Him wholeheartedly. Do not superimpose your worldly love on God's love. His is the only true and eternal love. Focus your love only on God. God is present everywhere in the form of love. You should never entertain doubts in this regard. The stream of love should flow in you incessantly. Only then can you have the divine vision. No doubt, you have the desire to see God but you are not expanding your love. If you are interested, I am ready to grant you the vision of God. But you can see Him provided you cultivate true and eternal love in you.

Embodiments of Love!

I always teach you love, love and love alone. You may try to describe love in various ways. It is impossible to do so. Love has only one form, i.e., the form of attraction. Love confers bliss and grace. *Love is God, live in love.* On some other occasion, I shall dwell further on the principle of love. Worldly love is but artificial. But man, out of his ignorance, thinks that there is happiness in it. All that man loves is negative. He should direct his love towards the positive principle. It never changes. Here is a small example. You have been coming here for a number of years. Do you ever feel satiated with Swami's Darshan? No. The same Swami whom you saw in the morning comes again in the evening. But you long to see Him again and again. The reason for this longing is love.

(Bhagavan brought His Divine Discourse to a close with the Bhajan, "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho ...*")

- **From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall, Brindavan, Whitefield (Bangalore) on 15th April 2004.**

THE PATH OF TOTAL SURRENDER

In this interview Sri K. Anil Kumar, a faculty member of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, tells Dr. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor of the Institute, some interesting and illuminating incidents from the life of two old and ardent devotees of Bhagavan Baba – Sri Ramabrahmam and Sri Kamavadhani. Both of them followed the path of total surrender and earned Bhagavan's grace and proximity.

G.V. I would like you to speak about some old timers because they played a vital role in shaping the things of what we now take for granted. They were the pioneers. It is appropriate that we remember those pioneers. One of them whose name I heard you mention often is Sri Ramabrahmam. So, I would like you to tell us a little bit about Sri Ramabrahmam starting with when you first came to know him.

A.K. Sri K. Ramabrahmam belonged to Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. Well, I knew him for 30 years, and I moved with him intimately ever since I took charge as the Principal of the Brindavan Campus, Bangalore in the year 1989. He was the caretaker then and used to visit me almost everyday. I was staying alone in the bungalow given to me at that time as my wife did not join me and my children were still studying. He used to come to me and give a pep talk since initially I did not know how to conduct myself with Swami. He served as the most faithful worker of Sai, a devotee par excellence.

G.V. Incidentally, when did Sri Ramabrahmam first come to Swami?

A.K. He said, he stayed with Swami for 30 long years.

G.V. So, that is what he told you in 1989; that means, more or less from 1959.

A.K. He stayed in Bangalore.

G.V. So, he was a Bangalore man, not Puttaparthi man.

A.K. It was all a forest in those days and there were no buildings.

G.V. Swami used to spend a lot of time at Brindavan those days.

A.K. Except the central old building, there was no other building whatsoever. There was only Swami's building in the centre. No lights as we find today. They moved in the midst of snakes. There are many, many things to learn from the late Sri Ramabrahmam. He never considered his job of caretaker of Brindavan as a means to earn his livelihood. He told me, "Never consider that this is your job, never consider that the college is a place where you work. Consider that these things belong to you. Just as you take care of your property, you should take care of Swami's college, hostel. Take care of the students, as you would take care of your own children." Sri Ramabrahmam had that spirit in him throughout. But the greatest thing about him was that he would never pray to Swami for anything. He said, "Never ask any personal favour from Bhagavan. He knows everything. When you do His work, He will do your work." What a great statement it is!

Sri Ramabrahmam had three sons; they used to visit their parents at Brindavan. Whenever the children came, they stayed outside with the devotees. He never told Swami that his son had come. But Swami always told him, "Ramabrahmam, your first son has come, give him accommodation. Ramabrahmam, your second son is there, give him accommodation." Sri Ramabrahmam told me that we should never ask any favour from Swami. He will take care of us. We should do our work. Another thing he told was also a great statement. I asked, "How is that you are very serious in front of Bhagavan? I have never seen you smiling or cutting a joke. You stand like a military man with folded hands." He said, "Look here, I don't see Swami as you see Him. I observe three parallel lines of Vibhuti on His forehead. That makes me feel that I am in front of God. I cannot smile, I cannot take Him in an easy way. So, I always maintain that spirit."

Then another point he said, "If you were to continue staying with Swami, follow His instructions scrupulously, no margin whatsoever." He gave an illustration from his own life. Once Swami told him, "Why does your wife keep shouting so much? I hear her voice. The people in the Mandir also hear her voice." The very next day, he dropped her back home in Krishna district, 17 hours drive from Bangalore. Then he reported to Swami, "Swami, she is no longer here. You are free from her disturbing voice." Then after a week, Swami asked, "When is she coming, Ramabrahmam?" "I don't know, Swami", replied Sri Ramabrahmam. Again after a few days Swami asked, "When is she coming, Ramabrahmam?" "I don't know, Swami." This divine romance continued for a long time. Finally, Bhagavan became stern and said, "Ramabrahmam, I will send you out if you don't bring your wife." So, he had to go and bring his wife. He said, "There was a choice between Bhagavan and wife, I chose Bhagavan and not my wife."

G.V. Is it not very similar to what Swami often says about great devotees like Prahlada, Mira, Mahabali, so on and so forth? Even in this Kali Age, there are people like Sri Ramabrahmam. I have not come across examples of a choice between wife and God. This is a classic example.

A.K. He also said, "We have to follow Swami carefully. We cannot take anything for granted." He gave an instance. Bhagavan asked him to wear His own ochre robe. Sri Ramabrahmam was a well-built man, a hefty personality. He said, "Swami, my head won't fit into Your robe. How do You expect me to wear it?" Swami said, "No, nothing doing. You have to wear it." With great difficulty, he could push his head into the robe. He became breathless and was almost in tears. As he started wearing, the robe started expanding. Finally, it was a correct fit to his size. Sri Ramabrahmam said, "When He tells you to do something, He sees to it that you are able to do the task."

G.V. Was it to give Sri Ramabrahmam a taste of His Divinity?

A.K. That's what he always told. Another example. Once Swami called, "Ramabrahmam, come here." He was having a thermos flask in his hand. So, he thought it would be improper to go with the flask. He went into the kitchen, kept the flask, climbed up the steps and went to Swami. Swami said, "I called you a few minutes ago. Better you go back."

Once a big borewell was being dug in Brindavan. Seva Dal volunteers were at work. In spite of 20 - 30 feet depth, they could not get water. Sri Ramabrahmam happened to pass that way. Seva Dal members said, "Sir, why don't you also take a crowbar and help us in digging the well? Perhaps by the hands of a devotee like you, we may get water. Our efforts are in vain. You are the grand old man of Brindavan. Come on, take this crowbar and render some service." He was 70 years old at that time. He forgot his age, took the crowbar and started digging. Water sprang up immediately. But while returning, he slipped and fell on the ground. His pant and shirt became dirty. It was time for him to report to Bhagavan. Immediately he went, changed his dress, and reported to Bhagavan. Bhagavan said, "When you fell down there, I immediately came to your rescue. But some months back, when I called you, you went into the kitchen and took some time to come. You delayed in attending to My work, whereas I did not delay; I immediately rushed to save you. This you must learn."

He often used to tell the devotees, "This is my experience, just as we expect Bhagavan to come to our rescue immediately, we should also do His work without any delay."

Sri Ramabrahmam narrated another experience. One day, Swami said suddenly, "Ramabrahmam, your second son has died. Don't tell your wife. She will be shocked. Both of you go to your native place. Finish off all that you are supposed to do and return." When they reached their native place, his wife saw the dead body of her second son. All the 17 hours, this man remained tight-lipped without divulging anything whatsoever since Swami had told him not to tell her. There the wife felt very bad that even after having come to know he did not tell her. He replied, "I would have revealed everything, but Swami instructed me not to tell anything because you had to travel for 17 hours. As a mother, you would not have been able to bear it." They finished the final rites and returned to Brindavan. His wife started crying, "Oh God! We lost our son." Swami said, "Why do you cry? He is with Me." "Swami, is he with You?" She asked. Swami replied, "Yes, he is with Me." Swami asked, "Do you want to see your son?" Then Bhagavan asked the couple to go into the interview room. They saw with their own eyes their second son sitting there, who had already been cremated. When Swami says, he is with Me, he is really there.

G.V. Apparently, this is not the first such experience. Many others had this kind of experience. I was talking to the Raja of Venkatagiri, the present younger Raja. When Swami first went to Venkatagiri, after keeping the family waiting for several years, the first thing he (the elder Raja, now no more) asked was, "I want to see my mother who is no more." Swami said, "You want to see your mother, grandmother!" Swami looked at the wall and called out her name. She stepped out from the wall. The Raja touched her. She was in flesh and blood; he also talked to her.

A.K. Sri Ramabrahmam gave another instance. It was an occasion wherein he had to attend his granddaughter's wedding. He gave an invitation to Bhagavan personally. "Swami said, "You go." He was expecting that Bhagavan would tell him to go on 14th since his granddaughter's wedding was on 15th. But Swami did not say anything. After the marriage was over, Swami started enquiring, "Ramabrahmam, why did you not go?" Then he said, "Bhagavan, I take it positively. I feel that You did not want me to attend. So, I kept quiet without asking You." Bhagavan said, "Good boy, this is the sign of a devotee." He was not for any relationships nor for any business. Before coming to Bhagavan, he was a very rich man, involved in tobacco business. He did not have time even to count his cash.

G.V. And he was working here as caretaker. How did he happen to come to Swami?

A.K. As ill-luck would have it, he lost all his money. It was then that he came to Swami. His sons told that they were ever grateful to Swami for He took care of their parents for forty long years. They said, "Our parents never came to stay with us. On the other hand, we were their guests; they were never our guests."

I want to tell you one more incident. It was the time when Sri B.D. Jatti was the Vice President of India. He was the one who inaugurated the hostel building. He was an ardent devotee of Bhagavan. It was Indo-Pak war time. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, sent Sri B.D. Jatti all the way to seek Bhagavan's blessings. He came by a special flight and went straight to Brindavan. It was 6 o' clock in the evening. Bhagavan had already

retired for the day. As Sri Jatti was the Vice President of India then, he came along with a big convoy of cabinet ministers, local authorities and the Chief Minister of Karnataka. In their presence, Sri B.D. Jatti pleaded with Sri Ramabrahmam, "I have to report to the Prime Minister before sunrise. Please inform Swami that I am waiting for Him here. I must immediately go." Sri Ramabrahmam said, "I am sorry, sir. You can take my head. But you can never force me to knock the door of Bhagavan and request Him to talk to you. Impossible! Once Bhagavan retires, nobody dares to knock the door. I am sorry. If you want, you can have my head. That's all." Then Sri B.D. Jatti with folded hands said, "Okay, sir, what am I to do now?"

G.V. The Vice President of India said so?

A.K. "I suggest to you only one thing, sir. Sit here, squat on the floor and chant Sai Ram. You do it and Swami will take care", said Sri Ramabrahmam. Sri B.D. Jatti along with other cabinet ministers sat there repeating Sai Ram. What happened? After half an hour, Sri Ramabrahmam heard a knock from Swami's room. Swami opened the door and said, "Ramabrahmam, I am coming. Jatti is waiting for Me. Tell Jatti that I am coming." Swami came down, spoke to Sri Jatti who conveyed to Swami what he had been asked to tell. Sri Ramabrahmam said, "Had I not followed Swami's instructions, Sri Jatti would have been in trouble, and I would also have been in trouble. It would have been a very bad experience for me. Moreover, it was revealed to all that Swami knew everything – the urgency of the situation, the need to talk, when, where and how. None can force Bhagavan. Everybody has to wait for Bhagavan." That's what Sri Ramabrahmam used to tell me.

G.V. You have seen Sri Ramabrahmam from close quarters and interacted with him intimately. You are seeing so many other people also and are interacting with some of them closely. Do you feel that the kind of loyal devotees that Bhagavan had those days are scarce these days or there are still people with steadfast one-pointedness? Do you feel the people now are different because of the change in environment and climate or do you feel that devotees are devotees always?

A.K. There is a decline in standards in every walk of life. So, naturally there is a decline in standards in this field also.

G.V. Is it because they don't have these experiences or something else is the reason?

A.K. Old devotees had intense love for Bhagavan. For them, love for Bhagavan was first. Today it is not so. My intention, my motive, my desire first, devotion next. But in their case, devotion first, other things next. So, priorities are different.

G.V. Swami also talks about the Vedic scholar Sri Kamavadhani who renounced everything and refused to go back home. It is very nice to hear about another devotee of the same stature. Do you know anything about Sri Kamavadhani?

A.K. Excepting what I have heard from Bhagavan, I do not know much.

G.V. Okay, tell us about that.

A.K. Bhagavan said a few things about Sri Kamavadhani.

G.V. You must have seen him.

A.K. I saw him.

G.V. Have you talked to him.

A.K. Yes. Bhagavan said a few things about him. He was a great scholar in Vedic literature. I can say, none could equal him in this field. He was of that stature. He was well-versed in all the Vedas, a most respected person in the State of Andhra Pradesh, particularly East Godavari, and a very rich man. But he said goodbye to his family, leaving all the property, children and grandchildren, and settled here at Prasanthi Nilayam.

G.V. That was long ago.

A.K. It was he who started teaching Vedic Mantras to our students here. There was a Veda Pathashala (school) in those days. He gave training to the students. He was incharge of all Dasara celebrations, and no surprise, one could easily make out Sri Kamavadhani's voice during Dasara celebrations as against the voice of the rest. There might be a hundred people, yet Sri Kamavadhani's voice was distinct, golden voice. The Mantras have to be chanted like that. He was a scholar and a great believer. Having come here, he never went back. But it so happened that Bhagavan wanted him to follow Him during His trip to East Godavari. Sri Kamavadhani belonged to East Godavari and the very village which he belonged to was also included in Bhagavan's programme. That is how Bhagavan plans. Bhagavan thought, "This man has not gone to his village, let him go to his people and spend some time." Bhagavan took him along with Him straight to his house. Everybody received them and Swami gave a nice talk also there. At the end of it, the children, grandchildren came to Sri Kamavadhani and said, "You have come after a long time, spend a couple of days with us and then join Bhagavan." This man said, "Nothing doing, I am leaving right now. I am following Bhagavan in His trip to East Godavari district. I am not going to stay here." Then he followed Bhagavan.

G.V. And what did Swami say?

A.K. Swami was just watching the drama and appreciated the devotion of Sri Kamavadhani. Having gone all the way to his house, Sri Kamavadhani had no regrets that he did not stay for more than a day or so, even less than that.

G.V. I heard he lived for one hundred years.

A.K. Yes, he was over hundred at the time of his death. Everyday, he used to report to Swami, both in the morning and evening, and Swami would grant him Padanamaskar. One day, Swami told him, "Go home, you don't have to see Me in the afternoon." He went home, did Puja, had his food and breathed his last. That is why Bhagavan didn't want him to come again. That too happened on the day he performed Sita Rama Kalyanam in the Mandir. Having performed the Divine wedding in accordance with Vedic injunctions, having had a sumptuous lunch, sitting comfortably, he left his mortal coil.

G.V. Well, I think, I can go on and on. But you must be tired. Let us stop at this point.

Courtesy: **Radio Sai Global Harmony**
Prasanthi Nilayam

DASARA DISCOURSES – VI

GOD IS THE EMBODIMENT OF PERFECTION

*Like a stream of water that flows down the hills,
Courage emerges from the heart of a person who trusts in God.*

(Telugu Poem)

*Oh man, how do you expect to attain God without understanding and
experiencing the principle of love which is the very form of God?*

(Telugu Poem)

Since time immemorial, in this sacred land of Bharat, people have been following Vedic traditions, performing Yajnas and experiencing bliss therefrom. In the Vedic tradition, there are four unique modes of worship. They are: Sathyavathi, Angavathi, Anyavathi and Nidanavathi.

Four Unique Modes of Worship

What is Sathyavathi Aradhana (worship)? In this mode of worship, the seeker investigates the truth with the conviction that Divinity pervades the entire cosmos, just as sweetness is present in every drop of syrup and butter in every drop of milk. It envisages that Divinity is present in all beings and in all names and forms. Just as the screen is the basis for the pictures projected on it, Divinity is the fundamental basis for the entire creation but is itself unnoticed. Screen projects all the pictures projected on it; likewise, Divinity pervades the entire creation. Hence, Sathyavathi mode of worship is based on the omnipresence of Divinity. It demonstrates unity in diversity. It echoes the Vedic dictum: *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (God is one but scholars refer to Him by many names). God is the embodiment of truth. That is why the ancient Rishis extolled Him as Sathya Swarupa. *Trikalabadhyam Sathyam* (Truth is changeless in all the three periods of time). Such truth shines forth in everybody as love. When you fill your heart with love, you will become love personified. Then there can be no scope for hatred in your heart. *Advashtha Sarva Bhutanam* (hatred towards none).

Angavathi refers to the worship of the five elements – earth, water, fire, air and ether considering them as manifestations of the Divine. The earth bears the burden of mighty mountains, vast oceans, dense forests, villages, towns and cities. Likewise, the remaining four elements are also responsible for the sustenance of creation. The Bharatiyas extol earth as Bhudevi (mother earth), water as Gangadevi (Mother Ganga), fire as Agnideva (god of fire) and air as Vayudeva (god of wind) and offer their salutations to them.

Anyavathi refers to visualising the many faceted Divinity in various names and forms and worshipping them. For example, Siva is described as Pinakapani (wielder of the bow Pinaka) and Rama is described as Kodandapani (wielder of the bow Kodanda). Our ancients worshipped these forms of God, established their identity with them and experienced bliss.

Nidanavathi represents the nine paths of devotion, namely, Sravanam (listening), Kirtanam (singing), Vishnusmaranam (contemplating on the Lord), Padasevanam (service to the Lotus Feet), Vandanam (salutation), Archanam (worship), Dasyam (to be a servant of the Lord), Sneham (friendship), Atmanivedanam (self surrender). The ancient sages and seers attained supreme bliss by following these nine paths of devotion.

You can Please God with Total Dedication

Not only in Bharat, there were many great men in other countries also who immersed themselves in divine bliss by their earnest devotion to God. A violin maker of Italy, for example, worshipped God with total dedication. His name was Antony. He used to earn his livelihood by making violins, but being a perfectionist, he used to take one full year to make one violin. His friends chided him saying, "Oh mad man, how do you expect to eke out your livelihood if you spend a whole year to make one violin?" Antony replied, "God is the embodiment of perfection. Whatever He does is absolutely perfect. He will be pleased only when we discharge our duty in the most perfect manner. All my work will be utter waste if God is not satisfied." Antony's violins were very famous and highly valuable. The reason was that he used to make them with sacred feelings. He was sanctifying his time by doing his work perfectly and thus pleasing God. God is the embodiment of perfection. It is only the perfect way of worship that can please God.

Poornamada Poornamidam

Poornat Poornamudachyate

Poornasya Poornamadaya Poornamevavashishyate

(That is whole, this is whole. When the whole is taken out of the whole, what remains is again the whole.)

Perfection arises out of love. Only through total love can one please God. There is nothing greater than love. No benefit accrues from chanting various names of the Lord without the spring of love in the heart. It is enough even if only one name is chanted wholeheartedly with a feeling of love. All your work must be totally dedicated to God. It should be done with total love and pure heart. This is the essence of Nidanavathi mode of worship.

It is quality that God values, not quantity. You may perform Narayana Seva (feeding the poor) on a large scale but you cannot please God without purity of heart. God will be pleased even with one morsel of food offered with sacred feelings. All that you do with purity of heart will find fulfilment. Do your work properly and perfectly, even if more time is spent in the process. But do not be in haste and do not work half-heartedly. Divinity can be recognised only by those who have a pure heart. Everybody cannot have such pure-heartedness. Sri Aurobindo could recognise the advent of Divinity on earth because of his pure-heartedness. On 24th November 1926, Sri Aurobindo declared before a congregation of his devotees that God had incarnated on the earth on the previous day. (*loud prolonged applause*).

Yajnas Spread Divine Vibrations

Since ancient times, various types of Yajnas have been performed in this sacred land of Bharat. *Yajno Vai Vishnu* (Yajna is the very form of Vishnu). Some people are under the mistaken notion that they can please God by offering costly items. What one has to offer God is pure heart. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as is the feeling, so is the result). If you are aspiring for good results, offer only good feelings to God and there should be perfect harmony in your thought, word and deed. *Manasyekam Vachasyekam Karmanyekam Mahatmanaam* (he is a noble soul whose thought, word and deed are in perfect harmony).

Once during the performance of a Yajna, an individual criticised the Vedic priests saying that they were wasting the valuable ghee by pouring it into the sacrificial fire. Then a Vedic scholar by name Amnaya Vachaspathi gave a befitting reply thus: "You do not call it a waste if a farmer sows four bags of paddy in his field because after a few months he will reap 40 bags of rice. Similar is the case with Yajna too. The sacred smoke arising from the sacrificial fire fully charged with the Divine Name and the sacred Vedic Mantras, purifies the atmosphere." A programme that is broadcast by the Delhi Radio Station can be heard throughout the country through the medium of electromagnetic waves. Likewise, the sacred vibrations of the Vedic Mantras chanted by the priests spread all over the world. Each Vedic Mantra chanted during the Yajna has a deep inner meaning associated with it. Each Mantra is dedicated to a particular deity. A letter with correct address reaches its destination. The Mantras are like the addresses of the deities. When they are chanted with proper intonation, they will yield the desired results.

Besides total purity, devotion and dedication, complete adherence to truth is the fundamental basis of Sathyavathi. Truth is not to be mixed even with an iota of untruth. Even a little untruth will bring about decadence and ruination. Since ancient times, Veda Purusha Sapthaha Jnana Yajna has been performed by our ancients for the attainment of truth. God is the Veda Purusha. He is the composer of the Vedas. Veda Purusha is propitiated and worshipped for seven days with the performance of Yajna. Seven is an auspicious number for it corresponds to Saptha Samundras (seven seas), Saptha Varnas (seven colours), Saptha Swaras (seven notes) and Saptha Rishis (seven sages).

The Saptha Rishis transformed Ratnakara, a fierce dacoit and murderer, to Sage Valmiki. One day, they confronted him to show the path of goodness to him. They urged him to give up his wicked deeds as he would have to bear the consequences of his horrible actions. He said that he could not do so, as it was the only way to feed his wife and children. Then the Saptha Rishis asked him to find out from his wife and children whether they were prepared to share the sin he committed for their sake. He went home and asked his wife and children, "Are you prepared to share my sin just as you share my booty everyday?" They replied in the negative. His wife said that only he was responsible for the merit or sin he committed. This incident opened his eyes. He went back to the Saptha Rishis, fell at their feet and prayed for guidance. They told him to contemplate on Lord Rama and chant His Name incessantly. He did accordingly, and consequently, his face shone with the divine effulgence of Lord Rama. Your thoughts play a vital role in shaping your personality.

Everyone has to Bear the Con-sequences of his Actions

Embodiments of Love!

One who thinks of God constantly will never be put to hardships. You may argue that you continue to suffer though you think of God all the time. How can you say that thinking of God has not helped you at all? It certainly would have mitigated your suffering without your knowledge. God's grace will certainly alleviate your suffering. By chanting Divine Name, even mountains of sin will vanish like mist into thin air. *Sarvada Sarvakaleshu Sarvatra Harichintanam*. You should think of God at all places, at all times and under all circumstances with pure love and total faith. Your prayers will be answered only when there is sincerity in you.

When I returned to Puttaparthi from Uravakonda, two persons – Subbaiah Shetty and Kodanda Shetty came from Anantapur. One of them was finding it difficult to get an alliance for his daughter. He said, "Sathya Sai Baba, I will believe that you are God only if I can find a suitable alliance for my daughter soon. I will build Chitikelameda (snapping mansion) for You if my daughter gets married within this month." Everyone was curious to know as to what he would do. His daughter got married within the same month. He came to the Old Mandir with a plate containing a coconut and some flowers. He said, "Swami, You have fulfilled my desire. Now I have to keep up my word. Please permit me to build a Chitikelameda for You." Many others were watching with curiosity. Even Subbamma came there thinking that he was going to give a big mansion for Swami. I very well knew what he was up to. He gave Arati and asked, "Swami, will You permit me to build Chitikelameda now?" In order to amuse the onlookers, I said, "All right, go ahead." He started snapping his fingers around Me, saying, "This is the first wall, this is the second wall, this is the third wall, this is the roof," so on and so forth. In the end, he said, "Here is God." Saying this, he fell at My feet and broke the coconut. Likewise, some people resort to mean strategies and try to cheat even God! They certainly have to face the consequences of their actions.

God neither favours nor disfavours anybody. Whatever one experiences is the result of one's own actions. In this context, one devotee prayed to God thus, "Oh God, You appeared as Yama to Kamsa, who had developed hatred towards You. On the other hand, You appeared as the Lord Himself to Ugrasena, the pious father of Kamsa. You appeared as Lord Narayana to Prahlada, who had immense faith in You, whereas You appeared as God of Death to Hiranyakasipu, who opposed You. To Vibhishana, who believed in You, You appeared as Rama. But to Ravana, who defied You, You became Yama." Yama and Rama are one and the same. Depending on the feelings, one sees Him as Rama and the other sees Him as Yama. Saint Purandaradasa described the glory of the Lord thus:

Who planted the tree on the mountain top and watered it? Who gave the red beak to the green parrot? Who gave the wonderful colours to the feathers of the peacock and to the flowers of the entire world? God is the fundamental basis of all creation. (Kannada Song)

You may make a bunch of plastic grapes and plastic lotuses, but will any honeybee go near them? No. But they swarm around the natural lotus created by God and suck nectar from it. The creation of God is most sweet and wonderful. None can comprehend and describe the mystery of God. The stories of the Lord are most mysterious, wonderful and

sacred. Everything has been created by Divine Sankalpa. Divine Will can accomplish anything and everything.

No one is Greater than a True Devotee

Do all actions with sacred feelings. Whatever you do with purity of heart will give you fulfilment in life. You sanctify time when you spend it in performing good deeds. When you thus sanctify time, the time will sanctify you. God is extolled as *Kalaya Namah, Kala Kalaya Namah, Kaladarpa Damanaya Namah, Kalateetaya Namah, Kalaswarupaya Namah, Kalaniyamitaya Namah* (salutations to time, to the one who is beyond time, to the one who has conquered time, to the one who transcends time, to the one who is the embodiment of time, and to the one who ordains time). Time is most important. It is the embodiment of Divinity. So, we salute time. Time is the cause for birth and death. None can conquer time except those who attain Divine grace. Here is a small example.

Sage Mrukandu had a son by name Markandeya, who was given only 16 years of life-span. But Markandeya was unaware of this fact. One night, he found his parents full of sorrow. On enquiry, they revealed that his end had approached and that was the cause of their sorrow. Hearing this, he went to the temple of Easwara without wasting even a moment, hugged the Siva Linga and started chanting *Om Namah Sivaya* wholeheartedly. At the appointed hour, Yama (God of Death) cast his noose around the neck of young Markandeya. As he was hugging the Linga, the noose fell around the Siva Linga also. Easwara manifested there and remonstrated Yama, "How dare you cast the noose around Me?" Pleased with the devotion of Markandeya, He blessed him with the boon of immortality. In fact, it was Easwara who had stipulated 16 years of life-span for Markandeya. But on account of Markandeya's intense devotion and total surrender Easwara had to change His Will. There is none greater than a true devotee in this world.

Once Lord Vishnu asked Narada, which among the five elements was the greatest. Narada replied, "Earth is the greatest." Then Vishnu remarked, "Three-fourth of the earth is enveloped with water. In such a case, which among the two is greater?" Narada agreed that water was greater. Vishnu said, "But Sage Agastya drank up the ocean in a single gulp. So, is Agastya greater or water?" Narada replied, "You are right, my Lord, Agastya is greater than water." Vishnu asked again, "But, this Agastya is a tiny star in the sky (Akasa). Now, is this star greater or the sky?" Narada replied, "It is the sky that is greater." The Lord agreed and said, "Your understanding is correct. The sky indeed is greater. In His incarnation as Vamana, the Lord asked for three steps from King Bali. And in the course of taking the gift of three steps, Vamana assumed the form of Trivikrama and covered the entire earth in one step, and the space from the earth to the sky in the second and there was no room for the third step. King Bali had to offer his head for the third step. So, now, is God greater or the sky?" Narada replied, "Swami, when the mere foot of the Lord covers the entire sky, how much greater His full form would be? God indeed is greater." "God, who envelops the entire cosmos dwells in the heart of His Bhakta (devotee). So, now, is the heart of the devotee greater or God?" asked Vishnu. Narada replied, "Indeed, the devotee is greater than God."

God is Bhakta Paradheena. He is the servant of His devotees. There is none greater than a true devotee in this world. God's heart can be melted only through love. So, develop total love. What is the type of love you should have? It should be Paripoorna Prema (perfect love).

This is not the worldly love that exists between parents and children, husband and wife, friends and relatives. Worldly love is tainted with selfishness but divine love is absolutely selfless. Your life will be sanctified only when you develop divine love.

*Hurry up, hurry up, listen to the clarion call of Sai filled with nectarine love,
Beckoning you to come near Him and exhorting you to attain Divinity.
No need to undertake Yoga or any other spiritual Sadhana.*

Hurry up, hurry up, hearken to the loving word of Sai. (Telugu Song)

God is calling you to come near but you are straying away from Him. God calls you at all times and at all places. You might have seen in Tirupathi – one hand of Lord Venkateswara is raised in Abhaya Hastha (blessing posture) and the other points to His feet. What does it mean? Take refuge at the Lord's Feet and you shall be protected. Surrender to Him, He will make you fearless. When you develop love and surrender in your heart, you can understand the divine principles. There is nothing higher than love in this world. So, from this very moment fill your heart with divine love and sanctify your life.

(Swami sang the Bhajan "*Pibare Rama Rasam ...*". Thereafter, He declared the setting up of a music college in Puttaparthi which has already become a well-known music institution of the country. After describing the unique features of the music college, Bhagavan declared how Puttaparthi was going to become world famous in the near future.)

Just think, Puttaparthi, a mere hamlet with a population of 106 people. It has grown big enough to inhabit lakhs of people. Not only that, just wait and see, in a very short time, Puttaparthi is going to be a landmark on the map of the world (*loud prolonged applause*). As our C. Sreenivas has said, the architectural features of our Puttaparthi hospital have found a pride of place in the American manual of architectural features for medical institutions. Let alone America, Puttaparthi is going to be a name to be reckoned with in every country in the world such as Japan, Germany, Italy, France, etc. Everywhere, world maps are going to mark Puttaparthi as an important location. The students of Puttaparthi should realise their good fortune. Only then will their life acquire its real meaning and significance.

- **From Bhagavan's Dasara Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 19th October 1999.**

ASHADI EKADASI CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

The sacred festival of Ashadi Ekadasi was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 29th June 2004 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Sri Sathya Sai Organisations of Maharashtra and Goa organised excellent programmes both in the morning and evening of 29th June 2004 in a beautifully decorated Sai Kulwant Hall to mark its celebrations.

Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.30 a.m. and blessed the huge gathering of devotees with His Divine Darshan. Bhagavan was offered traditional welcome with

Poornakumbham on His arrival on the dais where an idol of Lord Vitthala was placed amidst charming floral decorations. Bal Vikas children of Maharashtra and Goa sang a beautiful invocation song as Bhagavan arrived in the Hall. As soon as Bhagavan was seated on the dais, the traditional Dindi procession of Varkaris entered the Hall from Gopuram Gate side. They offered their salutations to Bhagavan and performed Dindi dance hailing Sai Vitthala with great devotion.

The second item of the programme was an excellent drama entitled "The Supreme Verdict" which was enacted by the Youth Wing and Bal Vikas children of Mumbai, Maharashtra and Goa Sathya Sai Seva Organisations. The lofty theme of the drama on the immanence of Divinity in every atom of the universe was extremely well presented by the children and the message of Bhagavan Baba was clearly depicted through succinct dialogues, melodious songs and appropriate presentation of various episodes. The culmination of the drama came with the pronouncement of the "Supreme Verdict" in the voice of Bhagavan Baba Himself, which provided perfect finale to the drama at 8.45 a.m. According to the this Divine verdict, man may do Nirguna or Saguna worship (worship of formless God or God with form) or he may follow any philosophy like Dvaita or Advaita, but he must first recognise his divinity within himself. After the conclusion of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the cast and posed for photographs with them. A special preparation called Rajgiri which is traditionally prepared in Maharashtra on Ashadi Ekadasi day, was then distributed as Prasadam to all the assembled devotees. Thereafter, Bhajans led by the devotees of Maharashtra and Goa filled the entire Hall with sacred vibrations. The morning programme came to a close at 9.25 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

In the afternoon, the Youth Wing and Bal Vikas children of Maharashtra and Goa presented another magnificent musical play entitled "Garib-Un Nawaz" on the life and teachings of the famous Sufi saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti of Ajmer. The play began soon after the arrival of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.30 p.m. Appropriate acting of the children, good make-up and costumes, beautiful songs and Qawalis, perfect stage management and choreography made this play an excellent presentation from all aspects, with the result that it could clearly convey the message of love, humanity and brotherhood which this great saint of India conveyed through his life and teachings. The play came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.00 p.m.

SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER LEARNING

(Deemed University)

Vidyagiri, **Prasanthi Nilayam – 515 134**, Anantapur Dist.,A.P.

Phone: (08555) 287239, 287191 Email: sssihl@hotmail.com

Orientation Programme for In-service Teachers

Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, a Regional Resource Centre of Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, is organising a six-day Orientation Programme in Value Education in the first / second week of August 2004 for in-service

teachers of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and other States – one at its Prasanthi Nilayam Campus for men and another at its Anantapur Campus for women.

Secondary level in-service teachers having ten or more years of experience may apply to the Registrar, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, along with brief bio-data, through the Head of their institution. Teacher Administrators like Principals and Headmasters may also apply. Teachers familiar with the Sri Sathya Sai System of Integral Education will be preferred.

Accommodation will be provided free by the Institute. The Institute will also pay Daily Allowance for the duration of the Orientation Programme and reimburse travelling expenses restricted to second class rail fare.

It is proposed to select 10 teachers from Tamil Nadu, 10 from Andhra Pradesh and 6 from other States.

Last date for receipt of application: 15th July 2004

Registrar

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

PRELUDE TO 8TH WORLD CONFERENCE INITIATED BY PRASANTHI COUNCIL IN OVERSEAS COUNTRIES

The Prasanthi Council of the Overseas Sri Sathya Sai Organisations has been engaged in a series of meetings throughout the world as a prelude to the 80th Birthday Celebrations of Bhagavan Baba and the 8th World Conference. The first three meetings were held in London, Rome, and Buenos Aires — the reports of which were presented in the June issue of "Sanathana Sarathi". Three more meetings were recently conducted in Singapore, Los Angeles, and New York. The public response was overwhelming and Bhagavan's Divine Loving Presence was deeply felt during the meetings. Accounts of these meetings follow.

Singapore

The Pre-World Conference for devotees of Zone III, comprising Australia, New Zealand and Asia (excluding India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Middle East), was held on 29th and 30th May 2004 in Singapore at the Convention Centre of the Singapore Polytechnic. 946 delegates attended the Conference from several countries including Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Hong Kong, Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, Mauritius and Costa Rica. After the welcome speech by Bro. Wee Lin, Chairman of the Organising Committee, the orientation address was delivered by Dr. Ravindran, the Central Coordinator of Region X (Far East 1) Zone III. Following the inspiring keynote

address by Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman of the Prasanthi Council, the delegates divided themselves into three workshops on Service, Devotion and Education and later, the summaries of these lively discussions were placed before the general assembly. This was followed by an enlightening session where Dr. Goldstein answered incisively and with clarity a range of written questions raised by the delegates during the day's proceedings. The Conference concluded with a multimedia presentation by the Youth Wing of Singapore on Swami's Life depicting His Birth and Mission, entitled *Journey to Divinity*, followed by a drama by the SSEHV children of Singapore on 'Unity, Purity, Divinity' which is also the theme of the World Conference.

The public meeting on 30th May 2004 was attended by about 1200 participants, comprising invited guests and the public who had responded to various announcements and advertisements. The speakers for the public forum were introduced by Dr. Ravindran. The presentations by Dr. Michael Goldstein on the teachings of Bhagavan Baba in the context of spirituality and by Prof. Yeoh Kian Hin on *Sathya Sai Baba — His Humanitarian Works* were extremely well received. The film on the humanitarian work of Bhagavan Baba was a fitting conclusion to the public meeting and it visibly moved many of those present. Dr. Goldstein concluded the meeting by reading Swami's message given to the overseas devotees.

Los Angeles (U.S.A.)

The public meeting in Los Angeles, held on 5th June 2004 at the La Mirada Theatre in the city of La Mirada, attracted over 750 devotees and members of the public. Several distinguished guests and special invitees were in attendance, including senior government officials and ministers from churches and other spiritual organisations. Following his welcome remarks, Mr. Robert Bozzani, President of the Sathya Sai Baba Book Centre of America, introduced each speaker in turn. Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman of the Prasanthi Council, gave an inspiring presentation on Bhagavan's teachings, illustrating how Swami embodies His message of love and service through the free super speciality hospitals, schools, colleges and university, free drinking water to millions, and rural outreach programmes. The second speaker, Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Member of the Prasanthi Council, dwelt on the miracle of personal and global transformation being brought about by Bhagavan Baba in the lives of millions of men and women of myriad faiths across all continents. He also narrated moving episodes from the life of Bhagavan Baba demonstrating His boundless, pure and all-embracing love towards all beings. The speeches were greeted with sustained applause from the public. A specially commissioned film titled '*His Work: The Work of Sri Sathya Sai Baba*' was then screened, which moved many in the audience to tears. DVDs of the film were distributed to the attendees as Bhagavan's Prasad and were received with grateful appreciation. At the conclusion of the meeting, Dr. Goldstein read Swami's message given to the Western devotees — this universal message of the brotherhood of all men and the fatherhood of God touched the hearts of all who were present.

New York (U.S.A.)

The public meeting in New York City, held on 12th June 2004 at the Great Hall of the Cooper Union, was the culmination of the present worldwide series of meetings that commenced in February this year. It is fitting that this series of six spiritually uplifting international meetings on the Message and Works of Bhagavan Baba should conclude in the same theatre and from the same podium graced by Abraham Lincoln when he addressed the American People in 1861. In past years, people had thronged the Great Hall to hear distinguished citizens and passionate activists such as Frederick Douglass, Sioux Chief Red Cloud, Mark Twain and Theodore Roosevelt. On 12th June 2004, the same Hall was witness to over 900 earnest Sai devotees and newcomers. The meeting commenced with Mr. Robert Bozzani welcoming the attendees and introducing the guest speakers which included Dr. Michael Goldstein and Dr. Narendranath Reddy. Dr. Goldstein gave a stirring exposition of Bhagavan's teachings, at the core of which was the truth that man is inherently divine and that his nature is selfless love. The second speaker Dr. Reddy shared anecdotes and stories from the lives of Jesus Christ and Lord Buddha, demonstrating how Swami re-emphasises principles that form the foundations of all religions. He forcefully brought forth how Swami's life, His inspiring works, His ideals and His lessons to mankind are all enshrined in one word: Love. He narrated a poignant incident from the life of Lincoln who, through his actions, demonstrated love and compassion towards all beings. The screening of the film '*His Work*' enthralled the assembled multitudes, enthusing and inspiring them. The meeting concluded with Dr. Goldstein reading a message from Swami which was a clarion call to lead our lives in love towards one and all.

BHARAT

Andhra Pradesh: Srikakulam district carried out a district Bal Vikas Rally in Korasawada village in which 600 Bal Vikas children, 200 Bal Vikas Gurus and Bal Vikas incharges of seven districts from Guntur to Srikakulam took part. A newly-built Sri Sathya Sai Seva Mandiram at Ichapuram was inaugurated on 23rd May 2004. It set up an old-age home for women at Rajam and donated one water cooler with 40 litres capacity to R.T.C. complex at Srikakulam.

Parigi Samithi of Ranga Reddy district organised a training programme for self-employment from 1st May to 30th May 2004 in different trades such as (1) Tailoring (2) Fabric painting (3) Agarbathi making (4) Candle making (5) Embroidery (6) Pot painting (7) Flower making, etc. 60 women took part in the training. This district has decided to extend the necessary help in setting up 8 small-scale household self-employment projects in connection with Bhagavan's 80th Birthday.

Assam, Manipur and N.E. States: The inhabitants of flood-ravaged Bhati Kuruwa heaved a sigh of relief when Guwahati Samithi along with Bhati Kuruwa Unnayan Samithi arranged a free medical camp in the premises of "247 No. Bhati Kuruwa Prathamik Vidyalaya" on 28th March 2004 where as many as 1700 villagers received free treatment and medicines. 56

doctors, mostly young men and women of various disciplines like medicine, E.N.T., gynaecology, ophthalmology, dentistry, paediatrics, dermatology, surgery, etc., rendered their services to alleviate the agony of the suffering people. Valuable support was provided by 45 Seva Dal youth in this camp.

Imphal Sai Organisation celebrated Easwaramma Day at Kuki-Inn on 6th May 2004 with the theme "Mother and Motherland are Greater than Heaven", in which 200 Bal Vikas children participated. The children presented cultural programmes and staged a short play based on the life of Bhagavan Baba. Besides children, parents and local tribals participated in the celebration. The local TV channel arranged live telecast of the programme from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Gujarat: Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Gujarat organised 13th State-level summer course on Indian Culture and Spirituality from 25th April to 30th April 2004. This was hosted by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Vadodara. Ninety students, both boys and girls, along with their twelve group teachers joined the course.

The summer course included morning Nagar Sankirtan, Yoga practice, Veda, Sanskrit study, lectures, quiz and elocution competition and Laksharchana. Cultural programmes by the local professional artists and entertainment programmes by the participants themselves were also included.

Haryana - Chandigarh: Grama Seva was done in the form of multifaceted camps in various districts involving cleanliness of streets, drains, religious places. Nagar Sankirtan/Bhajans were also conducted followed by health awareness and medical camps headed by teams of expert doctors. These camps were conducted in the villages Behlana, Maloya and Hallo Majra (Chandigarh) with 1411 patients, Nada, Dabkori, Bahera, Burjkotia and Mogianand (Panchkula) with 902 patients, Nayagaon, Raulon and Jandali (Ambala) with 522 patients, Chhachrauli (Yamunanagar) with 239 patients and Madanpur, Nadana and Sanghaur (Kurukshetra) with 2270 patients. Free medicines were given to all the 5344 patients who were treated in these camps. Spot preparation of food in village Sanghaur (Kurukshetra) was done, serving 3100 Narayanas during the medical camps.

Kerala: Summer courses for selected Bal Vikas children were conducted at the district level on 14th, 15th and 16th May 2004. A total of 1026 children participated in these courses. One session was earmarked for the parents of these children. The Bal Vikas children of Palakkad district have started follow-up programme like "Panchasheel", "No TV, Yes Reading", "Sandhyavandanam" after attending the summer course. In June 2004 under the programme 'Serve a Child, Deserve His Grace', all Samithis helped thousands of needy school-going children.

Due to heavy rain when there was a calamity near seashore, 45 members of Sai Youth and disaster management group of Ernakulam district immediately plunged into action. They

provided dress and food to 400 people in a relief camp. They also helped to construct walls with bags of sand.

Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh: Since 1999, a summer course on Indian Culture and Spirituality for school children studying in Classes 9th to 12th is being held every year by the State Organisation in the premises of Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar, Indore. The students come from three Sathya Sai schools in the State as well as from Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and other local schools apart from the Bal Vikas classes run in the State. The total number of participants this year was 203 (105 boys, 75 girls and 23 observers/escorts). It was a residential course and no fee was charged. The course was conducted from 2nd May to 8th May 2004 during which a wide variety of spiritual subjects were dealt with. One period was daily earmarked for teaching devotional and national songs to the participants and one period was utilised for group activities, value games, role play, attitude development and group discussions. Evening sessions were daily held from 6.30 to 8 p.m. with Bhajans for 30 minutes, followed by talks on Swami's dictums of Love All Serve All, Help Ever Hurt Never, ABC of Life and Be Good.

Maharashtra and Goa: A mass marriages ceremony was solemnised in Sri Sathya Sai Kalyan Mandap, Anganwadi Chon – Panchayat, Thane district on 9th May 2004. With Bhagavan's blessings, 18 couples tied their nuptial knots in the presence of devotees from all Samithis of Thane district. Early in the morning, Palki procession was taken out in the village by the Youth Wings from all the Samithis of the district. Veda chanting was conducted throughout the ceremony by Dombivli Samithi Youth Wing. After marriage rituals, many useful gifts were given to each couple. Villagers from surrounding areas joyfully witnessed the ceremony, and more than 1500 villagers and devotees partook of the Prasadam in the Narayana Seva organised on this occasion.

Rajasthan: A State-level Bal Vikas Gurus Training Camp was organised on 17th, 18th and 19th May 2004 at Sri Sathya Sai Mahila College, Jaipur wherein 87 Bal Vikas Gurus were imparted training. This was inaugurated by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Rajasthan. The intensive training programme was very inspiring and impressive. Alwar Samithi organised a cattle care camp in village Dadri and rendered medical aid to 300 cattle. Youth Wing of the Samithi organised Narayana Seva on 15th April 2004 for 350 rickshaw pullers and destitutes.

Tamil Nadu: The State Sathya Sai Seva Organisation started Sri Sathya Sai Community Centre at Virudhachalam, Cuddalore district on 20th June 2004. The Centre will house a medical centre, a library, Bal Vikas classes and coaching classes for children. It will be made available free of cost to the needy for conducting small functions. On this occasion, 80 needy men were provided with Dhotis and 80 needy women with Saris, and Narayana Seva was performed in which 6000 persons partook of the Prasadam.

CHINNA KATHA

True Deservedness

One day when Puja was going on in the Viswanath Temple at Kashi, suddenly a gold plate came from somewhere and fell on the floor of the temple. The temple priest was overjoyed to see the gold plate and came forward to take it. He saw something written on it. "This belongs only to My devotee", read the priest. He thought, "I am constantly engaged in doing Puja and Abhisheka of the Lord, and am always reciting Mantras in His praise. Who can be a greater devotee than me?" Thinking thus, the priest took the gold plate in his hand. As soon as he touched it, it changed into a plate of clay. Not able to bear his discomfiture, the priest immediately dropped it on the floor. As it touched the floor, it again turned into a gold plate. Tempted by the desire to possess the gold plate, all the people gathered in the temple tried to take it one by one. Whosoever touched it, the gold plate changed into a clay plate. But when it touched the floor, it again changed into a golden one. Days, weeks, months passed by. Kings, ministers, scholars, poets, noble men and common people, all came to try their luck and see this miraculous plate.

As the crowds flocked to the temple, many beggars also came there in expectation of alms. One day, a new person came there. He was overcome with compassion to see the miserable condition of so many poor beggars. He was full of sorrow that he could not relieve the suffering of these unfortunate people. With heart full of compassion and sorrow, he entered the temple. When he saw the crowd of people gathered there, he also bent forward to see what the people were seeing. When he saw what the matter was, he was filled with surprise and regret that so many people were trying to possess a mere gold plate instead of trying to attain the Lord who was the master of the entire wealth of the world. Unable to bear this spectacle, he moved forward.

Seeing the new person, the priest came forward and said, "You seem to be a new devotee. You also hold this plate and try your luck. Would you go away without seeing anything?" This man replied, "Oh revered sir! I have no desire for all this. For me, Lord Viswanath is everything." Impressed by his spirit of sacrifice, the priest prayed to him, "If you are not interested in the gold plate, don't take it. Throw it down. But test your devotion at least. Listen to my request and touch it." For the satisfaction of the priest, this man touched the gold plate. Immediately, it started shining with great effulgence. All the people gathered there were surprised to see this wonder. "How much have you studied? How many Vedas and Upanishads have you mastered? How many times have you read the Gita?" These questions of the people puzzled him. He calmly said, "Dear ones! I do not know anything. I know only the name of Lord Viswanath. By repeating the Divine Name, I have attained control over my senses and my heart has become pure."

By attaining control over the senses, one is endowed with the virtue of compassion. A compassionate heart is the temple of God. Without attaining sense control, man becomes egoistic. There is no use of learning and worship if the heart is not tender with love and compassion.

PUBLIC CAUTION NOTICE

It is hereby informed that the Government of India have amended the schedule to the Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act 1950 recently to include the following as protected names and emblems under the said Act:

1. Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust



2. Sarva dharma Symbol

3. Sri Sathya Sai

In view of the above, no person shall use or continue to use for the purpose of any trade, business, calling or profession or any patent, trademark or design the aforementioned protected names/emblems or any colourable imitation thereof without the previous written permission of the Central Government. Any person who contravenes the above is liable to be proceeded against and punished under the provisions of the law.

Any person who is using the aforementioned names and emblem in contravention of the provisions of the Act is hereby notified and required to cease and desist from using the said names/emblem with immediate effect.

Dated: 20th June 2004

Secretary

*Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam,
Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh - 515134, India.*

Guru Purnima Message

LOVE IS YOUR GREATEST WEALTH

Forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land of Bharat. Of all the rituals, adherence to truth is the greatest penance. The nectarine feeling in this country is the feeling of love towards one's mother.

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

The foremost quality of a devotee is forbearance. What is Bhakti (devotion)? People are under the mistaken notion that worshipping some idols, observing certain vows and performing some rituals is Bhakti. It is not as simple as that. It is of utmost importance for the people of Bharat to observe forbearance in their life. The quality of forbearance will provide inspiration to them to undertake noble deeds. Besides, they should teach this noble quality to others so that they also imbibe it.

Bharatiya Culture Teaches Noble Virtues

Forbearance is the most sacred and valuable Mantra of the Bharatiyas. But due to delusion caused by their ignorance the Bharatiyas today are not able to understand its meaning and significance, and are indulging in rituals. One bereft of forbearance cannot be called a human being in the real sense.

Adherence to truth is the real Tapa (penance). But man today has forgotten this shining principle. The nectarine feeling in this country is the feeling of love towards one's mother. There is nothing greater and sweeter than this sacred feeling in the world. One who has cultivated such noble feeling is most fortunate. It is not a quality that can be purchased or hired. This feeling flows from the natural love that one has for one's mother. But the people of Bharat today are forsaking such noble qualities. They are trying to imitate alien culture. In fact, they are running after it with excessive enthusiasm as if it were their very life-breath.

Love Sustains the Entire Universe

Embodiments of Love!

There is nothing more sacred than love in this world. The Bharatiyas today have forgotten this sacred and noble principle of love. It is only their love for God that has sustained and protected the people in this sacred land of Bharat since ancient times, just as the eyelids protect the eyes. This divine love permeates the entire universe. Wherever you see, it is present there. There is nothing in the world except divine love. All other types of love are mere infatuation. Real love emerges from the depth of one's heart. It will please Me most if you cultivate and share this love with others. Today, you find worldly and physical love for achieving selfish ends everywhere. But love suffused with Atmic bliss is difficult to find. Worldly love is not real love. Real love is sacred, divine and selfless; it springs from one's heart.

Embodiments of Love!

Cultivate and strengthen this divine love. When you cultivate such love, you will not be lacking in anything. It is only when you cultivate such noble love, you will deserve to be called "Embodiments of Love". God is omnipresent. Who is God? In fact, you are verily God. You must strive to attain that state. God is present everywhere. Do not forget the divinity immanent in you. Some people think that God exists separately in some distant place. Prahlada, the child devotee of Lord Vishnu, declared that God is everywhere; wherever you look for Him, He is there.

These principles form the basis of the ancient culture of Bharat. But man forgets the divinity latent in him. He reposes faith in everything except God.

Embodiments of Love!

Do not give up love under any circumstances. Love is your greatest wealth. One who forgets this is not a human being at all! You love your father, mother, brothers, sisters, etc. All these relationships are impermanent. You must try to recognise true love which is permanent. It is always in you. You need not search for it outside. Unfortunately, today we are running after things which are not real and permanent. (Bhagavan showing a flower) What is this? This is a flower. Everybody says so. But the truth is, it is a manifestation of divinity. There are several petals in it which represent divinity. If the petals are taken out one by one, it cannot be called a flower. Just as the petals constitute the flower, individuals constitute a family. It is not enough if you limit your love to the family members. The entire universe must live like a family. Whomever you meet, offer salutations to him. Say "Namaskar! Namaskar!" There cannot be any nobler feeling than this. If there is no love in a human being, he cannot be called the embodiment of love. The source and sustenance for the entire universe is love. This quality of love takes different shapes in different individuals, say, between father, mother, brothers, sisters, but you refer to it all as love. All these individuals together constitute a family.

Divinity Manifests in all Forms

All the forms you come across in this world are the embodiments of divinity. There is nothing in this world which is not divine. You consider different objects in the universe as mere objects. No! No! Consider them as symbols of divinity. Unfortunately, people foolishly search for God. Wherever you see, there is God. Therefore, it is the noblest feeling to consider everything in the universe as embodiment of divinity. The universe is but a form of God! God is manifest in all forms. All forms are His. It is God who assumes all forms. Do not give credence to the outward form of any object; firmly believe in the divine power that is immanent in that object. Experience divinity in your day-to-day activities. For example, we are thirsty. Thirst is the fire which manifests as divinity. We quench our thirst by drinking water, which is another manifestation of divinity.

The Pancha Bhutas, Pancha Indriyas, Pancha Koshas and Pancha Pranas (five elements in the universe, five senses, five sheaths and five vital breaths in the body), are all manifestations of divinity. Today we are misusing our senses. This is an act of grave sin. All the senses are pure, sacred and steady. The senses are beyond all distinction of caste, creed, religion, nationality, etc. What do you think the human values are? They are nothing but divine qualities. Possessing all these divine qualities within himself, man searches for divinity in the outside world. What a pity! God has no special attributes other than these. But man out of delusion gives names, forms and attributes to the attributeless Divinity.

Cultivate Love as your Foremost Quality

Embodiments of Love!

Whatever I speak, it is only love. I do not refer to any other word. There is no other quality greater than love. Hence, we have to develop that quality of love. The different ways by which we describe God such as *Nirgunam*, *Niranjanam*, *Sanathana Niketanam*, *Nitya*, *Shuddha*, *Buddha*, *Mukta*, *Nirmala Swarupinam* (God is attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness) are only for our satisfaction. They cannot describe God. In fact, God is beyond all descriptions. The only word by which we can describe God is "love". Nothing can describe Him better. You are all the embodiments of love. Your form is love. God's form is also love.

Embodiments of Love!

Man should have sympathy and tolerance towards those who are underprivileged and physically challenged. Modern man instead shows disgust towards these unfortunate people. I am very much distressed to see those physically challenged children seated on the hand-driven cycle rickshaws. Never look down upon them as lowly

or inferior. In fact, there is none in this world who is low and abject. That low quality is due to our thinking. It is not the quality of Divinity. God has only one quality. That is love. That is His form (*loud applause*). When someone talks to Me with love, I am very much pleased. But when people use empty rhetoric without love to describe My qualities, I am not at all pleased or impressed. Talk to Me with a loving heart. Pray to Me with your heart full of love. When you pray with a loving heart, I immediately respond. You call Me "Sai" with love; I will readily respond saying "Oyi" (yes). Any amount of prayer devoid of love cannot move Me. If you call Me with love, I will certainly respond, wherever you are. There is nothing greater than love. Therefore, if you wish to have the vision and experience of God, pray to Him with love. You may have any amount of wealth and any number of virtues but they are no match for the quality of love. The sweetness inherent in the word Prema is not to be found anywhere else in the world. Therefore, cultivate love as your foremost quality.

Love is your sole refuge wherever you may be, in a forest, in the sky, in a city or a village, on the top of a mountain or in the middle of deep sea. (Telugu Poem)

Love is not confined to any particular place or dwelling; it is universal. This universal love cannot be purchased with any amount of money. It can be attained only when you offer your heart to God. Man has, therefore, to cultivate such pure and selfless love. In order to cultivate such pure love, Bhakti (devotion) is prescribed as a means. Bhakti is not to be found somewhere in a distant remote corner. Prema (love) is Bhakti (devotion). Devotion without love is deep ocean. And how is that ocean? It is full of salt water, whereas devotion with love is like sweet water (*loud applause*). Love is a nectarine feeling. Love is verily bliss. Love is a wonderful feeling. It is unfathomable. Therefore, you should never give up such nectarine, sweet, blissful and limitless love.

Embodiments of Love!

Instead of making hollow claims of Bhakti (devotion), keep Prema (love) as your goal to be attained. There is no greater Sadhana than this. There is no greater Shakti (power) than love. Bhakti, Mukti and Anurakti (devotion, liberation and affection) are contained in love. It is pure and selfless love that can liberate you. On this auspicious occasion of Guru Purnima, I bestow upon you the most valuable present of love (*loud prolonged applause*). This is My most precious gift to you. Whatever other gifts I may give, they will be of little value as compared to love. My love is pure, sacred and invaluable. You should also cultivate such love. Develop this love more and more.

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

– **From Bhagavan's Guru Purnima Message in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 2nd July 2004.**

SHOWERS OF DIVINE GRACE

Celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam: A Report

GURU PURNIMA CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

The holy festival of Guru Purnima was celebrated in a most befitting manner at Prasanthi Nilayam where devotees from all over India and all parts of the world offered their homage to their Supreme Guru Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on 2nd July 2004. Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue of the celebrations, was tastefully decorated on this occasion. Since early morning,

the devotees had occupied every inch of space in the Hall which was filled to capacity with devotees when Bhagavan Baba entered the Hall at 6.50 a.m. to give His blessings to the devotees on this auspicious day. The students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning were present along with staff in full strength to offer their prayerful salutations to their Sadguru and Divine Master Bhagavan Baba on this holy occasion. They welcomed Him with blowing of sacred conch, playing of Panchavadyam music and chanting of Vedic Mantras on His arrival in the Hall. When Bhagavan was seated on the dais, after blessing the huge congregation of devotees with His Divine Darshan, the students of the Institute offered agarland and sacred musical compositions, consisting of Guru Stotras, devotional songs and Qawalis at the Lotus Feet of their Beloved Lord Bhagavan Baba. This musical presentation was accompanied by a very appropriate commentary in the form of dialogues which highlighted the significance of this festival and described the glory of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as Universal Teacher for the entire mankind.

At the conclusion of the musical presentation, a solemn function was held to distribute hand-driven cycle rickshaws to 22 physically challenged persons who had lost mobility of their legs due to some disease or defect. Most of the beneficiaries were either students studying in schools and colleges or earning members of poor families. Seva Dal volunteers brought them to the dais one by one where Compassionate Lord Bhagavan Baba gave cycle rickshaws to them. He also distributed shawls to them.

Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, two eminent speakers addressed the gathering. The first to speak was Sri Indulal Shah, former Chairman of Sri Sathya Sai Overseas Organisation who served Bhagavan for over 40 years. "God does not come in human form often. But when He comes, it is for a profound reason," observed Sri Indulal Shah. The learned speaker said that Bhagavan Baba's life itself was a message of universal love for the entire mankind. He added that Bhagavan operated simultaneously at several levels of existence and the devotees of Bhagavan were most fortunate to have come in contact with such a mighty and majestic manifestation of Divinity. Sri Shah concluded his speech by commenting that the best way to pay gratitude to Bhagavan for His limitless grace and love was to put His teachings into practice in our lives.

Paying his homage to Bhagavan Baba, the next speaker, Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman, Prasanthi Council remarked that Bhagavan is a pre-eminent world teacher and humanitarian who is bringing about much-needed illumination in this world of disharmony and chaos created by man's folly. He is bringing the people of all races, religions and nationalities together by inspiring them to realise their divinity and oneness of the entire mankind. Giving his impressions about the meetings conducted by the Prasanthi Council recently in New York, Los Angeles, London, Rome, Buenos Aires and Singapore, Dr. Goldstein remarked, "I witnessed Bhagavan Baba's greatest miracle of spiritual transformation of people everywhere through His love. I witnessed the power of God."

Thereafter, Secretary, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, Sri K. Chakravarthi, who earlier introduced the two speakers, informed the devotees that the Government of India had issued an amendment to the schedule under the Prevention of Improper use of Names and Emblems Act, 1950, declaring that the name of "Sri Sathya Sai", "Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust" and the two emblems cannot be used for any commercial exploitation, and that the above names and emblems cannot be used without the prior written permission of the Government of India. Any violation of this is punishable under the said Act. He advised the Sai organisations in India and overseas countries to bring it to the notice of the devotees

from time to time if some people were using Bhagavan's Name and the emblems without any authority.

After this, Bhagavan Baba gave His Divine Message on this most auspicious Guru Purnima day. (Bhagavan's Discourse has been given elsewhere in this issue.) Bhagavan concluded His Discourse at 9.00 a.m. with the Bhajan "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...*" with devotees repeating it after Him blissfully. Soon after this, the programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan.

CULTURAL PROGRAMMES

Dashavatar – A Dance Drama

As part of Guru Purnima celebrations, many cultural programmes were held in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. A dance drama on Dashavatar was presented on the afternoon of 30th June 2004 by the Bal Vikas children of Rajasthan. In their meticulous performance, the children portrayed the ten incarnations of Vishnu who came to save and protect mankind whenever it faced a catastrophe at different periods of time. In Kali Yuga, God has incarnated again in the form of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who is eradicating evil from the heart of man through His love and is establishing the Brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God on this earth. The acting, music and total portrayal earned the appreciation of the audience. At the end of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the cast and posed for photographs with them.

The Power of Devotion

This excellent drama on the theme of Bhakti (devotion) beautifully portrayed three episodes from the Bhagavata depicting the inspiring life stories of child devotees Dhruva, Prahlada and Markandeya who attained the vision of God by their steadfast devotion. This drama was presented by the Bal Vikas children of Haryana and Chandigarh.

Superb acting of the children, appropriate costumes and make-up and succinct dialogues made this drama a very powerful presentation. In conclusion, it paid homage to Bhagavan Baba for His wonderful gift of Bal Vikas to the children of the world which could produce many Dhruvas, Prahladas and Markandeyas by sowing the seeds of spirituality in children in their formative years.

Bhagavan sat through the entire programme which was presented in His Divine Presence on the afternoon of 1st July 2004 in Sai Kulwant Hall. At the conclusion of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the cast and posed for photographs with them.

God Resides in All

Based on the teachings of Bhagavan Baba that there is only one caste, the caste of humanity, this short but impressive dance drama was presented by the Bal Vikas children of Nepal on the afternoon of 2nd July 2004.

The story is set in a small hamlet in the lap of the Himalayas where a little girl and her brother lead a miserable life as they are ill-treated by the villagers due to their low caste. They however find joy in the company of Nature which, contrary to human society, does not have any discrimination of high and low. When the suffering of the children becomes

unbearable at the hands of the villagers, Buddha comes to their rescue and transforms the hearts of the villagers by his teachings of love and equality. The play ends with a beautiful dance which depicts unity in diversity in Nature.

Simple story and lofty theme of this drama along with excellent acting of the children made it an excellent presentation. At the end of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the children and posed for photographs with them.

From Humanness to Divinity

Soon after this, Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Children of Indonesia presented the dance drama entitled "From Humanness to Divinity." Opening with a beautiful traditional Indonesian dance and a group song in praise of Lord Sai, the play chartered the course of man's journey from humanness to Divinity with Namasmarana, sense control, right conduct, love, service and charity serving as lamp posts on the route of this divine pilgrimage. Embellished with meaningful episodes from scriptures, traditional Indonesian dances, beautiful group songs depicting the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, this play effectively portrayed the path of evolution of man. The play ended with prayer to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba whose Divine Presence is uniting mankind and showing it the path to Divinity. At the end of this excellent play, Bhagavan blessed the children. He also materialised a gold chain for one of the children who acted in this drama.

Madhur Bhakti

This musical presentation was made by the Bal Vikas children of Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh on the afternoon of 3rd July 2004. Adorned with sweet lyrics of Hindi poet Surdas and beautiful dances performed by the children, this dance drama depicted the power of intense devotion and total surrender on the supreme path of God realisation which was practiced by the Gopikas of Brindavan. When Krishna's friend Uddhava went to Brindavan to impart the knowledge of attributeless Brahman to the Gopikas, he was overwhelmed by their intense, one-pointed love for Krishna. Beautiful verses sung in sweet voice and superb dances performed by the children made it one of the sweetest presentations. As a grand finale of the drama, the children presented Madhurashtakam. Bhagavan blessed the cast at the end of the drama and posed for photographs with them. He also materialised a gold chain for one of the children.

Musical Presentation by Anantapur College Students

Soon after the conclusion of the drama "Madhur Bhakti", the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Anantapur Campus presented a scintillating programme of classical devotional songs. Compositions in various Ragas portrayed the feelings of intense devotion of a devotee for his Beloved Lord. With this, the day's programme came to a close.

Gangavataran

This dance drama was presented by the Bal Vikas children of Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal on the afternoon of 4th July 2004. The legendary story of Ganga's descent from heaven to earth by the intense penance of King Bhagirath came alive in this beautiful drama. Bhagirath not only pleased Lord Vishnu by his penance, he was able to please Brahma and Siva also. The play showed the power of penance and firm determination which can help man to

achieve the highest goal in life. Bhagavan Baba blessed the children at the conclusion of the play and posed for photographs with them.

Bloom where you are Planted

This drama was presented on the afternoon of 5th July 2004 in Sai Kulwant Hall. In this play, the children of Sathya Sai Education, Region 9 (U.S.A.) presented the life stories of three great persons of America who devoted their lives in the service of mankind.

The first episode of the drama portrayed the life story of Sojourner Truth, an American lady born as slave who convinced Abraham Lincoln to put an end to the injustice of slavery being perpetrated in America. With immense courage and determination she overcame the greatest challenges in life and became a torchbearer of freedom of slaves. The second episode depicted the story of Abraham Lincoln who became the President of America by his diligence, self-confidence and hard work. He became well known for his sense of justice and honesty and earned high place in history by granting freedom to slaves. The third story showed the life of Eleanor Roosevelt who devoted her life for the cause of the working class of people and earned name and fame. These great men and women were the epitome of values being taught by Bhagavan Baba to devotees today. At the end of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the children and posed for group photos with them. The weeklong cultural programmes on the auspicious occasion of Guru Purnima came to a happy conclusion with this drama.

U.K. DEVOTEES AT

PRASANTHI NILAYAM

A group of 270 devotees associated with Sai Kingdom (U.K.) came to Prasanthi Nilayam for about one week, from 18th July 2004 to 25th July 2004, to receive the blessings of Bhagavan Baba. They conducted a medical camp in Puttaparthi for one week and also presented musical and cultural programmes in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba.

Medical Camp in Puttaparthi

The doctors in this group of devotees conducted a medical camp at Puttaparthi from 19th July 2004 to 24th July 2004 which benefited a total of 3,921 needy patients comprising 1,326 eye patients, 1,455 dental patients and 1,140 general ailments patients. During this medical camp, Narayana Seva was done for 14,800 persons by offering food to them.

Bhajans, Musical and Cultural Programmes

This group of devotees presented a galaxy of Bhajan, Musical and Cultural programmes during this week in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. Besides Sai Melody (continuous Bhajans) and Sai Symphony (devotional music), an excellent drama entitled "God is Here" was performed by the members of this group. This drama presented on the afternoon of 20th July 2004 in Sai Kulwant Hall depicted the story of Prahlada who could overcome all sufferings and attain the vision of God by the power of chanting Divine Name and by his steadfast devotion in the face of innumerable ordeals. Powerful acting of the cast, excellent

music, good make-up and costumes, and appropriate dialogues made this drama an outstanding presentation.

Besides this drama and musical programmes, a few members of the group spoke about Bhagavan's teachings and narrated their experiences of His Divinity in their brief speeches. They included Sri Ajit Popat, Ms Vicky Thakordas, Ms Joan Humphrey, Sri Vikas Thakordas, Sri David Kaushal, Sri Dipak Vasani and Dr. Puvanchandra who presented the report of the medical camp also.

Bhagavan Baba blessed the members of this group with His Divine Darshan and benedictions all through the week both in the morning and in the evening. He showered His special love on them on the afternoon of 24th July 2004 by distributing white suiting material to male members and Saris to female members with His Divine Hands. Besides these gifts, Bhagavan materialised necklaces and rings for some of the most fortunate members during this week. Showers of blessings and love of Bhagavan made this a most rewarding pilgrimage for this group who departed for U.K. after the morning Bhajan on 25th July 2004.

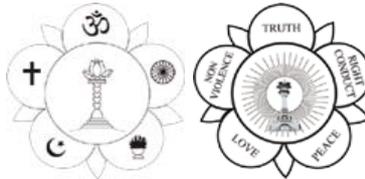
PUBLIC CAUTION NOTICE

In partial modification of the Notice issued in our July 2004 issue, we are publishing this.

It is hereby informed that the Government of India have amended the schedule to the Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act 1950 recently to include the following as protected names and emblems under the said Act:

1. Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust

2. The following emblems



3. Sri Sathya Sai

In view of the above, no person shall use or continue to use for the purpose of any trade, business, calling or profession or any patent, trademark or design the aforementioned protected names / emblems or any colourable imitation thereof without the previous written permission of the Central Government. Any person who contravenes the above is liable to be proceeded against and punished under the provisions of the law.

Any person who is using the aforementioned names and emblems in contravention of the provisions of the Act is hereby notified and required to cease and desist from using the said names/emblems with immediate effect.

Dated: 11th July 2004

Secretary

**Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam
Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh – 515134 India**

DASARA DISCOURSES - IV

DIVINITY PERMEATES EVERY ATOM OF THE UNIVERSE

Why should one crave for pleasure and prosperity, acquisition of degrees and exalted position? It is enough if one has a compassionate heart, peace and happiness. This is all that humanity needs today. (Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Today scientists are propagating various scientific theories in the world. At the same time, exponents of spirituality are also propagating about spirituality in various ways. But mankind is not able to understand the theories of both. All said and done, it can be concluded that the world is made up of molecules and atoms. There can be no world without atoms. Our Venkataraman (former Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning) raised two questions in his speech: Who is God? Where is God? God is everywhere in the form of atoms. This is the correct answer to these questions.

Atom is the Primordial Basis of the Creation

The universe is a combination of atoms. The Vedantins (Vedic scholars) say: *Anoraneeyan Mahato Maheeyan* (Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest). It is because of the coming together of atoms that we find the five elements, human beings and various objects in this world. The atoms are all-pervasive. The world is composed of atoms and nothing else. Human beings, birds and animals, food, water, mansions, light – everything is made up of atoms. Brahman does not have a specific form.

Brahman is subtler than the subtlest, vaster than the vastest. He is the eternal witness and pervades the entire universe in the form of atoms. (Telugu Poem)

All powers are latent in man. There is no power that is not in him. Light waves and electric waves are present in him. Magnetic power is the greatest of all. It is present in man from top to toe. This is the cause of attraction power in him. All divine incarnations like Rama and Krishna were the embodiments of magnetic power. Why does God put on the vesture of a human being? Some say that God has no form and some others argue that God has infinite number of forms. Truly speaking, none of these descriptions is correct. Every atom has a form. Likewise, God also has form. He assumes the form which His devotees attribute to Him. He manifests in the form which His devotees adore, worship and contemplate on. Sound has no form but the object that produces sound has a form. Likewise, bliss has no form but the person who experiences it has a form. Fragrance has no form but the flower that emits fragrance has a form. Love has no form but the mother who confers love has a form. Water has no form but the container has a form. Water assumes the form of the container. Likewise, God has no form but the atom, which manifests

Divinity, has a form. It is a mistake to argue that God has no form. In fact, all forms are His. He is infinite and all-pervasive.

Atom is the primordial basis of the entire creation. Nothing exists to the exclusion of atom. Atoms constitute the world. Divinity is immanent in the atom. The form of the atom is the form of God. Man should make efforts to know this truth. Scientists had to struggle hard to know that atom was all-pervasive. However, thousands of years ago, child Prahlada recognised and proclaimed this truth:

Never doubt that God is here and He is not there. He is everywhere. Wherever you look for Him, you can find Him there. (Telugu Poem)

But even today, scientists have not recognised this truth. Divinity transcends science. That is why people call it transcendental power. People have given it various names. Names may vary but the fundamental basis is the same, that is the atom. The power of the atom is infinite and is present in everyone.

Divine Magnetic Power of God

If you question a student as to what a magnet is, he will say, a magnet is that which attracts iron filings. However, if you put the same question to a businessman, he will say, money is the magnet. For a husband, wife is the magnet and for a wife, husband is the magnet. For a bee, flower is the magnet. Thus, we see that everything in the creation has magnetic power latent in it. Even science cannot deny it. In olden days, kings used to wear crowns embedded with magnets because of which people would get attracted to them. Likewise, queens also used to wear jewellery studded with magnets. God is magnetic power personified. He is the super magnet. God has infinite power of attraction. That is why God attracts the entire creation. Such divine magnetic power is present in everyone. However, man is not making any effort to understand his latent power.

There was Siva's bow in the house of King Janaka. It was so heavy that it was not possible for any mortal to lift it. One day Sita, who was very young at that time, was engaged in a game of ball with her playmates. As they were playing, it so happened that the ball rolled down under Siva's bow. All the children tried to retrieve the ball but could not do so as it was trapped underneath the bow. Then Sita quite casually lifted the bow with her left hand and picked up the ball. King Janaka was astonished when he saw this incident. He realised that Sita was no ordinary girl. It was then that he resolved to give her in marriage to a person who could string the Siva's bow. He thought that such a person alone could be a suitable match for her as she was endowed with extraordinary powers. When Sita grew up, King Janaka sent invitations to many kings and princes for her marriage stipulating the condition for marriage. On the appointed day, many kings and princes came and made futile attempts to lift the bow. Even the mighty Ravana failed miserably in his attempt to lift the bow. Sage Viswamitra had brought Rama and Lakshmana with him to Janaka's court. All those who had assembled there were attracted by their radiant forms. No one was looking at the bow as their attention was focused on Rama and Lakshmana. Sage Viswamitra gave a meaningful look towards Rama. Rama understood its implication and slowly started walking towards the bow. All those who had assembled there were smiling with amusement, thinking how a young boy could accomplish a task which even the mighty Ravana had failed to perform. To

the amazement of all, Rama lifted the bow quite effortlessly with His left hand. Janaka was reminded of the incident of Sita having lifted the bow. He was overjoyed with the feeling that he had found a suitable match for Sita. As Rama tried to string the bow, it broke with a thunderous sound. People were ecstatic seeing the majestic form of Rama and His mighty prowess. They hailed the good fortune of Sita profusely. They were happy that Sita had won the hand of a person who was virtuous, powerful and handsome.

This episode demonstrates that Sita and Rama possessed the magnetic power in all its totality. *Poornamada Poornamidam...* (That is full, this is full). Rama was the embodiment of total magnetic power, and so also was Sita. Sita represented Prakriti (Nature) and Rama, Paramatma (God). They were a perfect match for each other. Divinity can be recognised by its infinite power of attraction. This power is present in man also. However, man is not making any effort to recognise his innate power. Man is the storehouse of heat energy, electrical energy, laser power, etc. Human body is like a small generator, Hridaya (heart) is like a television and the mind is like a camera. There is no power in the world that is not there in man. Though all powers are latent in him, man out of his ignorance considers himself weak and low. He wastes his precious human life and faces numerous hardships.

The concept of magnetic power of man is very well illustrated in the Ramayana. Vali was highly powerful. He had immense magnetic power. The attraction power in him was so strong that opponents could not fight with him face to face since he would draw half their power to himself. That is why Rama killed him by shooting an arrow from behind a tree. Without understanding such subtle secrets, people question the propriety of this act of Rama. Though God is all-powerful, He puts Himself under limitations according to the requirements of time, situation and circumstances. Truly speaking, God has no limitations whatsoever. However, for the welfare of the world and for the sake of humanity at large, sometimes He acts like an ordinary human being. On account of this, people start doubting His Divinity. They question, "If Sai Baba is so powerful, why could He not do this or that?" However, God acts according to the situation and circumstances. He alone knows what to do and when. Only God has the power and capacity to change the situation according to His plan. He does what is right at a particular moment.

The marriages of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna were performed simultaneously. As you are aware, the bride and the bridegroom exchange garlands during the wedding. Sita had to garland Rama before the other brides could garland their respective bridegrooms. Sita, being short in stature, could not garland Rama who was Ajanubahu (tall personality). Unless Rama bent His head before Sita, she could not garland Him. But He did not want to bend His head lest people should blame Him for not maintaining the honour of His lineage. Unable to garland Rama, Sita was holding the garland in her hand for a long time. The onlookers were surprised and watching the proceedings without batting an eyelid. There is another secret in this act of Rama. From the worldly point of view, Rama had not seen Sita till then. Only after tying the Mangal Sutra would Sita become His consort and He would have the right to look at her. Rama observed this Dharma. He had laid down this restriction for Himself. Lakshmana was the incarnation of Adishesha who carried the mother earth on his hood. Rama looked at Lakshmana as if to say, "Look, why don't you raise that

part of the earth where Sita is standing to enable her to garland Me.” Then Lakshmana indicated to Rama that it was not possible to raise any particular area. If he tried to raise that part of the earth where Sita was standing, simultaneously Rama would be raised and so also others. Lakshmana, being one of intelligence, thought of a plan to solve the problem. All of a sudden, he fell at the feet of Rama and did not get up for a long time. Then Rama had to bend to lift Lakshmana up. Sita seized the opportunity and lost no time in garlanding Rama. Saint Thyagaraja sang the following verse in praise of Rama:

“Oh Rama! If it was not for Your mighty power, could a mere monkey leap across the ocean? Would Lakshmi Devi, the goddess of wealth, become Your consort? Would the mighty Lakshmana worship You? Would the intelligent Bharata offer his salutations to You? No doubt, Your power is unparalleled.”

(Telugu Song)

Love is the only Attribute of God

Today people read the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata but they fail to recognise the subtle implications contained in them. Where there is Divinity, there is attraction power. Many people of different nations have gathered here. No one has called you here nor did anyone send you invitation. The name and form of Sai has attracted you here (*loud applause*). No one is making any effort to recognise this divine power of attraction. This power is unlimited and indescribable; it can attract anything. However, God uses this power in a limited manner. God has infinite power, but He adheres to certain limitations which He has laid down for Himself. Every man has this divine power latent in him. That is why the Vedas declare, *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God is the indweller in all beings), *Isavasyam Idam Jagat* (the entire universe is permeated by God).

Many people do meditation and undertake various spiritual practices. None of these spiritual practices will, however, help you to attain God. How can you attain God? Just as God showers His love on all, you should share your love with all. God will shower His grace on those who imbibe this spirit of oneness. Therefore, you should share your love with everybody with the spirit of oneness. Only then can you attain God. Attaining God does not mean that He is separate from you. He will manifest from within. Reaction, reflection, and resound are outside, but reality is within. That is the fundamental principle. All that you see, hear and experience in the world is the reaction, reflection and resound of your inner being. But no one is trying to recognise this. Act as per the Divine command. Then you will certainly attain Divinity. You cannot attain Divinity through any other path. God is attributeless. He has only one quality and that is love. That is life. Love is the only relationship that exists between you and Him.

Steadfast Devotion Earns Divine Grace

Embodiments of Love!

It is very difficult to understand divinity. However, if you understand divinity, you will understand everything in the world. Once you develop this understanding, you will find that there is nothing simpler than this. This is the teaching of the Upanishads. When you cultivate

the vision of love, you will see divinity everywhere. One who does not understand this subtle secret gets confused. God can be attained only through love, not by power, position and wealth.

Once there was a devotee who prayed incessantly for the vision of Krishna. He was not married and had no worldly obligations. He had no desire other than attaining Krishna. Pleased with his devotion, Radha decided to grant him a boon. Very close to his village, there was a river. A bangle seller went to the river to quench his thirst. Suddenly, a woman's hand emerged out of the river and asked him if he would adorn her hand with bangles. She did not show her face; only her hand was seen. The bangle seller was surprised at this. As per her request, he put bangles on the hand. Then the second hand appeared, and the bangle seller put bangles on that also. Thereafter, she asked as to what was the price of the bangles. The bangle seller told the price of the bangles. Then she said, "Go to my house in the village and ask the owner to give you the money. I have kept the money in a small enclosure behind the window in the room." As per her directions, the bangle seller went to the house and spoke to the owner, "Your daughter bought some bangles from me at the river. She told me to collect the money from you. She also told that I could take the money from the small enclosure behind the window in your room. The owner was surprised to hear this. He said, "How can I have a daughter when I am not married? Moreover, there is no such enclosure or window in my house. Someone has misguided you." However, on the insistence of the bangle seller, he went inside to see if the money was there. To his utter surprise, he found a window, and behind it a small enclosure in the room. When he put his hand into the enclosure, he got the required amount. He gave the money to the bangle seller and prayed, "Please take me with you and show me the woman who has sent you here." He sensed that she was none other than Radha. Chanting her name, he followed the bangle seller. When they went near the river, an ethereal voice asked the bangle seller, "Son, have you received the money?" He replied, "Mother, I have received the money and I have also brought the owner of the house with me. Please bless him with your vision." But she said that she did not want to show her face to any person other than Krishna. From that day onwards, the devotee remained near the river, chanting the name of Radha incessantly. Ultimately, he had the vision of Radha and Krishna. A true devotee is one who does not give up his resolve until he attains his goal.

Having resolved, what ought to be resolved, hold on to it till you have succeeded. Having desired what ought to be desired, hold on to it till your desire is fulfilled. Having asked what ought to be asked, do not leave the hold till you get it. Having thought what ought to be thought, hold on to it till you have succeeded. With heart mellowed, the Lord must yield to your wishes or forgetting yourself, you should ask Him with all your heart. Persevere, be tenacious, and never give up, for it is the quality of a devotee never to retreat, abandoning his resolve. (Telugu Poem)

With such firm resolve, he could see Radha and Krishna and redeem his life. Though God is everywhere, He grants His vision to the devotees depending on the intensity of their prayer. He will enquire whether it is necessary or not. He will put the following questions: Where, why, what, how, when? Only when He is satisfied with the answers does He respond. He acts according to the time, situation and circumstances.

Firm Resolve Can Attain Everything

All powers needed to know God are latent in man. Man is highly powerful and sacred. With firm resolve and unflinching faith, he can accomplish any task. Today man has travelled millions of miles in space and has reached the moon but he has not performed even an inch of inward journey. People today make enormous effort for obtaining material wealth but they do not contemplate on God even for a minute. Once Narendra (Swami Vivekananda) asked Sri Ramakrishna, "Swami, you say you can see God. How is it that we are not able to see Him?" Ramakrishna gave him a straight answer. "Son, people cry for their wives, children, family and their possessions. But, do they shed a single tear for the sake of God? If man sheds tears for the sake of God with full heart, surely God will be visible to him." Develop firm determination to see God. If your faith is unsteady, you can never attain the vision of God. People are full of doubts. Doubts arise out of attachment to the body. So long as there is attachment to the body, attachment to God will not occur. What humanity needs today is not power, position and prosperity. Peace, contentment and happiness constitute the true strength of man. God will not manifest before doubters. Therefore, you should ensure that you do not allow doubts to arise under any circumstances. This is the Sadhana that you need to perform. With this Sadhana, God will manifest right in your heart.

Venkataraman spoke today. He is a scientist and is well known in the field of atomic research. He was a student of C.V. Raman and did research under him. Such people are normally engaged fully in worldly activities. But he has a firm resolve to serve Swami. No matter what happens, he will not forsake Swami's proximity. "By good fortune, I have got the association of God. I shall never let go of this opportunity. Having attached myself to Sai's Divine Feet, I shall never let go." Such is his firm resolve. He lost his wife and passed through many trials and tribulations. But still he did not deviate from his chosen path. This is real Tapa. He is here and he continues to serve. Everything is contained in service.

Neither by penance nor by pilgrimage nor by study of scriptures nor by Japa can one cross the ocean of life. One can achieve it only by serving the pious.

(Sanskrit Verse)

Without having Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan (vision, contact and conversation) of God, what is the use of a long life? Such life is no better than that of an inert stone. Even dogs see Me when I am present. Do they attain liberation the moment they see Me? Mere Darshan (seeing) is not enough. You must perceive the form and experience divine feelings. Similarly, mere Sparshan (contact) is not enough. One must also have experience of divinity. Divine vibrations should emanate straight from the heart. God manifests in the form conceived by His devotees. He appears in the form He is worshipped. Formless God assumes manifold forms for the sake of His devotees. All forms are His. Firstly, one must recognise the principle of divinity.

(Bhagavan concluded His Divine Discourse with the Bhajan "Govinda Krishna Jai, Gopala Krishna Jai ...")

– **From Bhagavan's Dasara Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 23rd October 2001.**

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

F I J I : The Sai Organisation of Fiji received a container load of 550 wheelchairs for distribution to the people who are in need and who cannot afford it. The Sai Organisation assembled the wheelchairs, assessed the application forms for free chairs and then distributed them to people with amputated legs due to complications of diabetes, children infected by paraplegia and victims affected by paralytic strokes.

The wheelchairs were sent by the Free Wheelchair Mission, USA and it chose the Sai Organisation out of all the NGO's for distribution of the wheelchairs in Fiji. The President, Don Schoendonfer of the Free Wheelchair Mission, greatly admired Sai Organisation for their selfless service in Fiji and said, "You set the standard for the rest of the world to follow. Your attention to detail is truly amazing. It reflects the awesome heart you have to serve the poorest of the poor."

N E W Z E A L A N D : Sai devotees from Auckland regularly visit the women's section of the Mt. Eden Correction Centre. Needless to say that in the past few months Swami's love and grace started working through the spirit of the devotees by melting the hard and rough-hearted inmates of the Centre. The devotees teach meditation, Pranayama, Bhajans, and most of all give them love. The inmates experienced Swami's love in many different ways and showed transformation in their character. One girl with tears of joy said that a man with bushy hair and orange robe came blessing the inmates.

O M A N : On 22nd April 2004, the Serve and Inspire (SAI) Group of Muscat organised the 'Times of Oman Open Essay Writing and Poster Making Competition' under the theme 'Spreading the Light through Human Values 2004'. The competition with English as the medium of language was held under two categories, viz., poster making and essay writing. It was inaugurated by Dr. Muna bint Salim Al Jardani, Under Secretary for Education and Curricula in the Ministry of Education. Students from four groups of schools, viz., Omani-Arabic, Omani-bilingual, International Community and Special Education took part in the event. In all, 1,105 participants from 86 schools registered for the event and they participated in four age-groups. Human values-based themes were given to each group – 'Good Manners' for ages 6 to 9, 'Be Good, See Good, Do Good' for ages 9 to 12, 'Sharing and Caring' for ages 12 to 15 and 'Give and Forgive' for ages 15 to 18.

A team of 40 judges who are professionals in the area of art and literature were part of the evaluation team. Each entry was reviewed by a panel of three judges with two members from the community and one from the SAI group. The judges were truly impressed with the quality of essays and posters indicative of excellent literary and artistic skills of the participants. First, second, third and consolation prizes were awarded in each age-group and category. All the participating children were awarded certificates and all the participating schools were presented a plaque of appreciation.

The leading national newspaper, the *Times of Oman*, applauded this event in glowing terms – "The competition, a trendsetter in Oman, has the unique distinction of involving students from varied backgrounds, bringing them all under one roof, for the noble cause of spreading awareness about the human values. To bring contemplation about the universal human values, viz., truth, love, peace, right conduct and non-violence and putting them into

practice is the driving motto of the event which is inspired by the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV).”

The SSEHV is an education programme adopted by more than 165 countries all over the world. The prime objective of the programme is to elicit the human values from within a child by effective integration of the human values in the subjects and suitable teaching techniques. The SSEHV programme ensures that the students become valuable assets to the nation.

The organisers, i.e., the SAI Group, have conducted workshops on the theme “Role of Teachers and Inculcation of Human Values” for teachers from Omani bilingual schools in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. The Ministry had invited the SAI Group to present papers on human values at the school owners’ and principals’ conference held at the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and later at the citizenship education seminar at Sheraton Hotel. The SAI Group is a team of dedicated volunteers who feel that they must contribute positively to society in areas such as education and service. They are also one of the leading groups in regular blood donation and are conducting health awareness camps for the needy.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: The festival of Buddha Purnima was observed with piety and loving devotion at the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Arcadia in Los Angeles on 6th May 2004. The altar was beautifully decorated with exquisite flowers. The programme commenced with a Sinhalese song describing the glory of city of Anuradhapura, the ancient capital of Sri Lanka, along with a procession of devotees carrying lit lamps to the altar. The programme consisted of communal chanting the Buddha Gayatri and a recounting of the life and teachings of Lord Buddha. Several songs were presented which depicted the love and compassion of Lord Buddha for all humanity, helping to rid humankind of its evil tendencies and flooding the human heart with pure joy. The Buddha’s teachings on Metta (loving kindness), Karuna (compassion), Mudita (altruistic joy) and Upekkha (equanimity) were presented in the light of Bhagavan Baba’s Discourses on the occasion of Buddha Purnima. Over 125 devotees attended this joyous celebration.

In commemoration of Easwaramma Day, the Sathya Sai Baba Centres of Arcadia and Glendale in Los Angeles came together to prepare and serve a midday meal to homeless individuals and families on 6th May 2004. 24 volunteers gathered at the Pasadena Union Station shelter, an institution which serves meals to people who live on the streets. This Easwaramma Day service project has been carried out every year for the past 20 years. This year, the Union Station shelter requested an Indian meal. At the Union Station, the tables were decorated with colourful fresh-flower bouquets and were laid with dinnerware. Over 125 needy men, women and children of all ages received a hearty meal. As they departed, each individual received a gift pack consisting of a hat, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, socks, hand towel and band aid.

B H A R A T

Andhra Pradesh: Vijayanagaram district arranged a blood donation camp at Parvathipuram town on 4th April 2004. 50 persons donated blood which was sent to Vijayanagaram Government Hospital. This district held a youth convention on 24th and 25th April in Panadi village in which 1000 youth took part. Spiritual exhibition and cultural programmes were arranged. Food provisions (Amruta Kalasams) were distributed to 200 deserving poor in

different villages. This district mobilised 108 new subscribers to "Sanathana Sarathi". A new Sri Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandiram was opened in Gollapeta village on 2nd May 2004 and weeklong celebrations of Easwaramma Day were carried out in the district. Narayana Seva was done to about 2000 people on this occasion. This district conducted a free medical camp in Sanipalli village on 25th May 2004 treating 454 patients of skin, ENT, ophthalmic and dental ailments. 80 needy persons were selected and given food provisions in Piridi village on 30th May 2004.

West Godavari district conducted two youth camps at Eluru and Jangareddy Gudem on 11th April 2004. 250 youth took part in each camp and carried out tree plantation, veterinary camps, dental camps and distributed new clothes to 79 deserving needy people.

Nalgonda district conducted 54 free mass marriages in a very grand and big way in Chowtuppal village on 2nd May 2004 in which about 2000 people from all walks of life took part and 500 Seva Dal volunteers, gents and ladies, rendered the required services.

Assam, Manipur and N.E. States: Inspired by Sai ideals of selfless service, the Mahila members of Guwahati Samithi have time and again rushed to the assistance of the ailing, aged, desperate and needy. A laudable way of infusing courage and hope in the minds of the suffering humanity materialised in the form of the visit to the B. Barooah Cancer Institute on 19th May 2004, the Shakti Swarupini Day, where the assembled 140 patients were regaled by the soulful and melodious Sai Bhajans. Later on, the Sai Sisters personally distributed fruits and biscuits, dropping in a loving word or two to dispel the clouds of depression and hopelessness surrounding the patients. The encouraging feature of the programme was the participation of doctors and hospital staff and the request of the inmates to visit them at quick intervals.

Haryana and Chandigarh: Teachers orientation workshops for education on human values were conducted at Rohtak, Gurgaon and Faridabad, wherein 708 teachers took part. Five Grama Seva Training and Rural Bal Vikas camps were organised, one each at Hissar, Ambala, Yamunanagar, Karnal and Chandigarh – Panchkula, wherein 352 Seva Dal workers were given training.

A disaster management camp was conducted at Yamunagar, wherein the State faculty imparted theoretical as well as practical training to 53 youth and 40 observers. Other activities conducted during this period were blood donation camp at Panchkula donating 168 units of liquid love, a tailoring centre for widows and needy families in village Tangri, Ambala district, free coaching classes (session 2004-05) for students of needy families at Panchkula, Faridabad and Gurgaon benefiting 1057 children.

Kerala: Sai Youth of Calicut district under 'Sai Annapoorneswari' project are feeding 108 families regularly. At Alleppey, 120 school children are daily being fed by the Alleppey Samithi. With the help of trained group of volunteers, the State Organisation is covering new areas now for spreading Sai activities. In Thiruvananthapuram district alone, 24 new Bhajan centres have been started.

Orissa: A weeklong residential vocational training camp, "Sri Sathya Sai Vritti Siksha Saptaha" was organised for unemployed Sai Youth (gents) in the premises of Sai Centre, Dagarpada under Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Cuttack from 16th May 2004 to 22nd May

2004. The camp was attended by 50 youth. Training was imparted in seven trades, such as integrated farming system and mushroom cultivation, candle and agarbati rolling, chalk and duster making, DTP and screen printing, phenyl preparation, two-wheeler servicing and electrical appliances repairing.

It was not only Vritti Siksha but also Vyakti Siksha. To promote Vyakti Siksha, trainees had to undergo a process of spiritual Sadhana. All necessary arrangements were made to achieve this objective. Every morning from 5 a.m. to 7 a.m. and evening from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. were fully devoted to spiritual activities like Omkaram and Suprabhatam, practice of Jyotir Dhyana, Bhajan and Satsang, Nagar Sankirtan and Seva work. Professionals and ITI experts from each trade imparted training to the trainees. There was an evaluation on the basis of which certificates were issued to the deserving and successful trainees. Field visits were arranged for the trainees.

A youth bicycle rally was organised by the youth of Jharsuguda district covering a distance of 76 km. 38 youth participated in this rally. The theme of the rally was 'Grama Seva is Rama Seva'. They conducted three medical camps in three remote villages and did Seva there. They conducted Bhajan and Satsang in the evening. This was a three-day programme.

Seva Dal workers from different districts of the State participated in Seva conducted by the State Sai Seva Organisation during internationally famous Car Festival of Lord Shri Jagannath at Puri on 18th and 19th June 2004. About 350 Seva Dal workers participated in the activities like sanitation, water spraying, medical camp and Prasanthi Bhandar displaying Sai literature.

Grama Seva and medical camp were organised by north zone workers of the Samithi on 12th June 2004 in village Bhubanpur. In the medical camp, four doctors assisted by active workers treated 156 patients. Medicines were distributed free of cost. Youth Shramdana camp was also held in which youth cleaned the village temple complex, roads and drains. 32 lady active workers visited each house explaining Bhagavan's Mission and distributing Bhagavan's photograph, Vibhuti and Sai literature. All the villagers attended the Nagar Parikrama and Satsang on Sai Avatar arranged by active workers of the Samithi.

A 79-hour integrated service was held at the adopted village Ankabadi under Kolanara Samithi of Rayagada district from 4.30 a.m. of 7th May 2004 to 12.30 p.m. of 10th May 2004. Daily Omkaram, Suprabhatam, Nagar Sankirtan, Puja, medical camp, veterinary camp, evening Nagar Parikrama, Sai video show, cultural programme on Jayadev, cleaning of slums, mass Sathyanarayana Vratams, Bhajans, Sadhana camp, distribution of Sai protein, photos and Vibhuti were conducted during this service. Distribution of Sai literature, opening of Sai library, Bal Vikas rally, parents contact, awareness about AIDS, TB, family planning, hepatitis "B" were also undertaken. Doctors, technicians and agriculture specialists were involved in this programme. Costly medicines and tonics were distributed to 91 patients. 28 cattle were treated. Most of the inhabitants were tribals and Harijans.

Parlakhemundi Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi installed one drinking water tank at Sri Sathya Sai Bus shelter near Maharaja's palace.

Rajasthan: Ajmer Samithi organised an Educare Faculty Members Training Workshop on 11th and 12th April 2004 in Shirdi Sai Temple Conference Hall, Ajmer. In this workshop, 21 faculty members and 43 observers participated.

Door-to-door Narayana Seva programme is picking up at a fast pace in Rajasthan. Jaipur Samithi has added one more slum in Jalana Doongri area wherein 10 families are being taken care of. Padampur Samithi is continuing door-to-door Narayana Seva for 20 families, and 40 families are being provided regular medical aid. Udaipur Samithi has adopted 21 families for door-to-door Narayana Seva at Amba Mata Kachhi Basti Roopnagar.

Angucha Zinc Colony and Chittorgarh Zinc Colony are excelling in organising cultural programmes by Bal Vikas children to impress upon the parents the necessity of Bal Vikas education and its impact on children.

Official Website of Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust
www.sssbpt.org

The official website of Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam was launched with the Divine Blessings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the auspicious occasion of Maha Sivarathri 2004. As laid down in the charter of the Trust, this site aims at fostering five human values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa by disseminating the Divine Message of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba through its publications.

Salient features of this website are:

- ◆ **Bhagavan's Life and Mission**
- ◆ **Information about various activities of Book Trust**
- ◆ **Online catalogue of books and audio visual products**
- ◆ **Shopping cart for ordering publications**
- ◆ **Latest updates from Prasanthi Nilayam.**

Convener
Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust

SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER MEDICAL SCIENCES

Prashanthigram - 515 134, Anantapur Dist. (A.P.) India

(Accredited by the National Board of Examinations)

Phone No. 287388 Ext: 506, Fax 08555-287544

Email: ssihms@sancharnet.in, ssihmspsn@rediffmail.com

Applications are invited from candidates who have passed MS (Gen Surgery) from a recognised university for training in Urology for three years for the National Board of Examinations.

This Institute offers stipend and free single room hostel accommodation.

The selection will be based on the performance in written, clinical and viva voce tests which will be held during the last week of October 2004.

The application form and the brochure can be had from the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Prashanthigram, Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh, Pin - 515 134 on payment of Rs. 100/- (Rupees one hundred only) by demand draft drawn on the State Bank of India, Prasanthi Nilayam, in favour of SSSIHMS, Prashanthigram. The last date for the receipt of requests for application form is 31st August 2004.

Director

SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER MEDICAL SCIENCES,

Prashanthigram – 515 134, Anantapur Dt. (A.P) India

E-mail: sssihms@sancharnet.in, sssihmsspn@rediffmail.com

Phone No.08555-287388, Fax No.287544

Applications from qualified and experienced nurses with their complete Bio-data indicating their date of birth, educational qualifications, full particulars and period for which they worked / working since the date of passing the diploma / degree in Nursing, marital status etc., and a passport size photo are invited for the following posts of Sister Grade-II in Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Prashanthigram.

Educational and other Qualifications

Essential

- i) Intermediate or its equivalent from a recognised Board.
- ii) Certificate in General Nursing and Midwifery (3 years course) from a recognised Institution or equivalent or higher qualification.
- iii) Should be a registered 'A' Grade Nurse and Midwife with a State Nursing Council

Others:

Persons having experience in the field of Nursing are preferred.

Scale of Pay: Rs.5000-150-8000

DA as per Institute's rules

Accommodation: Accommodation is provided in the Ladies Hostel inside the Hospital Complex and they will be charged for the accommodation under the rules of the Institute.

Director

**AUGUST 2004 BACK COVER
MATTER**

Brahman is the Target

Grasp as a bow the great weapon furnished by the Upanishads, and fix in it an arrow sharpened by meditation. Draw it with the mind concentrated on Brahman, and hit, oh gentle youth, on that target alone, the immortal Brahman. Pranava is the bow, Atma is the arrow, Brahman is the target. So, the Sadhaka must, like the practitioner of the art of archery, be unaffected by things that agitate the mind. He should pay one-pointed attention to the target. Then, he becomes the thing meditated upon.

- Baba

SEPTEMBER 2004

Bhagavan's Address to Institute Students

MY STUDENTS ARE MY WEALTH

*One may acquire degrees such as B.A., M.A., MBA and MFM,
One may amass wealth, perform acts of charity and attain name and fame,
One may have physical strength and enjoy a long and healthy life,
One may be a scholar and attain exalted position in life,
But if one lacks humanness, then all this will be fruitless.*

(Telugu Poem)

Students! Boys and Girls! Teachers! Patrons of Education!

Mere acquisition of worldly education does not make a man great. Without attaining God's grace, all efforts of man will be in vain. There are many in this world who are highly educated, but are they rendering any service to their country? No. It appears that unlettered people are better than the highly educated ones. In spite of his education and intelligence, man is so foolish that he does not know his true Self. One may be highly intelligent and educated but bereft of human values his life is meaningless. In fact, one devoid of human values is no human being at all! There is little use in acquiring a number of degrees without imbibing human values.

Matchless Qualities of Institute Students

Embodiments of Love!

To know and recognise a truly educated individual, you have to look closely at our students. They are not satisfied with mere acquisition of degrees. They utilise their knowledge for the benefit of society. Education which is not useful to society is meaningless. Our students are highly virtuous and are endowed with the wealth of character. They consider virtues as their very life. Eminent persons who come here from all over the world learn many things from our students. Some of our students serve here as teachers after the completion of their studies. I am very happy to see this. We don't need to be worried about getting good and noble teachers from elsewhere for our Institute. Our own students take up this responsibility and set high ideals as exemplary teachers. In other academic centres, students are interested in pursuing higher studies for their own selfish ends. But our students are not interested merely in accumulating degrees; they use their knowledge for the benefit of others.

The height of character and nobility attained by our students is not due to secular education. The education they receive here is not limited to textual knowledge alone. They receive that education which develops virtues in them and which originates from the heart. Our students are incomparable. They will become ideal teachers and will transform the world by moulding students into men and women of good character. Character is the prime objective of education in our Institute. A person endowed with such education and character can rule over the entire world. Education without character is of no use. I am very much pleased to have students who are virtuous, energetic and intelligent. Our MBA students have all the noble qualities that are expected of them. In addition to their studies, they learn various languages. The students from other States have gained knowledge of various languages, such as, Tamil, Malayalam, Hindi, English,

Telugu, etc. They speak all these languages with such fluency that it is very difficult to identify their mother tongue. For such talented students, it is not difficult to learn the language of the Atma. They give talks even in Sanskrit. They also adhere to our Samskriti (culture). Samskara is not imbibed by learning Sanskrit; it comes from adherence to Samskriti. One who adheres to Samskriti will be able to attain all types of wealth and be an ideal to others. When I asked one of the students which place he belonged to, he said, "Swami, I belong to Puttaparthi." That boy speaks Sanskrit very fluently. He has also learnt various other languages.

My Students are My Property

The students who have studied at Puttaparthi are spreading Swami's message in various countries, such as America, Japan, Germany, Italy, etc. The students who have such dedication and devotion are very rare these days. But here are many such students in our institutions. It gives Me great joy to have such students here. We need such students. I wish that these students, after completion of their education, share the knowledge they have acquired here with their fellowmen and transform them. Men of eminence like the President of India, the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers, etc., extol our students whenever they visit this place.

In our Institute, students are provided education totally free of charge. In addition to this, scholarships are provided to deserving students. If you ask, "What is Swami's property?" I say, "Students are My property." Without the students, I will not be able to do anything. They are looking after Swami with utmost love and care. In fact, they are responsible for all the development that we find in our educational and other institutions.

The culture of Bharat is based on the Vedas which are in Sanskrit language. Here students chant the Vedic Mantras both in the morning and in the evening. You cannot get such students even if you do intense penance. They can certainly bring about transformation in society. There is no language our students do not know; there are no subjects they do not understand. You may be under the impression that Swami is straining hard to mould the character of the students. There is no strain on Swami whatsoever. In fact, the students are of great help to Swami. They are spreading the ideals of Sai to the rest of the world, giving Hai (joy) to one and all. There is a need to establish more similar institutions in order to have such ideal students. Parents themselves are not aware of the innate potential of their children. Our students are filled with noble thoughts and sacred feelings. They give top priority to the service of their parents. They treat their friends and relatives with love and affection. They have no desire for accumulating wealth. Their sole aim is to obey Swami's command and work for the progress of society. I do not want any other property than My students. With the help of these students, many educational institutions can be developed. Unlike students elsewhere who wake up very late in the morning, our students get up in the early hours at the crowing of the cock. They observe moderation in food and develop good habits. Such discipline is rarely found among students elsewhere. They are attentive in class and learn their lessons well. They obey their teachers. They take part in races, and in sports and games. They play games like badminton, tennis, volleyball, etc., in the right spirit. They take good care of their health too. They are all very strong in physique and spirit. You do not find anyone weak and afflicted with diseases. Such students who take care of themselves are capable of taking care of the country as well. Our institution is fortunate to have students of such calibre (*loud applause*). If there are another five institutions of this quality, they will give

immense happiness to all. In fact, other colleges are trying to emulate our institution. Our country is very fortunate that there are students of such quality in it. Bharat is a sacred land. The Bharatiyas are like diamonds. Our students are also like diamonds. They are obedient to elders, courteous towards relatives. Seeing their good conduct and listening to their sweet words, the guests who visit their houses are highly impressed. They are creative in their thinking and shine as role models. We do not wish to praise the qualities of our own students. But when dignitaries who visit this Institute talk high of our students, I feel very happy.

Spirit of Sacrifice of Institute Students

(Here Bhagavan referred to the hip bone fracture He suffered last year.) I am not suffering from any disease or any ailment. Last year, one boy was hanging colour buntings on the door while standing on an iron stool. Meanwhile, I opened the door and came out of My room. As soon as he saw Me, he became nervous and fell down from the stool. As he was falling, the iron stool got toppled and fell on Me. That was the time when My hip bone was fractured. Doctors tried their best to set it right. They felt sorry that it would be difficult for Swami to walk. I told them, “No one needs to feel sorry for Me. My students will take good care of Me. They will follow Me like shadow wherever I go.” My students are My doctors, compounders and nurses. It is because of them that I am able to move around. My students tell Me, “Swami, we don’t need to be worried about anything when we are with You. We want to sanctify our lives by serving You.” With such love and faith, hundreds of students have remained with Swami after the completion of their education. They are performing various types of jobs here. They do not want to go outside for employment. You may find it hard to believe if I tell you about the work they do. Once someone from outside came here and took two of our boys for employment. They were given a salary of 50,000 to 60,000 rupees per month. They utilised this money to serve poor children. Later on, they resigned their jobs and came here as they could not bear separation from Swami. Our students are capable of handling various types of instruments and equipment. They can handle sophisticated hospital equipment very efficiently. They are striving hard for the development of our hospitals. It is not possible for anyone to understand the sacred feelings of our students.

Students are Future Leaders of the Country

(Swami asked one of the boys who was sitting near Him to get up.) This boy did his engineering earlier and then completed his MBA degree in our Institute. Many companies from all over the country offered him jobs. But he rejected their offers. What is he doing at present? He is spreading Swami’s message all over the world through Radio Sai Global Harmony. Even his parents tell Me, “Swami, please keep him with You always.” When he was with his parents, he did not put on weight even though his parents forced him to eat more. But after coming here, he has gained 18 kg even without timely intake of food. Now he is always with Me attending to My needs. At the same time, he does not keep his office work pending. He attends to it at night.

(Swami asked another boy to get up.) What do you think of this boy? He hails from a backward area in Orissa. His father has three sons. Now all of them are working in Puttaparthi. These boys have post graduation degrees like M.Sc and MBA. They do not want to take up any job outside. All of them are working here and serving Swami. They are satisfied with whatever salary they are paid here. In this manner, all the boys who are working here are full of virtues and are leading a life of sacrifice. They are taking good

care of Me. I do not have any pain. I do not require any medical treatment. I do not need to be worried about anything. It is because of the loving service of My students that I am spending My time blissfully without any inconvenience or suffering whatsoever. They are always ready and eager to serve Me. All of them live like brothers. They carry out My instructions meticulously. There are nearly 200 such students at Prasanthi Nilayam. They do not sit idle; they discharge their duties diligently. It is not possible to describe the magnitude of work they do. They attend to all jobs. If there are such students everywhere, the country will certainly prosper. They help everyone. I Myself set an ideal to all of them. I want to make them totally self-reliant. They should not be dependent on anyone. I am sure they will be able to lead their lives in this ideal manner. I am telling all this today so that you will know the noble qualities of our students. They are Gunavantulu (virtuous), Balavantulu (energetic) and also Dhanavantulu (well-to-do). They themselves earn money. They do not take even a paisa from their parents. Sometimes, the parents may come and ask, "Do you require anything?" They reply, "Swami has provided everything. He is looking after us very well."

In future, many great events are going to take place. The country should have no fear. Bharat will certainly become a land of plenty and prosperity (*loud applause*). Our students will contribute a lot to the development of the country. They are the future leaders. It is a matter of great joy for Me to see the students as future leaders.

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

- **From Bhagavan's Address to Institute students in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 21st August 2004 on the occasion of the 18th Anniversary of the School of Business Management, Accounting and Finance, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prasanthi Nilayam.**

Festival of Indian Culture and Spirituality

A grand function was held at Prasanthi Nilayam for two days to celebrate the "Festival of Indian Culture and Spirituality". On this occasion, Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue of the function, bore a festive look as it was tastefully decorated with mango and plantain leaves and various traditional Indian style decorations. The function started on the morning of 31st July 2004 after the arrival of Bhagavan Baba in Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.10 a.m. Children with lighted candles were lined up on both sides of the passage of Bhagavan to offer welcome to Him. After showering the blessings of His Divine Darshan on the devotees, Bhagavan came to the dais and inaugurated the function by lighting the sacred lamp at 7.20 a.m. amidst a thunderous applause of devotees.

The programme began with talks on the various facets of Indian Culture and Spirituality. Smt. Chethana Raju, a former student of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, introduced the speakers who were blessed by Bhagavan to speak on this important subject. In her introductory remarks, Smt. Raju said, "Indian culture recognises the spirit as the truth of our being and our life as growth and evolution of the spirit." Bhagavan Baba, she said, had incarnated to re-establish our ancient ideals which were relevant for the progress of humanity today. The first speaker who addressed the gathering was Dr. Rajeswari Patel, Reader, Anantapur Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Offering her obeisance at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan, the learned speaker

remarked that Bhagavan Baba is the Sanathana Sarathi (eternal guide and Guru of humanity), to whom all worship and all prayer of all religions reaches. Bhagavan, she said, had descended on earth to re-establish Sanathana Dharma, the eternal religion of man based on the accumulated wisdom of the Vedas, which contain the timeless spiritual truths revealed by God to man through ancient Rishis (sages). The second speaker, Ms. Nandini Samarasinghe of Sri Lanka, observed that Lord Buddha's teachings found true meaning in the teachings of Bhagavan Baba whose aura of love was spreading in the entire world and uniting mankind. Bhagavan, the learned speaker said, had incarnated on earth so that man could reach his ultimate heights of spirituality. She exhorted the devotees to recognise Bhagavan's Divinity and experience the bliss of His Divine Love. True Nirvana, she felt, was at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Baba. The next speaker was Ms. Sylvia, Vice President, Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of the U.S.A. (Region 6). Referring to Bhagavan Baba's Guru Purnima message, Ms. Sylvia remarked that millions of people from all parts of the world were coming to Bhagavan to receive the most precious gift of His Divine Love. Indian culture and spirituality, she said, gave the immortal message to the entire mankind that each person was divine and the goal of man's life was to realise his innate divinity. The last speaker was Dr. Zeba Bashiruddin, a faculty member of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prasanthi Nilayam Campus. At the outset, the learned speaker dwelt on the various aspects of Indian Culture and Spirituality. The main message of the Vedas and other scriptures, she said, was that God is one and there are different paths to attain Him. Referring to the teachings of Bhagavan Baba, she observed that Bhagavan is teaching eternal truths to the people of all races, religions and nationalities by exhorting them to adhere to human values of Sathya, Dharma, Prema, Santhi and Ahimsa. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 8.45 a.m. In the end, Prasadam was distributed to all and new Saris were given to needy women.

Devotional Music by Priya Sisters: On the afternoon of 31st July 2004, renowned Carnatic musicians, Ms. Shanmugapriya and Ms. Haripriya of Chennai, better known as Priya Sisters, regaled the devotees with a galaxy of musical compositions which included classical items, Sai Bhajans and devotional songs in praise of Bhagavan. The programme started after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan at 3.10 p.m. and came to a close at 4.30 p.m. The entire audience remained spellbound for nearly one and half hours by their excellent performance. At the end of this programme, Bhagavan blessed the artistes. Both the sisters received special grace of Bhagavan when with His usual wave of hand, He materialised two gold chains for them. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.00 p.m.

The Glory of Sita: Panel Discussion: The second day of the celebrations of this festival began with a scintillating Veena recital by Smt. Padma Krishnamurthi of Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music. This was followed by a panel discussion on the theme "The Glory of Sita". The panelists were faculty members of Anantapur Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Smt. Chethana Raju who acted as moderator introduced the topic and also summed up the proceedings at the end of the discussion. In her opening remarks, Smt. Chethana observed that Sita was the very source of all virtues and a most exemplary ideal for all womanhood. The ideals and values practised by her in her life stood as beacon light for all women, she said. In the first part of the discussion, the panelists brought forth the ideals and values represented by Sita. The panelists narrated

various incidents from the life of Sita to explain how she set the greatest ideals of womanhood by her exemplary conduct in the face of biggest ordeals in her life. Renouncing the luxuries of palace life, she chose a life of self-sacrifice and accompanied Rama to the forest. She was the epitome of forbearance who faced all difficult situations without grievance, anger or remorse and established the highest ideals of chastity, courage, fortitude and ethics. The second part of the discussion was devoted to assess the virtues represented by Sita in the light of the teachings of Bhagavan Baba. She followed Rama as the supreme goal of her life discarding all material and worldly comforts and faced all challenges of her life with bravery, courage and dignity. The discussion came to a close with the remarks of the moderator who said that the ideals established by Sita were very much relevant for modern women. Analysing the present situation of modern society, the moderator observed that Bhagavan Baba was re-establishing the ancient ideals of Indian Culture and Spirituality by His system of education. The discussion brought forth clarity of thinking and depth of understanding of the topic. In fact, the entire programme was well researched, meticulously planned and ably presented. At the end of this programme, Bhagavan blessed the participants. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 8.45 a.m. In the end, Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees.

Saadhvimani Sita – Dance Drama: On the afternoon of 1st August 2004, a drama entitled “Saadhvimani Sita” was presented by the Bal Vikas children of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Andhra Pradesh. Based on the story of Uttar Ramayana, an extension of the Ramayana by Valmiki, the drama portrayed the noble ideals set by Sita to the entire womanhood as a model of nobility, chastity, devotion and self-esteem. Opening with a beautiful dance as invocation to Lord Ganesh, the drama unfolded the course of events commencing with the banishment of Sita to the forest by Rama and concluding with meeting of Rama with Sita and Lava, Kusha in the Ashram of Sage Valmiki. By all accounts it was a superb presentation, be it acting of the children, sweetness of the songs, exquisiteness of the sets and perfection of choreography. Obviously pleased with this excellent performance, Bhagavan blessed the children, distributed Prasadam to them with His Divine Hands and posed for photographs with them. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.05 p.m. With this excellent play, the celebrations of two-day festival of Indian Culture and Spirituality came to a happy conclusion.

Service is a Glorious Opportunity for Mankind

A play was enacted on the theme of service in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the afternoon of 9th August 2004 by a group of devotees from the U.K. who visited Prasanthi Nilayam in the month of August 2004. Various episodes of the play brought out the significance of service in the life of man and also outlined the criteria which made service beneficial for both society as well as the individual who performed service. One of the episodes showed how service done for personal glory made it a mere ritual. Another episode showed how an individual neglected his old father and his family because he was engaged in so-called social service. The play successfully depicted the criteria which should govern service to make it an elevating and ennobling act as defined by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, who is the greatest source of inspiration for service programmes in the world today.

All the scenes were well enacted and the addition of appropriate songs relevant to the theme and situation heightened the impact of the drama. The drama came to a close at 4.45 p.m. with a beautiful group song in praise of Bhagavan Baba. At the end of the play,

Bhagavan blessed the cast and posed for photographs with them. Bhajans on this day were also led by these devotees. Prasadam was then distributed to all. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.20 p.m.

From Independence to Swarajya

The spirit of freedom struggle of India came alive in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam where the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning presented a very powerful play entitled "From Independence to Swarajya" on the afternoon of 15th August 2004 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as part of 58th Independence Day Celebrations of India.

The first episode of the play portrayed the scene of Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukhdev being led to the gallows. These immortal heroes of India's freedom struggle faced death bravely while shouting the slogan of Vande Matram and singing the famous song "Mera Rangade Basanti Chola". The emotional acting of the students and the touching words of their dialogues and songs recaptured the spirit of India's freedom struggle so realistically that all eyes were moist with tears at the great sacrifice of these great martyrs. The second episode shifted the scene to North-east where Subhash Chandra Bose prepared the countrymen for struggle against the foreign rule and infused the spirit of sacrifice in them. Another episode showed a college principal waging a non-violent struggle against the foreign rulers by sowing the seeds of patriotism in the minds of the students and youth. His patriotic fervour was not a bit diminished even when his son sacrificed his life for the motherland and he himself was jailed and crippled due to cruelty of his captors. Powerful oratory of the student who enacted this role shook the entire audience.

But most strikingly realistic was the depiction of the mindset of modern youth who not only lack the patriotic fervour of their forefathers but are pathetically indifferent towards their duty towards their motherland. So, the heroes of freedom struggle regret how the spirit and sentiments of patriotism have disappeared in their country where people have become greedy and selfish and the youth have become directionless. The last episode showed that the greatest hope of this country was that Almighty God Himself had incarnated in this land in the human form of Bhagavan Baba whose powerful teachings were re-establishing the most cherished values of this sacred land. The path of unity and divinity shown by Bhagavan Baba was sure to lead not only the people of this country but the entire mankind towards Swarajya, the rule of the Self, by raising the consciousness of men to transcend the body and the mind, and by laying the firm foundation of life on the eternal values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa.

By all accounts, it was a matchless performance aided by a powerful script, emotion charged dialogues, excellent stage management and selection of appropriate songs. Obviously pleased with the performance of the students, Bhagavan Baba showered His profuse blessings on them at the end of the play and posed for photographs with them. He also materialised four rings one after the other for four students who played the lead roles in the drama. The drama which started at 3.30 p.m. came to a close at 4.30 p.m. At the end, Prasadam was distributed to all. Besides, Bhagavan distributed sweets to the cast of the drama with His Divine Hands. In the end, Arati was offered to Bhagavan.

18th Anniversary Celebrations of SBMAF

The School of Business Management, Accounting and Finance (SBMAF) of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning celebrated its 18th Anniversary on 21st August 2004 in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam. The day marked the completion of 18 eventful and

memorable years since Bhagavan inaugurated the management programme in the Institute on 21st August 1986.

Bhagavan came to the Bhajan Hall at 2.55 p.m. and showered His blessings on the management students and faculty members for nearly one hour till 3.55 p.m. Bhagavan answered their queries and interacted with them. Most of the questions were related to internalising various aspects of the curriculum in an individual's life. Thereafter, the management students presented a drama entitled "Where Nobility Meets Ability" in the Divine Presence in Sai Kulwant Hall. The drama highlighted the fact that the education imparted in Bhagavan's educational institutions was a perfect blend of academic excellence and spiritual inputs for character building and integrated personality development. Such students would then act as change agents in society bringing about transformation in the corporate world and society at large. The drama also highlighted the 'unique focus' and 'broader perspective' that were the outstanding features of the management programme in Bhagavan's Institute. The incidents were based on real life individual experiences.

After the completion of the presentation, Bhagavan blessed four speakers to address the gathering. The first speaker was Prof. U.S. Rao, Dean, SBMAF, who expressed his gratitude to Bhagavan for His constant guidance, attention and encouragement to the students of the management programme. He gratefully acknowledged how Bhagavan helped the Department to develop and offer unique courses such as Self Awareness, Personality Development, Leadership, etc. The next speaker, Sri Deepak Anand, Research Scholar, SBMAF, recounted his experiences with Bhagavan during his tenure as a Ph.D student. Sri Satish Narayan, II MBA (Finance) student said that being Bhagavan's student meant having the rare opportunity of building a unique relationship with Him and learning so much by observing Him. Finally, Prof. Sudhir Bhaskar spoke about the high esteem in which the UGC and NAAC had held the Institute and that the highest grade of A++ ranking, the highest in the country, was awarded to it. This rating was the recognition for the Integral System of Education of the Institute. All this was due to Bhagavan's grace, he said.

As grand finale to the programme, Bhagavan blessed all with His Divine Discourse in which He stressed the importance of value education and also extolled His students' exemplary character, disciplined behaviour and virtuous conduct. (Full text of Bhagavan's Discourse has been given elsewhere in this issue.) The programme came to a close at 6.15 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan and Prasadam distribution.

Grama Seva and Parthi Yatra by Srikakulam Devotees

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Srikakulam (Andhra Pradesh) undertook a grand project of Grama Seva named "Sri Sathya Sai Sahasra Grama Seva Maha Yajnam" from December 2003 to August 2004 in which 141 Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithis and Bhajan Mandals of the district took part. The Grama Seva included Nagar Sankirtans, Satsang and Bal Vikas programmes. It also included 61 general medical camps benefiting 11,239 persons and 36 veterinary camps which treated 11,789 animals. Other social service programmes included distribution of Amrutha Kalasam, i.e., a bag containing rice, pulses, oil, utensils, chappals, clothes, etc., to 2400 needy families, and providing self employment to 27 families. To provide drinking water to villagers, wells were dug in 32 villages. Besides sanitary cleaning of wells, bores, drains was done in 600 villages.

After performing this Grama Seva, the Sai Organisation of the district organised Parthi Yatra (pilgrimage to Puttaparthi) from 21st to 24th August 2004 in which 5,000 devotees of Srikakulam district took part. All the 5,000 devotees participated in personal Sadhana for 40 days conducted by the Organisation before coming to Puttaparthi. These devotees came to Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the afternoon of 22nd August 2004 in a grand procession of chariots, palanquins, bands, Nagar Sankirtan groups, Bhajan groups, folk dancers, etc. They presented various cultural items in Sai Kulwant Hall as they came near the dais to seek the benedictions of Bhagavan Baba. After the conclusion of this grand procession, an excellent music programme directed by the eminent music director Sri Saluru Vasurao was presented by them. The programme came to a conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.45 p.m.

On the next day, i.e., 23rd August 2004, the programme commenced after the morning Darshan of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall. At the outset, Bhagavan blessed Sri R. Lakshmana Rao, District President of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Srikakulam district to give a talk. Sri Rao gave a detailed description of the Grama Seva and Parthi Yatra organised by them and expressed gratitude to Bhagavan for His guidance and inspiration. At the end of his speech, Bhagavan blessed Sri Rao and materialised a gold chain and a ring for him. After the speech of Sri Rao, Bhagavan blessed the devotees with His Divine Discourse. Bhagavan said that He was aware of the difficulties of the people of Srikakulam district. He blessed them that they would overcome all difficulties. He said that difficulties were for the good of man. He added that the Bharatiyas did not lose their peace of mind in difficulties. Bhagavan materialised three rings one after the other and gave these to three Srikakulam devotees. With the blessings of Bhagavan, all the devotees from Srikakulam were offered a sumptuous meal in the canteen as Bhagavan's Prasadam on this day.

Cultural Programmes by Institute's Brindavan and Anantapur Campus Students

An excellent drama on the life and teachings of Shirdi Sai Baba was presented by the students of Brindavan Campus on the morning of 22nd August 2004 in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. Many incidents from the life of Baba were superbly enacted by the students to the joy of the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall. The story was introduced through dialogues in Sanskrit, Hindi and English. The story which started with the arrival of Baba in Shirdi concluded with joint celebrations of Id and Sri Rama Navami by Baba's Hindu and Muslim devotees giving the message of Baba that religions were the various paths leading to the realisation of one God. Interspersed with appropriate songs, the drama recreated the scenes of Shirdi in a very lively manner.

After this excellent drama, the students of Anantapur Campus of the Institute presented their programme. The first item of the programme was Rama Katha which portrayed the life of Lord Rama in traditional style. Thereafter, the students presented Sai Melody consisting of sweet musical notes of their brass band. The morning programme came to a close at 9.25 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

Devotional Music by Overseas Devotees

An overseas musical programme was presented on the evening of 24th August 2004 in Poornachandra Auditorium in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. The programme first featured piano soloist Ms. Joanna Brzezinska from Poland. Ms. Brzezinska performs throughout Europe as a soloist and chamber music artist and is in residence at the Conservatoire Populaire de Musique in Geneva, Switzerland. She performed works of

Chopin, Mozart and Beethoven, thrilling the audience with her virtuosity and emotional sensitivity.

Next, German singer Gisela Sebastian sang devotional songs accompanied by violin and keyboard. All over the world, people are composing songs out of love for Swami in their own native languages. This global musical outpouring of love is truly unique in the history of music. A solo in Spanish was followed by the ladies from the Sai Youth Group of Poland, who sang in Polish about longing for God and the importance of remembering God through the ups and downs of life.

The final part of the programme featured American Gospel soloist Johani Funchela-Penny and group from Los Angeles, California. The Gospel style of music grew out of the longing of early Afro-American slaves, appealing to God for strength, solace and freedom. The music stirs the soul and has a special quality expressing patience, hope, bliss and faith in God. The powerful and expressive songs of the American group brought the programme to a close, ending with “We are One Humanity,” which reflects Swami’s teachings.

At the end of the programme, Bhagavan came on the stage and blessed all the ladies, created a ring and chain for the pianist, and distributed Saris to the participants.

Sai Mahima: A Dance Drama

Dramatic art was brought to perfection by this dance drama enacted by the U.K. Sai children on the afternoon of 25th August 2004 in Poornachandra Auditorium, Prasanthi Nilayam in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. All aspects of this drama were praiseworthy. Superb acting of the children, excellent dances, appropriate make-up and costumes, sweet soothing music, effective stage management and innovative background effects made it a perfect dance drama. The drama commenced with a beautiful dance as prayer to Lord Ganesh. Episodes from the Puranas as narrated by Bhagavan Baba formed the next two scenes of the drama, the first of them being the story of King Parikshit who merged with Lord Vishnu after listening to the Bhagavata by Sage Suka. The other episode entitled “Nithya Sankalpa” narrated the story of Siva and Parvati whose desire of building a house was never fulfilled because Siva never willed it. The remaining three scenes of the drama portrayed the humanitarian projects undertaken by Bhagavan Baba relating to healthcare, educare and sociocare which included Grama Seva also. Besides portraying the glory of Bhagavan Baba, the drama successfully depicted His teachings.

The drama started after the arrival of Bhagavan Baba in Poornachandra Auditorium at 3.30 p.m. and came to a close at 4.35 p.m. with an excellent group song devoted to Bharat Matha (motherland). At the end of the drama, Bhagavan distributed clothes to the children and showered His blessings on them. He also posed for photographs with them. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 4.45 p.m.

Radio Sai Global Harmony

This 24-hour digital radio channel in collaboration with WorldSpace Corporation broadcasts Bhagavan’s Discourses, Bhajans, Interviews with devotees, instrumental Bhajans, etc. It has been on the air since November 2001 and can be heard at the Broadcast ID 1314 in case of Asiastar* and at the Broadcast ID 846 in case of

Afristar** on a WorldSpace digital radio set. In the regions not covered by Afristar and Asiastar satellites, **RADIO SAI** programmes can be heard through “web-radio”, by logging on to www.radiosai.org

* Satellite which covers Asia and Australia (partly)

** Satellite which covers Africa and Europe (partly)

For further details visit
www.radiosai.org
www.worldspace.com

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

CANADA

The Sathya Sai School of Canada’s Second Annual Walk for Values was held on Saturday, 29th May 2004 in eight Canadian cities including Abbotsford, Coquitlam and Vancouver in British Columbia, Calgary in Alberta, Saskatoon and Winnipeg in the prairies and the nation’s capital, Ottawa. In the city of Toronto, over three thousand people walked in unison to raise awareness of human values. The opening ceremonies included the soulful rendering of the national anthem “O Canada” and prayers from the Sathya Sai School and the First Nations. Honourable Jim Karygiannis, Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Agincourt and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport read out a message from the Prime Minister of Canada, Honourable Paul Martin, commending the organisers for helping to promote values which contribute to the well being of our society.

Participants included peace loving and civic conscious residents, parliamentarians, policy pundits, decision makers, educators and law enforcement officers. Organised by the students, parents and Principal of the Sathya Sai School, this unique event brought together diverse groups of people, underscoring the universal appeal of Bhagavan Baba’s message of human values which transcends religious or racial lines. The participants were led by the students of the Sathya Sai School, who marched under the banner of ‘Character’ echoing the motto of the school – ‘The End of Education is Character’. Others who rallied behind them were divided into five groups, each representing a human value, namely, Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence. Three large colourful floats carried Sathya Sai School kindergarteners and some Grade 4 pupils dressed as inspiring personalities such as the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela, Abraham Lincoln, Mother Teresa, Albert Einstein and Helen Keller.

The 3-km walk ended with celebrations at the Scarborough Civic Centre where participants received their lunch packets and viewed an exhibition on Value

Parenting. Representatives from all levels of Government addressed the concluding ceremonies, bringing messages of appreciation from the Canadian Parliament and the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. Several of them acknowledged the need to bring in the five human values into the various levels of governance. The highlight of the ceremony was a presentation by three students of the Sathya Sai School. With their excellent oratory, they beautifully conveyed how their school had taught them to live in the light of the five human values, and won the loving adoration of the audience.

Several Canadian media outlets carried reports of this one-of-a-kind walk and the one-of-its-kind Sathya Sai School behind it. Bhagavan's Divine Presence was experienced in everything and by everyone. For the second year in a row, the event proved highly successful in its community outreach objectives and created positive awareness about Bhagavan Baba, His message and its positive impact on millions around the world.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

On 2nd June 2004, a team from the Advisory Board to the USA Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Foundation conducted SSEHV training geared toward a Summer Youth programme from Purdue University Extension, called Freedom Through the Arts. This SSEHV training resulted from a referral by a St. Louis SSEHV community programme. This St. Louis Neighbourhood Houses programme has been running for two years after extensive training of their administration and staff. It serves approximately 350 city youth who attend year-round after-school programmes in five neighbourhood centres throughout the city. More than twenty participants were trained including Purdue University staff, community activists, programme directors, teachers, parents and volunteers. The participants gained working knowledge of Community SSEHV enabling them to introduce human values in the summer programme serving a group of fifty Indianapolis children in grades 1–5 from various ethnic backgrounds. The summer programme began in July 2004, running for five weeks – five days a week. The training programme was greatly appreciated by all the participants for introducing them to the profound dimensions of human values in the lives of children.

BHARAT

Assam, Manipur and N.E. States: “Service to man is service to God”, so says Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. With this theme in view the Youth Wing of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Tezpur arranged a healthcare programme for the rickshaw pullers who have to do laborious work, and also they belong to lower strata of society. The programme was undertaken on 8th August 2004 at Agnigarh High School, Joymoti Pathar, Tezpur for the first time. About 200 rickshaw pullers and their families were examined by three doctors and medicines were distributed free. About 60 rickshaw pullers also received training in Yoga and Pranayama given by an experienced and qualified trainer. The programme, which was supported by 40 Youth Wing members including other active workers, gained much enthusiasm.

In an attempt to expand Sai activities, two more Sai Centres were started. One centre was started on 4th January 2004 at Digbhoi, an oil town. The other centre was started at Lido, a colliery town, on the land given by the Coal India Limited, Margherita, a sub-divisional headquarter. Sai Youth of the area constructed a house for the Lido Centre.

Tamil Nadu: A Youth Seminar on the theme “In Pursuit of Human Excellence” was conducted in Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan on 8th August 2004 for Mahila Youth between the ages of 18 and 35 by the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Metro West, Chennai. It was attended by 435 Mahila Youth from all major colleges in the city. Inaugurating the seminar, Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations observed that human excellence could be achieved by fostering selfless love. The chief Guest Smt. M.V. Bhanumathy IRS, Addl. Commissioner of Income Tax, gave the keynote address and highlighted the need for education to go beyond classrooms where applying human values in real life situations became a necessity. Dr. Nirmala Prasad, Principal, MOP Vaishnav College for Women spoke on the dire need of women to become self employed instead of being dependent. The Seminar concluded with a dance drama entitled “The Pancha Bhootha Prapancham” by Bal Vikas children from Chennai Metro West.

To secure grace of the Divine, it is not necessary to seek knowledge, wealth, power and position. Purity of mind alone is enough. Every cell of one’s body will be filled with the Divine when God is worshipped with pure and single-minded devotion.

- *Baba*

DEVOTIONAL FERVOUR MARKS ONAM

It is customary for Keralites to get together in their ancestral homes to celebrate Onam. However, for the devotees of Bhagavan Baba it is a great privilege and blessing to come together at Prasanthi Nilayam for celebrating Onam at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Baba who is the Universal Mother and Father.

As part of Onam celebrations, extensive medical camps in the villages of Sathya Sai Taluk and nearby villages were organised by SAIMED, the team of 36 doctors and 36 paramedical staff from Kerala. Altogether, the team served 11822 patients and provided medicines, including 117 dental extractions in 15 villages. Medical stalls were put up at many places inside the Ashram. The team included doctors from the streams of allopathy, ayurveda and homeopathy and specialists in general medicine, ophthalmology, ENT, paediatrics, gynaecology, orthopaedics, dentistry, etc. The team observed that there was a high incidence of ophthalmologic and dental problems in these areas. The doctors who participated are planning a project for continuous dental and eye care for these villagers.

The holy festival of Onam was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 26th, 27th and 28th of August 2004. On all these days, morning and evening, there were recitals of

the sacred Nadaswaram and Panchavadyam in Sai Kulwant Hall creating an ambience as that of the temples of Kerala. Sai Kulwant Hall was beautifully done up with traditional Kerala style decorations for the festive occasion.

The celebrations commenced on the evening of 26th of August by the presentation of “Sai Katha” by Sri Balarama Chandran, a former student of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. It consisted of Telugu verses on the childhood events of Bhagavan, composed by Bhagavan Himself. The verses were interspersed with explanation in English. This was followed by the rendering of sacred chants by the Mahila Sai Youth of Kerala. Their sweet voices came out with Ganeshastuthi, Suryashtakam and Annapournashtakam. Then came devotional music by the renowned singer, Kum. Niveditha, a product of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas. She presented devotionalsongs in Malayalam and Hindi. The programme of the evening concluded with Bhajans by the Kerala Bhajan Group and Mangalarati to Bhagavan.

The evening of 27th August witnessed the presentation of the drama “Bhakta Sakha Bhagavan” by the Bal Vikas children of Ernakulam district. They presented episodes from the lives of great devotees – Draupadi, Kurooramma and Shama. To save Draupadi from her misfortune of widowhood, Sri Krishna went to the extent of carrying her sandals in His Hands. Kurooramma was an ardent devotee of the Lord of Guruvayoor. Child Krishna came to her everyday in the guise of a sweet little boy. One day, the boy put the garland kept at the altar around his neck and ate the Prasadam meant for the Lord. He was not deterred by the repeated scoldings of Kurooramma with regard to the mishandling of Prasadam for the Lord. In order that the boy should not disturb the Puja, she placed the boy under a big vessel. That day, contrary to the routine, Krishna did not appear before the great devotee Bilvamangal during his Puja. After a while, Krishna came with dirt smeared all over His body. Bilvamangal became angry when he came to know that Kurooramma had kept the Lord under the vessel. But Krishna declared, “I am the servant of My devotees.”

The next scene showed how Shama, an ardent devotee of Sai Baba of Shirdi, was miraculously cured of snake bite by Baba. In the last scene, Hanuman declares that the Lord of Draupadi, Kurooramma and Shama is now with us as Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The drama concluded as all the children came together extolling Lord Sai as “Bhakta Sakha Bhagavan”. Bhagavan in all His grace and mercy blessed the children and posed for photographs with them. Following the drama, renowned singers Sri T.S. Radhakrishnan, Sri M.G. Srikumar, Sri Unni Menon and Sri Pradeep Somasundaram enthralled the audience with their devotional songs. The programme for the day concluded with Bhajans by Kerala Bhajan Group and Mangalarati to Bhagavan.

Early in the morning of 28th of August, the Thiruvonam day, Sai Kulwant Hall, richly decorated to the Kerala style with festoons of Kuruthola (tender coconut leaves) and other decorations was ready to welcome Bhagavan. Bhagavan graciously came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.00 a.m. in a grand procession with the accompaniment of Poornakumbham, Veda chanting, Thalapoli, Kavadi and peacock dance. The morning programme commenced with a welcome song to Swami set to the Sopanam style of Kerala. Then Sri Kavalam Srikumar rendered Sankirthanams. Thereafter, the Bal

Vikas children of Thiruvananthapuram presented the dance drama entitled “Sai Samrajya”. The drama begins showing Emperor Mahabali revealing his identity to two boys. The boys inform him that the place he is in is Andhra Pradesh, and he has lost his way. Bali in turn remarks that he has already gone to Kerala and has observed that all his people have come to Puttaparthi. He wants to celebrate Onam with Sai Vamana and his people. Hence, he informs that he has come to the right place. Then the children hail Lord Sai in the various traditional dance forms of Kerala and the programme concludes with the loving invitation to Swami to come to Kerala. Bhagavan graciously materialised a chain for a little girl who participated in the drama.

After this, the State President of Kerala, Prof. E. Mukundan, addressed the audience. On behalf of all Keralites, he expressed his sincere gratitude to Bhagavan for allowing Keralites to celebrate Onam in the Divine Presence. He also brought out various incidents that highlighted Swami’s infinite love and compassion for His devotees. Then the Minister for Transport, Government of Kerala, Sri R. Balakrishna Pillai addressed the gathering. He told that Swami’s presence and grace had been evident in each and every moment of his life. He reminded the devotees that Swami was with all of them at all points of time. He concluded with a request to Swami to bless every citizen of the State with His Divine visit. Then Bhagavan graciously delivered the Onam Discourse. The programme happily concluded with Bhajans by the State Bhajan Group, distribution of Prasadam and Mangalarati to Bhagavan.

The evening programme commenced as Swami came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.05 p.m. The first programme of the evening was a drama by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Vidyapeeth, Srisailam, Kerala. It demonstrated the Pithrubhakti of Adi Sankara. Sankara’s father sends him to offer Naivedya at the altar of Devi (Divine Mother). Devi does not come to accept the offering. Sankara feels miserable and decides to put an end to his life. Then Devi comes and accepts the Naivedya and takes leave. Sankara dances in joy, but later discovers that Devi has drunk the whole milk. There is nothing left to take back as Prasadam. He is afraid whether his father may mistake him to have consumed the milk. He prays intensely and the Devi appears again. He pleads for some milk and Devi gives him milk as her Divine Prasad. This Prasad confers on him all the knowledge and wisdom.

Then the Bal Vikas children of Malappuram district presented the dance drama “Ambarisha Charitham”. One day, Durvasa curses King Ambarisha, the celebrated devotee of Lord Narayana and creates an ogre to kill him. Ambarisha prays to Lord Vishnu, who sends his Sudarshana Chakra. It annihilates the ogre and flies targeting Durvasa. Durvasa runs to the Trinity but they express their inability to help him. At last, he begs Ambarisha for pardon. As King Ambarisha prays, the Chakra goes back to Lord Vishnu.

Then the Sai Youth presented “Abhangs” – the Vittal Bhajans. The entire ambience was filled with the potent, vibrant, fast tempo of the presentation. The session happily concluded with Prasadam distribution and Mangalarati to Bhagavan.

On the morning of 29th August, Bhagavan graciously blessed the gold medals for the winners of State level essay competition held in the schools and colleges of the State,

covering 305 educational institutions and 3142 participants. The topic for the competition was “The End of Education is Character.”

The devotees returned to their native places with hearts full of sweet memories which they would cherish for a lifetime.

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Director

Chinna Katha

Experiencing Truth

On learning that Sage Suka was imparting his teachings on the subject of Atmic principle to some of his disciples in his Ashram in a forest near Mithilapura, King

Janaka decided to go to the Ashram of the sage everyday and listen to his teachings. The sage was very much pleased to get a disciple like Janaka.

Once King Janaka did not come at the stipulated time. After some time, the remaining disciples of the sage wanted the sage to start his discourse. But the sage said, "King Janaka is yet to come. I will start my discourse after he comes." A feeling of anger overtook the disciples and doubt arose in their mind about their Guru. "Even a sage like Suka has not risen above the feelings of difference between a king and a common man! Are we not his disciples?" They started whispering amongst themselves thus. Sage Suka understood their feelings. Meanwhile, King Janaka arrived and Sage Suka started his discourse. The sage thought of showing to his disciples the greatness of King Janaka at an appropriate time.

One day, Sage Suka was giving his discourse, and all the disciples were listening very attentively. Suddenly, the sage said, "What is this? The entire city of Mithilapura is on fire. The smoke and flames can be seen from here." That very moment, all the disciples ran towards Mithilapura, wailing and shouting, "Oh! What would have happened to my house! What would be the fate of my mother and father?" Only King Janaka remained there without showing any anxiety whatsoever. Sage Suka told him, "My dear! The palace and your living quarters are all in the grip of fire. Will you not go and see?" But King Janaka remained unperturbed as if nothing had happened.

After some time, all the disciples came back running and said, "Guruji! We did not see any fire when we went near Mithilapura. There was no cause for any worry. But we saw smoke and fire from here. What is this mystery?" They prayed to their Guru to tell them the reality. Then Sage Suka smilingly addressed his disciples thus, "Oh dear ones! I myself created this scene to test you. You are the owners of one house. But King Janaka is the ruler of the entire kingdom. Not only that, even after hearing that his living quarters were aflame, he did not lose his equal-mindedness and concentration, and remained here all the time. But all of you ran helter-skelter. Now you only tell how great King Janaka is! Only those who possess equal-mindedness, concentration and detachment are most deserving to receive the knowledge of the Self. That is why I waited for the king to arrive on that day before starting my discourse." All the disciples prayed to their Guru for forgiveness. King Janaka was as great a disciple of Sage Suka as was Arjuna of Sri Krishna. He experienced the truth of his Guru's teachings by listening to them.

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A Pure Heart is the Abode of God

God's grace cannot be had by one who is wavering from moment to moment and whose heart is not pure. The Lord judges the devotee by the purity of his heart and not by the kind of worship or Japa he performs. Even if you do not

practise worship or meditation, it is enough if you have cleansed your heart. The Divine will then enter it.

– Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

BACK COVER MATTER

The One is ever One

A mirror reflects all that is before it. The convexity or concavity of the mirror or the covering of dust it might have collected will certainly misshape the image but they cannot misshape or affect the objects reflected. Easwara, Prakriti and Jiva are all three images of Paramatma in the mirror of Maya, warped by the Guna that tarnishes the surface of the mirror. It is the mirror that pictures the One as many; the One is ever One.

- Baba

OCTOBER 2004

SRI KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI SANDESH – I

GOD IS PLEASED WITH DEVOTIONAL SINGING

*Oh Krishna! You do not eat what I serve You at home.
But You go to the houses of the Gopikas
And steal their butter.
Oh dear Krishna! It spoils our good name.*

Thus, Yashoda reprimanded child Krishna, “Oh! My dear Krishna! You don’t eat the food I prepare for You. You go to the houses of the milkmaids and stealthily eat the butter stored in their houses. You are creating problems for me. Is it that the butter suffused with mother’s love does not taste good to You?” So saying, she tied Krishna to a mortar with a rope. It is everybody’s experience in the world that we do not like the food cooked in our own house. The items cooked in others’ houses appear to be tasty. This is quite natural. A sweetmeat seller does not eat sweets though enjoying all the while the sweet smell of the Laddus in his shop; he relishes puffed rice from another shop. However, Krishna did not steal butter from others’ houses for its taste. There is an underlying message in this Leela (divine prank). Here, butter symbolises pure heart. Wherever there is a pure heart, Krishna goes there. Such a pure heart will be soft and sweet. The hearts of Gopis were ripened with devotion. They were pure, soft and nectarine. Hence, Krishna would go to their houses to steal their hearts.

Divine Energy Makes the Universe Function

In Krita Yuga, Lord Vishnu incarnated as Vamana. Sage Kashyapa was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. He had completely surrendered himself at His Lotus Feet and was totally lost in divine bliss. One day, his wife Aditi requested him, “My dear! You have surrendered everything to the Lord. Why don’t you pray to Him to bless us with a child who can save us from the demons?” In response to their prayer, Lord Vishnu incarnated as their son in the form of Vamana. Emperor Bali performed many Yajnas. After the completion of 107 Yajnas, he made arrangements for performing 108th Yajna known as Viswajit. As he was performing this Yajna, Vamana appeared before him as a dwarf Brahmin. Vamana asked for three steps of land in charity from Bali, which he promised to give. In the meantime, Emperor Bali’s preceptor Sukracharya came there and tried to dissuade Bali from giving this gift of charity. He advised Bali, “Please do not give anything in charity to this Brahmin, much less the three steps of land. Do not underestimate Him. He is not an ordinary Brahmin. He is an Avatar of Vishnu. He is born to Sage Kashyapa in fulfilment of the boon granted by Lord Vishnu to him.” But Emperor Bali did not pay heed to the advice of his preceptor. Sukracharya again pleaded with Bali, “Oh king! You consider this person as an ordinary Brahmin. No, no. He is capable of filling the entire universe. It is not wise on your part to grant His request.” But Emperor Bali turned down his advice saying that he could not go back on his promise, as it was a great sin not to stand by one’s word. In those days, people preferred death to going back on their word. But today in Kali Yuga, people make promises and break them at will. Emperor Bali was of pure heart. Once a promise was made, he wanted to fulfil it, come what may! He said, “I have given word to this Brahmin boy. I am prepared to face

any eventuality in fulfilling my promise.” I will offer the fruits of all the Yajnas I have performed, including the one I am now performing, to this Brahmin boy.” So saying, he put the garland of the fruits of 108 Yajnas around the neck of Vamana and prostrated before Him. (As Bhagavan said this, He created a necklace of 108 gold coins and said that each coin symbolised one Yajna.)

Vamana grew in size and covered the entire land given in charity by Bali with one step. He covered the entire universe with His second step. No further space was left for His third step. Then Sukracharya said, “Oh emperor! You did not pay heed to my advice. You underestimated this Brahmin boy and got yourself tricked by His innocent looks.”

Vamana received the offering of Emperor Bali, praised his large-heartedness and blessed him. Vamana was short in stature but He could fill the entire universe. Being an Avatar, He was Aprameya (immeasurable). Human beings have limitations but not an Avatar. The entire creation is regulated by Divine laws. The sun rises and sets regularly according to the Divine command. Similarly, all the five elements in the universe follow the Divine command and discharge their allocated duties. Even God Himself observes the rules that He lays down for His creation. Everything in God’s creation works in accordance with a predetermined schedule. Nothing in the universe, including the five elements, is independent. But, unfortunately, man is unable to recognise this divine force that regulates the functioning of the universe.

The sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening with utmost regularity everyday. The stars glitter beautifully in the sky at night and hide themselves during the day. The wind blows incessantly and sustains the living beings without taking rest even for a moment. The rivers make gurgling sounds as they flow perennially. (Telugu Poem)

It is the divine energy which moves everything in this universe. Man, of his own accord, cannot achieve anything. This divine energy manifests itself in several ways in this universe. People think they are created by somebody. Strictly speaking, nobody has created them. They are natural phenomena that manifest out of Divine Will. For example, when two pieces of stone are struck against each other, fire is produced. Can you see the fire in a stone? No. It means, there is fire latent in the stone, but it does not manifest outside. Thus, all the powers are latent in Nature.

The moment the umbilical cord is cut and the child is separated from the mother, it cries. Why? Nobody could explain and explore this secret. The moment a drop of milk or honey is put on the tongue of the newborn child, it sleeps happily. When branches of a tree rub against each other by the force of wind, fire is produced due to friction between two pieces of wood. How does it happen? Though there is fire in wood, it is not burnt. Why? There are many such inexplicable phenomena in Nature. Scientists study these divine phenomena but are unable to discover the divine force working behind them. Man is constantly engaged in the quest for Divinity. However, one need not search for God, who is omnipresent.

Oh man! You struggle hard to acquire various types of knowledge in order to fill your stomach. In spite of all your hard work and acquisition of knowledge, you are unable to experience everlasting happiness. Instead, why don't you contemplate on the Lord and seek refuge in Him? He will certainly show you a way to overcome your misery. (Telugu Poem)

Leelas of Krishna Manifest His Divinity

A few minutes ago, one boy spoke about Nanda and Yashoda, the foster parents of Lord Krishna. In those days, there was no electricity. People in the village lighted their oil lamps from the lamp in Nanda's house. They believed that they would attain plenty and prosperity if they lighted their oil lamps from the lamps lit in the houses of prosperous people. A newly married daughter-in-law by name Suguna arrived in that village. Her mother-in-law told her to go to the house of Nanda and get her lamp lighted from theirs. When Suguna went to the house of Nanda and lighted the lamp, she could visualise Krishna in that flame. On having this Divine vision, she lost her body consciousness. She fixed her gaze on that beautiful form of Lord Krishna and was immersed in bliss. She could not even realise that her fingers were getting burnt, having come in contact with the flame. She was in total bliss. In the meantime, other women from the neighbouring houses also came there to light their own lamps. They were wonderstruck on witnessing this scene. They could notice that Suguna was not moving away from the flame even though her fingers were in contact with the flame. They then realised that she had the vision of Krishna in that flame. They sang a song describing this incident. (Swami sang this Telugu song.)

*It seems Suguna had a vision
Of Gopala in the house of Nanda.
She saw Krishna in the flame!
(Telugu Song)*

On hearing this song, Yashoda came there running. She saw Suguna's fingers getting burnt in the flame. While all the Gopis were dancing in ecstasy, Yashoda went near Suguna and pulled her hand away from the flame. She chided her, "Oh! Suguna! Don't you see your fingers are getting burnt by the flame of the lamp? Do you want to bring a bad name to us? People may say that if anyone goes to Nanda's house, his fingers are burnt." On hearing about this incident, Suguna's mother-in-law came running to Yashoda's house and ordered her daughter-in-law not to go to the house of Nanda in future for lighting the lamp.

Many miraculous events happened in the house of Yashoda. After Krishna left for Mathura, the Gopis could not bear His separation and were pining for His Darshan. In such a moment of yearning, Krishna appeared in Gokul. All the Gopis gathered at the house of Nanda and prayed that they may be allowed to have Krishna's Darshan. They started complaining, "Nanda and Yashoda! You have kept Krishna away from us. Please tell us where He is." But Krishna did not make His appearance in public. He appeared to some Gopis individually in answer to their prayers.

A few minutes ago, a student of our university narrated an experience wherein Swami appeared before a student in answer to his prayers. No one else could see Swami. Then, the boy prayed again, "Swami! What is the use of giving Darshan to me alone? Please give Darshan to all the students; otherwise, they will not believe my words and make fun of me." I replied, "Does not matter. Let people think whatever they wish to. This is your Prapti (deservedness); only you deserve to see Me." So saying, I disappeared.

God Loves Music

Krishna is referred to as Chora (thief). What does He steal? He steals the butter-like hearts of the Gopis, hearts which are pure, soft and wholesome. If you address someone as Chora (thief), he will be annoyed. But if you call Krishna as Chittachora (stealer of hearts), He will be happy. That is why, devotees sing in praise of the Lord most endearingly, "*Chittachora Yashoda Ke Bal! Navaneeta Chora Gopal! Gopal, Gopal, Gopal! Govardhanadhara Gopal!*" (Here Bhagavan sang this song in His sweet and mellifluous voice.) The song thus sung melodiously with Bhava (feeling), Raga (tune) and Tala (beat) will be liked by everyone. Thyagaraja made sweet offerings to God in the form of Kirtans with Bhava, Raga and Tala and won His grace. There is so much sweetness in such devotional songs. God's grace can be attained by such devotional singing. You cannot win the grace of God by empty rhetoric. It is only through devotional singing with Bhava, Raga and Tala that you can please God. God will be moved by such Sankirtan. God cannot be attained merely by chanting Vedic hymns. There are several hymns in praise of God in the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharvana Veda. One cannot experience divinity merely by chanting them mechanically. However, when these hymns are set to tune and sung with devotion, one can have the experience of divinity. That is why God is extolled as Ganalola and Ganapriya (lover of music). Therefore, pray to God with devotional singing. You can easily please God by singing His glory. Some people may have a doubt, "We cannot sing well; we have not learnt the art of singing. How can we please God?" Do not worry. You may not have the knowledge of music; you may not have even a mellifluous voice. It does not matter. Sing the glory of God with intense love in your heart. It is not necessary to make a special effort to learn music. A simple song with intense love and yearning will please God. For example, you recite a poem, "Rama! Nannu Kaapaadu" (Oh! Rama! Please protect me). There will be no sweetness in the poem. It is simply a literal rendering of your feelings. Similarly, if you make an appeal to God saying "Rama! Nannu Kaapaadu", it becomes an empty repetition of words. If the same feeling is expressed in a song set to a beautiful tune, "Rama ... ! Nannu Kaapaadu ...", it will be so sweet and endearing to God. (Bhagavan demonstrated how the same words could become sweet and pleasing if they were sung in proper tune.) There is so much sweetness in music. Therefore, if you want to attain God, you have to do it only with devotional singing. If you offer your heart to God and sing His glory wholeheartedly, you will surely attain Him.

Gopikas Experienced Divine Bliss

You need not be disappointed if you have not learnt music. Why disappointment? If there is an appointment, there will be disappointment. Therefore, do not make an appointment in the first instance. Sing the glory of God in your own way. That is the easiest way to attain God. The divine bliss experienced by the Gopikas in Krishnavatar was

unparalleled. Recall that divine bliss, sing the glory of God with total devotion and experience the same level of bliss. Krishna was Ganalola. He was pleased with the devotional singing of the Gopikas who had total purity of heart. That is why the devotees of Krishnavatar enjoyed unparalleled bliss, not experienced by others.

Thousands of devotees merged in Sri Krishna during the time of His Avatarhood. Hence, if you want to merge in God, devotional singing is the best means. God is Ganapriya (lover of music). Krishnavatar presents the best example of this. If you utter the name 'Krishna' even once lovingly and melodiously (Swami demonstrated this), it is enough to move Him. So, attain God through music. The Leelas (divine play), Mahimas (divine glory) and miraculous deeds of Lord Krishna were not seen in any other period. They were unique and unparalleled. Krishna was the only Avatar who granted Darshan to different people in different ways, clarified their doubts, made them blissful by His sweet words and blessed them to merge in His own Self.

Dear students! You are singing many Bhajans. All of you participate in Bhajans. But each one is singing in his own way. If you want to install God in your heart, you should sing in one voice and one tune with divine feelings. Otherwise, your Raga will become Roga.

Embodiments of Love!

There is nothing superior to devotional singing. Be it a drama or cinema, people are attracted by music and songs. Never forget to sing the glory of God. Even an illiterate person can derive bliss by singing the glory of God. What a great joy and happiness you derive by singing the song *Nanduni Yinta Gopaludanta Deepaana Kanipinchenanta* (It seems Gopala has appeared in the flame of the lamp in the house of Nanda)! Experience the sweetness of this song, every word of which rhymes beautifully. Sing such soulful songs with Bhava, Raga and Tala to please God and attain His grace. You may sing any number of Bhajans and songs, but it is only when they are suffused with intense love, devotion and sweet and soft feelings that you will derive immense happiness and joy.

- **From Bhagavan's Sri Krishna Janmashtami Sandesh in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the morning of 6th September 2004.**

**The grace of God is like insurance. It will help you
in your time of need without any limit.**

- **Baba**

SRI KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

Gaiety, piety and divinity marked the celebrations of the holy festival of Sri Krishna Janmashtami at Prasanthi Nilayam. The Presence of the Avatar of this Yuga Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba during the

celebrations filled the entire milieu with divine vibrations. The devotees not only experienced the bliss of Bhagavan's Divine Darshan on this auspicious day but they were also fortunate to be blessed with two Divine Discourses of Bhagavan on 6th September 2004.

On the morning of 6th September 2004, Bhagavan showered His love and blessings on the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall when He came at 7.15 a.m. in a beautiful yellow robe. The programme began at 7.30 a.m. with a short introductory speech of Sri S.V. Giri, Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Sri Giri congratulated the devotees who had the rare fortune of celebrating this holy and auspicious festival at the Lotus Feet of the Avatar Himself. Bhagavan, he said, is the manifestation of perfection in man. He exhorted the devotees to follow Bhagavan's teachings and attain divinity by imbibing the virtues of love and compassion. After this introductory speech of Sri Giri, six students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning spoke on the life and teachings of Sri Krishna and described the glory and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in English and Telugu.

The first student was Sri B. Arvind, a student of M.Sc. (chemistry), who spoke about the Leelas and Mahimas of Bhagavan. The second speaker was Sri Y. Sriranganatha Raju, a student of M.A. (economics), who spoke in Telugu. He spoke about Swami's love and compassion which are unfathomable. He said, no language was ever comprehensive enough to describe Bhagavan. He also narrated an incident when Bhagavan gave Darshan to a student in the Brindavan Campus of the Institute. The third speaker was Sri J. Uday Girish of M.A. (economics) who also spoke in Telugu. All the occurrences in the world were dependent on God's Will and all we needed to do was to be His beloved forever, said Sri Uday Girish in his speech. The fourth speaker was Sri Shashank Shah, a student of M.Phil. programme in Management. Sri Shah highlighted many similarities in the lives of Sri Krishna and Sri Sathya Sai and also the declaration made by the Avatar, "My Life is My Message." He laid emphasis on the fact that in order to attain Him we too should tread the path of love. The fifth student was Sri Bharat Kumar of M.B.A. (final) who stressed on the value of Namasmarana and its efficacy to help man cross the ocean of Samsara. The last student was Sri V. Jagannadan of M. Tech. (computer science) who narrated many incidents from the life of child Krishna. He also sang two melodious songs while sharing these incidents. After this, Bhagavan gave His Divine Message on this holy day. (Full text of Bhagavan's Discourse has been given elsewhere.) After Bhagavan's Divine Discourse, the Institute students led the Bhajans and devotees repeated them in chorus, surcharging the entire milieu with spiritual vibrations. The morning programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.20 a.m. In the end, Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees.

The afternoon programme started after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall. The first item of the afternoon programme was classical and light vocal music by the students of Anantapur Campus of the Institute. The programme started with invocation of Lord Ganesh, followed by devotional songs describing the Divine Leelas of Sri Krishna. The second item of the programme was the presentation of Stotras and devotional songs in praise of Lord Krishna by the students of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute. Before the second Divine Discourse of Bhagavan Baba, Sri Y. Sriranganatha Raju, a student of M.A. (economics), made a brief speech in Telugu. Sri Raju explained the inner significance of the various ornaments that adorn Lord Krishna. Being the devotees and contemporaries of the Avatar, it was our duty to live up to His expectations, he said. After this, Bhagavan Baba gave His Discourse in which He exhorted the devotees to realise their innate divinity by purifying their heart and cultivating virtues. Sri Krishna Janmashtami celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam came to a close with this Divine Message of Bhagavan Baba.

FLIGHT SERVICE TO PRASANTHI NILAYAM (PUTTAPARTHI)
From 11th October 2004 (every Monday, Thursday and Saturday)

Flight No.	Bangalore	Prasanthi Nilayam
IC 969	... 13.30 IST →	14.00 IST By Airbus 320

IC 970

...

15.10 IST



14.40 IST

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Bhagavan's Onam Discourse

CULTIVATE DIVINE LOVE

Oh man! You struggle hard in life merely for the sake of filling your belly. You acquire myriad types of knowledge from various fields. Examine and enquire for yourself what great happiness you have achieved by spending all the time from dawn to dusk in acquiring worldly knowledge and earning wealth while forgetting God. (Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Hunger, thirst, pleasure and pain, are quite natural to man. One follows the other. Food is essential for man but filling the belly is not the be-all and end-all of human existence. Man is born not for the sake of Ahara (food) but to experience Ananda (bliss). One who forgets this bliss and struggles all his life for food will be ultimately consumed by food only.

Realise the Truth of the Atma

The purpose of celebrating festivals is to experience bliss and not merely to partake of delicious food. No doubt, the body requires food but life is not meant for food alone. Unmindful of this truth, man is leading a false life for the sake of food and physical pleasures. The body is made up of five elements and is transitory. The mind is a mere bundle of thoughts and desires. We should not be unduly attached to the body and the mind. We should strive to experience bliss. Human body has emerged out of love. Hence, we should lead a life for divine love and not for food. But man forgets this truth and struggles hard from dawn to dusk for the sake of filling his belly. He does not utilise the gift of the body for the purpose it has been given to him. This body is a den of dirt and prone to diseases; it is impermanent and subject to change from time to time. It is foolish to develop attachment to such a transient body and strive for bodily pleasures.

Embodiments of Love!

The purpose of human life is to attain liberation. Man should aspire only for God. His love should be directed only towards God, and not towards the body. All his actions, his speech and his life-breath itself are meant to experience the Atma. Man is born to attain the eternal truth of the Atma. Life is meant for Atmanveshana (quest for the Atma) and not for Annanveshana (quest for food). Annanveshana is the cause of physical ailments. But these bodily afflictions are temporary. They come and go like passing clouds. It is foolish to worry about these temporary afflictions. Man should never forget the truth that he is born to experience the eternal bliss of the Atma. Do not worry too much about the body. The body is temporary like a water bubble. Mind is like a mad monkey. You should not worry about these passing clouds. How long will the clouds stay? They come and go. Get firmly established in the Atma Tattwa which is nothing but Divinity. Develop firm faith in the Atma Tattwa. That alone will protect you in every way.

Embodiments of Love!

You have come here all the way from Kerala full of enthusiasm to celebrate the holy festival of Onam blissfully. We should not allow trivial matters to dampen the spirit of the festivities. We should march forward with courage and conviction, unmindful of hurdles and obstacles in our way. A few

minutes ago, when all of you were blissfully immersed in the celebration, all of a sudden My nose started bleeding. I went inside, wiped the blood and came out cheerfully as if nothing had happened. How can we discontinue the celebration of a sacred festival of this kind on account of such a trivial matter? We should not lose our self-confidence due to such minor physical discomforts. They are transient in nature; we should not get distracted by them. Ailments and suffering are but natural to the human body. Sometimes, the sun is covered by clouds. But can the clouds ever diminish the effulgence of the sun? No. Just as the sun is not affected by the clouds, you too should remain unaffected by ailments and suffering. When you develop such courage, conviction and determination, you will not be worried by difficulties. Amidst the joyous celebration of the festival, a slight physical discomfort to this body has caused anxiety to you. There should be no cause for anxiety or worry. In order to allay your fears and anxiety and to give you joy, I came back immediately. In this world, many difficulties come in our way. Truly speaking, they merely cause anxiety in you; they cannot harm you.

Face Difficulties with Courage

Embodiments of Love!

We should sanctify our time by performing sacred actions. This is the spiritual lesson we have to learn today. We can experience transcendental bliss only when we overcome the difficulties and suffering that come in our way. Never be afraid of difficulties; face them with courage. Only then will humanness blossom in you. Once you experience the bliss of the Atma, difficulties and suffering will no longer bother you.

Onam is the most sacred festival of Kerala. You have to understand the significance and message of this festival and put it into practice. Onam is an occasion to share our joy with others. You cannot experience happiness without undergoing difficulties. *Na Sukhat Labhate Sukham* (one cannot derive happiness out of happiness). Happiness gains value in the face of difficulties. Even mountainous difficulties will vanish like thin mist when you face them with courage and self-confidence. So, never allow fear and anxiety to overpower your mind. Mind is a mad monkey. It easily gets swayed by difficulties. Hence, you should brush aside difficulties that come in your way. Never allow them to have an upper hand. Under the influence of Maya (delusion), your mind can become an obstacle in your spiritual progress. So, never become a slave of the mind; conquer it. Only then can you attain Divinity. But you are carried away by the vagaries of the mind. You should ignore the dictates of the mind. We consider the mind to be the most important aspect of mankind. However, it can lead you to dangers and difficulties if you are carried away by its whims and fancies. Hence, do not submit yourself to the mind.

Embodiments of Love!

One who has control over the mind is a true Manishi (human). One who lacks control over the mind is no human at all. How can you call yourself a human being if you are fickle-minded and are depressed by trivial problems? You should make efforts to overcome problems posed by the mind without being unduly worried about them. In this world, there is nothing greater than God's love. Hence, we should transcend the mind that stands as an obstacle in the Godward path.

Embodiments of Love!

You are born out of love and sustained by love. Love is the fundamental principle of your life. You should sanctify your life by leading a life suffused with love. You are not fit to be called a human being if you submit yourself to trivial problems. Even tiny ants are able to overcome obstacles that stand in their way. Problems are not limited to human beings alone; even birds, beasts and insects have problems.

Saint Thyagaraja sang, "*Oh Rama! You are present in everything right from a Cheema (ant) to Brahma. You are in Siva and also in Kesava. Please protect me.*"

(Telugu Poem)

The same divinity that is present in an ant is also present in man. Likewise, difficulties are also common for all. The suffering that an ant undergoes is similar to that of man. When such a tiny

creature like an ant is able to withstand suffering, why is it that man is not able to do the same? He has become a slave of his mind due to his wrong habits and food. That is the reason why he is unable to withstand suffering. We should face the challenges of life with fortitude. Never be cowed down by difficulties; transcend them. Only then can you attain God.

Develop Love for God

Embodiments of Love!

You should not seek anything other than divine love. There is nothing superior to love in this world. You consider gold, silver, diamonds, etc., as most valuable. In fact, all these so-called valuable things cause delusion in man. We should not care for such worldly possessions. Instead, we should focus our mind on God. Perform your daily activities keeping God as your goal. Only then will your human birth find fulfilment. Strive to attain the grace of God. Do not be deterred by difficulties and losses. When you have God on your side, you can achieve anything; all your difficulties and suffering will vanish in a trice. When omnipotent God is within you, why should you be worried about trivial matters? Love is the divine power that bestows on you the courage to overcome difficulties. Anything can be achieved with the power of love. You should be afraid of sin, not difficulties.

We have to develop Daiva Preeti, Papa Bheeti and Sangha Neeti (love for God, fear of sin and morality in society). Instead of developing fear of sin, we are enslaved by sin. Instead of seeking refuge in God, we are submitting ourselves to difficulties. Morality in society will lead to love for God which will in turn lead to fear of sin. Hence, we should uphold morality in society and dedicate ourselves to God. Thyagaraja once prayed, "Oh! Lord, I am deeply concerned about the fear of sin. I am unable to surrender to Your love. Please grant me the strength of conviction to bow down before Your divine love. Please give me the strength to overcome the fear of difficulties." What have we achieved in our life? What is the purpose of constant contemplation of God? One who is constantly contemplating on God should be able to keep himself away from sinful acts and develop love for God. There can be no greater fortune than having love for God. One must strive to achieve that great treasure. One should not be deterred by sorrows and difficulties in this Sadhana.

Embodiments of Love!

You have all gathered here to attain the great fortune of love for God. Never be afraid of sorrows and difficulties. Sorrow and sin are obstacles in the path of spirituality. They are like the opposing waves that prevent you from surging ahead when you swim in water. You have to push aside these waves to move forward. Similarly, in the stream of life, one has to ward off the opposing waves of sorrow and sin to achieve progress. From a small child to a grown-up person, everyone strives to attain love. It is love and bliss that comprise your personality. What is meant by personality? Does it mean height, weight and a strong body? No, it is a mistake to think so. Undeterred by sorrows and difficulties, one has to march forward with courage to attain bliss. That is the real meaning of personality. In fact, God has granted such a personality to every human being. Unfortunately, we fail to realise this truth. The word 'Person' implies the divine force that is granted by God to man. The ancients called this divine force as 'Persona'. This is a great gift of God to every individual. But we are unable to safeguard this great treasure. These sorrows and difficulties are like passing clouds that come and go. Why should we be afraid of them when we have permanent divinity immanent in our personality? Therefore, there is no need at all to be afraid of anything as long as we are aware of our latent divinity. You should develop courage and fearlessness. This is the purpose of today's celebrations.

Embodiments of Love!

God can do anything by His Divine Will. Why should you fear when such all powerful God is always with you? With courage and faith you can achieve anything. There is no force more powerful than faith in God in this world.

Children Manifest Divine Qualities

Embodiments of Love!

All these children have gathered here to spend some sacred moments. They are extremely fortunate. Their good fortune is the result of the merits acquired by their parents. (Bhagavan called a girl near the dais) Here is a small girl. She participated in a group dance a short while ago. While doing so, she was constantly observing the steps of other girls in the group. She developed so much concentration in this activity that she perfectly maintained her steps in tune with the steps of other girls. (Swami created a gold chain and put it around her neck amidst a thunderous applause of devotees.)

Embodiments of Love!

I will be very happy if all of you become children. Children do not have the bad qualities of anger, desire, jealousy, conceit and ego. Jesus Christ once picked up a small child from the lap of her mother in a congregation and said, "I like this small child very much; she is full of divine feelings. She is pure, selfless and innocent." Children are divine in nature. But grown-ups develop bad qualities like desire, attachment, anger, jealousy, etc. As the age advances, sorrows and difficulties also increase. Therefore, one should try to control one's desires. Have ceiling on desires. Only then can you attain divine power. Desires make you weak and cause delusion. Do not get deluded by entertaining too many desires. A child is endowed with the qualities of selflessness, simplicity, purity and innocence. These qualities demonstrate a child's divinity.

Embodiments of Love!

I wish, you all become children for at least one minute in a day. When any desires arise in our mind, we should feel ashamed, considering the desires as unbecoming of our status as human being. When we start doing so, we shall no longer become slaves of our desires. A few minutes ago, My nose started bleeding. If I were to submit Myself helplessly to this bodily ailment, it would have aggravated. Therefore, I decided to face it with courage and firmness. The doctors advised Me that I should take complete rest and should not go out to give My Discourse. I asked them, "Why?" The doctors explained that if I started talking, the bleeding might reoccur. Then I replied, "Okay! Let Me see!" (*loud applause*). When you face the problem courageously, the problem will be afraid of you. No problem should be able to make you sad and miserable. Face all problems with courage. Only then can you overcome them. I wiped My face and came back immediately to give My Discourse. After all, this body is nourished and nurtured by the food that we supply. If we cannot control our own body, then what is the use? Wherever we are, we should keep control over our body. Only then can we become real human beings. This is the way to glorify human life and move closer to God. The more you control your body and mind, the nearer you go to God.

Onam Symbolises Love

In fact, love is the only quality that takes you nearer to God. There is nothing greater than love. It is a divine attribute. *Love is God. Live in love.* You deserve to be called a human being only when you cultivate this noble quality. This divine love is like the blood that circulates in every human being, nay, every living being. If you cultivate this universal love, you can love not only all human beings but all living beings. *Love is God and God is love.* Consider every individual as your near and dear. Do not ever show anger or hatred towards anybody. This is the lesson that you have to learn on this holy occasion of Onam.

You are all truly embodiments of love. The love principle which is present in every human being is one and the same. There are no differences whatsoever. When you cultivate such universal love, it becomes your very life-breath and sustains your life. It is this pure love that takes you closer to God. Therefore, cultivate love. Never give up love under any circumstances. Love your neighbour's child as your own child. All are embodiments of love. Onam symbolises love. This festival is celebrated to spread love among all human beings. In fact, we are born to cultivate love. If we fail in this endeavour, our life is a waste.

(Bhagavan sang the Bhajans, "*Prema Daivam Hai ...*" and "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho ...*" and then continued the Discourse.)

Embodiments of Love!

Whenever you encounter difficulties, do not get carried away by them. Face them with full confidence and courage. Engage yourself in actions which will counter these problems. You will succeed in overcoming them. No doubt, situations do arise in life when we have to undergo sorrows and difficulties. When our loving parents depart from this world, we are in deep sorrow. Instead of losing our poise in such difficult situations, it is advisable to face the ordeal with courage, expressing gratitude to our parents for granting us the gift of this body.

Embodiments of Love!

I hope I am not causing inconvenience to you by speaking for a long time. It is only to instill courage in you that I am giving this long Discourse (*loud applause*). All the boys who came into My room were feeling sad to see blood coming out of My nose. I told them, "Do not feel worried. I will come out and give you courage. With courage you can overcome all difficulties. Such is My courage and confidence in facing difficult situations. In fact, this courage is My real strength. Come! Let us go!" The boys collected all the blood-soaked clothes and felt very distressed on seeing them. When these clothes are washed, the blood stains will vanish in no time. But it is not so easy to wash off sorrows. Only God's love can wash them off! Therefore, cultivate divine love. This will free you from all sorrows and difficulties.

– **From Bhagavan's Onam Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 28th August 2004.**

GAIETY MARKS GANESH CHATURTHI CELEBRATIONS

Every year the holy festival of Ganesh Chaturthi is celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam with great devotion and dedication. This year also the festival was celebrated with great enthusiasm. Sai Kulwant Hall, Bhagavan's residence and adjoining areas, especially the Ganesh Temple were beautifully decorated on this occasion. On the day of Ganesh Chaturthi, i.e., 18th September 2004, Bhagavan came to shower the bliss of His Divine Darshan on the assembled devotees at 7.00 a.m. Sweet notes of Panchavadyam music and sacred recitation of Vedic Mantras welcomed Bhagavan into the Hall.

Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, four speakers addressed the gathering. The first speaker was Sri Deepak Anand, a research scholar of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Offering his obeisance to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on this auspicious occasion, Sri Deepak Anand observed that Bhagavan is the embodiment of all gods and goddesses and prayers and worship of all gods reach only Him. Sri Anand illustrated this by narrating two experiences which showed how Bhagavan answered his and another devotee's prayers made reverentially to Hanuman and Ganapati respectively. The next speaker, Sri Shashank Shah, an M.Phil student of the Institute, also illustrated this assertion of Sri Anand by narrating an incident how Bhagavan gave Darshan as Ganesh to a devotee of Ramana Maharishi since he worshipped Ganesh. Sri Shah also explained the significance of Ganesh worship describing him as the Lord of Buddhi and Vijnana. The next speaker was Sri Bharat Kumar, a student of M.B.A. (Final) class. Sri Bharat reiterated that whichever god one worshipped it reached Bhagavan. In this context, he narrated his personal experience of his pilgrimage to Tirupati where he had Lord Venkateswara's Darshan in an extraordinary way. Thereafter, Sri S.V. Giri, Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning addressed the gathering. Sri Giri observed that Vinayaka was a perfect role model for students as he embodied all the virtues like wisdom, sacrifice, devotion to work, etc. After this, Bhagavan addressed the gathering and gave His Divine Message on this auspicious occasion. He exhorted the students to follow the example of Vinayaka and worship their parents as they were the very embodiments of divinity. The morning programme came to a close at 9.05 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan. Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees in the end.

In the afternoon, the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning presented a very educative and illuminating programme on Vinayaka and Vinayaka worship. Introduced through lively dialogues, the programme took the audience to a spiritual pilgrimage relating it to nine steps of Narada Bhakti Sutras. Besides dialogues, the programme included Stotras and devotional songs in praise of Vinayaka and episodes from his life. After this programme, the students sang devotional songs in praise of Bhagavan Baba to the delight of all the devotees. The celebrations came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.45 p.m. Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees in the end.

It was a feast for the eyes to see a large number of idols of Vinayaka on attractively decorated vehicles in Sai Kulwant Hall on the afternoon of 20th September 2004 which was the day for the immersion of the idols. Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 2.20 p.m. amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras by the Institute students. While Mantra chanting continued, Bhagavan took His seat on the dais. Soon after this, decorated chariots of Ganesh idols accompanied by Bhajan singing and Veda chanting groups of students in various costumes as also by other devotees from various departments of the Ashram started entering Sai Kulwant Hall from Gopuram Gate side. After all the vehicles occupied their allocated places, the groups of students and devotees accompanying these chariots came to the dais and received Bhagavan's blessings. When the vehicles carrying the idols started returning after seeking the blessings of Bhagavan, the entire Hall reverberated with shouts of "Jai Ganesh". The celebrations came to a close with Bhajans and Arati to Bhagavan.

CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

Krishna Kuchela: A Drama

On the eve of Sri Krishna Janmashtami, the students of Brindavan Campus of the Institute presented an excellent drama entitled "Krishna Kuchela" in Sai Kulwant Hall on 5th September 2004 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. The drama depicted how poverty-stricken Kuchela's life was transformed into a life of riches both material and spiritual when he visited his childhood friend Lord Krishna at Dwaraka. It also conveyed that Krishna was not only a true and ideal friend but a perfect host also. Excellent acting of the students coupled with appropriate costumes and sweet songs made this drama a lively and impressive presentation.

Bhadrachalam Ramdas: A Drama

This beautiful drama was also presented by the students of Brindavan Campus of the Institute on the afternoon of 12th September 2004 in Sai Kulwant Hall. It depicted the life story of Bhadrachalam Ramdas, an ardent devotee of Lord Rama, whose total surrender at his master's feet redeemed his life when Rama and Lakshmana appeared before the ruler of the kingdom Tani Shah and paid the revenue due from Ramdas and got his release from prison.

Lively acting of the students, beautiful sets and innovative choreography made this drama an excellent presentation. The students earned the appreciation of the audience and blessings of Bhagavan who sat through the entire performance and blessed the cast at the end of the drama. He posed for photographs with them and materialised rings for the two students who played the roles of Tani Shah and Ramdas.

Prasanthi Yatra by Visakhapatnam Devotees

More than 3000 devotees of Visakhapatnam district from 26 Bhajan Mandals of Visakhapatnam Samithi and 14 Samithis of rural Visakha, even from the interior tribal areas of Araku and Paderu, participated in Prasanthi Yatra from 11th to 14th September 2004. Besides presenting the dance drama "Mother Easwaramma" and music programmes in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba, they organised Mahanagar Sankirtan which went through the streets of Puttaparthi singing the glory of Bhagavan.

Mother Easwaramma: A Musical Dance Presentation

An excellent dance drama entitled “Mother Easwaramma” was presented by the Bal Vikas students of Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) on the afternoon of 12th September 2004 in Sai Kulwant Hall. The inspiring and ideal life of Mother Easwaramma was depicted in a lively manner through various episodes of this beautiful musical play. The drama realistically portrayed how she was transformed when Bhagavan Baba gave her the vision of Kodanda Rama, which made her realise that her son was none other than God Himself. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan.

Devotional Music by Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu Devotees

Devotees at Prasanthi Nilayam had a delectable treat of devotional music when Bhajan singers and music groups of Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) and Chennai (Tamil Nadu) presented their musical programmes in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. The Visakhapatnam devotees gave their first performance of devotional music on the afternoon of 12th September 2004 soon after presenting the drama “Mother Easwaramma”. They made their second musical presentation on the morning of 13th September 2004 after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan Baba in Sai Kulwant Hall. Both the programmes delighted music lovers and devotees and earned their appreciation. Bhagavan blessed the singers and distributed clothes and watches to them on the afternoon of 13th September 2004.

Sundaram Bhajan Group, Chennai offered at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan a musical garland of devotional songs and melodious Bhajans on two consecutive evenings, viz., 16th and 17th September 2004 in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam before a vast gathering of devotees. On the first day, i.e., the 16th (Thursday), the Group rendered devotional songs titled ‘Sri Krishna Ganam’: The songs were in Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Sanskrit and Hindi and the compositions of the songs were by varied legends, viz., Purandaradas, Surdas, Tulasidas and Mirabai. Classical numbers like Jagadodharana were rendered beautifully. Instrumental support was very ably provided with mridangam, tabla, kanjira, keyboard, violin, sitar and harmonium. They also sang some fast Bhajans which were enthusiastically followed by the huge gathering of devotees. The programme concluded with Arati to Bhagavan. On the second day, i.e., the 17th September 2004, Bhagavan once again blessed the Group to sing devotional numbers. Songs in Tamil, Hindi and Kannada received loud cheers from the gathering. Besides, there was an instrumental (violin) presentation on Lord Rama, viz., Raghuvamsasudha, a composition of Thyagaraja. On both the days, the members of the Group received Bhagavan’s blessings at the end of their performance.

This being Ganesh Chaturthi eve, the Institute students gave a spectacular presentation of Stotras and devotional songs in praise of Lord Ganapati. In the end, students of Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music presented Ramakatha in its traditional style. The day’s excellent musical programmes came to a close at 5.10 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

A Blessed Evening

The devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall and the students and staff of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning were overjoyed when Bhagavan delivered a special Discourse in the evening of 15th September 2004. The occasion was the visit of Sant Asaram Bapu to Prasanthi Nilayam. Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, Sant Asaram Bapu also addressed the gathering.

The programme began with an introductory speech by Sri S.V. Giri, Vice Chancellor of the Institute, who introduced the eminent saint to the audience. He also introduced two students of the Institute who were blessed by Bhagavan to speak on this occasion. The first speaker, Sri Sanjay Mahalingam, a research scholar of the Institute who spoke in English narrated one of his personal experiences to state that Bhagavan’s love has no limit and no boundary. One night, he said, he could not sleep due to some disturbance and the next day Bhagavan told him that He could not sleep up to late that night. Bhagavan added, “All your joys are My joys; all your pains are My pains. There is no difference between you and Me.” Sri Mahalingam concluded that Bhagavan’s love was the greatest treasure which should be cherished and safeguarded. The second speaker Sri Jagdish Chandra, a student of M.Sc. (physics) who spoke in Hindi, narrated an experience related to his stay at Kodaikanal with Bhagavan who one day told the students that there was a boy selling caps on the bank of the lake whom they should render help by purchasing his caps because his caps were not

selling due to bad weather. Sri Jagdish Chandra concluded that Bhagavan's love and compassion have no limits.

After these two speeches of the students, Sant Asaram Babu addressed the gathering. He observed that all attainments of man in his life were imperfect without attaining the love of God. If one loved wealth, one would become greedy, if one loved body one would get attachment, if one loved power and position one would become egoistic; but if one loved God, one would redeem one's life, said the renowned saint. Concluding his speech, the learned speaker advised the students and devotees to make the right use of their power of action, power of thinking and power of understanding.

In the end, Bhagavan gave His nectarine message and exhorted the devotees to imbibe selfless love in order to earn the grace of God. He called upon the students to acquire positive education which would enable them to bring out their latent virtues like love, peace, compassion and forbearance, etc. He also advised them to follow the teachings of saints and sages like Sant Asaram Babu which would help them to follow the right path. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan, "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho ...*" which the devotees followed joyously in chorus. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan.

Sri Rama Darshanam

The students of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Institutions presented the story of the Ramayana in the form of a Yakshagana Roopaka in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the afternoon of 30th September 2004 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Yakshagana Roopaka is a combination of musical narration, dance and drama. The actors speak no dialogues and the story is carried forward with the help of dance and actions of the actors combined with musical narration of singers. Powerful acting of the students with appropriate costumes and delightful music made it a very impressive presentation. At the end of presentation, Bhagavan blessed the students and posed for photographs with them.

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

80th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS THE WORK HAS BEGUN

As a humble offering of our love to Bhagavan Baba on His 80th Birthday in November 2005, the Overseas Sri Sathya Sai Organisations have embarked upon three major service programmes:

1. Service to individuals through inter-national medical camps.
2. Service to communities through adoption of impoverished communities, families and individuals.
3. Service to humanity through public meetings that bring the Divine Message of Bhagavan Baba to the people of the world.

Each of the nine International Zones has committed itself to a minimum of nine of each of these events for a minimum total of 81 of the above service programmes prior to the 80th Birthday of Bhagavan. Several parts of the world have begun a vigorous implementation of these programmes and many more are currently in various stages of planning and execution. Given below are a few representative examples of the events under each programme, that have been carried out around the world.

1. MEDICAL CAMPS

23 medical camps in 13 countries in all the continents of the world were conducted till to-date. The services offered were: health education, blood donation, immunisation, cancer screening, screening for

diabetes and heart disease, dental services and cataract surgery. The following are representative of some of the recently conducted medical camps.

United States of America: On August 21, 2004, the Mid-Central Region of Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organisation of America conducted a free medical camp at 'Our Lady of Guadeloupe Church' in St. Louis. 278 patients attended the camp, comprising 85 adult males, 104 adult females and 89 children. A team consisting of 20 doctors and 74 medical and non-medical volunteers worked tirelessly and in a spirit of selfless dedication to make this camp a wonderful success. The services provided included cholesterol and glucose testing, mammograms and pap tests, eye and skin care, asthma, hypertension and lead screening, dental health and hygiene and nutrition and diabetes education. A review of the test results revealed 71 abnormal cases, for which appropriate recommendations were given. All children attending the camp were given gifts and 58 children received helmets for safety during bicycle riding. The participating medical volunteers and community organisations were very much inspired, and they offered to participate in future camps. The two pastors, who offered the Church premises for the medical camp and personally promoted the camp with great enthusiasm to all the neighbouring churches during the mass, were very much impressed by the selflessness and excellent quality of care evinced by the Sai volunteers and promised their joyful support for future medical camps.

Guyana: From 1st to 4th September 2004, free medical camps covering over 3000 patients were conducted in Guyana, thanks to the loving and unified efforts of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organisations of America and Guyana, and the people of Guyana. A team consisting of 20 doctors representing various specialties and 12 volunteers from USA, a nurse from Holland and volunteers from the various Sai Centres of Guyana participated in these camps, which were held in four places covering all three counties. At Prema Nilayam, Georgetown, 243 patients were seen on Day 1 and 97 patients were seen on Day 2 including 'KidsFirst' patients requiring echocardiography. At Port Mourant Public Hospital, Berbice, 698 patients were cared for, 1134 patients were treated at Anna Regina Mandir, Essequibo and 977 patients were consulted at Zeelugt Primary School, West Coast, Demerara. The medical team saw patients of all ages with a wide variety of ailments, including cough, cold, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, skin diseases, arthritic problems, congenital and adult heart diseases, eye complaints, dental conditions, gynaecologic and gastrointestinal disorders and infestations and orthopaedic conditions ranging from aches and pains to non-union of fractures. A comprehensive range of treatments were administered including Maxillo-facial surgery, dental extractions and fillings, and free medications were dispensed. On September 5th, a series of lectures on healthcare issues including HIV, alcohol abuse, hypertension, diabetes, heart disease and women's health were given at Prema Nilayam for the Guyanese people. This event was announced by the First Lady of Guyana, Mrs. Uma Varshnie Jagdeo, in the local newspapers.

2. COMMUNITY ADOPTION PROGRAMMES

19 impoverished communities across 13 countries have been adopted. Various services were provided like distributing food and medicines, tutoring children, help in water supply projects and rebuilding schools for children. They covered cities in various countries namely Argentina, Australia, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Brazil, Italy, Nepal, USA, Greece, Spain, Thailand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, El Salvador and Ecuador. The following reports illustrate the above programmes.

Botswana, Southern Africa: On 6th May 2004, the Sathya Sai Centre of Gaborone in the capital city of Botswana celebrated Easwaramma Day by organising a special service programme in a slum area of Gaborone city at 'The Daycare Centre for Orphans' and distributed play items for children, food items like maize meal, milk, rice sufficient for feeding 70 children of the Daycare Centre for about 5 months. On 22nd May 2004, the Centre organised another service project at the Camphil-Community Rankoramane (Handicapped) Centre, Otse near Gaborone City and donated winter dresses to 48 children. On 31st July 2004, in connection with the Global Handicapped Day, Sai volunteers visited the 'Pudulogong Rehabilitation Centre for Blind Students' at Mochudi, a town near Gaborone city. The Centre donated two Braille machines and one Screen Reading Software for the use of blind

students. The Centre had earlier donated six Braille machines and one Binder to this rehabilitation centre.

Slovakia, Central Europe: On 19th June, 2004, the Sathya Sai Centre of Martin undertook a service project for the socially underprivileged people in their town. The Centre members had earlier collected clothes and household items which were assembled at the Turcianska Library in Martin. 25 needy and poor people, mostly Gypsies and young children under the age of 15, benefited from the clothes and other essential items. Everyone also got a packet of vegetarian foodstuffs including beans, etc.

Mexico City, Mexico: In January 2001, in one of the poorest and most populated neighbourhoods of the Iztapalapa district in Mexico City, a small dispensary was established by the Mexican Sri Sathya Sai Foundation to serve the residents suffering from severe lack of medical services and hospitals. At present, the doctor's office has basic and essential medical equipment; the services are provided by a general doctor, a nurse and a dentist. In addition, the Health Secretary, Municipality Office offers the temporary services of a second general doctor. The dispensary offers medical services completely free of cost and remains open Monday to Friday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The past three years have seen more than fifteen thousand consultations for patients with different conditions such as respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases and a high percentage of pregnant women needing medical follow-up. On an average, about 500 consultations are provided each month. Other services rendered by the dispensary are: dental care for children; health education for families on nutrition, purification of drinking water and dental hygiene; promotion of hygiene through cleanliness campaigns; supply of medication, clothes and basic provisions.

Greece: On June 5, 2004, a large group of members from various Greek Sai centres assisted in the preparation of meals as well as the distribution of food at St. George's Church in Athens. Volunteers distributed 90 packets of food to over 60 persons, plus 60 sandwiches and 70 loaves of bread as well as many items of used clothing in good condition. Also 15 food bags were distributed to 12 families and an adequate quantity of olive oil plus sugar and coffee for individuals. For a poor family consisting of a mother and 6 children plus a grandchild, second-hand electrical appliances such as a refrigerator, cooking stove and washing machine were provided in order to facilitate their daily life. At the St. Paraskevi Church in Perama, six Sai volunteers distributed 130 bags with full meals consisting of cooked food, salad, bread and fruits. Additionally, 37 food bags and items of used clothing were distributed to families.

On 8 June, 2004, the Pindarou Sai Centre organised a celebration at the Institute for Chronic Illness of the Young, in Skaramanga, marking the closing of visits due to summer vacations. Another important activity is the service offered to adults who are sick or handicapped, many of whom are suffering from mental retardation and remain institutionalised and often forgotten by their relatives. A team of volunteers visits them regularly, spreading love and cheer and opening for them a window to the outside world.

3. PUBLIC MEETINGS

When we bear witness to the Eternal Truth of the Divine Message brought to mankind by Bhagavan Baba, we are rendering a great service to our brothers and sisters. In speaking about His Message, His Works, His Life in a public forum, our outer actions become congruent with our inner convictions, our thoughts, words, and deeds become one. In these public meetings, in addition to the talks on Swami's Message, an inspiring film on His humanitarian and magnificent works is also shown. To benefit humanity at large through the message of His love, books on Sai Baba, monthly magazines and information about Radio Sai Global Harmony is made available to the interested visitors. By Bhagavan's grace and blessings public meetings were held in six major cities of the world like London, Rome, Buenos Aires, Singapore, Los Angeles and New York with overwhelming response from the public. Following these major meetings, public meetings programme has continued in 16 more cities in 10 countries with outstanding participation. Below are some illustrative examples.

Lima, Peru: On 6th August 2004, a public meeting was held at the Garcilazo de la Vega University in San Isidro, Lima by the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Peru. The programme, which was attended by nearly 800 people, began with a photographic show of the service activities of the North Central

Council. This was followed by talks by two eminent speakers – Antonio Escalante of Peru and Leonardo Gutter, Member, Prasanthi Council from Argentina. The meeting concluded with screening of the short film ‘His Work’ which touched the hearts of one and all.

Geneva, Switzerland: On July 9, 2004, a public conference was held at the ILO (International Labour Organisation) Auditorium in Geneva, Switzerland, on the topic of “Peace and Goodwill in Our Troubled World”. A panel of distinguished speakers addressed the audience of over 100 people, many of whom were officials of the United Nations and other non-governmental organisations. Justice P.N. Bhagawati, member of the U.N. Human Rights Commission and former Chief Justice of India, opened the meeting with an inspiring talk stressing the need to foster human values in all societal domains throughout the world. He was followed by Prof. Eric Arnott, Honorary Professor of Ophthalmology, Charing Cross Hospital and Arnott Eye Centre (England) who focused on the theme of unity of faiths and selfless service. Prof. Keith Critchlow, Professor Emeritus of the Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts Department of the Prince of Wales School of Traditional Arts, England, and the lead architect of the Super Specialty Hospital at Puttaparthi, enlightened the gathering as he creatively brought together values, health and architecture in a harmonious juxtaposition. In this light, the Super Specialty Hospital at Puttaparthi was introduced as a temple of healing in which Vitruvius’ words find fulfilment: “A healthy piece of architecture is like a healthy body, its requirements are the same: strength, convenience and beauty.” The final speaker Dr. Surendra Upadhyay, Honorary Professor of Ophthalmology and consultant ophthalmologist, England, touched everyone’s heart by presenting the extensive medical service endeavours of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisations which echo the essence of true service – that which springs forth from love and not self-interest or compulsion. The conference concluded with a brief question-and-answer session, wherein a delegate expressed the need of adding the word ‘Love’ to the UN charters. This prompted a final reflection on how more important than inscribing the word ‘Love’ to any charter is the humble attitude of cherishing it in one’s heart, transforming ourselves and as a result, merging our consciousness into Pure Divine Love.

Inspired by the 80th Birthday of our Lord, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, we have commenced our campaign to uplift the conscious awareness of mankind through Loving Sai Service to the individual, to the community, and to humanity. Each month we will provide you with a progress report in the form of a recurring column in Sanathana Sarathi entitled, “The Work Has Begun”.

– **Prashanti Council**

Bharat

Andaman and Nicobar Islands: Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Port Blair organised a free medical camp on 12th September 2004 in Community Hall, Ranchi Tekri (Basthi), Port Blair where medicines were also given to the patients. Besides, Bal Vikas programme was conducted simultaneously in which about 80 children participated, to whom milk and biscuits were given. After Bhajan, the camp was concluded with Narayana Seva and Arati to Bhagavan. This is the 18th free medical camp organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Port Blair.

Assam, Manipur and N.E. States: Devastating floodwaters marooned lakhs of people in Assam and brought in its wake untold deprivation and misery. Amongst various other organisations, Sri Sathya Sai Samithis also responded to the distress caused by Nature’s fury and collected good quantities of foodstuffs like rice, Dal, sugar, sago, salt, mustard oil, baby food, etc., and clothes for distribution to the distressed men, women and children. Seva Dal volunteers of Guwahati Samithi carried the relief materials to Rangia, a small town about 50 km from Guwahati and organised a camp with the help of Rangia Samithi on 22nd August 2004 at the spacious premises of Gram Swaraj Parishad. Foodstuffs, clothes and other materials as well as 80 new mosquito nets donated by the State Trust were distributed and more than 300 affected villagers were provided relief. On 5th September 2004, Guwahati Samithi Seva Dal reached Bhati Kuruwa, a remote village on the north bank of the Brahmaputra across Guwahati and distributed foodstuffs and clothes amongst the flood affected people. More than 292 persons received the relief materials lovingly offered by the Sai Sevaks. The overwhelming spirit of Sai Love pervaded the atmosphere in both the relief camps and at the end of the day there were no givers or takers.

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi of Agartala, Tripura conducted various programmes during Sri Krishna Janmashtami on 5th and 6th September 2004 in the ONGC Auditorium. In the beautifully decorated auditorium, banners on Bhagavan's teachings were displayed. In the evening session, a dance drama on Lord Krishna was performed by Bal Vikas children. The youth of the Samithi presented a drama 'Work is Worship' which was appreciated by the audience. Video display of Vande Mataram was also arranged. Participated by more than 500 people, the functions generated Sai Love and encouraged the members of a comparatively new Samithi.

Bihar: There was unprecedented flood in north Bihar particularly in the districts of Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur, Samastipur, Khagaria, Saharsa. People became homeless within no time. Road and rail link were broken and disconnected; only water was seen everywhere. On possible locations, our youth Seva Dal constructed floating bamboo bridge for the benefit of entrapped people who could move to safer places with the help of these bridges. Food packets were the most needed items in such a situation. Our youth Seva Dal and disaster management team went as far as eight km by boat and distributed clothes and food packets. More than 150 youth of the State participated in the Seva, and about 20,000 people were provided relief.

Jammu and Kashmir: Narayan Seva is a regular feature of the Sai Organisation. It is being conducted by all the Samithis of Jammu district jointly on every second Sunday of the month, and by R.S. Pura and Udhampur Samithis once a month. On each occasion, nearly 400-500 food packets are distributed among very poor people particularly in the slum areas of Jammu city. Apart from these activities, old city Samithi provides food and other day-to-day requirements in Mother Teresa's home for the poor at Janipur.

An awareness camp was organised by the Organisation in villages Burjmandir, Jaswan and Soi near border areas for farmers and livestock owners. The camp was attended by the villagers along with their livestock. The farmers were made aware with regard to various hazardous diseases of livestock along with the symptoms of such diseases and preventive measures to be taken by them for the control of such diseases in the first instance. Besides, farmers were educated with regard to modern sanitation, housing and feeding of livestock by scientific ways so as to achieve maximum returns by way of scientific inputs. About 250 animals were vaccinated in this camp against a dreadful disease, namely, Foot and Mouth disease. The farmers were also educated with respect to milking hygiene in order to keep away various communicable diseases from livestock to human beings.

Karnataka: With the blessings of Bhagavan Baba, a workshop on "Sai Holistic Rehabilitation" was organised in Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Whitefield (Bangalore) on 17th July 2004. This programme is being implemented as a "Pilot Project" guided by Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences. It will cover all the patients treated and discharged from Sri Sathya Sai Super Speciality Hospital, Whitefield since beginning, covering cardiac department. Doctors from all over the State, District Presidents, District representatives of Sai Organisation attended the workshop.

Bhagavan Baba inaugurated the "Exhibition on Educare" held in Sai Krishan Kalyana Mandapam, Brindavan on 5th June 2004. Subsequently, this exhibition was also held at Sathya Sai Samskruta Sadanam, Bangalore. Thousands of devotees and active workers viewed the exhibition with great interest.

An exhibition on "Sri Sathya Sai Parenting" was held at Sai Darshan, Indira Nagar, Bangalore on 21st and 22nd August 2004. This exhibition was also held at Rajajinagar Parents Association on 28th and 29th August 2004. Parents of Bal Vikas children and parents of thousands of school children of surrounding areas participated. With the blessings of Bhagavan Baba, a new service centre, "Sri Sathya Sai Seva Kshetra" was inaugurated at Mandya.

SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER LEARNING
(Deemed University)

Vidyagiri, Prasanthi Nilayam - 515 134, Anantapur Dist., A.P.

Phone: (08555) 287239 Fax: 287191

Applications are invited on plain paper with detailed curriculum vitae and a recent passport size photograph for the following faculty positions in Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, so as to reach the Registrar on or before the 10th of November 2004. Retired persons below the age of 65 years may also apply.

Lecturer in English : Two posts (men only) at the Whitefield Campus and Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute

Lecturer in Chemistry : One post (women only) at the Anantapur Campus (Area of specialisation: Inorganic Chemistry)

The University reserves the right to relax any of the qualifications/experience in exceptional cases or in the case of persons already holding analogous posts in a University/Research Institution, etc.

Knowledge of system of integral education is desirable.

The above posts carry UGC scales of pay.

Registrar

Surrender your Ego to God

Banks have vaults where customers can deposit their valuables, silver, gold and jewels. They surrender them to the custody of the bank and dismiss anxiety from the mind. The spiritual bank also has such a facility. Surrender your jewels of intelligence, cleverness, capacity to serve and the gem that you value most, your ego, to the care of God. Then you will be happy.

- *Baba*

NOVEMBER 2004
EDITORIAL
THE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH

TODAY human society is riddled with differences, dissensions, conflicts and strife. Violence, war and terror stalk the earth. Human unity is nowhere to be seen. Even families are beset with bitter conflicts as interpersonal relations have touched a new low. There are hardly any takers today for the universal message of love given by Lord Jesus in his immortal words, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." In spite of all the comforts and conveniences provided by science and technology, man has no real happiness or peace. What is the reason? Where has man gone wrong?

Identifying the main reason of man's suffering, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba says, "It is because you see diversity, ignoring unity, that there is so much restlessness and lack of peace in the world." Man sees separation because he identifies himself with the body and consequently becomes the victim of ego, greed, hatred, selfishness, narrow-mindedness and all other evils. Bhagavan is never tired of repeating this most fundamental truth of man's existence on earth. In His recent Divine Message to mankind on the occasion of Dasara celebrations (given in this issue), Bhagavan again states this profound truth of Vedanta. He says, "Never identify yourself with the body. Identify yourself with the Self. He who realises this truth is a blessed one." Bhagavan's these words of timeless wisdom are, in fact, the essence of all the Vedas, Upanishads and other scriptures. As Isavasya Upanishad declares:

*Yasin Sarvani Bhutani Atmaivabhut Vijnanta,
Tatra Ko Moha Ka Shoka Ekatvam Anupashyata?*

(What delusion, what sorrow can there be for the wise man who sees the same Self in all beings?)

The Bharatiyas were endowed with this sacred knowledge of the principle of unity of mankind from the very beginning of human history. The Rishis who propounded these truths had direct perception of this wisdom through their communion with the Supreme Being. These wise men in their compassion and love for mankind passed on this supreme wisdom to posterity which later took the form of the Vedas and the Upanishads. These ancient scriptures gave to man such profound statements as *Tattwamasi* (That thou art), *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman), *Ekatma Sarva Bhutantaratma* (one Atma dwells in all beings) and exhorted him to realise his divinity and unity in the diversity of the creation. Realising the immanence of divinity in every atom of the universe, they declared: *Isavasyam Idam Jagat* (The universe is pervaded by God) and *Sarvam Brahmamayam Jagat* (Divinity permeates the universe). All their prayers were for the welfare of the entire mankind, e.g., *Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all the people of the world be happy!) Even in the famous Gayatri Mantra, they prayed to the Supreme Being "to illumine our intellects" as they wished all to receive illumination. They wanted man to be broad-minded and considered the entire mankind as one family as the following verse illustrates:

*Ayam Nija Paro Vetti Ganana Laghuchetsam,
Udaracharitanam Tu Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.*

(Only the narrow-minded people observe the differences of thine and mine. For the people who are broad-minded, the whole world is a family.)

The following profound message of Bhagavan reaffirms this great truth of the scriptures:

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

This is the path he has to follow if man wants to establish harmony and unity in the world. This is the path of peace, progress and prosperity of man. It is the only path which can unify mankind. As the Upanishads say: *Na Anya Pantha Ayanaya Vidyate* (There is no other path). History is witness that socio-economic movements, howsoever well intentioned, have not been successful in bringing about unity, equality and harmony in human society because they do not transform the heart of man. There can be no real unity without transformation of man from within. As Bhagavan has incarnated with unlimited powers, He can transform a person within no time. And He does it in His own unique and sometimes mysterious way. One of His devotees Sri Victor Krishna-Kanu narrates how he was transformed by Bhagavan; we reproduce his interview in this issue. There are millions of such people, and also there are as many unique stories of their transformation. They have all tasted Bhagavan's divine love and experienced His transforming divine touch. None other than God can give so much love to so many people. As the scriptures say, *Ekameva Adviteeyam Brahma* (God is one without a second), Bhagavan Baba is the same Supreme Transcendental Reality.

At a time when the Bharatiyas themselves are forgetting the teachings of the Vedas and the Upanishads, and man is fighting against man instead of loving him, the Supreme Being who imparted this supreme wisdom to the Rishis of yore has incarnated in the human form of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba to re-establish it in the world and to sow the seeds of love in the heart of man. Bhagavan has declared, "The time is approaching when all humanity will live in harmony. That time will be here sooner than one expects." Let us hope and pray that man will understand the futility of senseless violence and hatred that prevail today and pay heed to the sacred teachings of Bhagavan to redeem his life. Prasanthi Nilayam, the abode of Bhagavan, is already a mini world where millions of people of all religions, nationalities and races bask in the sunshine of Bhagavan's divine love and make Brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God a reality on earth in a model form. May the entire world become Prasanthi Nilayam! May the Golden Age be ushered in sooner than later!!

- *Editor*

DASARA DISCOURSES – I

GOD IS YOUR ONLY TRUE FRIEND

How is it that the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening with utmost regularity everyday? How is it that the stars glitter beautifully in the sky at night and hide themselves during the day? How is it that the wind blows incessantly and sustains the living beings without taking rest even for a moment? How is it that the rivers flow perennially, making gurgling sounds?

(Telugu Poem)

THE Pancha Bhutas (five basic elements, viz., earth, water, fire, air and ether) which permeate the Prapancha (world) are present in every being also. What is Prapancha? 'Pra' means vast and 'Pancha' means five elements. Therefore, Prapancha connotes vast space permeated by five elements. Wherever you see, you will find the effulgence of the five elements enveloping the vast world.

Intelligence without Virtues is Useless

Embodiments of Love!

God is the source and sustenance of all creation. No one can question why God acts in a particular manner. He is the Supreme Lord of the universe and He can act according to His Will. The creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe are all His Will. But whatever He does is only for the good of the world. Every act in this world, even the tiniest one, is happening as per the Will of God. What you consider as sorrow is not so from the viewpoint of God. In God's creation, there is nothing like sorrow. Whatever you see, hear or experience, it is all for the welfare of humanity. Some people complain that God gave them troubles and sorrows. But God does not observe any difference between what you call sorrow and happiness. Of course, there are some changes in Nature which you may call adverse. But from the point of view of God everything in Nature is meant to provide happiness and comfort to living beings. I have been repeatedly emphasising, man should always think that everything is for his own good, be it sorrow or happiness. Man undergoes all sorts of suffering because he is unable to realise this truth. One has to strive to recognise the truth underlying God's creation. There are countless people in this world with various types of qualities. Also, there are many people who strive hard to develop their intelligence. But there are very few who strive to cultivate noble qualities. Without cultivating noble qualities, what is the use of intelligence alone? All ancient Rishis exhorted people to cultivate noble qualities. It is a great mistake to consider oneself very intelligent and well educated merely because one has acquired high degrees. Mere intelligence and acquisition of high degrees in education are of little use. One has to cultivate noble qualities along with education and intelligence. Intelligence without noble qualities is useless.

Today we are celebrating Navaratri festival which is held for nine days. All festivals are meant to remind us that we should cultivate noble qualities by engaging ourselves in those actions which are beneficial for us as well as for society. Whatever activity we undertake, we must analyse for ourselves whether our intention and resolve to do the same are good, and whether we would be able to develop noble qualities by performing such an act. Man today is trying to develop his intelligence in several areas by making conscientious efforts but he is not making any effort to cultivate noble qualities due to the effect of Kali Yuga. Though he is able to occupy high positions in worldly life with his intelligence, it is of no use without noble qualities. Today man is losing faith in God. Faith is like the eyes of man. Devoid of faith, man is blind. Only when he has faith in God can he have faith in everybody else. Therefore, the need of the hour is that man should deepen his faith.

Develop Faith in God

Some people say, "I have no faith in God." This is a meaningless statement. If they have no faith in God, in whom else do they have faith? One can have faith in everything else only when one develops faith in God. Therefore, one has to develop faith in God in the first instance. With faith in God, one can achieve success in all one's endeavours. One who has faith in God will be able to develop faith in everybody. Only such a person can realise that God is immanent in every living being. The Upanishads declare: *Isavasyam Idam Jagat* (the world is permeated by God) and *Iswara Sarva*

Bhutanam (God is the indweller of all beings). God is immanent in every being as “Nammakamu” (faith). Therefore, one has to cultivate faith in God as his first and foremost duty.

Today man believes everything in the objective world. For example, when a news item appears in a newspaper that so and so died in Russia under such and such circumstances, we believe it. How did we believe that news? Who gave this news to us? It is only the newspaper. We believe a newspaper but not a profound experience born out of eternal truth and its practice in daily life. In order to develop firm faith, we have to cultivate noble qualities. This is our foremost duty. By doing so, our faith in God also increases. Unfortunately, today we are undermining our faith in God and are carried away by what others say. This leads us to wrong path. We have to develop self-confidence first. Only then can we develop faith in every aspect of God’s creation.

Dear Students! Devotees!

What is of utmost importance today is to develop faith in God. Man develops ego, believing that he knows everything in this world. This ego is, in fact, a sign of foolishness. Without having faith in God if one says that he believes everything in this world, then such kind of belief is not based on solid foundation. Man today believes everything in this world, even that which he has not seen. But he is not prepared to believe that which is right in front of his eyes, the manifestation of divinity in ever so many ways. There is fire latent in the branches of a tree, which becomes manifest when one branch rubs against the other. Where has the fire come from? It is from the branches only. Just as the fire born out of the branches of a tree destroys the tree itself, so also the ego born out of a human being destroys the very human being. Hence, man has to develop firm faith in God. Without this faith, man degenerates himself to the level of a wicked person.

Purify your Thoughts

Students! Teachers! Patrons of Education!

Education does not mean mere acquisition of bookish knowledge. True education is that which inculcates faith in the students.

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

Can one be called educated merely because one has studied in a college and acquired a degree?

How can you attain true knowledge without knowing your Self? (Telugu Poem)

You should make efforts to know your true identity. All your education will prove futile if you do not know who you really are. When you are seated here, you listen to the discourses in rapt attention. But once you leave this place, you forget everything and even lose faith in what you have heard here. This is not the quality of a true human being. Have total faith in the spiritual truths you listen to, put them into practice and experience bliss.

Faith is the first and foremost quality that man inherits by birth. He develops faith in his mother in the first instance. His mother may scold or beat him, yet his faith in his mother remains firm. That is the greatness of the love of a mother. Man should develop such firm faith in God as he has for his mother. But today such faith is nowhere to be seen. Everyone wants to have the direct vision of God. Who is God? You see the sun. It gives us light from dawn to dusk and sustains life on earth. God bestows His love on all in the form of light of the sun. If you do not have faith in the light of love, your life will be filled with darkness. The sun is only one but it appears in different parts of the world. When it is sunrise in America, it is sunset in India. The Indians will say that the sun is setting and at the same time the Americans will say that the sun is rising. There is no question of argument here. Time may vary but both are correct from their points of view.

Once a disciple asked his Guru, “Where is God?” The Guru replied that He is everywhere and is present in all beings. The disciple expressed his doubt as to how it was possible for God to be present in all beings. The Guru asked him to bring ten vessels and fill them with water. The reflection of the sun could be seen in all of them. Where is the sun? The sun is in all the vessels. Likewise, God is present in all beings. Vessels may vary, but the sun’s reflection is one and the same in all. Hence, the sun is the Pratyaksha Paramatma (direct manifestation of Divinity). However, there can be no reflection without water. Our physical body is like a vessel and the Vasanas like water. If your thoughts and feelings are pure, you can see the reflection of Divinity clearly. When your thoughts are impure and wicked, you cannot see the reflection of Divinity. Mistake lies in your thoughts and not in the reflection. Likewise, you alone are responsible for your happiness or sorrow. Hence, cultivate noble and sacred feelings in the first instance. Navaratri is celebrated to make our thoughts pure and sacred. I often tell you that the physical body is like a water bubble and the mind is like a mad monkey. Therefore, do not repose your faith in the body or the mind. You should have firm faith in your Self. It is from the Self that the body and the mind have originated.

Lack of Faith in God is the Cause of Man’s Suffering

Students!

When you have faith in your Self, you will not experience difficulties and sorrows. At least you should have faith in the teachings of elders and follow them implicitly.

As part of Navaratri celebrations, people worship different forms of divinity. You should develop sacred feelings and experience divinity. What is the inner meaning of Navaratri celebrations? These nine nights represent nine planets. Each planet has its own significance. However, these planets are not outside; they are within you. If your feelings are impure and unsacred, the result also will be the same. Good and bad come from within you and not from outside. They are the reaction, reflection and resound of your inner being. Man suffers due to the vicissitudes of life as he is bound by reaction, reflection and resound. Forgetting these three, man tries to search for the solution of his problems elsewhere. He thinks he is highly intelligent. In fact, that is not true intelligence. He has no faith in his Self. That is the real cause of his suffering. God is one. Likewise, human beings are one, though Akara (forms) and Acharana (behaviour) may vary. But due to his narrow-mindedness, man is unable to understand this unity.

When you eat a mango, you cannot get the belch of a cucumber. Likewise, whatever you experience is the result of your own thoughts and feelings. No outside force is responsible for it. Do not be carried away by the external influences. Follow the sacred feelings that originate from your heart. Navaratri celebrations are symbolic of the nine forms of power. What we have to cultivate during this Navaratri is the feeling of oneness. Though there are nine forms of power, the underlying truth in all of them is one and the same. That is the principle of the Atma. It is all-pervasive. It is present not only in human beings but in all living beings.

Realise Unity in the Creation

If you are walking towards the west when the sun is rising in the east, your shadow will be moving ahead of you, much bigger than your size. As the sun rises gradually, your shadow becomes smaller. At noon when the sun is right above your head, the shadow will be right under your feet. Likewise, when you develop equanimity, your ego will be subdued just like the shadow under your feet. First and foremost, you have to give up ego to understand the oneness of the Atma. *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (Truth is one but the wise refer to it by various names). *Ekameva Adviteeyam*

Brahma (God is one without a second). There is only unity everywhere; multiplicity is your own imagination. Mistake lies in your vision, not in the creation. We should make efforts to understand the underlying principle of oneness. First, develop faith in yourself. See only goodness in others. If you see evil in others, it is the reflection of your own feelings. Develop Atmabhimana (love for the Self) and Atma Shakti (power of the Self). Exercise self-control. Only through self-control can you achieve self-satisfaction.

Embodiments of Love!

Develop the spirit of oneness. You are Ekatma Swarupas (embodiments of the principle of Atma). You have only one heart, not two. If you had two hearts, you would have to be admitted in the hospital. Likewise, there is only one Atma. That is the ultimate truth. Hence, develop the feeling of oneness. If you follow the path of truth, you will find the manifestation of truth everywhere. There is only one principle of love in you. You think that there are various forms of love. It is only your imagination.

Make efforts to understand the principles of spirituality. Have firm conviction that you are the embodiment of Atma and there is no second entity in this world. All worldly relationships such as mother, wife, children, etc., are of your own making. It is only a temporary relationship but not the reality. Do not get deluded by these worldly 'relations'. Develop firm faith in your 'real nation' i.e., the Atma. Do not put faith in external relations. Have faith in yourself. God is everywhere. *Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Sruthimalloke Sarvamavruthya Tishthati* (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). But you see duality because of your mistaken identity and delusion.

Develop Ekatma Bhava

Embodiments of Love!

There is love in you. It need not be acquired from outside. Worldly love is based on worldly relationships. Whomever you love, you love your own reflection. It is a mistake to think that you love someone else. You point to somebody and say, "He is my friend." Who is your friend? There is only one friend. God alone is your true friend (*loud applause*). He will never betray you. You may sometimes doubt your true friend but God will never doubt you or forsake you. Your feelings may change according to time and situation but God is changeless. He always manifests Ekatma Bhava (feeling of oneness). Once you consider God as your true friend, everyone will become friendly towards you. Truly speaking, you have no enemies. There is none other than you in this world. When there is no second person, how can there be an enemy? All are like passing clouds. But you think they are permanent and repose faith in them. Consequently, you are unable to have faith in the pure and selfless love of God. You are forgetting the 'divine love' and getting intoxicated with the 'deep wine' of worldly love.

Embodiments of Love!

If you want to know God, imbibe the principle of oneness. When you have the feeling of oneness, you can have the direct manifestation of God. The sages of Vedic times adored the sun as the direct manifestation of God as described in the Gayatri Mantra. Consider God as your mother, father, friend and everything.

*Twameva Mathascha Pitha Twameva,
Twameva Bandhuscha Sakha Twameva,*

Twameva Vidya Dravinam Twameva,

Twameva Sarvam Mama Deva Deva.

(Oh Lord! You alone are my father and mother, friend, relation, wisdom, wealth and everything.)

People today have forgotten God and are craving for fleeting pleasures. Nothing is permanent in this world. All your worldly relations are temporary. Your life itself is temporary. Such being the case, how can you consider someone as your permanent friend? There is only one permanent friend; He is God. If you want to experience true love, have full faith in God. God's love is steady. It never diminishes. You are His and He is yours. There is no third person between you and God. It is only because of your illusion that you think there is a third person. You say, "He is my classmate; he is my sportsmate." But none of them can come to your rescue. You have to look after yourself. You should have faith in yourself. Only then can you realise the truth.

Embodiments of Love!

Never forget love. Love is the form of God. *Love is God. Live in love.* Only then can you understand the reality. Do not go by what others say. Never lose faith in God under any circumstances. Sometimes, even your parents may try to dissuade you from taking to Godward path. You should tell them that God means everything to you. He is your true friend. You love your mother because it is she who gave you birth and fostered you. You consider someone as your teacher because you learn your lessons from him. You treat so and so as your mother, father, teacher, etc., based on your relationship and experience. Truly speaking, all these relationships come and go just like moving pictures on a cinema screen. Do not be deluded by the pictures that appear on the screen. Have the picture of God imprinted on your heart. Develop strong conviction that He is your sole refuge. Only then can you have the vision of God.

This morning, a Russian lady came to Me. During the course of conversation, she said, "Swami, I have a friend." When I asked as to who he was, she took out her wallet and showed a small photograph. Then I told her, "Mother, he is your husband, not your friend. Do not consider your husband as your friend or your friend as your husband." She said, "Swami, this is what I have been doing all these years. Is it a mistake?" I said, "Yes, it is a mistake, it certainly is a mistake." Then I asked her as to when she met him first. She said that she knew him for the last three years. I told her, "This type of relationship is temporary. God alone is your true friend. You may forget God but He will never forget you. He will be with you even after your death. Hence, treat God as your true friend. Ultimately, you will become one with Him."

Embodiments of Love!

Many people in this world are not able to know the reality due to their delusion. God is the only reality. He is your mother, father and friend. Develop firm conviction that He is everything for you. Then God will always take care of you. When you cultivate Ekatma Bhava (feeling of oneness), all divine qualities will become manifest in you. You will be an ideal to the world. Then, you will be free from suffering, pain and death. You will realise your true identity. If someone puts a question to you, "Who are you?", say with firm conviction, "I am I." Never identify yourself with the body. Identify yourself with the Self. He who realises this truth is a blessed one. I will elaborate on this subject in the days to come.

You may say, so and so is your Guru. But worldly Gurus are temporary. Your real Guru is one who is permanent. God alone is your true Guru (*loud prolonged applause*). Have total faith in God. Develop faith day by day. Only then can you be called a true Manava (human being). *Daivam*

Manusha Rupena (God incarnates in the form of a human being). Hence, consider yourself as divine. Declare with total conviction, "I am I." When you lead your life with such a sacred feeling, divinity will certainly manifest in you. Never be under the mistaken notion that God is outside. God is not outside; God is inside. He is always in you. Your reflection is God's reflection. Your reaction and resound are His reaction and resound. Everything is basically divine. It is God who makes you play your role in this cosmic drama. It is He who makes you sing, dance, etc. He is the cosmic play director. You may call Him by any name. Names may be different but God is one.

Embodiments of Love!

If you want to attain God, develop Ekatma Bhava with total faith. Then, you will certainly be able to see and experience Him.

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

- **From Bhagavan's Dasara Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 17th October 2004.**

DASARA CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

DASARA celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam have great spiritual significance, the main features of which are the Divine Discourses of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, performance of Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna, meeting of the Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha and worship of Devi in the forms of Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati as part of Navaratri celebrations for nine days. Cultural and music programmes also form part of these celebrations. All these devotional programmes along with daily chanting of Vedic Mantras and Bhajan sessions fill the hearts of devotees with devotional fervour. Bhagavan Baba's Divine Presence during all these celebrations surcharges the entire environment with divine vibrations.

Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna

This year also, Dasara was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam in this sacred, ennobling and elevating environment. On the first day of Navaratri, i.e., 15th October 2004 Bhagavan Baba went into the Bhajan Mandir and blessed the commencement of Devi Navaratri Puja. The worship of Devi started in the Bhajan Mandir with Kalash Puja by the Mandir priest.

Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna started on the morning of 17th October 2004. Bhagavan showered His blessings on the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall on this auspicious day when He came to give Darshan at 7.30 a.m. amidst sweet notes of Panchavadyam and sacred chants of Vedic Mantras. Sai Geeta (Bhagavan's blessed elephant) caparisoned in shining vesture was waiting for Bhagavan in the Hall. Bhagavan lovingly caressed it and fed it with fruits. In response to Bhagavan's love, Sai Geeta expressed its love and gratitude for Bhagavan by her loving gestures. Soon after this, Bhagavan came to the Bhajan Mandir, blessed the Ritwiks and distributed new clothes to them which they were to wear to conduct the Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna. The grand procession of Veda chanting Ritwiks and students led by musicians first circumambulated the Bhajan Mandir and then proceeded to Poornachandra Auditorium at 8.50 a.m.

After reaching Poornachandra Auditorium, the venue of the Yajna, they occupied their seats at the Yajnasala. Soon the Auditorium was filled to capacity by the students and devotees. The entire Auditorium then started reverberating with Vedic chants of the Ritviks and Bhajan singing and Vedic chants of groups of students. Along with Veda chanting and Bhajan singing, some priests started reading sacred texts like the Ramayana, the Bhagavata and the Devi Bhagavata while another priest started performing Surya Namaskar. Bhagavan came to the Auditorium at 9.15 a.m. and took His seat at the Yajnasala. Soon, two priests started the process of producing sacred fire in the traditional way by churning one piece of wood on the other. The fire was ultimately produced at 9.45 a.m. The chief priest put the fire in the Yajna Kunda and the Yajna started with chanting of sacred Vedic Mantras. During the course of the Yajna, the chief priest offered Arati to Veda Purusha Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and received His blessings.

Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna continued in this sacred manner from 17th October to 23rd November 2004 when Poornahuti was offered in the Yajna by Veda Purusha Bhagavan Baba Himself on this sacred day of Vijaya Dasami. On the day of Poornahuti, Bhagavan came to Poornachandra Auditorium at 8.00 a.m. after His morning Darshan in Sai Kulwant Hall. Bhagavan took His seat near the Yajna Kunda and put oblations in the Yajna fire with His Divine Hands to bring the sacred Yajna to a conclusion. The entire Auditorium reverberated with sacred chants, Bhajans and Panchavadyam music. Bhagavan blessed all the priests by sprinkling sacred Akshata and Kalash water on them. He also gave them gifts and Dakshina. After Poornahuti, Arati was offered to Bhagavan by the chief priest. Chanting of Vedic Mantras by the priests and students continued to the delight of the devotees for some more time before the conclusion of this sacred Yajna.

Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha

Meeting of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha set up by Bhagavan more than four decades ago has been an essential feature of Dasara celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam. The proceedings of the Mahasabha started this year on the afternoon of 17th October 2004 with chanting of sacred Vedic Mantras by a group of students. Sri Sanjay Sahni, Principal, Brindavan Campus of the Institute, who compered this programme, introduced the speakers who were blessed by Bhagavan to share their views with the devotees on the first day of the meeting. In his introductory remarks, Sri Sanjay Sahni referred to Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna and Sri Sathya Sai Grama Seva 2004 and observed that the proceedings of the Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha were starting after the commencement of these two events of great spiritual significance in the morning with the blessings of Bhagavan. Bhagavan, he said, was spreading His message of love and spirituality through such programmes to the whole of mankind.

The first speaker of this session was Sri Deepak Anand, a research scholar of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Quoting a Sloka from the Gita, Sri Anand referred to Lord Krishna who gave divine vision to Arjuna to see His Divinity. He prayed to Bhagavan Baba for such a vision so that we may see God in the sick, in the destitute and in the poor and perform Seva as an offering to God. The second speaker, Sri G.S. Srirangarajan, a faculty member of the Institute, elaborated upon Samskaras as the process of refinement by God which continued until God saw Himself in man. He stressed on Bhagavan's message to mankind to annihilate animal qualities, promote human qualities and manifest divine qualities. The third speaker of the session was Sri S.V. Giri, Vice Chancellor of the Institute. Dwelling on the uniqueness of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Sri Giri observed that in no other institute events of such social, intellectual and spiritual magnitude were held

as Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna, Grama Seva and Devi Navaratri celebrations that are being held in this Institute with the active participation of all the students and members of the staff. Values, he said, were not merely taught in this Institute, the students were provided opportunities to put them into practice by participating in such elevating events.

The second day's proceedings of the Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha began at 3.35 p.m. on 18th October 2004 with Veda chanting by school students after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall. The first speaker who addressed the gathering was Sri Jagdish Chandra, a second year student of M.Sc. (physics) of the Institute. Sri Jagdish Chandra felt that it was a rare opportunity for man to redeem his life when God had incarnated on earth in the form of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Who else, he asked, could take man to the highest level of spirituality except God? Narrating a few incidents how Bhagavan Baba protected the students like a doting mother, the second speaker, Dr. T. Ravikumar, a faculty member of the Brindavan Campus of the Institute, said that Bhagavan has set highest ideals of self-sacrifice to the world. The last speaker of the session was Dr. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor of the Institute. Dr. Venkataraman said that he had seen a large number of educational institutions in the world, but none could compare with Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning where the system of integral education really catered to the development of the body, mind and soul of the students.

The first speaker of the third day's session of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha was Sri Shashank Shah, an M.Phil student of the Institute. Narrating a few acts of Bhagavan's compassion and love, Sri Shah observed that what merited with Bhagavan was a devotee's purity of intention and intensity of devotion. The second speaker, Sri Ruchir Desai, a faculty member of Brindavan Campus of the Institute, described a few incidents in which Bhagavan's Divinity became manifest. Sri Desai observed that we should never forget that Bhagavan is the Supreme Being who has created the universe. The last speaker of the session was Prof. A. Anantha Raman, a visiting faculty of the Institute at Prasanthi Nilayam. Describing how a Sathya Sai Human Values Conference organised by him in another country became a grand success in spite of all hurdles, the learned speaker observed that no human could ever explain Divinity. The power of Bhagavan Baba, he said, is unlimited; so, whatever He Wills will always be fulfilled and whatever His work will always be done.

The fourth session of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha was held after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan at 3.45 p.m on 20th October 2004. The programme began with Veda chanting by school students. The first speaker who addressed the gathering was Sri Y. Sriranganatha Raju, a 2nd year M.A. (economics) students of the Institute at Prasanthi Nilayam. Speaking in fluent Telugu, Sri Raju observed that God always protects His devotees and comes to the rescue of all those who sincerely pray to Him. Referring to Grama Seva, he said, Bhagavan is inspiring the youth to lead a life of virtues by engaging themselves in Seva activities like Grama Seva. At the end of his speech, Bhagavan showered His blessings on Sri Raju and materialised a gold chain for him. The second speaker was Sri Ravi Mariwala, a staff member of Sri Sathya Sai Super Speciality Hospital at Puttaparthi. Sri Mariwala observed that Bhagavan's hospitals were not merely grand edifices; they were the temples of healing where even the poorest of poor could get the best medical care free of any charge. The last speaker of this session was Prof. V.E. Ramamoorthy, a faculty member of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute. Prof. Ramamoorthy said that man had to undertake spiritual journey to reach the goal of his true identity. He advised the students to observe the signposts of awareness, responsibility and surrender to God on the road to spirituality.

On the fifth day of the deliberations of the Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha, speakers from the Anantapur Campus of the Institute addressed the gathering. The programme began with Veda chanting by a group of school boys and then by a group of girls. The first speaker of this session was Kum. Vijayalakshmi, a student of B.Ed class in Anantapur Campus of the Institute. Kum. Vijayalakshmi narrated a story and a few incidents to emphasise the point that God could take any form and go to any extent to help His devotees provided the devotee was endowed with intense yearning for God. The second speaker, Kum. Rajeswari Patel, a faculty member of Anantapur Campus of the Institute, said that God is man's only true friend as told by Bhagavan often. She narrated some personal incidents how Bhagavan helped her family in adverse circumstances when nobody came to help the family. It was our foremost duty, she said, that we should hold on to the hand of God when He has incarnated on earth to redeem our lives. The last speaker of this session was Prof. Poornashri Devi, Principal of the Anantapur Campus of the Institute. Referring to the worship of Divine Mother during the Navaratri festival, the learned speaker told that Bhagavan Baba Himself is the Divine Mother. In this regard, she narrated the experience of Bhagavan's elder sister Smt. Venkamma whom Bhagavan granted the vision of Rajarajeswari in the Old Mandir.

The sixth session of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha held on 22nd October 2004 was devoted to a panel discussion on the theme "Message of the Upanishads in the Light of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Teachings." The programme started in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba with Veda chanting by a group of school boys followed by a group of school girls. Smt. Chethana Raju, a former student of Anantapur Campus of the Institute, acted as moderator and introduced the subject. In her introductory remarks, Smt. Raju stated that the Vedas are the beginning of spiritual knowledge and they will remain so forever. Bhagavan Baba, she said, has told that the Vedas are not an intellectual curiosity, but a practical necessity for humanity. Clarifying the objectives of the panel discussion, Smt. Raju observed that the panelists would try to explain these Upanishadic messages in the light of the teachings of Bhagavan, relying on the books written by Bhagavan like Upanishad Vahini, Dharma Vahini, Vidya Vahini, Jnana Vahini, etc., as well as the discourses of Bhagavan. Dr. Dwaraka Rani Rao, Dr. K.P. Sai Leela, Dr. Sarada Subramanyam and Kum. Kiran Gupta, all faculty members of the Anantapur Campus of the Institute and Ms. Prasana of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, were the panelists.

The discussion of the panelists was not only profound and illuminating but was related to day to day life of man also. Theory of creation of the universe, importance of Omkar, concepts of Sreyas and Preyas, Para Vidya and Aparā Vidya, etc., were discussed in depth which showed the deep study of the subjects by the panelists.

In conclusion, Mrs. Raju quoted from a Telugu poem of Bhagavan to convey the central message of the Vedas that man should make efforts to know the Atma Tattwa. She added, we are fortunate that we are present at a time of human history when the Avatar is walking on earth amidst us. At such a time, even a little effort of man could change the destiny of human race, she said.

In the seventh session of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha held on 23rd October 2004, two speakers shared their views with the gathering. The first speaker, Sri Bharat Kumar, a student of 2nd year M.B.A. course narrated his experiences of learning under Bhagavan's guidance and observed that Bhagavan's method of teaching was unique and effective as He always imparted His teachings suffused with motherly love. The second speaker, Sri Sanjay Mahalingam, a research scholar of the Institute said that Bhagavan's love is unconditional, consistently intense and absolutely divine.

Narrating a few personal incidents, Sri Mahalingam observed that Bhagavan is closest to our heart and He knows what we want even without our telling Him.

In a special meeting held on the afternoon of 25th October 2004, two guest speakers addressed the gathering. The first speaker was Dr. D.J. Gadhia, an ardent devotee of Bhagavan for the last 44 years. Describing the Leelas and Mahimas (divine play and glory) of Bhagavan Baba, Dr. Gadhia observed that Bhagavan has incarnated in His full Divine glory to establish peace in the world and to uplift mankind. Bhagavan, he said, wanted all human beings to realise their divinity. In conclusion, he exhorted all to attain the goal of divinity through Namasmarana, Atma Shuddhi and Manava Seva (recitation of God's Name, self purification and service to mankind).

The second speaker, Sri Ajit Popat of London, U.K. felt that people had been listening to the invaluable teachings of Bhagavan for decades, yet they had not been putting them into practice. He, therefore, exhorted all to make the best use of this golden opportunity when God has incarnated in human form, and redeem their lives by putting Bhagavan's teachings into practice in their life.

Music and Cultural Programmes

Cultural and Music Programme by Mahabubnagar Devotees: Nearly 3,500 devotees from Mahabubnagar district of Andhra Pradesh came to Prasanthi Nilayam on 1st October 2004 to express their gratitude to Bhagavan for providing drinking water to the people of this drought-prone district through Sri Sathya Sai Drinking Water Project. These devotees undertook 79 days of Sai Diksha Sadhana before coming to Prasanthi Nilayam.

A very enthralling programme of devotional music was presented by the Bhajan singers group of these devotees on the afternoon of 2nd October 2004 in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. The programme which began with a beautiful welcome song in praise of Bhagavan Baba started at 4.00 p.m. and came to a close at 5.00 p.m. with offer of Arati to Bhagavan. Throughout this period of one hour, the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall tasted the delight of sweet devotional musical compositions.

On the next day afternoon, i.e., 3rd October 2004, Bal Vikas students of Mahabubnagar presented a variety cultural programme which included devotional songs, skits on the theme of unity of all religions and values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. But most appreciable item of their programme was a skit on the humanitarian projects undertaken by Bhagavan including Sri Sathya Sai Water Supply Project. The programme came to a close with a beautiful Qawali. Bhagavan blessed the cast at the end of the programme and posed for photographs with them. The programme which began at 3.45 p.m. came to a close at 5.00 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan. Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees in the end.

Devotional Songs and Drama by Muddenahalli Students: The students of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva educational institutions Muddenahalli had the unique opportunity to sing some devotional songs in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba on the evening of 8th October 2004. The programme started with "Shakti Sahitha Ganapathim", a composition of Muthuswami Dikshitar. The next three songs in Telugu took the audience to the glorious days of 1950's when Swami used to sit among the devotees in the Old Mandir and ask them to sing. The students sang the glory of Swami with great devotional fervour. Their Hindi and Kannada songs were also full of devotion and sweetness. In the end, Bhagavan granted the singers with coveted opportunity of group photo with Him.

On the next day, i.e., 9th October 2004, the students had the opportunity to present a devotional drama entitled "Bhakta Bhishma" in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. The

drama depicted the sterling qualities of Bhishma who stands out as one of the most heroic and illustrious characters in the immortal epic Mahabharata. Devavrata's renunciation of the right to the throne as heir apparent, his firm vow to remain a celibate and thus earning the name Bhishma, his matchless valour in the Kurukshetra battlefield and his supreme devotion to Lord Krishna and the final consummation of Bhishma's Atmajyoti becoming one with the Akhanda Jyoti that is Krishna ... all this was enacted by the students in a touching and impressive manner. Swami had words of praise for the students for their having played different roles with aplomb. He blessed them with the opportunity of group photos with Him.

The Glory of Shirdi Sai: This excellent drama was presented by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva institutions, Alike (Karnataka) on the afternoon of 12th October 2004 in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Judiciously selected episodes from the life of Shirdi Sai Baba not only portrayed His glorious life but they also conveyed His main teachings. Realistic acting of the students along with good make-up and appropriate dialogues made it a very lively presentation. Bhagavan blessed the students at the end of the drama and posed for photographs with them. He also materialised a gold chain with a pendant for the student who played the role of Shirdi Sai Baba.

Cultural Programme by Bal Vikas Students of Hyderabad: The students of Bal Vikas from Hyderabad presented a cultural programme on the theme of human values on the afternoon of 18th October 2004 in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. The programme started at 4.30 p.m. with a prayer song to Lord Ganesh. Short skits on the values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema, Ahimsa, etc., were then presented by the children through the medium of songs, dances and acting.

Delightful Carnatic Music Presentation: A very delightful and soul-stirring carnatic music programme of devotional compositions was presented by the famous vocalist Ms. Anuradha Krishnamurthy on the afternoon of 22nd October 2004 in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. The programme consisting of classical Ragas and light music earned the appreciation and repeated applause of the gathering. At the end of the programme, Bhagavan blessed the singer and the accompanying artists and distributed clothes to them.

Cultural and Music Programmes by Sai Youth of Hyderabad: Sai Youth of Hyderabad presented a beautiful and inspiring cultural programme in Sai Kulwant Hall on the afternoon of 23rd October 2004 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. It effectively portrayed how Bhagavan's teachings could check the waywardness of modern youth and put them on the path of morality, sacrifice, social welfare, patriotism and spirituality. Interspersed with group songs and Qawalis on patriotic and ethical themes, it was an inspiring programme for modern youth. Bhagavan blessed the cast at the end of the programme and posed for photographs with them.

The Sai Youth of Hyderabad also presented a programme of devotional music on the afternoon of 24th October 2004. The musical compositions described the glory of Bhagavan and gave the essence of His teachings. There were other songs on unity of all faiths and human values. One of the songs was addressed to the youth to exhort them to take to the path of service and sacrifice.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa: A Drama: A drama on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was presented by the students of the Brindavan Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning in Sai Kulwant Hall on the afternoon of 30th October 2004 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. The story began with the appointment of Gadadhar (Sri Ramakrishna's earlier name) as a priest in the temple of Dakshineswar in Kolkata. Sri Ramakrishna saw Mother Kali as a living form and not a mere idol; thereby he attained the grace of the Mother. Selected episodes from Sri Ramakrishna's life at Dakshineswar, including his meeting with Narendranath (Swami Vivekananda),

were then presented in a lively manner. Excellent acting of the cast, sweet melodious songs and effective dialogues made the drama an excellent presentation. Bhagavan sat through the entire performance and blessed the cast at the end of the drama. He also materialised a gold ring for the student who performed the role of Sri Ramakrishna.

SATHYA SAI SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA

BROTHER VICTOR KANU, welcome to the studios of Radio Sai Global Harmony. You are of course a very familiar figure to all of us here at Prasanthi Nilayam but many people might not have seen you and even if they have seen you they might not know much about you. So, may be I can request you to say a few words by way of introduction.

Thank you very much for inviting me to this recording. My present name is Victor-Krishna Kanu. Krishna was added after God had, in a dream, called me “Victor-Krishna.” I am 75 years old and was educated through primary and secondary schools and teacher training systems of Sierra Leone. I subsequently was admitted at Oxford University where I studied philosophy, politics and economics. I later became my country’s High Commissioner (Ambassador) to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland with further accreditations to Norway and Sweden. That was a political appointment which was later to be blown away by the political typhoons that characterised African politics in the 1970s in particular. Almost immediately after this experience, I came in contact with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in a miraculous way in late 1975.

You said that you came in contact with Bhagavan Baba in a miraculous way. Would you mind telling us exactly how it happened?

The life of a High Commissioner in London was a life of sophistication, of living and moving with and around high society – dining at Buckingham Palace and the House of Lords, etc. Indulgence in quality and excessive alcohol drinking, smoking the best cigarettes and cigars and dancing to the tunes of some of the best bands in London was the order of the day. Surprisingly, this expensive lifestyle did not vanish with the cessation of my High Commissionership. Old habits die hard. And so one day, in late 1975, I visited the pub. For a while I was fully aware of myself and the happenings in the pub. Later, I lost my awareness only to find myself in bed, at home, in my full winter dress – boots and all that. I then realised that I was deadly drunk the previous night. It was in that drunken stupor that I dreamt two angels had come to take me. We floated (I between them) in and through the deep blue sky to an unknown destination where I found my ancestors and thousands of people engaged in spiritual activities. Five years later, I came to know the name and recognised the destination as Prasanthi Nilayam when I made my first visit to Sathya Sai Baba’s Ashram (Prasanthi Nilayam) in July 1980. Immediately after this dream, my lifestyle changed dramatically much to the displeasure of my cohorts. The bad things I used to do, I did them no more. I could not explain the reason.

Would it be right to say that that was a turning point and you started becoming spiritual after that?

That is correct because there was a time in my life when I was riding so high both in my country and in London that I stopped to care or even talk about God. The Bible and church-going which I practised in my youth were forsaken. I was deluded into believing that only the world and its tantalising pleasures mattered, until Baba sent His angels to fish me out of the mud and bring me to Prasanthi

Nilayam and be cleansed. Yes, indeed, I became a spiritual seeker once again – reading the Bible, going to church and becoming President of the Spiritualists Association of Great Britain (SAGB) and as well as a member of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation in the United Kingdom.

This going to church interests me. You say, you were attracted to Baba but you went to church! You did not see any contradiction in that?

Not at all. As a matter of fact, the more I read about Baba's teachings, studied and observed His lifestyle at close quarters, the more my faith in Jesus Christ (faith that was once lost) was strengthened. I saw no conflict of interests. I only saw and continue to see Baba and Jesus as manifestations of the Divine. Both are the same.

That is very interesting because we have often heard people belonging to other faiths say, Swami telling them be a good Christian, be a good Muslim, be a good Jew, so on and so forth. He does not want people to change their religion and religious affiliations.

That is so. Baba is the only one in the whole world who has told spiritual seekers belonging to various spiritual/religious traditions to remain where they are, become good practitioners of their faith, love and respect other faiths because all are simply different pathways to the same God. What a wonderful teaching! Baba is truly a unifier of humanity; torch-bearer of love and peace to one and all.

That is very interesting. Now you were in London and you went back to Africa. But you did not go to your own country. Instead you went to Zambia and founded a school there. This is a very remarkable change in your life, your mission and your work. Would you like to tell us something about that? How it happened in particular?

As the saying goes, "Half a loaf of bread is better than no loaf at all." Better to join the then Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) than be a beggar in the streets of London. In any event, both Genoveva and I were in the field of education before the glamour and promises of the world sucked us into the volcanic eruptions of African politics. Now with the revival of our interests in spirituality and education combined, we were happy to attend the First Overseas Conference for Bal Vikas Teachers in 1983 at Prasanthi Nilayam, where we were exposed for the first time to the Education in Human Values (EHV) Programme.

Puttaparthi must have been very different at that time?

The difference is only in the physical appearance of the area. The Divine Presence of Swami remains the same, so are the feelings of satisfaction and spiritual upliftment when one is there.

How did you happen to choose Zambia?

Well, actually it was Swami Himself. We had visited Zambia very briefly to conduct an EHV workshop. That was all. We knew no one there except three or four devotees. But when we came to Baba in 1987, He said to us, "Go to Zambia and spread My message of love through education. Build a school and help the people." And, do you know why He chose Zambia for us? It was for a very good reason because Zambia happens to be, in my judgement, a very stable country. The people are very mature spiritually.

It must have been very difficult for you to start a school in a country you were not familiar with. And you must have been short of resources – physical, financial, and manpower resources. Tell us something about how you braved it all.

I very well still remember what happened in the interview room when Baba told us to go and set up this school. My wife was brave, I was not. She turned towards Baba and said, “Baba, what about funding?” Swami said, “Sell your house. If funds are not enough, borrow from banks.” Well, we were delighted when He told us to sell our house. Being brought up as Christians, we remembered the story in the Bible when a rich man went to Jesus and said, “Oh Lord, what can I do to come near God?” Jesus said, “Sell all that you have and give to the poor and follow me.” The man ran away when he heard these words. We were overjoyed.

This was the Father speaking to you.

Yes, this was the Father. We were so thrilled that Sathya Sai Baba whom we believe to be God Incarnate and the Father who sent Jesus had directed us to go to Zambia. It was not that He could not have given us funds, but that was a test. We knew that straightaway and we did exactly as He wanted us to do. We also remembered the stories of Hanuman, and other great disciples how they went to distant lands because the Lord was with them. So, that was enough for us. We knew Baba would be with us throughout. When Baba said, “Go to Zambia,” He did not say, there would be no difficulties. Difficulties are part of life.

It is my experience that when you do God’s work, you face more difficulties.

Yes, more difficulties, more tests. We enjoyed every bit of them, we knew that Lord Baba was testing us.

Your school has been invariably described as a miracle school. Now tell us something about why it is called a miracle school.

The school is located in a socially and economically disadvantaged area. Many boys had failed the national primary Grade 7 examination (a precondition for entrance into secondary schools). They failed because they were truants, poor attenders and difficult to teach. They were rejects. These were the same boys the Sathya Sai Secondary School in Ndola admitted. After two years and upon taking the National Grade 9 examination, not only were they among those who obtained the highest marks in the country, they all passed (100%). This success rate has been repeated at Grade 12 later for the past 10 years. They are at various institutions of higher learning in the country. This is the “Miracle” – the “Sai Miracle”.

That was in which year? I suppose, it was all part of the Divine plan.

That was in 1994. This was marvellous; the nation was stunned. How come a school which was located in a village among poor children do so well! This had never happened in the educational history of Zambia. It was all part of the Divine plan. It could not have happened without Swami’s intervention.

I presume there is no fee. Do you get any subsidy from the government?

No fee at all. We only ask a little for commitment purposes, but no tuition fee. There is no subsidy from the government. Swami is the provider of everything. So, the results were astonishing. The character of the children improved and they became good boys in a short period of time.

Did these students make any impact at home on their families?

Yes. There was a lot of impact on their families. I can give you two instances. A boy persistently told his father to take him to Sathya Sai School very early in the morning, because he did not want to be late. After dropping him at school, the father would report for work and was the first to do so. Within

six months, the father got promotion because of his punctuality and regularity at work. Also, a Managing Director who was the last to go to work began dropping his child very early in the morning at Sathya Sai School (at the insistence of the child), and he also became the first person to open his office; his late coming was reduced and so was that of his employees. There are many testimonies of this nature from parents as well as from children. The boys who never used to study, began to tell others at home to study and not to make noise.

I think, Ndola is not a big town. How much is the population?

It is relatively big enough. Population is about 250,000 people. We had a choice between building the school in the heart of the city or in the poorer area. So, I sent Genoveva to Baba. I said, "Please ask Him where we should put the school." He said, "Go to the poor area, train them."

And apart from classroom instructions, you also have social services and things like that?

Yes. We are very much involved in community work – helping the old and orphans.

That is very good because you must pay back to your society. I want you to tell us something about what you are doing for proper utilisation of water resources in Africa. I have heard that you spoke about this last year in Sai Kulwant Hall and this was something totally new and breathtaking. I am sure everyone will be interested in hearing you.

Well, this is a United Nation's (UN-HABITAT) Project - Water Education for African Cities Programme. There are many reasons why there is need for water education. Firstly, the population of Africa a century ago was 150 million. Now it is 875 million. According to projections, there would be one and a half billion people in the next 20 to 25 years, using the same water resources, the same rivers, the same lakes. Also, extravagant use of water, illegal connections, pollution, vandalism of water infrastructures, etc., are common practices. Pollution is rampant and at a very high level. In addition, there are conflicts between countries sharing the same rivers; for example, Egypt and Ethiopia. There are water riots and, as you know, there have been water wars in history. There can be water wars also in Africa. History is replete with such wars. In fact, water would become a major issue for peace and stability in the continent.

How did you and the U.N. come together on this? That will be very interesting to hear.

Well, the U.N. and national governments have tried many methods (mainly technological and regulatory) for the supply and uses of water. But in spite of these measures, the desired result has not been realised and it is unlikely this will happen. So, the U.N. found that by bringing in human values into the water education component will be of great assistance in water management/education.

How did they make this discovery?

They made this discovery when they heard about the African Institute of Sathya Sai Education in Ndola. It is the first institute of its kind in Africa that specialises in human values education.

That is the offshoot of your earlier school?

That is right. The UN-HABITAT invited an Expert Group of educationists, curriculum developers, water utilities experts and environmentalists from Africa to a meeting in Johannesburg in April 2001. There were many people who presented papers at the meeting organised by the UN- HABITAT. I also presented one, "Water Education – A Human Values Approach." The participants liked it so much that they unanimously adopted it as a possible solution, something that would complement the existing methods. This could only have been possible by Swami's grace. After that I was asked to present a similar paper to a parallel special session of the U.N. General Assembly in New York on 6th June

2001. This paper was also well received and it was put in the U.N. records. Then I was asked to chair a sub-regional meeting of African countries in Ndola and another in West Africa including some French speaking African countries. After these I was given a consultancy for integrating human values in Water Education in the curriculum of schools in Africa starting with six countries – Ethiopia, Kenya, Zambia, Ghana, Senegal and Ivory Coast. TAISSSE (The African Institute of Sathya Sai Education) examined the syllabuses of all these countries with a view to preparing a Pedagogic Guide, Lesson Plans and supplementary materials as a prelude to the integration of human values in Water Education. TAISSSE carried out the work successfully.

Even for an average citizen it would be a good thing.

Yes, in fact it goes beyond the school, the formal sector. We are also interested in the non-formal sector because they are water users. We try to re-vitalise the values in traditional African culture and then harmonise them with the needs and requirements of modern water users.

Is this received well by the public and the government?

Yes. This is very well received and that is why the United Nations (HABITAT) is so much interested in the Human Values Approach. People really want to go back to their roots. This makes the work easier since they can relate this programme to their traditional values. “Human Values are in every culture”, says Baba.

So, what is going to happen next in this wonderful programme that has just got started?

Well, first we have to examine the syllabi as we have said earlier, extract all water related topics from pre-school, primary and secondary in all disciplines and then submit our findings, suggestions to the United Nations which will then be submitted to the respective Curriculum Development Centres in the African countries. This is the first phase of the programme. Phase 2 is being planned.

And when it is submitted, will it be made mandatory in all schools?

Yes, mandatory by the government itself because the government will see the wisdom of adopting such an approach. The beauty of it is that bringing in human values into the school curriculum really does not involve any extra time. It does not overburden the curriculum and is very easy to understand and implement.

I am not surprised, you just have to remind the people of their culture.

That is all. It does not require elaborate materials at all. People usually worry about extra work. “What is water education? How much is it going to burden the already overburdened syllabus? And how much is it going to cost?” We tell them that there is no extra burden and no extra cost – only extra benefit. This is the truth.

Courtesy: Radio Sai Global Harmony

TO celebrate the forthcoming 80th Birthday of our Lord, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, we, the Overseas Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, accelerate our efforts to manifest His Love through selfless service to our brothers and sisters in all nations.

1. MEDICAL CAMPS

California (United States of America): On 9th October 2004, the campus of the Home-Gardens elementary school in Corona, California, came alive with love and excitement as dozens of Sai volunteers prepared to welcome patients for the free medical camp held under the auspices of Sri

Sathya Sai Baba Organisation of America (Pacific Region South). Warm greetings and colourful helium balloons proclaiming 'Love All, Serve All' welcomed the families of about 680 patients from this neighbourhood on the outskirts of Los Angeles. The brief inauguration ceremony consisted of remarks by the Hon. Jeff Miller, Mayor of the city of Corona, senior officials of the Corona-Norco Unified School District, Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman of the Prashanti Council and Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Member of the Prashanti Council. In recognition of the exemplary service rendered to his community by the Sai Organisation, the Mayor declared October 9th as 'Medical Camp Day' and presented an official proclamation to Dr. Goldstein on behalf of the Corona City Council, recognising and commending the efforts to serve the needy through the medical camp. Among the specialised services provided were audiology, cardiology, chiropractic care, dentistry, dermatology, endocrinology, ENT, family practice, internal medicine, gastroenterology, gynaecology, ophthalmology, orthopaedics, paediatrics, pharmacology, pulmonology, rheumatology and urology. Other essential services such as psychiatric and nutritional counselling, immunisations, blood tests, hypertension screening, EKG-s, bone marrow density tests and special tests for women were also performed. Supported by a host of bilingual translators, nurses and technicians, 54 physicians provided loving and compassionate care. All daylong, patients were provided with snacks and drinks. As the last of the patients left, the volunteer group gathered together to celebrate the birthday of a toddler patient who had just turned one that day! It was a fitting finale to a busy but fulfilling day, filled with Swami's love and grace at every step.

Indiana – The Sathya Sai Centre of Fort Wayne, Indiana undertook a Health Screening Medical Camp for the Burmese refugee community at St. Patrick's church in the city of Fort Wayne on June 5, 2004. Aided by Burmese translators, this daylong event served about 120 Burmese patients. The services included cardiac checkup, blood cholesterol and glucose check, osteoporosis screening, hypertension and diabetes screening along with dental, vision, asthma, and hearing screening. Adult and paediatric consultations were provided. Follow-up referrals were made to the local free clinics, especially ASK Medical clinic, where some Sai physicians serve as volunteers. Besides screening, preventive health education was provided to cover all these areas, along with counselling for diet and nutrition.

Russia: In the ancient Russian city of Lodeynoye Polye, a medical camp was held from 15th to 22nd August 2004 with specialist medical professionals coming from different countries such as the United Kingdom, Russia, Byelorussia and Ukraine. This was the 13th such Medical Camp conducted in Russia. A total of 230 volunteers worked tirelessly for this camp which treated nearly 8000 patients suffering from a variety of disease conditions. In conjunction with the camp, volunteers also carried out repairs of buildings at a children's home, a hospital and a school.

Indonesia: In February 2004, an earthquake hit Karangasem village of East Bali. Sai Centres around Bali took up relief work for the distressed families by providing medical aid to the villages. Over 500 patients received medical care through these efforts. Several medical camps have since been held – Bangli (155 patients); Sidetape and Kayuputih (500 villagers); remote areas of Palu in Sulawesi Island (95 people) and Tabanan village (150 people).

Malaysia: A Specialist Medical Camp was organised by the Sathya Sai Central Council of Malaysia at Parit, Perak on 15th August 2004. General medical screening was conducted by 10 doctors and nearly 80 volunteers, including paramedics and nurses. More than 500 Parit residents attended this medical camp. Several specialists including general surgeons, gynaecologists, ophthalmologists,

orthopaedic surgeons, ENT surgeons, skin specialists, cardiologists and urologists also provided their services. A unique feature of this medical camp was the simultaneous implementation of sociocare and environ-care projects at Sekolah Agama Rakyat dan Tadika and the adjacent Taman Parit Jaya Playground, Sekolah Menengah Chung Hwa and Sekolah SJK (T) Ladang Glenealy. These consisted of painting of seesaws, benches and swings; planting of trees and flowering plants; creation of a playing field for children; painting of the school compound and building of a badminton court.

2. COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMMES

Africa: In October 2001, the United Nations (UN-HABITAT) requested that high-level education personnel in six African countries be trained in the practical application of Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values. The purpose of the training was to facilitate the preservation and proper utilisation of water in these drought-ridden countries. The African Institute of Sathya Sai Education (TAISSE) of Ndola, Zambia has incorporated the Universal Human Values in the school curricula of all these countries. At the conclusion of the initial assignment in October 2003, UN-HABITAT appointed a distinguished educationist from Strathclyde University, Scotland (now Vice Chancellor of Kabarak University, Kenya) to evaluate TAISSE's work. Greatly enthused by the positive evaluation report, UN-HABITAT has now expanded the assignment to TAISSE for another two years commencing from 1st October 2004 to 30th September 2006 to cover nine countries: Ghana, Cameroon, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya and Zambia.

Mauritius: On the night of 8th September, 2004, thousands of pilgrims, predominantly Christians, came from all over the island of Mauritius to the sacred memorial site of Father Jacques Desire Laval at Ste Croix on the occasion of the annual tribute to the revered saint. With a view to demonstrating Bhagavan Baba's message of universal brotherhood and harmony, the service wing of the Port Louis and Savanne regional coordinating committees of the Sathya Sai Organisation of Mauritius served food and refreshments to the devout pilgrims. More than 4000 persons were served in a spirit of love and selfless service by 30 dedicated Sai workers. Many recipients expressed their grateful appreciation, besides evincing great interest in the teachings of Bhagavan.

Thailand: On 2nd October, 2004, EHV students and teachers along with Sai devotees visited the slum areas at 70 Rai Klong Toey in Bangkok to distribute 1013 packets of food to needy children and adults. EHV songs were sung in the Thai language, followed by few minutes of silent sitting.

Pennsylvania (United States of America): On 11th September, 2004, Sai devotees of the Lansdale Sai Centre in Pennsylvania organised a day of fun-filled activities and loving care for 26 mentally and physically challenged young adults. This event was in response to Swami's recent call to serve those with physical and mental disabilities. The day was filled with various outdoor activities which were greatly enjoyed by the disabled persons and the volunteers alike. At the end of the day, each one was gifted with a bag filled with special treats and personal items.

Italy: On 25th and 26th September 2004, at the 'Mother Sai' complex located in the lovely countryside of Varallo Pombia, the first edition of 'Sai Olympics' was held with the participation of 120 Sai devotees of all ages from 33 different Sai Centres and Groups all over Italy. The opening ceremony included lighting of the 'Olympic Flame' symbolising purity illuminating our minds, and the launching of balloons carrying Swami's quotations. The sports activities comprised soccer, swimming, volleyball, table tennis, chess and cross-country racing. All participants received their well-deserved prizes from internationally recognised sports personalities and celebrities.

3. PUBLIC MEETINGS

Colombia: On 8th August, 2004, the Sathya Sai Baba Organisation of Colombia held a public meeting at the Corferias auditorium in Bogotá. The auditorium was soon overflowing with the halls and corridors packed with over 1000 attendees, nearly ninety percent of whom were not members of the Sathya Sai Organisation. Carlos Cuellar, President of the Colombian Sai Organisation, introduced the two guest speakers – Leonardo Gutter from the Prashanti Council and Billy Escalante, the coordinator of the Latin American Central Region. The speakers were followed by a reading of Swami's letter to the West and a short presentation by Esther Cristina Puentes on the Colombian Sai Education in Human Values programme. The meeting concluded with the screening of the film 'His Work'.

Dominican Republic: On September 17, 2004, a public meeting was held in the beautiful city of La Vega located in the heart of the Dominican Republic. Despite the fact that the country had been ravaged by Hurricane Jeanne just two days prior to the event causing heavy flooding and disruption of normal life, it was indeed Swami's miracle that the day of the event saw the entire La Vega Valley bathed in radiant sunlight at the same time that the rest of the country was still facing heaving winds and rain. The two-hour event was attended by nearly 250 people, who were addressed by the Deputy Coordinator for Region 6, Ismael de Lorenz from Mexico, and Jaime Marizan, President of the Sai Organisation of the Dominican Republic. Subsequent to the showing of the film 'His Work', Swami's letter was read to the gathering and concluding remarks were offered by Salvador Demallistre, President of the Caribbean Council.

Argentina: On September 25, 2004, a public meeting on Swami's life and message was held in downtown Resistencia, Chaco Province. Approximately 200 people attended, most of whom were not Sai devotees. The speaker was Leonardo Gutter, Member of the Prashanti Council, who spoke movingly and inspired the assembled gathering with Bhagavan's Message of Love. The movie "His Work" portraying Swami's magnificent humanitarian projects received spontaneous and sustained applause.

We pray to Bhagavan to bless us with more and more opportunities to do His Work so that we march forward towards the 80th Birthday theme "Unity, Purity and Divinity."

– Prashanti Council

Bharat

Andhra Pradesh: 194 Mahila Seva Dal members from all the 13 Samithis of Ranga Reddy district carried out Grama Seva on 19th September 2004 (Mahila Day) in Mirja Gudda village of Chevella Mandal. As part of Grama Seva, they conducted a free medical camp with 5 doctors treating 468 patients, distributed 5 kg rice and ½ kg Dal to 120 selected needy families, distributed Saris and blouses to 120 selected women, planted saplings of fruit bearing trees in 120 houses, cleaned the premises of two temples, conducted model Bal Vikas classes for 120 children and carried out Pallaki Seva and Bhajan.

Inspired by the Grama Seva programme started by Bhagavan Baba at Prasanthi Nilayam, the devotees of Mahabubnagar district undertook various programmes as part of Grama Seva in this district. Besides free medical camps for the healthcare of the rural population, the Sai organisation of this district constructed 27 houses for the poor and set up regular Narayana Seva centres in the towns

of Nagarkurnool, Makthal and Achampet. Besides, the organisation has set up Sri Sathya Sai Schools in Kollapur, Jedcherla, Gadwala and Mahabubnagar.

Assam, Manipur and N.E. States: As a part of three years action plan and also to prepare for celebrating Bhagavan's 80th Birthday, a Sadhana camp was held with the objectives "Renaissance of Bharatiya Culture and Values" at 'Sathyam Sivam Sundaram', Borjhar near Guwahati on 19th September 2004. The agenda covered all aspects of Sai Mission including rejuvenation of Bharatiya culture. The day being Shakti Swaroopini Day, the speakers highlighted the role of mother in the context of Mother Easwaramma's divine glory. Participated by a large number of people, both male and female, the camp brought new light and the function continued in lively bonhomie all through.

Haryana and Chandigarh: A Disaster Management Training Camp was conducted at village Nasibpur, district Narnaul from 18th September to 19th September 2004 wherein 67 trainees and 26 observers from Faridabad, Narnaul, Rewari, Mohindergarh and Gurgaon participated, and underwent theoretical as well as practical training from the State faculty.

District level medical camps were conducted in various districts/adopted villages: Maloya, Nehru Colony, Hallomajra, Behlana, Nada, Moginand, Gurgaon. 1625 patients were treated by the specialist doctors and were given free medicines. District Hisar conducted veterinary camp, treating 42 animals at Bhari and 350 animals at Singharam villages. Bhajan also followed the camp in these villages.

Gujarat: Due to heavy rainfall during the period from 2nd to 4th August 2004, there were heavy floods in many places of Surat and nearby villages. Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi carried out distribution of foodgrains, clothes, utensils to needy and affected people of 15 villages wherein about 1000 kg of rice, 500 kg pulses and utensils were distributed. Medical camps were also organised at various places. At Bharuch, Valsad, Bardoli, Sachin and Vyara, Sai Youth helped the flood affected families by distributing foodgrains, blankets, utensils and by organising medical camps.

To celebrate the 79th Birthday of Bhagavan Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Gujarat organised 79 hours Akhanda Bhajan at Prashanti Hall, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Althan, Surat. More than 1100 devotees from all over Gujarat participated in the Bhajans held from 12th August (10.15 a.m.) to 15th August (5.15 p.m.) On the first day, i.e., 12th August 2004, the newly constructed Prashanti Hall, Sri Sathya Sai Public Library, Sri Sathya Sai Vocational Training Centre and Drinking Water Hut at Sri Sathya Sai Seva Campus, Althan, Surat were inaugurated.

Maharashtra and Goa: Bhagavan Baba says, "The primary responsibility of parents is to mould the character of their children." On the auspicious occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Maharashtra and Goa organised Sri Sathya Sai Parenting Exhibition at Sai Prem in Vashi, Navi Mumbai from 19th to 25th September 2004. The exhibition depicted the teachings of Bhagavan Baba on parenting. The focus was on the areas of human values, culture, role and responsibilities of parents, harmful effects of TV, internet and mobile phones, etc. It provided a road map to effective parenting through Educare.

Chinna Katha

Bliss is Brahman

It was early morning time. The Ganga was flowing with a pleasing sound. The touch of cool breeze to the body was very elevating. The rays of the early morning sun were spreading their golden hue on the earth and in the sky. In the ambience of this sublime spectacle, a profound joyous thought arose in the heart of Bhrigu. He started thinking: "What a beautiful creation! Who is this Brahman who has created it? What is His form?" Soon his thinking grew so intense that it became verily impossible for him to bear it. So, he went to his father Varuna. After prostrating at his feet, he asked, "Father, who is Brahman? What is His form? Please clear this doubt of mine which is tormenting me." Varuna could tell his son all about Brahman. But he thought everyone should make efforts to understand the principle of Brahman through self-experience. Not only that, when a father assumes the role of a Guru, he should not remove the doubts of his disciple himself. This will dampen the spirit of self-effort in the disciple. Therefore, Varuna told his son, "It is not possible to say, Brahman is this or that. You have to realise it yourself through intense penance and deep contemplation." Saying this, he blessed his son and sent him away.

As per the command of his father, Bhrigu went to a forest and started doing penance after selecting a suitable place in it. He became engrossed in self-enquiry. One day, he thought in this manner: "All sentient beings in this world depend only on food. Food is necessary for every being. This body is nurtured by food. Therefore, food is Brahman." Concluding thus, he went to his father and said, "Father, I have come to know what is Brahman. Food is Brahman." Varuna said calmly, "No, no, dear son! Do some more contemplation. Perform some more penance." After doing penance for some more time, one day Bhrigu resolved this: "Nourished by food, this body attains growth. For this growth, energy is required to digest food. What is that? That is the energy of Prana (life-breath). Therefore, Prana is Brahman." Coming to this conclusion, he went again to his father and said, "Father! I know, Prana is Brahman." His father called him near and said, "No, no. Contemplate more and do penance more." After performing penance for some more time, one day Bhrigu thought in this manner: "No doubt, food is necessary and Prana energy is important. However, it is thought that impels one to eat food. But thought is born in the mind. Hence, the mind is Brahman." Bhrigu went to his father and said, "Father! Now I understand that the mind is Brahman." Varuna said, "No, no, son! Do penance and contemplation for some more time."

Without any demur whatsoever, Bhrigu started performing penance once again. After some time, he thought: "What purpose can the mere thoughts of the mind serve? It is the power of discrimination that imparts purpose to the thoughts." Resolving thus, he went again to his father and said, "Father, I know Vijnana (wisdom) is Brahman." Bhrigu once again told him to do more contemplation and Tapas, and sent him back with his blessings. After contemplating and performing penance for some more time, one day Bhrigu thought in this way: "Food is the source of nourishment and Prana gives energy. The mind generates desires. Buddhi (intellect) gives Viveka (wisdom). There must be some result of all this. What is that? This must be found." Thinking thus, he started performing penance once again. One day, he had a unique experience. He felt that he was immersed in an ocean of bliss and continuously remained in that blissful state.

Varuna came in search of his son and found him in a certain part of the forest in the state of Samadhi (superconscious state). He knew that he was experiencing pure and eternal bliss. *Anandam Brahman* (Bliss is Brahman). Thinking that his son needed nothing else, he went his way.

In ancient times, Gurus in their Gurukuls and fathers who assumed the role of Guru taught their disciples to think independently and provided opportunities to them to contemplate. This indeed is the path of quest for truth.

I have not come to collect disciples for any particular sect, creed or religion, such as the Hindu religion. I have come to light the lamp of love in the hearts of all humanity.

- Baba

SRI SATHYA SAI GRAMA SEVA - 2004

GRAMA SEVA started by Bhagavan in the year 2000 at Prasanthi Nilayam has come to be recognised as another project of Bhagavan of immense magnitude for the service of mankind. During the last few years since its inception, it has inspired Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations in Bharat and overseas countries to undertake stupendous humanitarian projects for the welfare of underprivileged sections of society.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba blessed the commencement of this year's Grama Seva at Prasanthi Nilayam on the morning of 17th October 2004 simultaneously with the start of Dasara celebrations and Veda Purusha Sapthaha Jnana Yajna. It was a festive mood in Sai Kulwant Hall when priests and groups of students circumambulated the Bhajan Mandir while chanting Vedic Mantras and singing Bhajans. Bhagavan showered His blessings on all of them with Abhayahasta. He also blessed the Prasadam for Grama Seva. From Sai Kulwant Hall, all of them went in a grand procession led by musicians and Sai Geeta to the venue of the Yajna in Poornachandra Auditorium where Veda Purusha Sapthaha Jnana Yajna started in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. After the commencement of the Yajna, the students and staff for Grama Seva work boarded the vehicles packed with food packets and clothes and embarked on the divine mission of carrying Prasadam with Bhagavan's message of love to villagers.

All the students and staff members from the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus, Brindavan Campus and Anantapur Campus of the Institute along with students and staff of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam took part in this Karma Yajna. While the students and staff of Anantapur Campus prepared the food packets chanting the Divine Name of Bhagavan almost the entire night, the students of other campuses took the Prasadam to the doorstep of all villagers and offered it with love and humility. The Grama Seva continued for 13 days and came to an end on 29th October 2004. Nearly three lakh food packets were served to the residents of 145 villages in the Mandals of Puttaparthi, Bukkapatnam and Kothacheruvu. Besides food packets, Dhotis, Saris and clothes for children were also distributed. Schools in these villages were provided with stationery items. This year, 13 young professionals from the U.K. also participated in Grama Seva for seven days, from 17th October to 23rd October 2004.

Bhagavan wanted students to experience the joy of giving and directed that Prasadam be distributed in each household at their doorstep in all the villages and towns. As directed by Bhagavan, Nagar Sankirtan and Veda chanting preceded the distribution of Prasadam in every village.

In each house, people welcomed the students with beaming faces and received the Prasadam with reverence. Most importantly, Prasadam was offered with God's Name and also received with God's Name.

God and His Avatars

God is said to be formless; that is to say, He can assume or adopt any form. He has endless forms. Then, in what form does He grant the clear vision to the devotee? He manifests in the form that the devotee yearns for, the form which will grant him the highest satisfaction. These forms are His Avatars. God does not limit Himself when He thus manifests; He is fully present in every such Avatar; He manifests Himself with His full glory in every Avatar.

- Baba

BHAGAVAN'S BIRTHDAY MESSAGE

UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF HUMAN BIRTH

All your education, positions of authority, acts of charity and service have little value without the four virtues of Sathya, Dharma, Prema and Santhi (truth, righteousness, love and peace), which are verily the pillars of the mansion of Sanathana Dharma.

Embodiments of Love!

ALL OF YOU ARE FORGETTING the purpose of your coming into this world. You should never forget where you have come from, what the purpose of your coming is and where you have to go. A letter should bear both the “From” address and “To” address. If these two addresses are not there, then where will the letter go? It will go to the “dead letter office”. Similarly, you are in the world now without knowing these two addresses. You can very well imagine what your fate will be. You must therefore find out yourself an answer to at least one of the these three questions. Otherwise, your life will be a waste.

Know your Source and Destination

Here is a small story. In the delta areas of East and West Godavari districts in Andhra Pradesh, people go to their work by crossing the river Godavari by boat. Once a businessman was travelling in a boat. There was no one else in the boat except the boatman. Usually, people would like to engage themselves in conversation with somebody during travel in order to pass time. The boatman started the conversation by asking the businessman where he was coming from. Then the businessman asked the boatman, “What is the news in the newspaper?” The boatman replied, “Sir! I do not know because I cannot read and write.” “If you do not know how to read and write, then one quarter of your life is wasted”, commented the businessman. The boatman felt sorry for his pitiable condition and kept quiet.

After a few minutes, the businessman enquired again, “Do you know the present prices of gold and silver in the Mumbai market?” The boatman replied, “Sir! I do not have any business experience. Hence, I do not know the prices of gold and silver in the Mumbai market.” Then the businessman commented, “If you have no knowledge of business, then half of your life is wasted.” The conversation continued. Observing the wrist watch worn by the boatman, the businessman again enquired, “My dear! What is the time now?” Though the poor boatman had a watch on his wrist, he did not know how to tell the time. The businessman again asked, “Why then do you wear a wrist watch?” The boatman replied, “Sir, it is a fashion nowadays to wear a wrist watch. That is why I am wearing one.” Then, the businessman commented, “If you do not know even to tell the time from a wrist watch, then three-fourths of your life is consigned to the Godavari.” Meanwhile, a gale started with great force raising high waves in the river. The boat started tossing up and down and ultimately went out of control. The boatman then asked the businessman, “Sir! By the way, do you know swimming?” The businessman replied, “Alas! I do not know swimming.” Now it was the turn of the boatman to comment, “Then, your entire life is about to be consigned to the waters of the Godavari.”

Overcome all Ordeals by Devotion and Faith

In the same way, we are today tossing in the river of this world. We do not know why we are here in this world, what we have to know, where we have to go and by knowing what we can reach there. Being ignorant of all this, our entire life is wasted. Therefore, we should make efforts to understand why we have come here, what our reality is, and where we have to go. If we are not able to know the answer to even one of these questions, our life’s journey

will be without a purpose. It is only when we are aware of the "From" address, "To" address and the "Present Resident" address will our life be meaningful.

Goldstein (Chairman, Prasanthi Council) and his wife visit Prasanthi Nilayam often. During one of his trips, he rode with Me in the car to the college. I asked Goldstein about his travel programme. Goldstein replied that he would leave on the same day. I told him not to leave on that day. Goldstein said that he would leave Prasanthi Nilayam on the same day but then take the next day's flight from Mumbai. I finally said, "You may go if you so wish." He did not realise that his life would be in grave danger if he decided to start on that day. He went to Mumbai and boarded the plane for the U.S.A. There were hijackers on the plane. Two hijackers stood guard at the entrance and another two roamed in the plane with guns fully loaded aiming at the passengers. The passengers were struck with horror.

It is then that Goldstein understood why I instructed him not to board the aircraft on that particular day. He prayed to Me as his sole refuge. His wife is a great devotee. She started chanting My Name, "Sai Ram, Sai Ram, Sai Ram". Goldstein then told his wife, "Swami advised me not to start on this day, but I did not follow Swami's instructions and that is why we are in this situation." They remained on the plane as hostages for a long time without food, water and sleep. They were very much depressed. Goldstein's wife has intense devotion. Normally ladies are more devoted than men. At this point, the hijackers began to shoot men, women, and children mercilessly. The aircraft was strewn with dead bodies. Goldstein and his wife were seated in the front portion of the aircraft. The hijackers started shooting the passengers around them. Goldstein and his wife thought it would be their turn next. They however continued to pray to Me, "Sai Ram, Sai Ram, Sai Ram." They silently prayed to Me closing their eyes. When one hijacker set his eyes on the couple, Mrs. Goldstein had been chanting the Name of Swami incessantly forgetting everything. The chanting of Swami's Name worked wonders and she was spared. Goldstein then got up and stood at the entrance of the aircraft but the hijackers could not see him even though he was a hefty person in those days. Thus, the life of Goldstein was saved by Swami's grace. In the meantime, all of the ammunition of the hijackers was exhausted. The police caught the hijackers. Goldstein and his wife were released and put on another aircraft bound for America.

However, the ordeal that they underwent continued to haunt them. After a few days, the police came to enquire about the incident. Goldstein was offered some compensation but he did not accept it. After two months, Goldstein again came to Prasanthi Nilayam and had My Darshan. Now he realised through his own experience that he need not fear anything under any circumstances if he did Namasmarana (chanting of God's Name). After having My Darshan, he regained calmness. From then on, whenever I would enquire about his return journey, he would leave it to the Lord's Will. He realised that it would be better to leave the matter in My Hands. Thereafter, he implicitly followed Divine command and commenced his return journey on the day given by Me. From then on, Goldstein developed unshakeable faith in My words and he stood like a rock.

Do not Waste Precious Human Birth in Futile Pursuits

People today are not aware where they have come from and where they are going. Only after going through such experiences do they develop firm faith. Without realising the value of human birth, they spend their time in eating and drinking. However, it should be

understood that man has taken birth in this world not merely for enjoying food and drink. The same truth has been explained by Adi Sankara in his famous Bhaja Govindam song thus:

*Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam,
Govindam Bhaja Moodha Mathe,
Samprapthe Sannihithe Kale,
Nahi Nahi Rakshati Dukrun Karane.*

(Oh foolish man, chant the name of Govinda; the rules of grammar will not come to your rescue when the end approaches.)

Be all and end all of human life is not merely Khana (food), Peena (drink), Sona (sleep), Marna (death). There are higher goals in life that one has to achieve. The purpose of human birth is not merely to enjoy food and comforts. It is not even to acquire education either. The purpose of human birth is totally different, though people have forgotten it. You have to fulfil the real purpose of your birth. The body comes, grows and dies. Before the body dies, one has to fulfil the real purpose for which he has come into this world. One should redeem one's life by engaging oneself in the service of others.

Embodiments of Love!

There are several trials and tribulations in the journey of life. You have to acquire the power by which you can courageously encounter them. That is the power of spirituality. You should not become diffident and withdraw from your effort in the middle. In this Bhavasagara (ocean of life), there will, of course, be turbulent waves which will toss your boat up and down. Only God's Name can take you across the ocean of life as declared by Adi Sankara:

*Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam,
Punarapi Janani Jathare Sayanam,
Iha Samsare Bahu Dustare,
Kripayapare Pahi Murare.*

(Oh Lord! I am caught up in this cycle of birth and death; time and again, I am experiencing the agony of staying in the mother's womb. It is very difficult to cross this ocean of worldly life. Please take me across this ocean and grant me liberation.)

The purpose of human birth is not to spend the life aimlessly and finally depart from this world only to be born again and again from the womb of the mother. There is a specific purpose why one is born in this world. Therefore, one has to realise that purpose and sanctify one's life. Our education, our work and the money we earn, all these must be spent in a purposeful way. The students today pursue education to make a living. They acquire degrees with the sole purpose of earning money. What is so great about struggling for filling one's own belly? Even dogs and foxes fill their bellies. You might have observed in the circus that even the monkeys learn several types of feats and display them. Having been born as human beings, you should not behave like dogs, foxes and monkeys. If you do so, of what use is your education? The education you acquire must be put to proper use. Only then will it become meaningful and will give strength to your personality. The purpose of your life is not merely to acquire degrees. Of course, you should study, but it is not enough if you simply study for acquiring degrees.

Can you call all those who know how to read and write educated?

Can one be called educated merely by acquiring degrees?

Can you call it education which does not confer virtues?

If education is just for a living, don't we find birds and beasts carrying on their lives?

(Telugu Poem)

Your education will be meaningful when you utilise it both for life and for a living. Therefore, every human being must keep the purpose of life in view. You may say, "I have passed MBA; I have acquired several degrees." But, what is the use? Acquiring degrees without imbibing spiritual knowledge is meaningless. Only human beings have the power to realise the purpose of their life. Some people feel satisfied, thinking, "I am born, I am educated, I have earned money, I have sufficient bank balance, I have got my children educated and have sent them for higher education to foreign countries." But that is not the sole purpose of life. You should never forget the purpose for which you are born in this world. Unfortunately, today you have forgotten the purpose of your life and are indulging in futile activities. As long as you live, you should experience peace. You should attain true and eternal bliss.

Dedicate your Life to the Service of Society

Mahatma Gandhi went to London and acquired a law degree. After his return to Bharat, he wished to utilise his education for the service of society. He joined the Indian National Congress and worked tirelessly for the Independence of the country from the British rule. He faced great ordeals but did not give up his resolve to serve the country. He sacrificed his entire life to achieve Independence for the country. He led a very simple life and wore only a small Dhoti and an upper garment. His wife Kasturba was a noble lady. She always served her husband with great devotion. When Gandhi was in jail, she was engaged in the service of the country. It was only her spirit of service that protected her throughout. During the days of their involvement in the Independence movement, there were occasions when the husband and wife got separated. But Kasturba was reconciled to the situation that whatever happened was for her good only. Thus, people who serve others with a noble heart will always see good only. At last, the country attained Independence and Jawaharlal Nehru became the first Prime Minister.

Subhash Chandra Bose was another great leader of the freedom movement who was good at heart and was a great patriot. It is only because of the efforts of such men of sacrifice that the country could attain Independence. However, it is not enough if we have freedom from foreign rule. We must attain Swarajya, independence of the spirit.

Dear Students!

You should be prepared to sacrifice even your life for the country. You are not the body. The body is only an instrument and a means for achieving something higher and noble. It has to be put to use for achieving these higher and noble aims. The body is like the dress we wear. One day or the other, the body is bound to decay. Till then it has to be maintained properly. It is only by Thyaga (sacrifice) that one can attain Yoga. That is what the Vedas proclaim: *Na Karmana Na Prajaya Dhanena Thyagenaike Amrutatthwamanasu* (immortality is not attained through actions, progeny or wealth; it is attained only by sacrifice). Having been born as human beings, we must dedicate our lives in the service of God and in the constant contemplation of God. If you do so, none of the physical ailments will trouble you.

You should get rid of Dehabhimana (body attachment) and develop Atmabhimana (spiritual consciousness).

I would like to narrate to you a small example. When I was in Bangalore some time back, this body fell in the bathroom. Two students by name Satyajit and Achintya attended to My needs with great devotion. They did great service to Me. I told them, "I have no body attachment. I am not this body. As long as the body is there, I have to do My work." The doctors advised Me to undergo an operation so that the fracture could be healed quickly. I placed this body in the hands of the doctors and let them do whatever they wished to do with it. The doctors wanted to put the body in bandage, but I did not agree. I continued to walk which I am still doing. I have no pain or suffering. If you thus leave your Dehabhimana, you can achieve anything in life. Whatever I do, I tell the same thing. One has to do what one says, and say what one does. That is the real Manavatva (humanness).

*ManasyekamVachasyekam, Karmanyekam Mahatmanam,
Manasyanyath Vachasyanyath,
Karmanyanyath Duratmanam.*

(Those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones; those who lack harmony of these are wicked.)

Many devotees are worried that Swami is walking with great difficulty and perhaps is undergoing severe pain. I would like to reiterate that I do not have any pain or suffering. Till today, I have not suffered from any body pain whatsoever. I can stand for any length of time though the doctors advised Me against it. Even now I have been standing for a long time. I have no suffering at all. I do not take even a single tablet. I do not put on any bandage. I always have the same Atmic feelings. I set an example by My own actions.

Dear Students!

The body is bound to suffer. Body is like a water bubble. Mind is like a mad monkey. Don't follow the body; don't follow the mind; follow the conscience. Develop Atmabhimana. When you develop Atmabhimana, no pain can trouble you. It is only to teach you Atmabhimana that I am demonstrating My example before you. I am doing My work like before. I do not have any handicap whatsoever. I don't feel any pain at all. I am telling you the truth. I am not suppressing the facts. In fact, I don't know or feel what pain is. We should face difficulties with courage. It is only to teach you this steadfastness and courage that I have taken upon Myself this ordeal. You must follow My ideal. Do not ever give importance to the suffering of the body. Give up Dehabhimana. However, engage the body in proper activities. Engage the body in the service of God. Our body is a gift of God. For what purpose has God given us this body? It is only for dedicating it in the service of God.

Embodiments of Love!

The body has been given to you for performing sacred actions. Several people wonder why Swami does not feel tired in spite of undergoing so much physical strain. Especially, the ladies can observe the signs of weakness quickly. I want to assure you that I am maintaining a constant body weight and good health throughout. Neither have I put on weight nor have I become weak. I can walk fast, but I am desisting from doing so only to satisfy the doctors. The doctors are particularly pressurising Me not to walk swiftly. They advised Me, "Swami,

please do not walk fast. Always keep two students with You to help You.” It is only to please them and satisfy them that I am keeping these two students with Me. I am not causing any inconvenience to these boys. Both these boys, Arun and Prusty, go to their offices and work there besides attending to My needs. The moment I call Prusty, he immediately rushes in. When I ask him to get Me a glass of water, he gives it immediately; I drink the water given by him. Similarly, both these boys are serving Me constantly with great devotion and love.

I have no Old Age

Embodiments of Love!

Today you are celebrating the 79th birthday of this body. In fact, it is the body that has a date of birth. But, do I look like a 79-year-old man? No. No. Not only now, even at 80 or 90, I will be like this only (*loud and prolonged applause*). I will never be dependant on anybody. My eyes and teeth are in perfect condition. Normally, by the time a person attains 79 years of age, all his teeth will be lost. His eyesight will be affected by cataract. His skin will have wrinkles. But I have no wrinkles at all. There is no effect of old age on Me (*loud applause*). In fact, I have no old age. Similarly, you also develop such courage and confidence. You will certainly feel good. Not only Myself, all of you should be in sound health. But you are spoiling your own health. You are misusing your physical strength in so many ways. If you put your body to proper use, you can progress well by Swami’s grace. You can serve any number of people with a healthy body and a sound mind.

Maintain your body not to show off your beauty but to serve others. Even for Me, this body is meant to serve others. I am prepared to do anything for the service of humanity. I am prepared even to sacrifice My life. Similarly, you must also be ever ready to serve others. Do not ever consider that the body is very important. Neither should you fritter away the physical strength. You must make proper use of the physical body and also gain enough mental strength. You should come up well in your educational career and sanctify your life by serving your fellowmen. You must always be ready to face any situation in life boldly. That is the real nature of humanity. Whenever your services are required, you must respond immediately, saying, “I am ready, I am ready, I am ready.” Develop such courage and confidence and set an ideal to the world.

Seek refuge at the lotus feet of the Lord. Do not bother about the suffering of the body. Serve the country to the extent you can. Utilise every small opportunity to serve the country and society. Even a small help done to an old woman whom you come across on the way is service. Do not ever think, “What do I gain by helping this woman?” There is great merit even in such a small service. Therefore, continue to serve. There is no greater Sadhana than service to fellow human beings. *Seva Bina Nirvan Nahi* (there is no redemption without service). You should not mind any inconvenience that you may undergo while serving others.

I have no intention of celebrating My birthday on a grand scale. My only concern is that you should maintain your body in proper condition and should render service to others through the body. This is the real purpose of celebrating the birthday. You should always be prepared to dedicate your life to serve society. That is true Sadhana.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, “*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin...*”)

– From Bhagavan’s Birthday Message in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 23rd November 2004.

BHAGAVAN’S 79TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

BHAGAVAN’S BIRTHDAY is the occasion for grand celebrations. A variety of cultural programmes and other programmes of great spiritual significance form part of this glorious event.

Global Akhanda Bhajan

The soul-stirring Akhanda Bhajan at Prasanthi Nilayam on 13th and 14th November 2004 as part of Global Akhanda Bhajan was a veritable spiritual treat for devotees. Conducted in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba, who started this global spiritual event more than 30 years ago, it attracted a mammoth gathering of devotees in beautifully decorated Sai Kulwant Hall.

On the afternoon of 13th November 2004, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.00 p.m. to shower the bliss of His Divine Darshan on the assembled devotees. As soon as Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall, the Institute students started chanting of Vedic hymns which continued up to 5.35 p.m. Sweet notes of flute music started from the Bhajan Mandir soon after Bhagavan occupied His seat in it. Akhanda Bhajan started at 6.00 p.m. Boys and girls students of the Institute alternately led the Bhajans which continued throughout the night in which the devotees and students enthusiastically took part. Early in the morning at 4.55 a.m., Suprabhatam was recited in Bhajan Mandir, after which Bhajans continued. The devotees experienced the bliss of Bhagavan’s Darshan when Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall on 14th November 2004 in the morning at 6.45 a.m. In the afternoon, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 2.50 p.m. and sat in His chair on the portico of the Hall showering the bliss of His Darshan on the devotees. Some time before the conclusion of the Bhajan, Bhagavan went into the Bhajan Mandir and occupied His seat there. The Akhanda Bhajan concluded with offer of Arati to Bhagavan at 6.00 p.m. Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees in the end.

Rathotsavam

The festival of Rathotsavam was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam with great enthusiasm and deep devotional fervour on the morning of 18th November 2004. Bhagavan Baba came to beautifully decorated Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue of the celebration, at 7.10 a.m. In the middle of the Hall stood richly dressed Sai Geeta (Bhagavan’s loving elephant) waiting to pay its respects to Bhagavan. As soon as Bhagavan came near it, it raised its trunk to show its love and reverence for Bhagavan, who caressed it and fed it with fruits. After showering His love and blessings on the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall, Bhagavan came to the verandah of the Hall and blessed the Veda chanting and Bhajan singing groups of students who were to lead the Rathotsavam procession.

Thereafter, the palanquin bearing the idols of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman as well as that having the idol of Venugopal Swami were brought out from the Bhajan Mandir. At the Gopuram Gate, the idol of Venugopal Swami was placed in a decorated chariot. Led by the Nadaswaram musicians and Sai Geeta and followed by Veda chanting and Bhajan singing groups of students, the idols were then taken to Sri Pedda Venkama Raju Kalyana Mandapam in Puttaparthi in a grand and colourful procession through the main bazaar of Puttaparthi. The villagers witnessed this procession

on its route and offered worship and Arati to the idols. The procession with the idols of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman returned to Sai Kulwant Hall at 8.35 a.m. and the idols were taken back into Mandir. Soon after this, Bhajans were started by the students of the Institute. The devotees assembled in the Hall joyously participated in the Bhajans. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.00 a.m.

Ladies Day Celebrations

Dedication and grandeur marked the celebration of 10th year of Ladies Day celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam on 19th November 2004. Rich tributes were paid to Divine Mother Easwaramma on this day, whose love for underprivileged sections of society generated social welfare projects of enormous magnitude. Besides holding cultural programmes to commemorate this day of great social and cultural significance, a project for the welfare of economically backward women was started on this day.

The venue of the celebrations, Sai Kulwant Hall, was beautifully decorated on this occasion. A photograph of Mother Easwaramma adorned the dais which was specially decorated with fresh roses. Bhagavan Baba came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 6.50 a.m. in a grand procession led by the Primary school and college girls bands and Veda chanting groups of girls students. He was welcomed into the Hall by two rows of girls with lighted lamps in their hands standing on both side of the passage of Bhagavan. After blessing the devotees with His Divine Darshan, Bhagavan came to the dais and inaugurated the programme by lighting the sacred lamp amidst a thunderous applause of the gathering. Thereafter, there was a charming display of girls students bands.

The programme began with an introductory speech by Smt. Chethana Raju, a former student of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Paying rich tributes to Mother Easwaramma, Smt. Raju remarked that massive social welfare projects of Bhagavan stemmed from the humble, selfless and apparently simple desires of Mother Easwaramma for the welfare of mankind. Smt. Raju then prayed to Bhagavan to inaugurate another project for the benefit of economically backward women. Bhagavan inaugurated this by unveiling the plaque of the project amidst a thunderous applause of devotees. Thereafter, Smt. Raju introduced the two speakers who were blessed by Bhagavan to speak on this auspicious day.

The first speaker was Dr. (Smt.) Geetha Reddy, Minister for Tourism and Culture, Andhra Pradesh. Smt. Geetha Reddy referred to mammoth humanitarian projects of Bhagavan and expressed gratitude to Him for completing the work on Kandaluru-Poondi canal on which Bhagavan had spent more than 200 crores. This project, she said, would not only provide drinking water for the people of Chennai, but it would also irrigate thousands of acres of land of poor farmers of Andhra Pradesh. Bhagavan, she said, is devoted to the welfare of the underprivileged masses, and women's welfare is His special concern. In this regard, she referred to the Easwaramma Women's Welfare Project inaugurated by Bhagavan a few minutes earlier. The second speaker Ms. Eleni Sotiriou of Greece narrated some of her experiences of Bhagavan's Divinity. Referring to an incident in war-torn Bosnia, she said, she heard the soldiers talk how Swami often visited them and distributed food to them, though they did not know who He was. She also narrated another experience when 100 tonnes of wheat flour bought for distribution to needy people turned into milk powder as they needed milk for their children. She concluded her talk with a devotional song in Hindi.

After these two talks, the girls students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Prasanthi Nilayam gave a magnificent dance performance. This was followed by a violin recital by renowned violin artistes

Dr. Lalita and Ms. Nandini of Chennai. At the end of this programme, Bhagavan blessed the artistes and gave Saris to them. He also posed for photographs with them. Bhagavan also distributed Saris to the girls students of Primary School who presented the dance programme. He also gave them the precious opportunity of a group photo with Him. The morning programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.20 a.m. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end. Bhagavan also performed the cake cutting ceremony as a mark of celebration of this day.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.05 p.m. A group of ladies sang a welcome song as Bhagavan arrived in the Hall. Thereafter, a very spectacular cultural programme was presented. The first item of the programme was choir singing by U.K. youth group who gave an excellent presentation of both Hindi and English choir songs. Thereafter, renowned playback singer Ms. Anuradha Paudwal enthralled the gathering with devotional songs which included Sai Bhajans and Mira Bhajans. Singing in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba, the artiste kept the audience spellbound for nearly one hour.

After this vocal music, the students of Sri Rama Nataka Niketan, Secunderabad presented marvellous group dances, "Ras Leela" and "Sri Krishna Leela Tharangini". Their dances truly enthralled one and all. And their perfection of movement while dancing on plates was simply wonderful. But the most breathtakingly beautiful was their dance on inverted pots which they performed with marvellous dexterity while having lighted candles on their palms and on their head. Delighted by their performance, Bhagavan Baba distributed sweets and gifts to them with His Divine Hands and gave them the opportunity of group photo with Him. The Ladies Day celebrations concluded with this delightful presentation. The programme came to a close at 5.00 p.m. with offer of Arati to Bhagavan.

A Grand Fusion of Cultures

A grand fusion of cultures was witnessed at Prasanthi Nilayam on 21st November 2004 when devotees from India, Brazil and U.K. presented a magnificent programme in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The programme started at 3.30 p.m. after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan. In his introductory remarks, Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman, Prasanthi Council, said that the greatest joy of a man's life was to experience the selfless love of Bhagavan which is uniting people of diverse cultures. Thereafter, Dr. Goldstein introduced the next speaker and described how the U.K. youth had expressed their love for Bhagavan in action by undertaking Grama Seva in four villages surrounding Puttaparthi. He also introduced the Bhajan programme of Brazilian devotees which, he said, demonstrated unity of love in the diversity of cultures.

The first speaker who addressed the gathering was Dr. Phil Heaton, National Chairman, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of the U.K. Dr. Heaton described how the youth of U.K. were inspired to undertake various programmes of medicare, educare and sociocare by the teachings and example of Bhagavan Baba. He said that 160 youth and 20 elders who had come from the U.K. on pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam had undertaken Seva activities in four villages surrounding Puttaparthi for five days. Besides, holding medical camps and distributing free medicines to villagers, the Sai Youth of U.K. also introduced value games to 1200 children of local schools and sang Bhajans with them, he said. They also organised the renovation of four temples in these villages, said Dr. Heaton. The second speaker was Sri Alexander Gifford, a young Sai devotee from the U.K. Sri Gifford told how the

Divine Love of Bhagavan had transformed his life. Bhagavan Baba, he said, is omnipotent God who destroyed all evil of his heart and sowed the seeds of righteousness in it.

After these two speeches, the devotees of Brazil presented a programme of Sai Bhajans. Commencing with a Bhajan as invocation to Lord Ganesh, they sang all Bhajans in Hindi. The amazing clarity of their pronunciation and perfection of tune and rhythm earned them the repeated applause of the devotees and blessings of Bhagavan who graciously distributed clothes to them at the end of the programme.

The next musical item was a clarinet recital by the renowned clarinet maestro Pandit Narasimha Vadavati. The artiste was joyously applauded time and again as he delighted the audience with his excellent recital. Bhagavan expressed His happiness by materialising a gold ring for him and by showering His blessings on him. Bhagavan also presented silk Dhotis to him and accompanying artistes. The programme came to a close at 5.10 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

Bhagavan's Birthday Function

Virtually a sea of humanity thronged Prasanthi Nilayam to pay their obeisance to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on His 79th Birthday on 23rd November 2004. The venue of the celebrations, Sai Kulwant Hall, was tastefully decorated with colourful buntings, beautiful festoons and fresh flowers. But most charming and eye catching was the decoration on the dais and on the steps where a virtual rose garden was created overnight with a beautiful lawn. The idol of Lord Ganesh behind the dais was also tastefully decorated with flowers of various colours in beautiful patterns. Bhagavan's residence and the new adjoining building bore a festive look with decoration of various kinds.

There was expectation in the air on the morning of 23rd November 2004 in Sai Kulwant Hall which was full to its capacity with devotees who were waiting since early morning to experience the bliss of Bhagavan's Darshan on this glorious day of His Advent on earth in human form. Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 6.55 a.m. in a shining white robe in a grand procession led by bands of Primary School and Institute students and a Veda chanting group of students. Sweet notes of Nadaswaram music by the students of Anantapur Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning welcomed Bhagavan into the Hall. After showering His blessings on the assembled devotees in and around Sai Kulwant Hall, Bhagavan occupied His seat on the dais at 7.25 a.m. and witnessed the display of the four students' bands who took their turns to offer their tributes to Bhagavan through band music.

Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, two speakers addressed the gathering. Sri Sanjay Sahni, Principal, Brindavan Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning introduced the speakers. In his introductory speech, Sri Sanjay Sahni remarked that God is timeless and limitless. The reason and purpose of His Advent on earth is to confer happiness and blessedness on man. So, the best way to celebrate the birthday of Bhagavan is to become deserving of His grace and to attain the state of blessedness. After these introductory remarks of Sri Sahni, Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman, Prasanthi Council addressed the gathering. Dr. Goldstein observed that the presence of the Avatar on earth provides immense possibilities for man. Bhagavan Baba, he said, is the embodiment of selfless love, and it is through this divine love that He is transforming mankind. Man, he observed, should seize this great opportunity and attain the experience of His Divinity. The next speaker, Dr. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor of the Institute, referred to the Bhagavan's Benedictory Address and Convocation drama on the previous day, and observed that in both these the direction given to man was to stay in the Atma. Dwelling on the uniqueness of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of

Higher Learning, the learned speaker narrated a few incidents how the students of the Institute develop a sterling character besides acquiring excellence in studies.

After these two speeches, Bhagavan gave His Divine Message and brought it to a close with the Bhajan “*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin...*” (Full text of Bhagavan’s Discourse has been given elsewhere in this issue.) The morning programme concluded with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.30 a.m. Prasadam was distributed to all the assembled devotees in the end. Many departments of the Ashram and Sai institutions had placed cakes in the verandah of Sai Kulwant Hall. Bhagavan graciously showered His blessings on all and lighted candles on the cakes.

A group of Institute students welcomed Bhagavan with blowing of conch and Panchavadyam music when He came to Sai Kulwant Hall to shower the bliss of His Divine Darshan on the mammoth gathering of devotees on the afternoon of 23rd November 2004. Thereafter, renowned Hindustani classical singer Ms. Parveen Sultana regaled the gathering with her devotional songs. First, she presented Rag Hamsa Dhwani in her mellifluous voice and thereafter she sang Sai Bhajans and Mira Bhajans to the delight of the devotees. The presentation earned the appreciation of the devotees and blessings of Bhagavan. The celebrations came to a happy conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.35 p.m.

A Galaxy of Cultural Programmes

Sri Kala Hastheeswara: The second year undergraduate students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prasanthi Nilayam Campus presented a devotional play entitled “Sri Kala Hastheeswara” on 6th November 2004 depicting the glory and grace of Lord Siva of Sri Kala Hasthi and conveying the message that God sees no difference between humans and other living beings. At Sri Kala Hasthi, on the banks of the river Swarnamukhi, a forester was initiated into Panchakshari Mantra ‘Om Namah Sivaya’. On the occasion of the initiation, his Guru narrated the story of an elephant, a serpent and a spider how they vied with one another to earn the grace of Lord Siva. Sweet music, and meaningful dialogues powerfully rendered by the students of the Institute along with appropriate make-up added liveliness to the presentation. On the whole, the play was performed so beautifully and effectively that at the end of the performance, Bhagavan Baba came down the steps, blessed the students and posed for photographs with them. He materialised a Navaratna ring for one of the principal actors.

Sai Leela: Burra Katha Presentation: The ancient art of Burra Katha came alive in Sai Kulwant Hall when the students of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning presented the life story of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in His Divine Presence on the afternoon of 8th November 2004. The programme started at 3.30 p.m. after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan. Beginning with an invocation song to Lord Ganesh, the students portrayed the glory of Sai Avatar, described His humanitarian and welfare projects like Grama Seva, Deenajanoddharan (helping the destitute and orphans), hospitals, etc., and conveyed His teachings and message to mankind through lively dialogues and beautiful songs in true Burra Katha style. The programme captivated one and all and earned the blessings of Bhagavan in abundance. At the end of the programme, Bhagavan distributed clothes to the students and gave watches to them. He also posed for photographs with them.

Gujarati New Year Celebrations: As part of Gujarati New Year celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam, two cultural programmes were presented by the Bal Vikas students and youth of Gujarat in Sai Kulwant Hall on 12th and 13th October 2004 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The programme on 12th October 2004 consisted of a beautiful folk dance of Gujarat and a drama entitled "Transformation". How adherence to values in Sathya Sai system of education was bringing about change in society was conveyed through this drama in a very effective manner. The headmaster of Shri Vidyaniketan, a school run on Sai ideals, faced all ordeals calmly and ultimately transformed his adversary whose greed for money prompted him to threaten and assault the headmaster because he refused to send his students to his tuition classes. The programme which began at 4.05 p.m. came to a close at 5.00 p.m. At the end of the programme, Bhagavan blessed the students and posed for photographs with them. Thereafter, ladies devotees of Gujarat led the Bhajans which the gathering in Sai Kulwant Hall followed in chorus. The day's programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.10 p.m.

Shantinagar – the Sai Grama: A Drama: The cultural programme on the morning of 13th November 2004 began after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan on this auspicious day of Gujarati New Year. The devotees of Gujarat welcomed Bhagavan into Sai Kulwant Hall with a beautiful welcome song and offered Poornakumbham on His arrival on the dais, which was aesthetically decorated with fresh flowers. The first item of the programme was a delightful Gujarati folk dance. This was followed by a drama entitled "Shantinagar – the Sai Grama". Based as it was on real life experiences of the Sai Seva Dal, the drama painted a realistic picture of the transformation being brought out by Sai Youth and volunteers in villages through Grama Seva. Apart from a good story, the drama had forceful and impressive dialogues and beautiful songs. Superb acting of the cast enhanced its effect on the audience all the more. At the end of the drama, Bhagavan showered His blessings on the cast and posed for photographs with them. He also materialised a gold ring for one of the principal actors. After the drama, Bhajans started which were led by the ladies and gents devotees of Gujarat. The celebrations concluded with distribution of Prasadam to all the devotees. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 8.55 a.m.

Id-ul-Fitr Celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam: On the joyous and holy day of Id-ul-Fitr, the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning presented a magnificent programme on the afternoon of 15th November 2004 in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The students, some of them dressed as devout Muslims, dwelt upon the principle tenets of Islam and explained the inner significance of the terms like Islam, Namaz, Roza, Zakat, etc., through lively dialogues interspersed with beautiful Qawalis. The programme effectively portrayed the common features of all religions to clarify that the various religions were not only similar but they were all one. The effect of the programme was heightened when not only the cast of the drama but the Muslim devotees present in the Hall joined in the performance of the Namaz conducted by a Muslim priest in the Hall. Everybody present in the Hall was overjoyed when a child from Iran recited verses from the Holy Quran as well as sacred Mantras from the Vedas. Besides, an Iranian devotee explained how Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was uniting the people of all religions through His Divine Love as witnessed at Prasanthi Nilayam.

This thoughtfully planned and meticulously executed programme earned the appreciation of the audience and love and blessings of Bhagavan Baba. At the end of the programme, Bhagavan gave the bliss of His proximity to the cast and distributed sweets to them with His Divine Hands. They also got the coveted opportunity of group photos with Bhagavan. Thereafter, Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees. The programme which started at 4.25 p.m. came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.30 p.m.

Purandaropanishad: This excellent drama was enacted by the students of Brindavan Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on the afternoon of 16th November 2004 in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. The drama portrayed the story of transformation of wealthy but miserly jeweller Srinivas Naik into Purandaradasa as Lord Vitthala's ardent devotee who earned name and fame as the father of carnatic music and poetic genius of Kannada language. Purandaradasa dedicated his compositions to his Guru Vyasaraaya who named them Purandaropanishad. Embellished with soulful compositions of Purandaradasa, the story of Purandaradasa was enacted through selected incidents from his life. At the end of the drama, Bhagavan showered His blessings on the students and posed for photographs with them. The programme ended with offer of Arati to Bhagavan at 5.00 p.m. and distribution of Prasadam to all the devotees.

The Ramayana as Yakshagana Roopaka: The folk art of Yakshagana Roopaka came alive in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam when the students of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva institutions, Alike (Karnataka) presented the story of the Ramayana in Yakshagana Roopaka on the afternoon of 20th November 2004 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba.

The students earned the appreciation of the audience and blessings of Bhagavan because of their excellent performance. At the end of the presentation, Bhagavan gave the students the opportunity of group photo with Him. He also distributed gifts to them with His Divine Hands. Bhagavan materialised a gold chain for the student who played the role of Rama. He also materialised a ring for the Bhagavata (singer) who sang the entire story. The programme which started at 3.00 p.m. after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan came to a close at 4.30 with offer of Arati to Bhagavan. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end.

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

80th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS: THE WORK HAS BEGUN

To celebrate the forthcoming 80th Birthday of our Lord, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, we, the Overseas Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, with love, humility and reverence offer these Seva flowers of worship at the Divine Lotus Feet of our loving Lord.

1. Medical Camps

Kenya: The Sathya Sai Service Organisation of United Kingdom, in conjunction with the Mombasa Sathya Sai Centre, held a week-long medical camp in the Mariakani area of Mombasa from 10th to 16th April 2004. A total of 4,757 people received free medical services at the camp including general medical diagnosis, treatment and minor surgeries; testing and treatment for blood pressure, diabetes and glaucoma; and ophthalmic, dental, gynaecological, paediatric and neurological care. In addition, 2500 eyeglasses were dispensed, 7000 pharmacy prescriptions were filled, 57 surgeries were performed and 5000 people were served free food. Eighty-five medical and non-medical volunteers participated in this camp, with many of the local physicians inspired by the love and dedication of the Sai doctors and personal sacrifices of all the volunteers towards this noble cause.

Mauritius: The Sathya Sai Baba Organisation of Mauritius organised a medical camp on 17th October 2004 at Bois Marchand, Terre Rouge and provided medical services to 295 children. 10 doctors, 3 dentists, 4 nurses, 5 social workers, 1 nutritionist and 20 general volunteers worked with enthusiasm and selfless love which made the children and their parents very happy.

United States: The Sathya Sai Centres of Southfield and Ann Arbor organised a health screening medical camp for an inner-city community in the city of Detroit, Michigan, on 11th September 2004. Held at the Motor City Resource Centre, the camp offered the following services to nearly one hundred patients: routine physical check; blood pressure check, heart and lung examination; blood testing for full lipid profile (cholesterol, triglyceride) and blood glucose levels; vision check and lead screening for young children. In addition, they also provided health education for asthma patients, and nutrition counselling by certified dieticians. To encourage reading among children, free books were provided to all children who attended the health camp. Many of the resident physicians from the University of Michigan along with other volunteers from local hospitals and other health organisations were inspired by the love and dedication of the Sai workers and expressed gratitude to the Sai Organisation for the opportunity to serve.

2. Community Service Programmes

United States: On 28th August 2004, many Sathya Sai Baba Centres in Southern California, along with the Sai Young Adults organised a “Day at the Beach” for over 50 physically and mentally challenged children and adults. Nearly 100 volunteers participated in this project, bringing joyful smiles to the faces of those children. Owing to their disabilities, they do not enjoy a normal childhood; some of them had never been to the beach before. The Sai volunteers, inspired by Swami’s love, created a programme of “Looking Beyond Disabilities, Focusing on Capabilities, and Expanding Possibilities.” The entire day comprised of therapeutic projects involving music, dance, human values’ songs, and games aimed at helping the children to express their innate, God-given abilities. The gleeful exhilaration on the tender faces of the children and the profound gratitude of their parents were a beautiful affirmation of Swami’s oft-quoted maxim – *Love without Duty is Divine!*

Brazil: Every week for the past two years, Sai devotees have been serving residents of an impoverished community in the city of Montenegro. The activities span a wide spectrum including supply of food, clothing, shoes, plants and seeds, school materials and medicines. Knitting classes for women and literacy classes for children and adults are also regularly conducted. The project currently serves 34 children and 43 adults from 23 families. To address the lack of clean water supply in this area, devotees initially provided two containers of water to every household. Later, the Sai Organisation, along with local community members, installed a domiciliary water net using a close stream as the source. The deep impact of Swami’s Love is often heard from the recipients through phrases such as “you give us the love our parents never gave us” and “it doesn’t matter you bring us things, it’s your presence we need”.

Indonesia: Members of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Yogyakarta, with the help of the National Central Council, have adopted the community of Gunung Kidul and render services here on an ongoing basis. The underprivileged people of this water-deprived area have seen very difficult times and consider themselves lucky when they manage to feed themselves twice a day. The Sai Centre of Yogya built 90 wells and provided clean water to more than 300 families in this area. The local authorities insisted on naming the wells after Swami; today the wells are called “Yayasan Sri Sathya Sai Baba”. Houses and some roads in the area were also repaired by the members of this Sai Centre.

3. Public Meetings

Canada: A public meeting was held on 25th September 2004 at the Vancouver Playhouse Theatre in Downtown Vancouver. 530 people attended this event. The featured speakers were Dr. David Gries, Chairman for Zone 1, and Dr. Mayur Pandya, former student and faculty member of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Dr. Gries started off the afternoon with a dynamic multimedia presentation on the many facets of Swami's Mission. Dr. Pandya shared with the august assembly his personal journey of coming into Swami's fold and how profoundly his life had been transformed by Swami as his guide and God. The poignant and powerful film, "His Work", demonstrating the unparalleled humanitarian works of Bhagavan Baba received a rousing applause from the audience.

Venezuela: On 17th September 2004, a wonderful public meeting was held in the city of Caracas, the capital of Venezuela. Held in the Cultural Complex Teresa Carrenio, the most prestigious theatre in the country, the event attracted unprecedented crowds and received wide coverage through television, radio and the press. Many attendees preferred to stand for the entire duration of the programme while a giant screen was placed in the theatre lobby for those who could not be accommodated inside. More than 3000 people came from all parts of Venezuela, including government officials, diplomats, and representatives from universities and social institutions. The programme started with a multimedia presentation of the education and service activities of the Venezuelan Sathya Sai Organisation. This was followed by the keynote address of Leonardo Gutter, member of the Prasanthi Council, whose moving words touched the hearts of all present. After this event, Sai Centres and Groups in Venezuela have received numerous calls from the public interested in participating in the activities of the Sai Organisation.

United States: On Saturday, 6th November 2004, members of the Sathya Sai Centres of Northern California and Nevada hosted a public meeting on the life, teachings and humanitarian works of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in this large urban community, popularly known as Silicon Valley, which is the home of some of the best-known hi-tech companies of the world. Held at the stately Heritage Theatre in the City of Campbell, the public programme started with the welcome remarks by Dr. Tom Scovill, Regional Educational Coordinator, who introduced the two guest speakers. Over 500 guests were in attendance including the Deputy Consul General of India and several top leaders of the business community. The first speaker, Dr. Michael Goldstein, chairman of the Prasanthi Council, described Bhagavan Baba's humanitarian projects in India: educational systems from primary through accredited doctorate level at no cost to the students, four hospitals providing advanced tertiary care, massive drinking water projects bringing safe water to millions and the Sri Sathya Sai education in human values programme. The second speaker, Dr. Narendranath Reddy, member of the Prasanthi Council, emphasised that the word love enshrined Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's life, humanitarian works, ideals and message to humankind. He stressed the need to realise our innate divinity and manifest it in our lives as the purpose of human life by experiencing pure selfless love and supreme peace and to share these with all. The meeting ended with the screening of the film "His Work" depicting the many projects initiated and inspired by Bhagavan Baba. As guests left the theatre with hope and love in their hearts, the evening colours painted the beautiful California sky in a heartwarming kaleidoscope of brilliant hues.

By His grace and blessings, may we redeem and sanctify our lives by taking active part in His Divine Mission with dedication and devotion.

- **Prasanthi Council**

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Andhra Pradesh: East Godavari district distributed 90 tricycles to physically challenged students, both boys and girls, selected from all over the district in a well arranged function in Sri Sathya Sai Gurukulam, Rajahmundry on 10th October 2004. On the same day, the Sarvadharm Stupam built at Vadlamur village was inaugurated by the State President. Food provisions and clothes were distributed to poor people on this occasion.

Begumpet Samithi (Hyderabad) of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation (Andhra Pradesh) organised Grama Seva in village Yeravelli (Medak district) on 3rd and 4th July 2004. During the Grama Seva, a multispeciality medical camp was held in which 1258 patients were treated and given free medicines.

Visakhapatnam district distributed monthly food provisions (known as Amruta Kalasams) to 96 selected poor families in different towns in the district, gave 37 sewing machines to deserving persons to eke out their livelihood.

Anantapur district conducted in a grand way 16 free marriages at Hindupur on 31st October 2004. Apart from Mangal Sutra, the couples were given new clothes and other items needed in wedding and various household goods. Uravakonda Samithi conducted Rathotsavam on 20th October 2004 as part of Avatar Declaration Day celebrations and carried out Narayana Seva for 200 people in Sri Bala Sathya Sai Sila Mandir premises where Bhagavan Baba gave His first Divine Message.

Assam, Manipur and N.E. States: Despite widespread unrest and frequent breakdown of normal life due to disturbances as well as natural calamities, Sai Sevaks and Sevikas of Manipur have taken the turmoil in its stride and have been quite active in Sai Seva. A Residential Sadhana Camp for the Mahila devotees held at Imphal from 7th to 10th October 2004 generated much enthusiasm. Bhagavan Baba's Divine messages on Love and Seva formed the core of the discussions. 141 delegates participated in the meet. Youth members took active part in the smooth conduct of the proceedings.

Gujarat: A seminar on Humanising Medicare was organised on 5th September 2004 (Teacher's Day) at Shri Mahavir Cardiac Hospital, Surat. Approximately 125 doctors from all over Gujarat participated in this Seminar. The theme of the seminar was how to provide free medical services to poor and needy people. The speakers at the seminar highlighted the need for providing quality medicare to poor and needy people on the model of Sri Sathya Sai Super Speciality Hospitals at Puttaparthi and Bangalore.

Haryana and Chandigarh: A district level inter-college seminar on "Decline in Human Values – a Challenge before the Youth in the Present Scenario" was held at Yamuna Nagar wherein 21 competitors and 100 students with college faculty members participated. A talk on "Essence of Indian Culture and Spirituality" was organised at S.D. College for Women, Hansi wherein 400 students and teachers participated.

Kerala: Mahila Vibhag organised Akhanda Sai Gayatri Japam in all the 140 Samithis from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on 22nd August 2004. Sri Sathya Sai Deenajanodharana Projects have been started in 6 out of 14 districts of the State. Efforts are being made to cover all the districts under these projects. Sai Youth are involved in four important projects – Sai Annapoorneswari, Sai Vidya, Sai Balaposhini and Sai Vidyalaya Project. A unique camp on Disaster Management was held at Kannur in which the District Collector and Director General of Police participated. They requested the Sai Organisation to take some of their people also for training. Apart from our Seva Dal members, representatives from police, social welfare, Red Cross, revenue and fire force departments participated.

Maharashtra and Goa: It was a memorable event of reunion of all the ex-Bal Vikas students at Pune for an exclusive conference. There were 254 students from all over Maharashtra. The conference started with 'lighted to light message' with lights in the hands of 9 Bal Vikas students signifying the 9

years of Bal Vikas, followed by Veda chanting. All the delegates shared their experiences of sweet memories of Bal Vikas and their Gurus. They also spoke on how Bal Vikas helped them in their later lives to achieve their goal.

Sikkim: An interactive, introductory and informative consultation on the concept, relevance and implementation of Sri Sathya Sai Educare Programme was held on four consecutive days from 29th August to 2nd September 2004 at Sri Sathya Sai Sarva Dharma Kendra, Baluwakhani; and the Community Hall in Gangtok. The programme on Sri Sathya Sai Educare was intended to address not only the office bearers, Bal Vikas Gurus and devotees of Bhagavan, but also teachers, educators, patrons of education and learning, parents and people drawn from various walks of life. The Minister for Human Resource Development, Sri Garjaman Gurung felt that educare was indeed the need of the hour and expressed his yearning to emulate the Gangtok experience in other parts of the State.

Tamil Nadu: Coimbatore district conducted a district level Youth Conference in S.R. Kalyana Mandapam (gents) and Saraswati Mahal (ladies), Pollachi on 26th September 2004 in which 988 participants (442 ladies and 546 gents) took part. Eminent speakers addressed the participants on moral values in personal as well as public life. The youth were well motivated by the day's deliberations.

23rd Convocation of SSSIHL

GRANDEUR AND SOLEMNITY MARK THE INSTITUTE'S CONVOCATION

"This university is one of its kind: there is none like it in India or elsewhere in the world. Nor is there another teacher like the founder, mentor, guide and Chancellor of this great seat of learning, the fountain of divine wisdom and knowledge, the Avatar of our Age, Sri Sathya Sai Baba. His abode Prasanthi Nilayam is the world's spiritual heart", observed Sri M.K. Rasgotra, former Foreign Secretary to the Government of India.

SRI RASGOTRA was delivering his Convocation Address as Chief Guest on the occasion of 23rd Convocation of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning in a glittering function held on 22nd November 2004 in aesthetically decorated Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam. The ceremonial procession which started from the Chancellor Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's residence came to Sai Kulwant Hall in all its majesty and grandeur at 3.00 p.m. amidst a thunderous applause of the mammoth gathering in the Hall. The procession was led by the Institute band followed by the Registrar of the Institute carrying the ceremonial mace with two students carrying the Institute emblem. Then came the Revered Chancellor of the Institute Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and the Chief Guest Sri M.K. Rasgotra in an open car. They were followed by distinguished guests, members of the Institute Trust, Governing Body and Academic Council.

The programme began with chanting of Vedic hymns by the students of the Institute. The proceedings began after the formal declaration of the opening of the Convocation by the Revered Chancellor of the Institute.

Vice Chancellor's Introductory Speech

In his introductory speech, the Vice Chancellor of the Institute Sri S.V. Giri extended a warm welcome to all and especially to the Chief Guest, Sri M.K. Rasgotra. Sri Giri referred to the inspiring and prophetic declaration made by Institute's Revered Chancellor 23 years ago while inaugurating it, and remarked that the Institute had followed these guiding principles of imparting self-confidence, self-sacrifice and self-knowledge to its students with the result that the students of this Institute had come to acquire a distinct identity with their positive attributes, sound learning and sterling character. Sri Giri observed that the Institute had come to acquire a singular distinction in the area of value education by adopting the methodology of Integral Education under the loving guidance of its Chancellor.

Outlining the major developments of the year under report, Sri Giri stated that the Institute had introduced a three-semester M.Phil course, and produced five Ph.D. theses which had been adjudged as path-breaking in their respective areas. Besides, the University Grants Commission had awarded a five-year research support to the Department of Biosciences of the Institute, added Sri Giri. In addition to these academic achievements of the Institute, Sri Giri referred to three significant events of spiritual dimension. These were: chanting of the Vedic hymns by the students, unfolding of their relevance to life through cultural activities and Grama Seva which had become a regular annual feature of the Institute. In conclusion, Sri Giri remarked that the Institute had put into practice the universal philosophy of blossoming of the spirit besides achieving academic excellence through the divine guidance provided by the Revered Chancellor of the Institute.

Convocation Address by Sri M.K. Rasgotra

Before the Convocation Address of the Chief Guest Sri M.K. Rasgotra, the candidates who had successfully completed their courses were awarded their degrees, and meritorious students were awarded gold medals by the Chancellor. Sri Rasgotra quoted the words of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council of the University Grants Commission, "this Institute was a model worthy of emulation by the institutions of higher learning in the country and elsewhere" and remarked that it was a well-deserved tribute to the Institute's pioneering work. He hoped that the prized features of this model would be replicated in all other Indian universities.

Sri Rasgotra praised the students of this Institute as makers of a new India and said, "Imbued with the best in Indian cultural tradition and ethics, they are modern in outlook without the frivolity and pomp of modernity. They are living examples of a good life of simplicity and honesty, of compassion, love and service. Ten thousand of them already in the field are changing life and environment around them. As their numbers grow, the university's contribution to the making of a new Indian society will become increasingly apparent."

Surveying the present world scenario, Sri Rasgotra observed that there was violence and hatred in the world, and despite great advances in science and technology, it was an unhappy world. He said, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's message of love contained in four simple words: "Love All, Serve All" was most relevant for uniting mankind and sowing the seeds of love in the heart of man. "Love All, Serve All is the Mantra for man's liberation and immortality and also the recipe for the making of a perfect global society," observed Sri Rasgotra. In conclusion, Sri Rasgotra advised the students to

observe three routine disciplines to make their life happy: “disciplines of the tongue or speech, of the intellect and of the mind.”

Benedictory Address of the Chancellor

In His Benedictory Address, the Revered Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba said that man today had become materialistic and selfish. Due to his craving for material objects and worldly possessions, man had forgotten God, observed Bhagavan Baba. Man, He said, was the embodiment of love, and unselfish love was his divine attribute and his hidden wealth. This supreme transcendental love, Bhagavan said, could be experienced in solitude and in absolute silence. Only then could man experience divine bliss, which was nothing but God. Human life could be redeemed only if he experienced his innate divinity. There was no other path except that of love to attain God, added the Revered Chancellor. After the Benedictory Address of the Chancellor, National Anthem was sung by all with reverence and solemnity.

Convocation Drama by the Institute Students

In the evening, the students of the Institute presented an excellent drama entitled “Chal Re Man Apne Dham” in Poornachandra Auditorium in the Divine Presence of the Revered Chancellor. The drama powerfully depicted the message that fulfilment in life could be attained by following the path of love, compassion and sacrifice, and not by resorting to demeaning selfishness and frivolous money laundering which degenerate human nature. The story realistically depicted the modern scenario of corporate world with flashbacks from the Mahabharata and the life of Swami Vivekananda. Planned, executed and directed under the guidance of the Revered Chancellor, the drama was a superb presentation from all aspects, be it acting, dialogues, choreography, costumes. Many scenes of the drama were so powerful and touching that they brought tears in the eyes of the viewers. The drama earned the appreciation of the viewers and blessings of the Revered Chancellor who distributed watches not only to the cast but also to all those associated with the drama. The drama which commenced at 6.00 p.m. came to a close at 7.20 p.m.

FLIGHT SERVICE TO PRASANTHI NILAYAM (PUTTAPARTHI) From 11th October 2004 till 15th March 2005 (every Monday, Thursday and Saturday)

Flight No.		Bangalore		Prasanthi Nilayam
IC 969	...	14.00 IST	→	14.30 IST
IC 970	...	15.40 IST	←	15.10 IST

**By Airbus 320
Indian Airlines**

Note: Please note the change in timing.

Message of Jesus

Love must be manifested as Seva (service). Seva must take the form of food for the hungry, solace for the forlorn, consolation for the sick and the

suffering. Jesus wore himself out in such Seva. The heart full of compassion is the temple of God. Compassion was his message. He was sorely distressed at the sight of the poor. Today Jesus is worshipped but his teachings are neglected. Develop compassion. Live in love. Be good, do good and see good. This is the way to God.

- *Baba*

