

**JANUARY 2005**

## **CHRISTMAS MESSAGE**

# **MY POWER IS THE POWER OF LOVE**

*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 twinkle 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)**

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Jagat denotes that which is subject to creation, sustenance and dissolution. God, who is responsible for these phenomena, has no specific form. He pervades the entire world in the form of the five elements, namely, space, wind, fire, water and earth.

### **Food and Water are the Gifts of God**

In man, these elements connote the faculties of Sabda, Sparsha, Rupa, Rasa, Gandha (hearing, touch, sight, taste, smell), respectively. There is no place where these five elements are not present. *Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Sruthimalloke Sarvamavrutya Tishthati* (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). That is why it is said that all hands, feet, eyes, heads, mouths and ears are His. The elders in the past therefore declared that God is present everywhere; there is no place where God is not present. How can we comprehend the principle of this all-pervasive divinity? People attribute various names and forms to God. They celebrate the birthdays of their chosen deities, worship them and derive joy therefrom. But it is not possible for anyone to fathom fully the nature of divinity. It is not possible to attribute any form to God. He is beyond all names, forms and attributes. God has neither birth nor death. How can anyone give a specific name to God who is all-powerful and all-pervasive?

*God is eternal without birth or death. He has no beginning, middle or end. He is omnipresent and is the eternal witness.*

**(Telugu Poem)**

When a child is born from the womb of its mother, it starts crying. However, it stops crying the moment you put a drop of honey or milk on its tongue. From this, we can deduce that everyone is born with hunger. What type of hunger is that? Is it worldly or spiritual? It is difficult to judge who is born with what type of hunger. Though food is of various kinds, hunger is common to all. Food is essential to satisfy one's hunger. So, every individual has to eat food. It is also his duty to share it with others.

It is the earth which provides food to man. It absorbs rainwater and supplies it to the crops. In this way, we grow crops. Thus, mother earth sustains our life by providing food to us. Water is also very essential for our survival. One may live without food for a few days, but not without water. Water is very necessary for growing food also. It can be acquired only through prayer and not by any other means. People perform worship and offer special prayers to invoke divine grace for water. Everyone

should pray to God whether one is a pauper or a millionaire, for it is God who provides food and water to man. Food and water are the gifts of God. Man cannot create food and water by himself. He does not even know what type of food is essential to lead a healthy life. He should, in fact, make efforts to understand this.

#### **Anything can be Achieved through Prayer**

Whatever God does is for the welfare of the world. You must understand that world is the very form of God. The Creator and creation are not different from each other. We should not worship God for the fulfilment of worldly desires. We should pray to God to attain Him. He showers His grace on all. It is God who gives us everything. He alone knows what is good for us. Everything that we need is provided by Him. However, it is not the quality of a true devotee to feel disappointed and blame God if his desires are not fulfilled. It is our duty to find ways and means to earn God's grace and make efforts to attain Him. Nobody can understand or explain divine plans. God alone knows His plans and He only can reveal them. No one can comprehend the ways of God as stated by Thyagaraja:

*Not even a blade of grass will move without divine Will,  
Right from an ant to Brahma, God pervades everything,  
But some people do not understand this and take pride in their intelligence,  
But no one however mighty knows what is going to happen in the next moment.*

(Telugu Poem)

No one can predict when God will shower His grace on an individual. Only God knows the answers to the questions like who, when, where, why and how. If one forgets God and gets carried away by ego and sense of doership, one will not meet with success in one's endeavours. Anything can be achieved through prayer. There is nothing greater than prayer. Hence, everyone must necessarily offer his prayer to God. However, one should not pray for worldly gains. "Oh God! I want Your love and nothing else." This should be your constant prayer. Once you become the recipient of God's love, you can conquer the entire world.

Do not pray to God for the fulfilment of your worldly desires. Instead, leave everything to God's Will. Have full faith that He will do what is good for you. Pray to Him, "Oh God, please take care of us every moment of our life." When you discharge your duties surrendering everything to God's Will, you will certainly achieve success in all your endeavours. But God's Will takes shape at the appropriate time without any prompting or planning.

#### **All are the Children of God**

Any mighty task can be accomplished by prayer. Hence, pray to God silently. Do not pray for the fulfilment of your petty desires. Give up all desires and pray to God wholeheartedly with love. You will certainly find fulfilment in life. You can understand and experience divinity only through love. Nothing can be achieved without love. Love makes all your tasks successful. Some people complain, "Swami, we are making fervent prayers but our prayers are not fruitful." I tell them, "The mistake lies in your prayer and not in God." If your prayers are sincere, they will certainly be answered. There is nothing that God cannot accomplish.

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

Today we are celebrating the sacred festival of Christmas. We should celebrate it in the true spirit without entertaining petty desires. Jesus was the son of God. While he was being crucified, he said, “Oh Father, Let Thy Will be done.” When you surrender yourself to God’s Will, He will take care of you. Do not develop pride. Give up ego and ostentation. Pray silently and sincerely. Then your prayers will surely be answered. God is not confined to a place somewhere in a distant corner. He always resides in your heart. He can accomplish anything. He is ever ready to perform any task, big or small, for His devotees. All are His children. Hence, He will certainly answer your prayers. Jesus taught, “All are the children of God.” When you have such firm conviction, you can accomplish any task. You need not read voluminous books. Fill your heart with love and leave everything to His Will. You will certainly achieve success in all your endeavours.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Love is the quintessence of My teachings. My power is the power of love (*loud applause*). There is nothing greater than love. When you develop love, you can easily face the challenges of life and emerge victorious. God will always be with you, in you and around you and will take care of you. Any mighty task can be accomplished through prayer. However, your prayer should be sincere. Say what is there in your mind. Swami is within you; He knows your thoughts and feelings. Develop unity of thought, word and deed. Have faith that Swami is in you, and He always listens to your prayer. If you think that Swami is outside, how will your prayer reach Him?

*Embodiments of Love!*

It is only love that will help you to achieve success in your life. Hence, develop love. That is the true prayer God expects from you.

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

- **From Bhagavan’s Christmas Message in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 25th December 2004.**

## **GOLDEN YEAR OF 80TH BIRTHDAY OF BHAGAVAN**

1st January 2005 was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam not only as New Year Day but also as the beginning of the 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Soulful musical offerings were made to Bhagavan on this occasion in Sai Kulwant Hall which was beautifully done up for the celebration of this joyous and spiritually significant event.

Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.10 a.m. amidst chanting of Vedic hymns by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. The celebrations began with lighting of the sacred lamps by Bhagavan amidst a thunderous applause of a mammoth gathering of devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall. At the outset, Sri Indulal Shah, International Advisor, Prasanthi Council greeted the devotees on this auspicious day and exhorted them to make their life ideal so that it should radiate the Divine Message of Bhagavan

Baba. Sri Shah emphasised that the year of 80th Birthday of Bhagavan Baba should be celebrated in a befitting manner throughout the world.

The programme of devotional music began at 7.30 a.m. First, the Indian contingent consisting of 102 gents and 98 ladies representing all the States of India made its musical presentation of devotional songs in Hindi and Telugu. Sung in perfect rhythm with deep devotional fervour, the musical offering touched every heart. This programme was directed by Sri Girish Atre. This was followed by devotional songs by the world choir consisting of 146 ladies and gents from 41 countries. The world choir presented 8 beautiful songs directed by Ms. Alma Badings of the Netherlands.

To add joy to the occasion, the youth of California (USA) rendered Bhajans after the devotional songs of national and overseas choirs. The morning programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.15 a.m. In the end, Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees.

After the national and overseas musical presentations, it was the turn of old students to pour out their hearts in devotional music and express their love for their Beloved Lord in their musical compositions. The old students made their musical offering to Bhagavan on the afternoon of 1st January 2005. In his introductory remarks, Sri S.V. Giri, Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning explained the relevance of celebrating the 80th Birthday of Bhagavan in the spread of Bhagavan's Mission of ushering in an era of peace, love and unity in the world. The scintillating programme of devotional songs of the old students kept the audience spellbound for nearly one hour. This was followed by a musical presentation by the Institute orchestra group. This lively presentation earned the repeated applause of the audience and profuse blessings of Bhagavan. Bhagavan materialised a gold bracelet for the student who directed the orchestra programme.

In the end, a lively talk was given by Sri Ajit Popat of the UK. Dwelling on the significance of New Year Day and the beginning of Bhagavan Baba's 80th Birthday celebrations, Sri Popat observed that this was the day of reflection, contemplation and introspection for all. On this day, he said, we should resolve that we would never forget Bhagavan Baba and His teachings. The celebrations came to a close at 5.45 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

**BENEDICTORY ADDRESS:  
23rd CONVOCATION OF SSSIHL**

**EXPERIENCE DIVINITY WITHIN  
IN TOTAL SILENCE**

*Embodiments of Love!*

You are very well aware of the present condition of the world. There is no scope for talking about God. Today Dhanam (money) is considered as Daivam (God). In such a situation, how can Dharma (righteousness) prevail in the world?

### **Principle of Love is Changeless**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

There is no other path except that of love to attain God. Love is God, God is love. But people do not understand what love is. They consider attachment to all that is worldly and material as love. Out of their selfishness, they love worldly objects and materials. So, man's love today is tainted with selfishness. There is selfish motive behind whatever he does. How can then man have the vision of God who is the very embodiment of selfless love? Love is present in all beings, right from a Pamara (ignorant person) to a Paramahansa (realised person). How can one describe such a principle of love?

Ego and pomp have become rampant today. Desires have become limitless. Man's heart is filled with selfishness, and compassion has no place in it. That is the reason why he is unable to have the vision of the Atma and experience bliss. I always speak about the principle of love. I do not know anything other than love (*loud applause*). When divinity is uniformly present in all, how can you share your love with some and deny it to others? How can anyone say, "Love this and not that"? God has no specific form. But if you firmly resolve to see God and make sincere efforts, God will assume a form and manifest before you.

There is love in everyone of you. What is the form of love? What is the nature of love? When we analyse carefully, we will realise that love is not limited to human beings alone but is present in all living beings. Every being is endowed with the quality of supreme divine love. One has to give up enmity and cultivate unity and purity in order to understand this truth. Love cannot be explained in words. How can you describe it? It can only be experienced and enjoyed. The experience of love confers bliss on us. Hence, we can say that bliss is the form of love.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Everything in this world is bound to change except the principle of love. Love is the only true and eternal path which will lead you to divinity. Divinity pervades each and every limb of the human body. It can be visualised only when we understand the principle of oneness. People attribute various names and forms to God. In fact, God should not be confined to a particular name and form. God is beyond all attributes and transcends all names and forms. Divinity is present in all in the form of love but each one experiences it in his own way. People imagine a particular form of divinity. They think divinity is limited to a specific name and form. That is why they are unable to experience it.

One whose heart is filled with love will see the manifestation of divinity everywhere. It is a mistake to think that Nature is different from God. People give various names to divinity based on their own experience. Jewels are many but gold is one. Likewise, names and forms are different but divinity is one. Where does gold come from? It comes from the earth. Similarly, God manifests in human body. *Daivam Manusha Rupena* (God incarnates in the form of a human being). Hence, consider everyone as divine. *Sahasra Seersha Purusha Sahasraksha Sahasra Pad* (The Cosmic Being has thousands of heads, eyes and feet). All heads, all eyes and all feet are His. Such transcendental divinity can be experienced only in absolute silence and in solitude. There lies hidden sacred divine power in the depth of total silence. The tongue is given to you not to indulge in vain

gossip. That is why the ancient sages and seers practised Mounam (silence). It is possible to experience God only in the depth of silence. However, we should understand the true meaning of silence. Silence does not mean merely refraining from speech. It is much higher than that and includes the mind also. The transcendental nature of divinity cannot be described in words. It is beyond the grasp of the mind.

### **Focus your Mind only on God**

Whatever you see in this world is the manifestation of truth. When divinity is all-pervasive, how can there be untruth? But you are unable to realise all-pervasiveness of divinity. Turn your vision inward and observe absolute silence. Only then can you realise all-pervasive divinity. Mere intellectual exercise will not help you in this regard. Whatever you see, hear and experience is the manifestation of divinity. Only God exists everywhere. Such being the case, is it possible to attribute a particular name and form to Him? He is present in all forms. When we experience the principle of oneness, we will be immersed in bliss. Hence, we can say that bliss is His form.

*Nityanandam, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnanamurtim, Dwandwateetam, Gagana Sadrisham, Tattwamasyadi Lakshyam, Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam* (God is the embodiment of eternal bliss, He is wisdom absolute, beyond the pair of opposites, expansive and pervasive like the sky, the goal indicated by the Mahavakya Tattwamasi, the one eternal, pure, unchanging, the witness of all functions of the intellect).

### *Embodiments of Love!*

When God is all-pervasive, where is the need to go in search of Him? You should make efforts to experience your innate divinity by observing total silence and turning your vision inward. You can experience divine bliss only in absolute silence. That is why it is said, “Silence is golden”.

God is present in all forms. All names and forms are His. The Vedas state the same principle when they declare: “*Sahasra Seersha Purusha...*” Various types of jewels are made out of gold. Likewise, God has assumed all the names and forms that we find in the world. Hence, you should develop faith in the existence of God. If you make sincere efforts, you can certainly realise Him. Many spiritual aspirants in the past could have the divine vision by their intense Sadhana and by going into total silence. One has to annihilate the mind in order to have the vision of God. You cannot experience divinity until and unless you transcend the mind.

Today people conduct enquiry and research into various aspects of the world. But divinity cannot be experienced with such enquiry and research. Select a divine form of your choice and contemplate on it. When you focus your mind on the divine form, your mind gets transformed completely and becomes one with divinity. Today man’s mind keeps wavering from moment to moment. Do not rely on such a wavering mind. Instead, rely on divinity which is steady and changeless. Once you fix your mind on a divine form of your choice, never change it. Close your eyes and contemplate on it. Only then can you experience divinity.

### **Understand the Principle of Unity**

People use the word “divinity” without really knowing its meaning. The Vedas declare, *Ekameva Adviteeyam Brahma* (God is one without a second), *Ekatma Brahma* (Atma is Brahman). You may call Him by any name. He has thousands of heads, hands and eyes.

Wherever you see, there is God only and no one else. The same primordial principle pervades everything. Contemplate on Him with single-minded devotion.

*Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathana Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam* (God is attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness). Divinity is present within you. Unable to realise your innate divinity, you waste your time searching for God outside. Whatever you see and experience in the world is only the reaction, reflection and resound of your feelings. Do not get deluded by the reaction, reflection and resound. Turn your mind inward and contemplate on the reality within you. You will certainly be able to experience divinity. You should have divinity as your goal and nothing else. Divinity is one without a second, and is all-pervasive.

Understand the principle of oneness and install God in your heart. Without the principle of unity, there can be no multiplicity. If you do not understand unity, you cannot understand the multiplicity of Nature. Nature is the best preacher. Follow the ideals demonstrated by this preacher with Preeti (love). The more you develop love, the sooner you can see God. Body attachment is the cause of all differences. You will understand and experience unity in diversity only when you give up body attachment. Once you are free from body attachment, you can experience God in a moment. Whatever you see is the manifestation of God. The principle of unity in diversity is divinity. But you are unable to understand and appreciate this truth. In order to understand this truth, there should be total transformation in your feelings. As is the colour of the glass, so is the colour of the scene outside. Remove the colour glasses of body attachment and see the reality.

### **Make your Mind Steady**

*Embodiments of Love!*

Hold on to the principle of love firmly and you can achieve anything. When you fill your heart with love, you will be protected wherever you go. Love is the reality and everything else is only reaction, reflection and resound. In order to experience the reality, you have to cultivate steadiness of mind in the first instance. How can you make your mind steady? You have to contemplate on one name and one form. Be firm in your chosen path. Do not get deluded by what appears to the physical eyes. Open the eye of wisdom and see the reality.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Consider everyone as the embodiment of divinity. God is the mother and father of all. That is why, we pray: *Twameva Mathascha Pitha Twameva, Twameva Bandhuscha Sakha Twameva, Twameva Vidya Dravinam Twameva* (Oh God! You alone are our father and mother, friend and relation, wisdom and wealth). Have firm faith that God is your everything. Do not entertain any doubts in this regard. It is because of doubts that man's mind is in a confused state. Many people ask Me about the proper way of meditation. I always tell only one thing, "Meditation does not mean merely closing your eyes and imagining anything and everything. Choose one form, install it in your heart and see that it is steady. Have total faith in one name and one form and contemplate on it incessantly. That is true meditation. If you follow this practice earnestly, you can experience divinity."

*Embodiments of Love!*

There is no greater Sadhana than following the path of love. Your love should flow only in one direction, and not in many directions. Your love should constantly flow towards God. Only then can you have the vision of God, who is the very personification of love. If you are unable to visualise God, it only means that you have not directed your love towards Him.

Make your mind steady and fix it on God. Mind is the cause of everything in this world. Mind by itself does not go anywhere. It is we who direct it and divert it in different ways according to our whims and fancies. We are responsible for its unsteadiness. When you keep your mind steady and focus it on God, you will find the brilliant and blissful form of God wherever you see. You are unable to see and experience God because you doubt His existence. First of all, develop unwavering faith in God. Your faith alone will protect you. Do not follow the vagaries of the mind. You should be the master of your mind and not its slave.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

People talk about meditation. Meditation is very simple. Meditation is not mere concentration. Concentration can never be equated with meditation. With unflinching faith and unwavering mind you should let your love flow towards God. If there is unsteadiness in your mind, it is reflected outside. All unsteadiness comes from within you. I am rather surprised to note that man's mind is wavering every moment. Why should the mind waver? It has no such power. Manas (mind) and Manishi (man) should be one. When you achieve this oneness, you can experience the principle of unity.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

You must firmly resolve to hold on to the principle of unity and divinity. What is the purpose of human birth? Is it to spend your time in eating and drinking? No, no. You should make efforts to understand the underlying principle of unity of five elements, five senses of action, five senses of cognition and five life sheaths. If you make sincere efforts, you will certainly be able to experience the principle of unity. Among all the living beings, only man is endowed with the ability to understand and experience unity and divinity. In fact, the very purpose of human birth is to experience unity in diversity. Hence, make every effort to experience unity and sanctify your lives. It is possible only by following the path of love. There is nothing superior to love in this world.

(Bhagavan sang the Bhajan, "*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho...*" and continued His Discourse.)

Today I have awarded the gold medal for all-round excellence to a girl student from Anantapur Campus. She has been a diabetic right from her childhood. Her parents and doctors have been trying their best to control her diabetes but all in vain. However, she has unflinching faith in Swami. That is why she had no problem at all in spite of her blood sugar level being very high. She is not worried at all. In fact, when her parents get worried, she infuses courage in them, saying, "Don't worry. God is with me." In this manner, she has spent sixteen years. She has studied in Puttaparthi school and Anantapur college. Sometimes, her blood sugar level is very high. No medicine can control it. Her father becomes anxious. But she is protected by her steady faith. Swami told her firmly, "This disease cannot harm you. Have total faith in God. Do not pay heed to what others say." She forgets her Badha (suffering) remembering Swami's Bodha (teaching). She has followed Swami's words implicitly and has remained steady in her faith. That is why she has come up in life.



She devotes all her time to studies. She will pursue higher studies. She has absolutely no worry even if her blood sugar level shoots up. She says, “It comes and goes. I have nothing to do with it.” She has faced her health problem with fortitude. In this manner, one should never be afraid of problems. This body is a storehouse of dirt and a den of diseases. One should never rely on such an ephemeral body. The body may have to undergo suffering on account of some diseases. But whatever may be the problem, one should not worry about it.

Her father is teaching in Puttaparthi college. Sometimes, he gets phone calls from his daughter’s teachers in Anantapur Campus, telling him, “Your daughter’s blood sugar is very high today. She is unable to attend the classes. What should we do?” He comes to Me for guidance and I tell him not to worry. I infuse courage in him, saying she would be all right. Because of her devotion and steadfast faith, she is maintaining her health and carrying on her studies without any hindrance.

*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)

She is leading her life with such unflinching faith and determination. Sometimes, she becomes very weak because of anaemia. Even in such a condition, she continues to do her work. That is true devotion. She is leading her life with total faith in Swami. She has stood first in her studies and has also achieved excellence in co-curricular activities. That is why she has been given the gold medal for all-round excellence.

- **From Bhagavan’s Benedictory Address on the occasion of the 23rd Convocation of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 22nd November 2004.**

### *Permanent Solution to a Chronic Problem*

## **DRINKING WATER TO CHENNAI THROUGH SRI SATHYA SAI GANGA CANAL**

Thousands of Tamil Nadu devotees came to Prasanthi Nilayam on 11th and 12th December 2004 to express their gratitude to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for providing water to Chennai through Sri Sathya Sai Ganga Canal which was commissioned on the auspicious day of the 79th Birthday of Bhagavan on 23rd November 2004.

A function was organised in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the morning of 12th December 2004 to celebrate this great event. The programme started after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan. Sri G.K. Raman, Convener, Sri Sathya Sai Trust, Tamil Nadu introduced the speakers who were blessed by Bhagavan to speak on this occasion. In his introductory speech, Sri Raman said that this was a most joyous occasion for the people

of Tamil Nadu as Bhagavan had provided water to Chennai relieving them of their prolonged suffering due to water scarcity. Outlining the auspiciousness of the day, Sri Raman informed the gathering that water in Sri Sathya Sai Ganga Canal was released on 23rd November 2004 which was the Birthday of Bhagavan according to English calendar and it reached Poondi reservoir near Chennai on 27th November 2004 which was Bhagavan's Birthday as per the Indian calendar.

The first speaker, Sri Arjuna Raja, conveyed to Bhagavan the gratitude of hundreds of thousands people of Chennai whose long-felt need for water was met by Bhagavan. He also prayed to Bhagavan to visit Chennai and shower His blessings on all the people there.

The second speaker was Dr. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Delineating the historical background of the Project, Dr. Venkataraman said that Chennai had been facing shortage of drinking water since long. The problem had become acute due to the influx of heavy population and non-availability of adequate water resources to cater to 6 million population of the city. Realising the suffering of the people of Chennai, Bhagavan in His immense grace and compassion declared of His own accord on 19th January 2002 at the First Anniversary Celebrations of Sri Sathya Sai Super Speciality Hospital, Whitefield that He would provide potable water to the people of Chennai at any cost. Accordingly, this Divine project was taken up by Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust with the wholehearted co-operation of the Government of Andhra Pradesh to improve the infrastructure of the Kandaleru-Poondi canal now christened as "Sri Sathya Sai Ganga Canal". Major works which covered this project were: (a) Strengthening of the bund so as to enhance the storage capacity of the Kandaleru reservoir, (b) strengthening of approach channel, (c) concrete lining of the vulnerable reaches of Sri Sathya Sai Ganga Canal and (d) construction of escape structures at various places for discharging flood waters from the canal in cases of emergencies. This work involved concrete lining of the bed of the canal with hi-density polythene sheets imported specially to prevent seepage. The canal sides were lined with concrete and paved with mechanical equipment according to the most modern technology over a distance of 65 km. The project employed about 4000 dedicated workers in three shifts and the work was done in more than 30 areas simultaneously to complete it in just eleven months, said the learned speaker.

The last speaker of the session was Dr. Mohan Krishna, Advisor to Tamil Nadu Government for Water Resources and former Chief Engineer. Tracing the history of chronic scarcity of water in Chennai, Dr. Mohan Krishna said that it was the Divine grace of Bhagavan Baba that this project was completed in such a short time and the work done was so satisfactory that the water which took 8 to 10 days to reach Poondi from Kandaleru now reached in just 4 days. Never in the history of Kandaleru-Poondi canal had water reached Poondi reservoir in so short a time with least wastage of water, told the learned speaker. "Sri Sathya Sai Ganga Canal for augmenting the drinking water supply to Chennai city is a boon to the 6 million population of the city of Chennai whose acute need for drinking water has been largely met through the compassion, grace and benevolence of our Beloved Bhagavan," said Dr. Mohan Krishna.

After these speeches, Sundaram Bhajan Group of Tamil Nadu added joy to the occasion by leading Bhajans which all the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall followed in chorus. In the

end, Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.00 a.m.

### ***FESTIVALS / EVENTS IN THE YEAR 2005***

11th Jan. .. Annual Sports and Cultural Meet of SSSIHL	27th Aug. .. Sri Krishna Janmashtami
14th Jan. .. Sankranti	7th Sept. .. Ganesh Chaturthi
9th Mar. .. Sivarathri	15th Sept... Onam
9th Apr. .. Ugadi (Telugu New Year Day)	12th Oct. .. Vijaya Dasami
14th Apr. .. Tamil New Year Day	1st Nov. .. Deepavali
14th Apr. .. Vishu (Malayalam New Year Day)	12th Nov. (6 p.m.) -
18th Apr. .. Sri Rama Navami	13th Nov. (6 p.m.) Global Akhanda Bhajan
6th May .. Easwaramma Day	19th Nov. .. Ladies Day
18th Jul. .. Ashadi Ekadasi	22nd Nov... 24th Convocation of SSSIHL
21st Jul. .. Guru Purnima	23rd Nov. .. Bhagavan Baba's 80th Birthday
	25th Dec. .. Christmas

### **CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM**

#### **Bhagavan Inaugurates Quarters for Nurses**

Sai Manonmani Nurses Residential Complex constructed in Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Prashanthigram, Puttaparthi was inaugurated by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the morning of 9th December 2004. Bhagavan was offered a reverential welcome amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras when He arrived in the Institute at 8.15 a.m. After arrival at the site of the Campus, Bhagavan pressed the button to unveil the plaque of the name of the building. He also cut the ribbon and lighted the sacred lamp to inaugurate the quarters for nurses and other technical staff of the hospital. He showered His blessings on Dr. V.K. Pillay and his family who built these quarters consisting of 8 blocks with 12 apartments in each block. Bhagavan also materialised a Navaratnamala for Dr. V.K. Pillay. The function came to a close with offer of Arati to Bhagavan.

#### **Sri Adi Sankaracharya: A Drama**

The students of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas, Singapore presented this drama on the life of Adi Sankaracharya on the evening of 9th December 2004 in Poornachandra Auditorium, Prasanthi Nilayam in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The drama comprehensively covered through commentary, acting and dialogues all the main events of the life of Adi Sankara, from his birth in Kaladi village (Kerala) to his final ascent to the seat of omniscience. It also effectively brought out his main teachings through his interaction with his Guru and his disciples as also through his debate with Mandana Misra. Locations of the main story, like Kaladi and Varanasi were well presented with the help of props and cut-outs of the places to make the setting of the story realistic and natural. Similarly, beautiful cut-outs of four places, Sringeri, Dwaraka, Puri and Badrinath, where Adi Sankara established four Mutts imparted realism to the story. Bhagavan sat through the entire performance and blessed the cast at the end of the drama. The programme came to a close at 6.20 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

### **Telugu Kavi Sammelan (Poets Meet) at Prasanthi Nilayam**

A very delectable programme of poetry recitation was held in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the afternoon of 13th December 2004 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Twelve renowned Telugu poets took part in this meet and enthralled the audience by reciting their thrilling poetic compositions. They were: Dr. Utpala Sathyanarayanacharya, Dr. Garikapati Narasimha Rao, Sri Rallabandi Kavitha Prasad, Prof. Bethavolu Rama Brahman, Sri Movva Vrishadripathi, Dr. M.S. Reddy, Dr. Undela Malakonda Reddy, Dr. Jandhyala Mahathi Sankar, Dr. J. Bapu Reddy, Dr. T.V. Narayana, Sri Jonnavitthula Ramalingeswara Rao, Prof. G.V. Subrahmanyam, Vice Chancellor, Potti Sri Ramulu Telugu University. The main theme of their compositions was the Glory of Sri Sathya Sai Avatar. At the end of this delightful programme, Bhagavan blessed all the poets and honoured them with shawls. He also posed for group photos with them. At the conclusion of this programme, Sri Y. Sriranganatha Raju, a student of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning expressed gratitude to the poets for giving joy to all by their scintillating poetry. This programme was followed by Veda chanting by Institute students. In the end, Prasadam was distributed to all. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.15 p.m.

### **Divine Blessings on Christmas**

A mammoth gathering of devotees of all religions, nationalities and countries participated in Christmas celebrations held on 24th and 25th December 2004 at Prasanthi Nilayam in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. A variety of festoons, wall hangings, pictures, models, Christmas trees and other creative decorations gave the look of wonderland to Sai Kulwant Hall, which was the venue of these celebrations. The dais was adorned with idols of Mother Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus on one side and three wise kings on the other. Bhagavan's residence, Ganesh Mandir and other surrounding areas were also beautifully decorated. Another attractive decoration was in front of the North Indian Canteen where a miniature village of Bethlehem was created with beautiful lights at night.

The programme began after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan Baba on the afternoon of 24th December 2004 in Sai Kulwant Hall. Bhagavan inaugurated the programme at 3.20 p.m. by lighting the candles placed on the dais. The first item of the programme was singing of Christmas carols by children. The children's choir consisted of 86 children from 21 countries. Among the beautiful Christmas carols rendered by this choir under the direction of Ms. Radha Reyes of the USA were: 'Amen', 'Come All Ye Faithful', 'We Three Kings', 'We Wish you a Holy Christmas', 'O Christmas Tree'.

After this excellent programme by the children's choir, adult choir constituted by about 400 ladies and 200 gents sang wonderful songs under the direction of Ms. Sylvia Alden of the USA. They started their programme with chanting of Omkar and Vedic prayer to Lord Ganesh, "Gananaamthwa ..." in Sanskrit. Their songs included 'In Moments like this', 'Almighty God', 'I am I', 'Sweet Lord your Love is so Great', 'Sathya Sai Baba Grant All the Beings Happiness', and 'We Come into the Lord's Presence'. After these Christmas carols, they sang Hindi Bhajans to the delight of all the devotees. The most remarkable feature of both these choirs was that they sang in one voice with purity and unity though they came from different countries speaking different languages. The programme on 24th December 2004 came to a close with this excellent presentation.

The programme on 25th December 2004 began with usual early morning Omkaram, Suprabhatam and Veda Parayanam in Sai Kulwant Hall at 5.20 a.m. Singing of Christmas carols by overseas devotees began soon after this in Sai Kulwant Hall while Nagar Sankirtan by ladies and gents groups started in the periphery of the Hall. Thus, the Christmas day programme began with singing of the glories of the Lord with devotion and love.

Bhagavan Baba showered the bliss of His Divine Darshan on the devotees when He came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.30 a.m. After Bhagavan took His seat on the dais, the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning presented a scintillating programme of orchestra music. This was followed by violin recital by a group of students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School. Some students dressed as Santa Claus came on the dais with their bags full of sweets which were blessed by Bhagavan. They went in the rows of devotees and merrily distributed the sweets among them while violin music presentation continued. After this beautiful violin music, the students of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School and the Institute presented an excellent programme of carol singing. This was followed by Bhajans in which all the devotees took part. After the conclusion of the Bhajans, Bhagavan went to the verandah of the Mandir and performed the cake cutting ceremony amidst a loud applause of devotees. The morning programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.10 a.m.

The programme on the afternoon of 25th December 2004 started at 4.00 p.m. with the introductory speech of Sri Arthur Hillcoat of Australia who offered Christmas greetings to the huge concourse of devotees and introduced the speakers who were blessed by Bhagavan to address the gathering on this auspicious occasion. The first speaker was Ms. Rita Bruce of the USA, writer, speaker and an ardent devotee of Bhagavan for nearly 30

years. Underlining the importance of the role of the mother in the home, Ms. Bruce said, "Mother is the fabric of the home." Deploing the drastic changes in the role of women in modern times, the learned speaker reminded the women of today their responsibility of moulding the character of their children and inculcating values in them. Beginning his talk with a beautiful prayer, the second speaker, Dr. Keki Mistry of Mumbai, referred to a Discourse of Bhagavan published in "Sanathana Sarathi" (1998) and observed that we should consider God as our old friend. Narrating a personal experience, Dr. Mistry said that Bhagavan cured his cancer which the medical experts considered as incurable.

The last speaker of the programme was Sri John Bedner, Chairman of Sai Organisation of Latin America. Sri John thanked the devotees and Seva Dal volunteers who helped in the decoration and other tasks of the celebrations and expressed his gratitude to Bhagavan for His inspiration and blessings. Referring to an incident of 1979, Sri John narrated how Bhagavan Himself distributed food to thousands of devotees and on enquiry told that that was His duty. This, he said, had a great impact on him and it became a turning point of his life. After these talks, Bhagavan gave His Christmas Message, full text of which has been given elsewhere. After Bhagavan's Discourse, the devotees experienced the joy of singing Bhajans which were led by Institute students. The programme came to a happy conclusion with offer of Arati to Bhagavan at 6.15 p.m.

## **80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS: THE WORK HAS BEGUN**

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**

**Dominican Republic:** A medical camp was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Organisation in the Las Guamas community of the city of Santiago de los Caballeros on 17th October 2004. Held in a Catholic church, the camp saw a total of 577 patients who were provided loving care by a team consisting of 8 doctors, 8 nurses, 2 pharmacists, 12 social workers, 2 nutritionists and 6 volunteers.

**Abu Dhabi:** A medical camp was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Abu Dhabi in the industrial town of Mussafah on 1st October 2004. The clinic was set up in a car workshop belonging to a devotee. Three doctors and several Sai volunteers provided medical care to 77 patients. Blood pressure measurement, glucose monitoring and treatment of minor illnesses was provided in the camp. The loving care provided by the doctors brought joy to the recipients.

**United Kingdom:** On 28th March 2004, the Sathya Sai Service Organisation of UK organised a medical camp at Brent Town Hall in Wembley. 900 people received medical services at the camp, where 75 medical and non-medical volunteers worked harmoniously in a spirit of dedication and compassion. Cabinet Minister and Mayor, Mr. Paul Botang, and two Ministers of Parliament representing Harrow East and Brent attended the opening ceremonies. They were impressed by the use of modern technology in the camp and promised their unstinted support for such future ventures.

**Argentina:** On 27th March 2004, the Sathya Sai Baba Organisation of Argentina organised a medical camp at Villa La Tela in the province of Cordoba. After a tornado, this shanty town in one of the poorest communities of Cordoba faced large-scale destruction, prompting the national government to declare a state of emergency. The army erected six big tents for the different specialities in the Sai medical camp, which served over 1500 patients. The day began with singing of the National Anthem and reading of passages from the Holy Bible. 42 medical professionals and 45 nursing students, along with many volunteers, provided a host of specialised services including paediatrics, dental care, gynaecology, dermatology, phonoaudiology, psychological counselling, ultrasound, screening for cervical cancer, high blood pressure and diabetes. Free medications were dispensed to all patients through the pharmacy.

## **2. Community Service Programmes**

**California (United States):** On 17th July 2004, eight centres of the Sathya Sai Organisation of Northern California participated in a 'Day at the Beach' event for 165 participants with varying degrees of physical impairment and special needs at the Cowell Beach in Santa Cruz. The 'special needs' individuals, including many paraplegics, were treated to a fabulous picnic with a number of scuba, kayaking, surfing, or outrigger canoeing organisations taking them out into the ocean waters and giving them a thrilling experience. Swami's quotes such as "Love Reveals God in All" were easy to spot everywhere and served to gently reiterate the true nature of service. Sai volunteers provided food to approximately 800 people who attended this event. There were touching scenes of people in wheelchairs eager to assist in serving others – truly the spontaneous spirit of 'giving' enveloped one and all.

**Oregon (United States):** Once a month, members of Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Oregon City participate in a Seva at a Correctional institution (prison) near Portland Oregon. This is a releasing facility for inmates with 6 months to 2 years of sentencing still left. Centre members and inmates meet for two hours in a designated room. The sessions start with recitation of three OM's. Each person present in the room is requested to pick a Prema card (cards with quotes from our beloved Swami) and share the quote with all in the room. Following this, each person shares the impact of Swami's words on their life. The members and the inmates have noticed a remarkable thing which happens each time. As these randomly picked cards are read, a common theme is recognised and this has allowed everyone to focus on a particular teaching every month. The inmates are open to deep spiritual discussions and have expressed positive changes in their lives since they joined the class. The session ends with singing of one or two devotional songs (Bhajans) and/or silent meditation. The Centre members feel that it has been a very holy and sacred experience for all, filled with Swami's light and guidance. The Seva is once a month for two hours and has been going on for more than 18 months.

## **3. Public Meetings**

**Canada:** More than seven hundred people attended the public meeting held at the Bloor Street United Church in downtown Toronto on Saturday, 9th October 2004. Spelling out the purpose of the meeting and introducing the other speakers, Dr. Peter Hacker, a Toronto dermatologist, reminded the audience that despite all the material progress humanity is making, turmoil and conflicts around the globe continue to rise. The five universal human values of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence, which form the basis of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings, if put into daily practice

offer hope for resolving the strife around us. An impressive multimedia presentation was shown on Bhagavan Baba's teachings and humanitarian works by Dr. David Gries of Cornell University, where he is currently Associate Dean of Engineering. He described how the uniqueness of the educational institutions established by Bhagavan Baba lies in the academic environment being suffused with pure love and students being moulded in a spirit of sacrifice and service to the community. Dr. Yassin Sankar, Professor of Management in the School of Business Administration at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, stressed how misused and misunderstood the term "ethics" was till Bhagavan shed clear light on the topic and revitalised its significance to solve world problems. Describing Bhagavan as an exemplary educator, Dr. Sankar said that in his entire teaching career, he found Bhagavan Baba as the greatest living expert on ethics and moral education of our times. The presentations were followed by a poignant and powerful short film titled 'His Work'.

**United States:** On 30th October 2004, a public meeting was held on the life and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in the Copley International Conference Centre on the campus of the University of California at San Diego, USA. Colourful flags from many nations hung from the ceiling set the mood for the message of unity in diversity. Nearly 300 people attended the programme which started with welcome remarks by Dr. Samuel Sandweiss, who spoke of Swami's blueprint for bringing peace to the world through love. Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman of the Prasanthi Council gave a moving talk with emphasis on man's divine nature and need to manifest it in daily life. He also described how Swami's humanitarian works promote love in society and bring about inner transformation. Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Member of the Prasanthi Council, spoke of Swami's divine love and the purpose of human existence – to expand in love and share love with fellow human beings. He also spoke of the need to put spiritual teachings into daily practice and to march forward till the goal of life was reached.

The talks were followed by an uplifting film entitled 'His Work' that documented the magnificent and awe-inspiring service programmes inspired by Bhagavan. The free world-class hospitals, schools, water projects, and rural outreach programmes seen in the film are shining examples of how people can be inspired to serve with love, humility and compassion the suffering and the needy community. Many first time visitors were inspired and bought books on Swami. One professor of religion and philosophy who is teaching for the last 25 years at the University shared how she was inspired by the public meeting.

**Guatemala:** Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organisation of Guatemala held its first public meeting on 29th October 2004 at the Hotel Camino Real in Salón Los Lagos. 800 people attended this event. The featured speakers were Dr. Héctor Castaneda from El Salvador and Leonardo Gutter from Argentina, both of whom gave moving and inspiring presentations on the life, teachings and humanitarian works of Bhagavan Baba. The meeting concluded with the screening of the film "His Work".

**Italy:** On 5th December 2004, the Sathya Sai Central Council of Italy hosted a public meeting at the Hotel Serena Majestic in the city of Montesilvano located in the province of Pescara. More than 700 people attended the event. Marco Pesce, President of the Central Council of Italy, welcomed everyone and introduced the speakers. Dr Thorbjörn Meyer, Zonal Chairman and President of the European Sathya Sai Education Institute, spoke about the spiritual transformation achieved through Swami's message and



teachings. Dr. Alberto Caratti, director of cardiology at the San Giuseppe Institute of Asti, reflected on his experiences of working at the Super Speciality Hospital in Puttaparthi for five years and spoke about the impact of Swami's humanitarian projects in alleviating the suffering of millions. The film 'His Work' received spontaneous applause from the audience.

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**

**Andhra Pradesh:** Anantapur district carried out Swami's car festival at Hindupur on 17th November 2004. 750 devotees took part in the function. On this occasion, 22 selected poor families were given food provisions (10 kg rice, 2 kg wheat, 2 kg Dhal, 2 kg Ragi flour, 1 kg sugar, 1 kg jaggery, 1 kg oil, 1 kg tamarind, 1 kg salt and ¼ kg dry chillies) along with new Saris and blouses, Dhotis and towels. This district arranged reception counter at Sri Sathya Sai Prasanthi Nilayam Railway Station on 20th, 21st and 22nd November 2004 to receive devotees coming for Swami's 79th Birthday celebrations. The incoming devotees about 7200 in number were served with coloured rice, curd rice, sweets and snacks on all the three days. On 23rd November 2004, this district distributed sweet Pongal, coloured rice and curd rice to about 7000 devotees, pedestrians and poor people at Puttaparthi near BSNL office. On 13th November 2004, 79 selected poor women were given Saris at Anantapur.

As part of Bhagavan's 79th Birthday celebrations, Visakhapatnam district carried out Narayana Seva for 26,535 people, distributed blankets to 1505 old people, new Saris to 1028 selected poor ladies, new Dhotis to 149 men, new towels to 343 persons and new dresses to 193 poor children. It distributed fruits to 1780 persons and sweets to 8895 people and planted 172 saplings. It gave food provisions to 230 poor families. It conducted a medical camp treating 319 patients and distributed clothes to 50 newly born babies in Victoria Government Women's Hospital, Vizag.

Srikakulam district gave 5 kg of rice, pulses, oil and tamarind (1 kg each), cloth beds, 1 blanket and 2 Saris to each of the 47 fire victim families at Srikakulam. This district conducted medical camps in 8 villages treating 1345 patients. It distributed 821 blankets in the district to selected poor and honoured 21 Veda Pandits as part of Bhagavan's 79th Birthday celebrations. The district conducted Sri Sathya Sai Divya Padhuka Jyothi Ratha Yatra in the entire district covering 452 villages. During the Ratha Yatra, Sri Sathya Sai Vratams were performed, Amruta Kalasams consisting of food provisions were distributed and cultural programmes were carried out.

West Godavari district conducted a medical camp in the rural area of Eluru, treating 935 patients of different ailments and 53 cataract cases. New clothes were given to 79 selected poor people on 23rd November 2004.

Hyderabad district selected 18 critical cases of different ailments from Bejgam village of Medak district and got them operated in different Nursing Homes. The entire cost – transport, laboratory test, food, accommodation, medicines, etc., was borne by the Sai Organisation. This district constructed a school building with all facilities at Dharmavaram Pedda Thanda of Nalgonda district as part of Sri Sathya Sai Gurukula Seva Yajnam. This district gave Saris and Dhotis to 100 people in leper colony in Mallikarjuna Nagar of Hyderabad. It carried out 7-day celebrations at Sivam including

daily Narayana Seva in different asylums and daily cultural programmes from 17th to 23rd November 2004.

Kurnool district carried out medical check-up and Narayana Seva in Bharat Seva Orphanage for 58 people, carried out Narayana Seva for 600 people on 21st November 2004, distributed 79 blankets to poor people on 22nd November 2004, provided food provisions (2 ½ kg rice, ¼ kg Dhal, ¼ kg Bengal gram, 1 kg jaggery) to 252 houses in Nandamuri colony of Nandyal town and distributed clothes to 40 people at Bethamcherla.

**Assam, Manipur and N.E. States:** A two-day Zonal Sai Devotees Meet was organised by the Jorhat Samithi on 9th and 10th October 2004. Participants from many places of upper Assam like Golaghat, Sivasagar, Digboi, Tinsukia, Nagaon, etc., took active part in the deliberations. Various speakers highlighted the need to practise Sri Sathya Sai Educare in day-to-day life. Many organisational aspects were also discussed and guidelines were given by the State President.

Apart from the general upheaval in day-to-day life, parts of Manipur were affected by natural calamities resulting in loss and distress to many villagers in outlying areas. On 22nd August 2004, a team of Sai devotees reached Toribari, a remote village inhabited by Nepali speaking people and offered relief to the victims of severe mud-slide. Assistance including foodstuffs were also given to the villagers of Keithelmanbi, Gopibung and Kalapahar in Senapati district affected by similar disasters.

A State-level conference of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas ex-students was held at the Rotary Club Auditorium, Guwahati with a daylong programme on 15th November 2004. The conference deliberated at length on the importance of Bal Vikas in nation building and also in the day-to-day life of individuals. Ex-students of Bal Vikas paid heartfelt homage to their respective Gurus. The past students narrated how the course helped them when they were at the formative stage of life. To conclude the conference, all the participants took a pledge to radiate the light of knowledge and love to all.

On the occasion of Bhagavan's 79th Birthday, devotees of Imphal organised Narayana Seva which included 85 visually challenged children, 55 hearing and speech impaired children and 12 old destitute women. Warm shawls and sweets were also distributed on this occasion. Participated by a large number of devotees, the function was pervaded with Sai Love. A thrilling experience enlivening the atmosphere of the celebration was the devotional songs presented by the visually challenged children.

**Kerala:** Sri Sathya Sai Deenajanoddharana Projects have been extended to 4 more districts. Now 10 out of 14 districts are having this noble activity. Sai Organisation is taking full care of old people and children in these centres. Sai Neethi (lawyers forum of the Sai Organisation) conducted a two-day camp for lawyers. 47 lawyers participated. Training was given on how to conduct classes on parenting, legal awareness programme, etc. "Sai Neethi" also organised the inauguration of a counselling centre to help the needy.

On 19th December 2004, a one-day camp was organised for Bal Vikas diploma holders. 128 participants attended. It was a very happy occasion for all to come together. The participants narrated how the Bal Vikas programme was helping them in their personal and official activities. Future course of action was also planned.

79th Birthday of our Lord was celebrated all over the State with a variety of programmes on each and every day. 79- hour Bhajan in all districts, one month relay Bhajan, Seva activities, etc., were some of the programmes.

The year 2004 witnessed a unique achievement in the expansion of the Sai Organisation in the State. Under the programme “Mandali” - 2004”, Mandalis were adopted by many Samithis for upgrading them as Samithis in 2004. By this, nearly 30 new Samithis were formed. This will help the Organisation to take Bhagavan’s message to every corner of the State.

**Maharashtra and Goa:** A grand Rath Yatra was organised by Bandra - Khar - Santacruz Samithi of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Mumbai to celebrate 79th year of the Advent of our Beloved Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and to create awareness of the Bal Vikas programmes and other activities of the Sai Organisation. The Rath Yatra started from the Laxmi Narayan Temple, Santacruz (West) at 5.05 p.m. with the melodious chanting of verses from the Vedas by Bal Vikas students. Devotees and Bhajan singers followed the chariot. The youth too participated in large numbers. They distributed pamphlets, highlighting Bal Vikas and other activities of the Sai Organisation. All along the rally, placards and banners of Swami’s sayings were displayed, some of which being in the language of the region. The Rath Yatra proceeded slowly, meandering through the inner residential lanes and finally culminated at Dayavanti Hall, Khar at around 6.30 p.m. with Arati.

## **SRI SATHYA SAI SEVA ORGANISATION, TAMIL NADU RISES TO THE OCCASION**

A major disaster caused by Tsunami struck the coastal belt of Tamil Nadu on 26th December 2004. Nagapattinam was the worst affected area where the massive undersea earthquake caused huge loss of life and property. Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Tamil Nadu swung into action immediately on hearing this tragic news of large-scale destruction. Disaster Management Teams of Sai Youth, Seva Dal volunteers and Sai devotees from Thanjavur, Tiruchi, Salem, Chennai, Kancheepuram and other nearby places reached the affected areas on the same day and helped in rescue and relief work including the removal of dead bodies. They also distributed food materials, clothes, utensils, cooked food, water sachets, bed sheets, etc., in the affected areas. Apart from these items, a large quantity of provisions like bags of rice, pulses, cooking oil, salt, etc., were also distributed to the needy people. All the work was carried out with discipline and dedication while chanting the Divine Name of Sai by all the Sai workers. The work of Disaster Management Teams and Seva Dal volunteers was commended by one and all including the Collector and the police authorities.

As commanded by Bhagavan Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Tamil Nadu is helping the affected people in Andaman and Nicobar Islands also. It immediately sent 477 cartons of relief materials to Port Blair by air on an urgent call from Andaman Sai Samithi.

**Chinna Katha**

# **As the King, so the People**

In ancient times, even the kings of small kingdoms performed their duty of ruling over their subjects with broad-mindedness and a spirit of sacrifice. One such king ruled over his kingdom, considering the welfare of his subjects as his greatest good fortune. He, therefore, took all steps for the welfare and happiness of his subjects. The people of his kingdom considered the king as their own body while the king considered the people as his heart. Such was the intimate relationship of love between the king and his people. The king worked very hard day and night to do the greatest good of his people.

One day, the king asked his queen to apply oil to his hair. In those days, it was not customary to have too many servants. The wife attended to the personal needs of the husband. Accordingly, the queen personally attended to even the smallest needs of the king as part of her sacred duty. She was a queen for the people of the kingdom but for her husband she was a dutiful wife. So, she applied oil to king's hair. While doing so, she noticed a few grey hair on the king's head. She thought that the king had stepped into old age and that God had already sent the first notice to remind the king that his end was drawing near. God sends a second notice in the form of cataract that blurs the vision. Then the teeth start falling one after the other. That is the third notice. The fourth and final notice comes in the form of wrinkles on the face. Lost as she was in these thoughts, tears started trickling down her cheeks. On seeing the queen in tears in the huge mirror in front of which he was sitting, the king asked, "What is the matter? Why are you weeping?" The queen stated the truth. The king smiled and said, "My dear, it is good that you have told me the truth. The body is like a water bubble. Sooner or later it is bound to perish. We should, therefore, hand over the responsibility of the kingdom to our ministers and go to the forest to spend the rest of our life in contemplation of God." Both of them decided that they would leave the kingdom the next day.

The king at once called a meeting of all the ministers and told them of his decision. The news spread like wild fire and all the people came running to the palace. The ministers and the people requested the king not to leave them. They told him that if he left them, they would be as lifeless as a body without the heart. The king tried to convince them about the inevitability of death and how man should prepare himself to meet it, by leading the life of an ascetic in the forest.

The people said, "Oh king, we will go to the forest and pray to Lord Siva to grant you a long life. Until we return, please do not leave the kingdom." The people went to the forest and offered sincere prayers to Lord Siva. When He appeared, they prayed, "Oh Lord! Please grant our king a life-span of a hundred years more." The Lord was pleased with their love and loyalty to the king and granted two hundred years to the king. The people returned with great joy to the palace and informed the king of God's boon. The king was very much pleased.

The queen however got ready to go to the forest and took leave of the king and the people. The people thought that the queen must be angry because they had secured the boon from the Lord only for the king.

The queen went into deep meditation and God did appear before her. The queen questioned the Lord with all humility, "Is it true, oh Lord, that you have granted two hundred years of life to the king?" The Lord said, "Yes". Then the queen asked, "Oh Lord! Of what use is this long life for the king unless the people who love him so much are also granted long life?" The Lord said, "Be it so. I grant long life to your people also."

Not only to your people, I am granting long life to you also, even though you have not asked for it.”

The queen returned and informed the king and the people of God’s blessings and boons. Such was the spirit of sacrifice of the people, of the kings and queens in ancient India.

Back Cover

## **Acquire Self-knowledge**

**Self-knowledge is that knowledge by acquiring which everything else becomes known. A person with self-knowledge can indeed be acclaimed as all-knowing. Secular learning cannot confer on us abiding and absolute peace. Self-knowledge alone can help us cross the sea of sorrow. So, all should strive to attain self-knowledge which can be acquired through purity of mind. And purity of mind can be attained through sacred deeds, charity, compassion and devotion.**

**- Baba**

**FEBRUARY 2005**

**SANKRANTI SANDESH**

## **PURE AND LOVING HEART IS THE SOURCE OF BLISS**

*The sun appears serene and peaceful. The days have become shorter. The sweet festival of Sankranti has come filling our homes with the newly harvested grain.*

**(Telugu Poem)**

THE BHARATIYAS consider Sankranti as one of the most important festivals. In fact, man should consider every day of his life a festival. It is a sign of ignorance to consider some days as festival days and others as ordinary ones. Many people celebrate the festival of Sankranti without actually knowing its significance.

### **Sankranti Brings Joy to all**

It is customary to worship cows and bulls on this day. Richly caparisoned bulls are decorated with a variety of ornaments and taken round the streets. They are called Gangireddhulu (sacred bulls). The person who takes round the decorated bull is called Gangireddudasu. He wears a special dress on this occasion. He performs a symbolic marriage of the bull and the cow to the delight of all. The very sight of Gangireddudasu fascinates children. The elder brother lovingly calls the younger brother to go along with him to see the sacred bull and its master.

*“Oh my dear brother, here comes the Gangireddudasu. Come, let us go and see him. He wears a silver medallion and a waist belt. He carries a decorated staff and wears special marks on his forehead. He brings with him richly caparisoned sacred cow and bull and performs their marriage. Let us see the marriage ceremony and offer our gifts.”* (Telugu Song)

Gangireddudasu calls the cow and the bull as Sita and Rama, respectively. They are trained in such a way that they respond to his questions according to the movement of his hand. He asks the cow, “Oh Sita! Do you like Rama?” As per the training given, the cow shakes its head in disapproval. Then he asks the bull, “Oh Rama! Do you like Sita?” The bull also answers in the negative. In this manner, both of them disagree initially but later on agree for the marriage. Then the Gangireddudasu performs their symbolic marriage. People offer gifts to the Gangireddudasu on this occasion. In this way, the festival of Sankranti bestows immense joy on all including animals and birds. It is a very important festival for farmers also. This is the time when they bring home the newly harvested crop and enjoy the fruits of their hard labour. Thus, right from the farmer to the king, this festival brings joy to all.

Names may vary, but this festival is celebrated by one and all irrespective of religion and nationality. Some name it Sankranti, and others consider it an auspicious time and give other names to it. Not only the Bharatians, even the people of other countries celebrate this festival, but with different names. This is the season when cool winds blow and the farmer brings home the harvested crop. He spends his time in a relaxed manner free from all worries and anxieties. There is a saying in Telugu: One who is free from Chintna (worry) will be able to sleep peacefully even in a Santha (market place). Everyone should make efforts to overcome worries and enjoy everlasting happiness. This is the message of Sankranti. Among all the festivals, the womenfolk accord a special place to this festival. The happiness that one enjoys during this festival is unique. It marks the beginning of the sacred time of Uttarayana (sun’s northward course). It confers bliss on one and all.

Everyone aspires to attain bliss. In fact, that is the very purpose of human life. Life has no meaning if one cannot experience bliss. Bliss is the goal of life.

*Nityanandam, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnanamurtim, Dwandwateetam, Gagana Sadrisham, Tattwamasyadi Lakshyam, Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam* (God is the embodiment of eternal bliss, He is wisdom absolute, beyond the pair of opposites, expansive and pervasive like the sky, the goal indicated by the Mahavakya Tattwamasi, One without a second, eternal, pure, unchanging, witness of all functions of the intellect).

In accordance with the tradition, the newly married sons-in-law visit their in-laws’ house to celebrate this festival. Even those who have not visited their in-laws’ house for a number of years will be eager to go on Sankranti festival.

*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 welcome you with love and affection.*  
(Telugu Song)

The in-laws extend all hospitality to the son-in-law and make him happy. They give him new clothes and serve him delicious food. The entire household is immersed in bliss. But today that spirit of Sankranti celebration is not noticed anywhere. The son-in-law, instead of giving joy to his in-laws, quarrels with them over petty matters.

### **Peace and Bliss are within you**

Man makes efforts to experience happiness. You can find none in this world who does not want to be happy. Happiness is very essential for man. But one must understand that happiness cannot be acquired from outside. It comes from the heart. The heart is the source of bliss. The happiness we enjoy in the external world is only a reaction, reflection and resound of the happiness within. Very few understand this truth. The apparent joy that one experiences is artificial and temporary. Only the happiness that springs from the heart is permanent.

*Students!*

Conduct yourself in a way that does not cause unhappiness to others. Festivals are meant to experience happiness and share it with others. You cannot really experience happiness when others are unhappy. Happiness cannot be purchased in a market nor can it be acquired by worldly means. It should manifest from within. It is not the nature of the Bharatiyas to hurt the feelings of others for their own happiness. You should respect others' feelings and act appropriately. You should share your happiness with your fellowmen. You should welcome the arrival of Pushya Masa (a month in Indian calendar) as the harbinger of change and bounty, and celebrate Sankranti in its true spirit by manifesting your inner joy and sharing it with others. The word 'Kranti' means change. It signifies a change from misery to happiness, from restlessness to peace and from pain to pleasure. Sankranti bestows joy on everyone equally. That is why everyone eagerly awaits the arrival of Sankranti with enthusiasm. Even birds and animals are happy with the arrival of Sankranti. When the farmer brings home the harvested grain, birds partake of them and express their joy by chirping merrily. The neighbours congratulate the farmer on the rich harvest obtained by him as a result of his hard labour.

*Students!*

It is most essential that you understand the significance of every festival and celebrate it in its true spirit. As we do not go deep into their significance, we are unable to enjoy true happiness. True happiness lies in sacrifice and renunciation. Body is the combination of five elements and mind is merely a bundle of thoughts. One should neither be attached to the body nor follow the vagaries of the mind. Drive away the evil qualities of Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsarya (desire, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and jealousy) and manifest your inner peace and bliss. But man today is destroying peace and bliss instead of developing them. He loses his peace even in trivial matters. Neither Asanthi (restlessness) nor Prasanthi (supreme peace) are acquired from outside. People say, "I want peace." Where is peace? Is it present outside? If peace were to be

found outside, people would have bought it by spending any amount of money. But outside, we find only pieces! The real peace is within.

Whether you boil it hard or dilute it with water, milk remains white. White symbolises purity. In the same manner, your heart should always remain pure, bright and peaceful in spite of all trials and tribulations. We should subdue sorrow, keep the evil qualities of anger, hatred and jealousy under check and manifest our innate bliss. What is the cause of anger? You become angry when your desires are not fulfilled. So, man can be happy if he keeps his desires under control.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Everybody wants to be happy. One should be happy even in difficulties. You need not search for happiness outside. It is always with you, in you, around you. You are unable to experience it as you have not understood the true meaning of happiness. You are under the illusion that happiness lies in money, wealth and material comforts. Once you have the taste of true happiness, you will not crave for worldly possessions. True happiness springs forth from the depth of one's heart.

When milk is boiled in a vessel, its level starts rising. But it goes down when you sprinkle a few drops of water on it. It is the association of water which brings its level down. Likewise, man loses his value when he associates himself with bad company. One will always be blissful if one is in good company. You like to spend time with your friends. But you should enquire what type of friends they are and what type of happiness you derive in their company.

### **Happiness is Union with God**

You may or may not be aware; I am always in a state of bliss. I have no worries or difficulties whatsoever. Some people ask, "Swami, do You have any worries?" I do not know what worry is. I have never experienced it. I am always in bliss (*loud applause*). Always think of bliss. Then you will experience bliss wherever you are. The taste of bliss is sweeter than sugar, tastier than curd, sweeter indeed than honey. People feel sad when they are faced with difficulties. Death of their near and dear ones also makes them sad. But I do not feel sad on account of anything whatsoever. Difficulties come and go like passing clouds. Happiness and sorrow follow one another. When you constantly think of bliss, there will be no scope for sorrow.

*Embodiments of Love!*

There is love in each one of you, but you are directing it towards worldly relationships. You have not tasted true love. Love God wholeheartedly. That is true love. People may come and people may go, but God neither comes nor goes. He is always present. When you are engulfed in sorrow, think of happiness. Then and there, you will experience happiness.

Bliss is very much immanent in every human being. Wherever we are, whatever be the position we occupy, our essential nature is bliss. People ask Me sometimes, "Swami! Did You ever experience sorrow?" I am amused at this question. In fact, why should I experience sorrow? Should I feel sorry about the body? Not necessary. This body is always healthy and active. The human mind is fickle by nature. Body is like a water bubble; mind is like a mad monkey. Don't follow the mind; don't follow the body. After all, why should one feel sorry about the body and mind which are transient? In fact, bliss is our essential nature which is permanent. Lead your life filled with love. Cultivate love. You can experience bliss when you develop love.

*Start the day with love;*



*Fill the day with love;  
End the day with love;  
That is the way to God.*

If you can achieve this, you will not be disturbed by sorrows and difficulties. The heart is the seat of bliss. True bliss flows from a pure and loving heart. Try to experience such bliss. All other forms of happiness are momentary.

*Embodiments of Love!*

You must have observed that small children are always happy and cheerful. They do not have any inhibitions. When somebody smiles at them, they will also smile innocently and make everybody happy. Their happiness is not ordinary happiness that comes and goes. It is that which is inherent in all human beings as their natural quality. It does not come from outside. It is something that comes from within. It is God's gift to man. Happiness is union with God. You experience real happiness when you unify with God. You cannot experience it when you are separated from Him.

You have to experience such bliss in abundance in the days to come. Let Me remind you once again that neither age nor position nor for that matter anything in this physical environment can bring about such bliss. It is only the pure and loving heart that is the source of bliss. The holy festival of Sankranti signifies change. It implies transformation of the heart. It is experiencing bliss arising out of the realisation of the changeless, eternal principle. Divinity is the only principle that is changeless. God is ever blissful. In fact, He is the embodiment of bliss. For example, this is a white cloth. It is only when it is dyed, it acquires some colour. Your essential nature is bliss. Sadness is of your own making. If you are experiencing sorrow, it is because you have immersed yourself in sorrow. Wherever you are, you must always be happy and blissful. Many people wish Me, "Swami! Happy Birthday!" Is happiness limited to a particular day for celebrating one's birthday? I am always happy (*loud applause*). Expressions like "Happy Birthday" are mere clichés. In fact, bliss is our true nature. We camouflage our true nature with artificial expressions and consider it real happiness. This is not proper.

**Evil Ways of Man Cause Natural Calamities**

*Embodiments of Love!*

You are all full of love. In fact, your hearts are overflowing with love. But you prevent your love from flowing in its natural course. Otherwise, love has no barriers and boundaries at all! Constantly contemplate on God. Then you will experience all-encompassing happiness at all levels – physical, mental and spiritual. Unfortunately, people today are losing their divine quality of happiness due to excessive desires. You can be happy when you get rid of your desires. For example, this is a white cloth. Whiteness is its nature. But it will become dirty when it is exposed to dirt. Similarly, your heart is always pure, bright and blissful. But it gets polluted due to excessive desires. Therefore, cultivate love and keep your heart always pure. Then you will be blissful every moment of your life. But you have forgotten your innate nature of bliss and are always immersed in sorrow and unhappiness. When someone enquires, "How are you?", say confidently, "I am very happy." It is possible that you may encounter some ups and downs in life. But they should not mar your blissful nature. See how blissful I am! Not only now, I am always in bliss. In fact, you can also experience this bliss when you come to Me. But if you come with

evil thoughts and desires, you cannot experience it. These are your weaknesses. Do away with these weaknesses which can bring about your ruin.

*Students – Boys and Girls!*

Do not become a victim of worry. Suppose you fail in an examination; do not worry about it. Rather, you should understand the reason for your failure; perhaps you did not write the examination well or you were not sufficiently prepared for it. But never get depressed and dejected that you have failed in the examination. Similarly, you should enquire within yourself the reason for your sorrow. You will realise that your own thoughts are responsible for it. If you give proper direction to your thoughts, you can always be happy. Sorrows and worries are like passing clouds. Never give importance to them. Always be happy and peaceful. Peace and happiness are your innate qualities.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Today is the holy festival of Sankranti. In fact, this year is more important than the previous years. Last month, the tsunami caused untold misery and suffering to a large number of people. It is only man's evil deeds that are responsible for such a calamity. Therefore, never indulge in wrong actions and evil deeds. It is possible that compared to last year more troubles may occur during this year. However, we should face all problems with courage and fortitude. These are all passing clouds and you need not be perturbed by these occurrences. Be bold and courageous to face them. It is man who is responsible for the calamity caused by the tsunami, and not God. But man thinks that all such calamities are thrust upon him by God. Never! God always provides happiness to man. He has no anger or hatred. His nature is love. The question arises as to why sorrows and difficulties occur in the world. Strictly speaking, happiness will not have any value without sorrow. Man cannot experience happiness without undergoing some difficulty or the other. Both happiness and sorrow are interlinked. One cannot exist without the other.

*Pleasure and pain, good and bad coexist, none can separate them. You cannot find pleasure or pain, good or bad to the exclusion of the other. Pleasure results when difficulties fructify.*  
(Telugu Poem)

God does not cause suffering to any living being in His creation. All sorrows and difficulties are of your own making. God is the protector of all living beings. He provides peace and happiness to one and all. *Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all the people of the world be happy!). This is the Will of God. How then can God cause sorrow to a human being? Unable to understand this truth, you blame God for your suffering. When you develop correct understanding, you will realise that everything is for your good only. Then you will be immersed in bliss day and night. Treasure this bliss in your heart and share it with one and all. Then you will be all the more blissful.

### **Transform your Heart and Attain Bliss**

*Embodiments of Love!*

This Sankranti is Prema Sankranti and Ananda Sankranti. It is a magnificent one. Hence, welcome it wholeheartedly and experience bliss (*loud applause*). God is the embodiment of bliss. Do not extol God with appellations like Karunanidhi (treasure of compassion) and Premaswarupa (embodiment of love). It is enough if you pray to Him earnestly for the share of His bliss. God is

always blissful. Do not pray to God for any other thing. Just pray, “Oh! God! Share Your bliss with me. Make me blissful!” Never deride God as “Nirdaya” (one without compassion). He is most compassionate. Whatever God does is for our own good. Even the sorrows and difficulties we experience are for our own good. They are preludes to happiness and bliss. If you cultivate such positive outlook, you will always be blissful. Share your happiness with all. Contrary to this, man today is keeping happiness to himself and distributing sorrow to others. This is not what we should do. Overcome your sorrow and manifest inner joy – this is the spiritual Sadhana one has to undertake. What is true spiritual practice? True spiritual practice is to rise above our sorrows and difficulties. When you constantly think that you are endowed with peace and bliss, no difficulties will bother you.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Today is Sankranti. Sankranti signifies change. Let this Sankranti bring about a transformation in your heart so that you may always lead a happy, prosperous and glorious life. Think of all those good things that have happened in your life. Then you will be happy and blissful. Bliss is, in fact, your very nature. Real humanness lies in rising from Manavatva (humanness) to Daivatva (divinity).

#### *Students!*

The dramas that you have enacted and music concerts you have presented here are all very good. Everything is good. Where does bad lie? If you analyse properly, you will find that it lies in your mind. Bliss is the real food of man. One should always be hungry to partake of that food of bliss. Try to remain in a state of bliss at all times. You should be blissful even at the time of your examinations. Various events come and go. But you should have determination to remain blissful. Let your faith in God be firm and unshakeable. It is only God’s love that is eternal. If you attain God’s love, happiness will automatically come to you.

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

– **From Bhagavan’s Sankranti Sandesh in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 14th January 2005.**

Bhakti is the state of mind, in which one has no separate existence apart from God. The Bhakta’s very breath is God. Like the fish, which can live only in water, man can live only in God, in peace and happiness. In other media, he has only fear, frantic struggle and failure.

## **CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM**

### **Krishnam Vande Jagadgurum: A Musical Ballet**

This beautiful musical ballet was presented by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar, Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the afternoon of 6th January 2005 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Based on the enchanting

theme of Bal Leela (childhood divine play) of Lord Krishna, this was a superb presentation from all accounts, be it music, choreography, acting, direction, lyrics. Particularly, the students who enacted the roles of Yashoda and Krishna beautifully portrayed the purest and tenderest feelings of love between the mother and the child. Obviously pleased with the performance of the children, Bhagavan Baba blessed the children at the conclusion of the play and gave them the precious opportunity of group photo with Him. Bhagavan also materialised a gold chain for the student who played the role of child Krishna. The programme which started after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan at 3.15 p.m. came to a close at 4.00 p.m. with a beautiful group song describing the divine play and glory of Kali Yuga Avatar, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. In the end, Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees.

#### **Sai Sankranti: A Musical Ballet**

On the eve of the holy festival of Sankranti, Bal Vikas students of Andhra Pradesh (Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Guntur and Krishna districts) presented an excellent musical ballet entitled "Sai Sankranti" in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the afternoon of 12th January 2005 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. In this well-planned and well-directed dance drama, religious, social and spiritual significance of Sankranti and the traditional values associated with this festival of plenty, peace and joy were brought forth through meticulously selected songs and dances enchantingly enacted by the children. The dance drama which began with invocation to Lord Ganesh at 3.30 p.m. came to a happy conclusion at 4.20 p.m. with a very befitting group dance and song in praise of the sacred land of Bharat and Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who is imparting priceless teachings to children through the great spiritual movement of Bal Vikas.

#### **Annamacharya: A Drama**

The students of Brindavan Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning presented a very beautiful and inspiring drama entitled "Annamacharya" in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the afternoon of 13th January 2005. Based on the lofty theme of Bhakti, the drama excellently portrayed the life story of Annamacharya, popularly known as Annamayya, whose devotion and yearning for Lord Venkateswara was so intense that the Lord Himself manifested before him to listen to his sweet Kirtans. The drama which superbly picturised the power of Bhakti of this great Kirtanacharya presented some of his choicest Kirtans to the delight of devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall. Superb acting of the students, powerful dialogues, sweet songs, appropriate costumes and exquisitely beautiful sets made this drama one of the most perfect presentations ever made in Sai Kulwant Hall. The drama which began after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan at 3.45 p.m. came to a close at 5.00 p.m. with a beautiful group song. Bhagavan sat through the entire presentation and blessed the students at the end of the drama. He also gave them the coveted opportunity of group photo with Him. The programme concluded with offer of Arati to Bhagavan.

#### **Sai Bhagavatam: A Drama**

The students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Prasanthi Nilayam presented an excellent drama entitled "Sai Bhagavatam" on 14th January 2005 in Poornachandra Auditorium. The drama unfolded the saga of Kali Yuga Avatar, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, depicted His Divine glory and expounded His main teachings in a very impressive manner. Beginning with the prayer of Mother Earth to the Lord to re-establish Dharma in the world, all the main events of the Shirdi Sai Avatar and Sathya Sai Avatar were beautifully presented by the students through appropriate dialogues, excellent acting and beautiful songs and dances. Effective use of video clippings to illustrate the various events added beauty and charm to the entire presentation. The drama which began at 5.45 p.m. after the

arrival of Bhagavan Baba in the Poornachandra Auditorium came to a close at 7.00 p.m. with offer of Mangalarati to Bhagavan. Bhagavan witnessed the entire drama and showered His blessings on the students at the end of the drama.

#### **People of Anantapur District Express their Gratitude to Bhagavan**

Thousands of people from Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh came to Prasanthi Nilayam on 28th January 2005 to express their gratitude to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for promoting all-round development of this drought-prone district of Andhra Pradesh by setting up educational institutions and hospitals and by starting social welfare projects like Sri Sathya Sai Water Project, Sri Sathya Sai Deenajanoddharana Pathakam and Grama Seva for the uplift of the masses.

On this occasion, the Sai Organisation of this district organised a function in Sai Kulwant Hall on the morning of 28th January 2005 to distribute wet grinders and sewing machines to 80 needy persons, both ladies and gents, to enable them to earn their livelihood through self-employment. The function was a part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan. Bhagavan graced the occasion by His Divine Presence and distributed these items to the beneficiaries. They came one by one in an orderly manner as their names were announced, offered their Pranams to Bhagavan and received His tokens of love with humility and gratitude. This simple and solemn function came to a close at 8.40 a.m. This was followed by Bhajans which were also led by the devotees of Anantapur district. The morning programme concluded at 9.15 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

#### **Anantha Varadayee Sri Sathya Sai: A Dance Drama**

In the afternoon, the Bal Vikas children of Anantapur district presented a dance drama entitled “Anantha Varadayee Sri Sathya Sai” in Sai Kulwant Hall. The drama showed how Bhagavan immensely helped the people of this district by setting up a number of educational institutions where best quality education was provided without any charge. Similarly, super speciality and other hospitals set up by Bhagavan provided free medicare. But the greatest boon of Bhagavan to this district was Sri Sathya Sai Water Supply Project which had quenched the thirst of the people and the land of this area. Aided by appropriate commentary, sweet songs, charming dances of the children and extraordinarily beautiful backdrops of the scenes, the dance drama realistically depicted all the educational, medical and social welfare projects undertaken by Bhagavan to better the lot of the masses of this district. At the end of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the children and posed for photographs with them. He also materialised a gold ring with a diamond for one of the organisers of this programme. A beautiful musical offering of devotional songs was thereafter made by the ladies devotees of this district. The programme came to a happy conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 4.55 p.m.

#### **Thyagaraja Aradhana Festival at Prasanthi Nilayam**

In a function held in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 30th January 2005 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the students and staff of Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music paid homage to Thyagaraja, the saint composer of Carnatic music, by singing his Pancharatna Kritis and other famous compositions. The programme began soon after Bhagavan occupied His chair on the dais which was adorned with a beautiful painting of Thyagaraja and the idol of his chosen deity, Lord Rama. This magnificently enthralling programme of sacred music was verily a feast for the soul. The audience were overwhelmed and applauded time and again in appreciation of beautiful rendering of divine compositions of this great composer and musician. The programme which began at 7.25 a.m. kept the audience spellbound for nearly one and a half hours and came to a close at 9.00

a.m. This was followed by Bhajans. In the end, Arati was offered to Bhagavan and Prasadam was distributed to all.

## **Annual Sports and Cultural Meet 2005 of SSSIHL AN OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE**

The Annual Sports and Cultural Meet 2005 of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning was held in the Hill View Stadium, Prasanthi Nilayam on 11th January 2005 in the Divine Presence of the Revered Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Spread over two sessions, one in the morning and the other in the evening, the sports and cultural events displayed the courage, skill and spirit of adventure of the students of the three campuses of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at Prasanthi Nilayam, Brindavan and Anantapur as also the students of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music and Sri Sathya Sai Deenajanoddharana Pathakam school, Prasanthi Nilayam. This year's sports and cultural meet had a special significance as it was the first big event of 80th Birthday celebrations of the Institute's Revered Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba. True to the spirit of the occasion, the students and staff of the Institute put their heart and soul into all the events of the Sports and Cultural Meet to make it one of the most outstanding performances ever made in the Hill View Stadium.

Even before dawn, the Stadium was filled to its capacity with spectators who thronged the venue of the Sports Meet since early morning to witness this grand annual event of the Institute. Vedic chants which started at 7.00 a.m. filled the entire milieu with sacred vibrations. Meanwhile, the students who were to take part in various events took their slots in the ground, giving the entire area the look of a colourful flowerbed.

### **Inauguration and March Past**

The Revered Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was welcomed by the band of Anantapur Campus when He majestically entered the Stadium in a sparkling white robe at 7.35 a.m. He was led to the Santhi Vedika in a grand procession comprising Sai Geeta (Bhagavan's beloved elephant), motorbike riders squad, brass band of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus, slow marching squad of captains of various teams and the squad of horse riders of Brindavan Campus. Prasanthi Nilayam Campus band innovatively played popular Bhajans to the beat of this slow march. On reaching Santhi Vedika, Bhagavan was offered a hearty welcome by the Vice Chancellor and the senior staff members of the Institute.

Bhagavan inaugurated the Sports and Cultural Meet at 7.50 a.m. by lighting the sacred lamp amidst a thunderous applause of the spectators and students. Soon after the inauguration, March Past began, headed by Primary School students in their colourful shining dresses. Marching in perfect coordination and harmony, they looked like hundreds of multicoloured roses blossoming with joy and happiness in the divine garden of their Beloved Bhagavan. Then followed the marching squads of Institute's Anantapur Campus, Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music, Brindavan Campus and Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute. A special squad of athletes of the Institute formed the rear of the March Past. All these contingents marched in perfect

order to the tunes of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus band and offered respectful salutes to their Revered Chancellor.

### **Spectacular Show of Courage and Confidence by Anantapur Campus Students**

The sports events began after the ceremonies of flag hoisting, administration of the pledge to the participants, lighting of the sports urn at the hilltop by the mascot Garuda and release of peace doves and balloons. First to display their events were the students of Anantapur Campus of the Institute. Their presentation was titled “*Dharma Margame Sai Margamu*” (the path of Dharma is the path of Sai). They had a fine mix of several items: martial arts, sword fighting, fencing and cultural items. They concluded with stunts on motorbikes. The stunts on bikes included criss-crosses, ramp jumps, human ramp jump, daring jumps through fire and several formations on the bikes. The highlight of the show was the bike jump over a human ramp of 16 girls lying next to each other! It was a spectacular display of courage, adventure and skill. Swami’s first campus proved beyond doubt, and not for the first time, that Mother Easwaramma’s dream of women’s education had yielded spectacular results.

After this came the children from Deenajanoddharana Pathakam on a motorised pageant which was parked right opposite the dais. Their presentation portrayed the teachings of Bhagavan through a series of magic tricks, and the accompanying song and commentary.

### **Display of Grit and Grandeur by Brindavan Campus Students**

Meanwhile, a microlight aircraft flew across the light blue sky with a long banner trailing behind, bearing the writing: “Happy 80th Birthday”. With this, the Brindavan Campus made its lofty entry. The Brindavan Campus presentation was titled “A Journey from I to we.... And we to He”. It was a display of beauty and symmetry taken to great heights by the spirit of adventure nurtured on the bedrock of faith and surrender. Celestial rhythms was a breathtaking display of grit and grandeur on a metal grid suspended at an awesome height of 80 feet. Students dressed in bright contrast colours formed several attractive patterns high above: the most striking of them was a beautiful pattern of SAI and 80, hailing the 80th year of the Advent of Avatar, Bhagavan Baba. Another breathtakingly adventurous event was reverse bungee jump presented by the Brindavan Campus students in the afternoon. In this event, a student is tied to the end of a rope at ground level and then flung up high in the sky at great speed with the help of a crane. The students who performed this event must be having nerves of steel!

### **Delightful Dances by Primary School Students**

In the afternoon, Bhagavan came to the Stadium at 2.50 p.m. The programme began with the presentation of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Prasanthi Nilayam. The theme was: *Ekoham Bahusyam* (I am one; I became many). They started their presentation with a Siva Tandava dance. The events that followed were a grand mix of bright colours, dances, gymnastics and beautiful formations. Suddenly different colours would spring up from nowhere and various objects would emerge from their hidden places, making the dances so thrilling and exciting - giving delight to one and all! They filled the milieu with patriotic fervour by their last presentation entitled “Vande Mataram”. Dancing to the tune of a Telugu song, they made a beautiful formation of the map of India.

### **Grand Presentation by Prasanthi Nilayam Students**

The presentation of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus began with a beautiful Siva Parvati dance on a 6-feet stage, in front of the massive 22-feet golden Nataraja. The next event by the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus students was carabining, which comprised sliding on ropes suspended from the stadium hill

and held tight on the ground. While sliding down from a height of 80 feet, the students performed various stunts at tremendous speed, e.g., yoga postures, cycling, carton crash, tent pegging, etc. All through this adventurous display, the spectators held their breath in awe, and marvelled at the courage of the students. The next event was a delightful display of gymnastics and skill. The students used the trampoline to perform various somersaults. The highlight of this programme was a sequence where the students tried to dunk basketballs into a loop after performing a complex trampoline jump / somersault. Simple yet so catchy! All were gripped with attention and sat at the edge of their seats waiting for the gymnasts to score a basket!

This was followed by stunts on German wheels by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam. Six pairs of boys took turns to perform various stunts on top of these wheels. Precariously manoeuvring themselves on the wheels, they left the spectators in awe and wonder! Another event by the school students was the martial art of stick fighting. It was a synchronous set of moves which was followed by a mock fight. The school students also presented gymnastics and a rhythmic dance making beautiful wave formations.

Gun Drill was another great attraction of the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus. It was an army drill performed for the first time in India by non-army personnel. The drill focused on perfect synchronisation as the students performed various movements with their guns. As they made their movements one after the other in rapid succession, a lovely wave effect was produced which was very well appreciated.

Another breathtakingly beautiful event of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus students was U-ramp stunts on roller blades and skateboards. The U-ramp measuring 24 feet by 10 feet was designed and fabricated by the maintenance crew in record time! The highlights of this programme were a 16-foot drop into the ramp, a front somersault and a stupendous leap over a Maruti van off a ramp. The jump was fantastic and drew applause from Bhagavan Himself!

The Annual Sports and Cultural Meet 2005 came to a close at 5.10 p.m. with this grand display of magnificent sports and cultural events. As the closing ceremony song was played, everybody was filled with a sense of joy and fulfilment at the high level of performance of almost all the events. The Annual Sports and Cultural Meet of the Institute is always a great learning experience. The inspiration and guidance provided by the Revered Chancellor of the Institute builds an enormous amount of self-confidence in the participants, on the basis of which they can achieve higher goals of self-sacrifice and self-realisation in life.

### **Sankranti and Prize Distribution**

The prize distribution function of Annual Sports and Cultural Meet 2005 of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning was held on the sacred day of Sankranti on 14th January 2005 in the Divine Presence of the Revered Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Baba.

On the morning of 14th January 2005, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall in a grand procession comprising the Anantapur Campus band, flag bearers squad of captains of sports teams and the brass band of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute. After showering the bliss of His Divine Darshan on the huge gathering of devotees and students in Sai Kulwant Hall, Bhagavan came to the beautifully decorated dais and inaugurated the programme by lighting the sacred lamp. The programme started with chanting of Vedic Mantras by a group of Institute students. After the sacred Vedic chants, Sri Sanjay Sahni, Principal, Brindavan Campus of the Institute addressed the gathering and expressed



gratitude to Bhagavan for His Divine Presence and loving benedictions which inspired all the participants throughout the preparation and presentation of sports and cultural events.

After this, the Vice Chancellor of the Institute, Sri S.V. Giri shared his thoughts with the audience. Sri Giri observed that this year's valedictory function of Sports and Cultural Meet assumed added significance as it was the first mega function in the first month of 80th Birthday celebrations of the Revered Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Mentioning some of the exquisitely beautiful and most adventurous events of the recently held Sports and Cultural Meet, Sri Giri felt that these events showed the highest concentration of mind of the participants which they achieved under the direct guidance of Bhagavan. This, he said, was the message of Sankranti which signified transformation of the mind.

Two student speakers were blessed by Bhagavan to speak on this occasion. The first speaker was Kumari Tina Thomas, a 1st year student of M.A. (English literature) of Anantapur Campus of the Institute. Narrating her experiences of Sports and Cultural Meet, Kumari Tina Thomas observed that students could fearlessly perform mind-boggling daring events because they felt that Bhagavan Baba was always protecting them. The second student speaker, Sri Arvind Balasubramanya of II M.Sc. (chemistry) remarked that all the students of the Institute were fired with only one thought while undertaking any activity, that is, to please their Beloved Swami. Sri Arvind felt that man's only objective of life was to love God and live for Him. At the end of his speech, Sri Arvind received special blessings of Bhagavan who materialised a gold chain with a locket for him.

After this, prize distribution function was held. A large number of prizes were blessed by Bhagavan for distribution to the winners of the various sports and cultural events. Big trophies were awarded to Institute's three institutions at Prasanthi Nilayam, Brindavan and Anantapur as also to Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music and Sri Sathya Sai Deenajanoddharana Pathakam school. After prize distribution, Bhagavan gave His Divine Discourse, the full text of which has been given elsewhere in this issue. In the end, Prasadam was distributed to all. The function came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 10.20 a.m.

## GANESH CHATURTHI DISCOURSE

# CONSIDER YOUR PARENTS AS YOUR PRESIDING DEITIES

*The moon illumines the world at night,*

*And the sun during the day.*

*Righteousness illumines the three worlds,*

*And a noble son illumines his entire clan.*

*Embodiments of Love!*

VINAYAKA is a virtuous son. He is the repository of Jnana (knowledge), Vijnana (wisdom), Sujnana (discrimination) and Prajnana (constant integrated awareness). Every individual has a Guru. But Vinayaka has no Guru. He is the Guru of Gurus and the leader of leaders. He is befittingly called Vinayaka since he has no Nayaka (leader) above him.

**Make Vinayaka as your Role Model**

When a Puja (ritualistic worship) is undertaken, it is customary to first worship Vinayaka to invoke his blessings for its successful completion. When a literary or musical work is undertaken, blessings of Vinayaka are first prayed for. When you thus pray to Vinayaka and seek his blessings, all your tasks will meet with success. Vinayaka has the head and trunk of an elephant. The elephant is associated with the qualities of intelligence and discrimination. It always exercises discrimination before proceeding on its path. Similarly, Vinayaka makes use of discrimination in all the endeavours undertaken by him. Ganapati means master of Buddhi and Vijnana (intellect and wisdom), the letters 'ga' and 'na' in his name denoting these qualities, respectively. People today forget the underlying meaning in the name Ganapati and engage themselves in mere rituals. You may not perform any rituals but never give up worshipping Vinayaka. Especially, it is the foremost duty of the students to follow Vinayaka, considering him as their ideal. None can excel Vinayaka in virtues; he is unparalleled and one without a second. When you make Vinayaka your ideal and pursue your studies, you will be able to master all branches of knowledge. Vinayaka has a big belly, which connotes his enormous Jnana (wisdom). That wisdom is his power. We should worship Vinayaka who is the master of vast powers. No one can comprehend the true nature of Lord Vinayaka fully.

Vinayaka is the leader of one and all. He is the divine father and mother to everybody in accordance with the prayer *Twameva Mathascha Pitha Twameva ,Twameva Bandhuscha Sakha Twameva ,Twameva Vidya Dravinam Twameva* (you alone are the father and mother, friend and relation, wisdom and wealth). None can equal Vinayaka in terms of wisdom and prowess in this world. People are unable to recognise the true nature of such a divine leader. They are prepared to accept ordinary mortals as leaders. But they forget Vinayaka who has matchless qualities of leadership.

Today is Vinayaka Chaturthi. It is celebrated as the birthday of Vinayaka. But how can you identify a particular day as the birthday of one who has created the entire universe? In fact, he has no birth at all. All forms of knowledge have originated from Vinayaka. All the Vedas, Itihasas and Puranas are the result of the Sankalpa (Will) of Vinayaka.

**God has no Trace of Anger in Him**

*Embodiments of Love!*

Vinayaka is the embodiment of love. He does not know what anger is. Where there is love, bad qualities like anger, passion, conceit, etc., cannot gain entry. You might have seen the face of Vinayaka. Does his face ever reflect anger? No. It always bears a smile. Here is a small example. On the way to Kodaikanal, there is a Kshetra (place of pilgrimage). The presiding deity of this Kshetra is Vinayaka. Though Vinayaka is worshipped in such Kshetras, he is present everywhere at all periods of time. In order to visualise God, people attribute a particular place as the birthplace of God and consider it as a Kshetra. But no single place can be ascribed as the birthplace of God. How can any

place be attributed to God when He pervades everything in the universe? God will manifest at the place where people give up their bad qualities and sincerely pray to Him with devotion. He is Gunatheetha (beyond attributes). He is *Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathanam Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam* (God is attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness).

God may appear to be angry at times. But that is not real anger. In order to put the devotees on the right path, He pretends to be angry. If He does not pretend so, there is no chance for the devotees to reform themselves. His show of anger is just a drama. God has no trace of anger in Him. When you commit mistakes or tread the wrong path, you are afraid that God will be angry with you. But God only pretends to be angry on such occasions so that you become aware of your own faults and deficiencies. For example, when Swami keeps Himself away from you, you feel very sad and think that Swami is not talking to you because He is angry with you. In fact, Swami does not know what anger is (*loud applause*). He is the embodiment of love. He is full of love. However, on some rare occasions when He speaks harshly, it might be misconstrued that He is angry. This is quite natural even in our day-to-day life. When you call somebody, "Son! Please come here," it sounds that you are calling him with love. But if the same words are uttered with a raised voice (in an angry tone), it looks as though you are angry. Therefore, all these are variations in expression and nothing else. The same was the case with Sage Durvasa, whose expressions revealed anger. But, in fact, Sage Durvasa had no anger at all though people consider Durvasa as the other name of anger!

During the Mahabharata war, Aswatthama, the son of Dronacharya, took a terrible vow to annihilate all the Pandavas. Having come to know of this, Draupadi prayed to Krishna to save the Pandavas. The Leelas of the Lord are not only wonderful but also mysterious. God enacts dramas and even changes the scenes in His play for the welfare and safety of His devotees. In this instance, the Lord saved the Pandavas with a delicate touch that He alone is capable of. He went to Sage Durvasa who was immensely delighted to receive Him. The sage asked, "Lord, what brings You to my humble Ashram?" Krishna smiled and said, "I have a small job for you." The sage was happy and said, "I am at Your service. You just have to command." Krishna then said, "Good! Tonight you have to save the Pandavas." Durvasa was puzzled and asked, "Lord, it is You who protect everything in this creation. Who am I to do that job?" Krishna replied, "That is a different matter. But for this job, you will be My instrument. I extend protection in many different ways. On this occasion, you have to do something specific as per My instructions." Durvasa wanted to know what it was and Krishna continued, "Dig a pit, ask the Pandavas to hide themselves in it, cover it with planks, grass and mud, and then take your seat on the platform so prepared. The enemies of the Pandavas may come and ask you about their whereabouts. They may say, "You know the past, present and future. Please tell us where the Pandavas are hiding." Durvasa intervened and said, "Lord, I cannot tell a lie." Krishna countered, "Did I ask you to utter falsehood? I am Myself the embodiment of truth, and I will always ask you to speak only the truth. However, you are at liberty to change your tone suitably to achieve the desired result. I am sure you understand." The sage nodded and smiled.

Some time later, when the Pandavas were hiding in the pit, Aswatthama came there, exactly as Krishna had foretold. Durvasa was sitting with his eyes closed. Bowing to the sage, Aswatthama enquired in a most humble manner about the whereabouts of the Pandavas. Durvasa slowly opened his eyes, which were red like a flame. Angrily he roared, "Yes, the Pandavas are here, right below me."

Aswatthama was frightened because the sage was well known for his bad temper and his propensity to curse those who made him angry. Promptly, he fled from the scene and the Pandavas were duly saved.

Since time immemorial, the sages and saints, Yogis and Jnanis have been providing Rakshana (protection) and Sikshana (teaching) to people by various means. Sage Durvasa did so by changing his tone. Ignorant people identify him as one of anger in spite of knowing that he was a great Tapasvin (one who performs penance). But people who are able to understand the real intention behind his apparent anger realise the truth. God has no trace of anger in Him. One with anger cannot be God. God changes His tone only to give protection to His devotees. No sage, no Tapasvin will have anger either.

### **Always Obey the Command of your Parents**

Once Mother Parvati and Easwara asked Vinayaka and his younger brother Subrahmanya to go round the world. They told them that whoever came first in this race would be given a Phala (fruit) as reward. The place where this episode took place is called Palani in the State of Tamil Nadu. That is how this place got its name. The younger brother Subrahmanya immediately mounted his vehicle peacock to fly round the world. But Vinayaka did not move and stayed where he was. Easwara then enquired, "My dear son! Why have you not started on your journey round the world?" Vinayaka smiled and replied "Oh Father! I need not go anywhere. Everything is present here. The fruit of all my journey round the world is right in front of me." So saying, Vinayakamadeva Pradakshina (circumambulation) round His father and mother (Lord Easwara and Mother Parvati) and sat down calmly. He claimed victory in the race. Meanwhile, Subrahmanya came there after completing his journey round the world. He was very much tired and reported to his father about his successful completion of the task. Lord Easwara then declared Vinayaka as the winner in the race and gave the reward to him. The underlying meaning of this story is that the parents are greater than the whole world. It is enough if one does their Pradakshina in reverence. That would be tantamount to the Punya (merit) acquired by visiting all the holy places in the world. Without the parents, there can be no children at all! If children are to be virtuous, it is the parents who have to take care of their upbringing. They are responsible for the success of their children in all endeavours.

It is a common practice for students to visit temples during examinations and pray for success. They offer coconuts in temples with the pocket money given by their parents. These are all external practices, which have little to do with sincere devotion. If you really wish to achieve success in all your endeavours, it is enough if you please your parents and obtain their blessings. If they are satisfied, you are sure to succeed. In order to drive home the point that children should strive to please and satisfy their parents, Lord Easwara and Mother Parvati arranged the competition of going round the world for Vinayaka and Subrahmanya. If you want to obtain the grace of God, it is enough if you obey the command of your parents lovingly. There is no god greater than parents. They are your presiding deities. They have struggled hard in several ways to bring you up. They made a lot of sacrifice, so that you may achieve progress in life. No parent would ever be inconsiderate towards the needs of his children. At times, they may appear to be angry and may even punish you but that is only outward show. In their heart of hearts, they have abundant love for you. Even if they pretend to be angry, it is for your own good. The stream of infinite love ever flows in their hearts. You are nourished by their limitless love. Here is a small example. When a child does some mischief, its mother beats him. But, how? The beating merely produces sound but does not cause any pain to the child. Her anger is born out of love only. On certain occasions, your parents may show anger but it is

only temporary. It is never permanent. You may think that your parents are angry with you. But that is your own misunderstanding; you may not be able to recognise their love, which is lying hidden. Even if they show anger and say “chee” (an expression in Telugu to indicate one’s displeasure), it is only out of love. Students should, therefore, try to understand the real nature of their parents.

In fact, one’s anger is one’s own enemy, and happiness, heaven. One should always be happy. A person with anger and irritable temperament can never achieve anything. Vinayaka is one who always obeyed his parents’ command. That is why it is said that there is no leader above him. Students sometimes ask for money from their parents to go to cinema. When parents refuse, they think that the parents are angry. These are trivial issues. The parents, especially the mother, will be even ready to sacrifice her life in order to save her children in times of danger. Unfortunately, today there are sons who even go to the court of law against their mothers. It is, therefore, essential that they change their attitude towards their parents and realise that they are verily embodiments of love. Any number of diversions or silly thoughts may arise in children, but the parents’ love towards their children remains unwavering. There are several sons in the world who are angry with their parents. The son may go to the court of law because of some differences with his mother. On being asked by the judge, he tells his mother’s name as so and so. He utters the words, “My mother”. Similarly, the mother tells her son’s name as so and so. She says, “My son”. Such is the intimate relationship that exists between the mother and son. The differences between parents and their children are of temporary nature; they are not permanent. In fact, an unbreakable bond of love exists between parents and children.

Vinayaka is the embodiment of love. He always showers love on all. When he was acting as a scribe to write the Mahabharata dictated by Sage Vyasa, he displayed the same quality of love. Vyasa selected him to undertake the duty of a scribe since he was the embodiment of love. Throughout the period of writing the Mahabharata, Vinayaka displayed this quality of pure love. That is why you do not find even a single mistake in the Mahabharata. Since he is flawless, his writing is also flawless. You do not find the bad qualities of anger, jealousy, envy or pride in Vinayaka.

Dear students! From today onwards, give up whatever little anger you have towards your parents and cultivate pure love towards them. Only then can you call yourself the devotees of Vinayaka. Love begets love. Receive love from your parents in abundance and prosper in life.

### **Eat only Sattwic Food**

Today is the festival of Vinayaka Chaturthi. It is a very important festival. When someone visits your house on a festival day, the entire household is happy. One is sure to feel happy and mentally relaxed. However, there are some stone-hearted persons, who cultivate ill-feelings towards others. Such ill-feelings are the result of food. As is the food, so is the head. The feelings of the heart reflect the thought in the head (mind). Therefore, we must take the right food. You should never take such food that would kindle the flames of anger and envy in you. Since ancient times, sages in India have been observing strict regulations with regard to diet. They always made it a point to eat Sattwic food. Rajasic food generates anger while Thamasic food will make you feel sleepy even while you are eating. Therefore, both Rajasic and Thamasic types of food must be avoided. Only Sattwic food must be taken. Excess of chillies, salt and sour items must be avoided in food. Before you eat food, never forget to offer your prayer:

*Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir  
Brahmagnou Brahmanahutam*

*Brahmaiva Thena Ganthavyam*

*Brahma Karma Samadhina.*

(Brahman is the ladle as well as the oblation. He is the sacrificial fire as also the sacrificer. And finally, Brahman is the goal of one who is engaged in the act of sacrifice.)

When you pray in this manner before you partake of your food, God immediately responds thus:

*Aham Vaishvanaro Bhutva*

*Praninam Dehamasrita*

*Pranapana Samayukta*

*Pachamyannam Chaturvidham.*

(I am present in all beings in the form of digestive fire. United with the Prana and Apana, it is I who consume the four kinds of food.)

While taking food, you must always ensure that you eat only that food which you can easily digest. Never consume food which is hard to digest. Just as you feel light and happy before sitting down for eating food, so also you should feel comfortable and light when you get up after eating it. Some people sit for food with light stomach and get up after overloading it. This is not the proper way of eating. Always eat light food. This is one of the many qualities of Vinayaka. If you cultivate the qualities of Vinayaka, you can become like him without, of course, his trunk!

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

**–From Bhagavan’s Ganesh Chaturthi Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 18th September 2004.**

## **NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES**

### **RESCUE, RELIEF AND REHABILITATION OF TSUNAMI VICTIMS BY SAI ORGANISATIONS**

THE TSUNAMI that hit South Asia and South East Asia on 26th December 2004 was a tragedy of unprecedented magnitude, and though it struck in the span of hours, its effects will be felt for years to come. Many Sai workers in India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and other areas, undaunted by the horror and havoc of the disastrous circumstances, undertook all manner of relief work. They saved many precious lives and provided the physical necessities of life for those who were left with nothing. They are uplifting the forlorn who have lost everything. They have started the long, arduous process of helping restore functional societies in these stricken areas.

#### **Sri Lanka**

The Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Sri Lanka swung into action immediately after the tsunami struck the island. A Disaster Management Committee headed by the Central

Coordinator, M. Wanniyasekaram and comprising several senior officials of the Organisation was set up to spearhead the relief and reconstruction activities.

Between 26th December 2004 and 4th January 2005, Sai volunteers from Western, Eastern, Northern and North Central zones were tirelessly engaged in a range of activities that included the following: (a) Procurement of rice, vegetables, dry rations, (b) cooking meals for the refugees, (c) collection of clothes and medicines, (d) packaging, transporting and distributing food, medicines and clothing to the refugees.

In Western zone, nearly 300 Sai volunteers served approximately 10,000 people in the worst affected areas of Modera suburb, Galle town, Moratuwa town and Hikkaduwa town. In Eastern zone, 200 volunteers helped around 3500 people in Kalmunai (south of Trincomalee) and Akkaraipattu (south of Batticaloa). In the North of Sri Lanka, the coastal regions were severely damaged by the killer waves. 300 volunteers from North and North Central zones served about 6000 people. They also provided medical services in the refugee camps for over five days. Totally, 818 volunteers served 19,500 people during the relief operations from 26th December 2004 to 4th January 2005.

Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman of the Prasanthi Council and Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Member of the Prasanthi Council and Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee, visited Sri Lanka on 8th January 2005 to assess the ground situation and to discuss how the International Sri Sathya Sai Organisation could assist Sri Lanka in this hour of need. They, accompanied by the Sri Lankan Central Coordinator, met the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Sri Mahinda Rajapakse and briefed him about the relief efforts of the Sai Organisation to serve those in distress. The Prime Minister acknowledged the services provided by the Sai Organisation and proposed a rehabilitation project comprising housing, sanitation, clothing and schools. After the meeting with the Prime Minister, Dr. Goldstein and Dr. Reddy met senior officials of the Sri Lankan Sai Organisation at the Sai Mandir in Colombo and discussed the immediate action plan for relief work.

The Sai Organisation of Sri Lanka, following the Swami's command "Good work should never be postponed", immediately authorised the procurement of 500 fabricated housing units to provide homes for the refugees in North and North Central zones. In addition to the housing, the Sai Organisation is also providing all basic necessities to the refugees who will settle in the 500 housing units. For this purpose, a container load of utensils, a container load of mineral water and 2000 cartons of chlorine tablets for purification of drinking water are being imported from Chennai, India.

Sri A. Pulendran, Chairman of the Central Council, Sri Lanka, made a presentation on the extent of damage caused by the tsunami and what needed to be done immediately. Dr. Goldstein and Dr. Reddy, accompanied by the Sri Lankan Central Coordinator, visited the affected areas in and around Colombo to see the damages caused by the tsunami. They assured the Sai Organisation of Sri Lanka of all help by way of sending medical experts, medical equipment and medicines to the affected areas.

Dr. Upadhyay, Member of the Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee, visited the affected areas to make a field assessment of the medical needs, and will be returning soon with a medical team from the United Kingdom. A task force of physicians and volunteers, headed by Dr. Brahma Sharma, President of the USA Sai Medical Committee, has visited

the affected areas. Following their recommendations two relief teams of Sai workers from Canada and USA are going to Sri Lanka on 29th January 2005 and 10th February 2005.

### **Indonesia**

In Indonesia, the deadly tsunami swamped the northern and western coastal areas of Sumatra, and the smaller outlying islands off Sumatra on 26th December 2004. The trauma faced by the victims and the trail of destruction left by the tsunami is devastating. Nearly all the casualties and damage took place within the province of Aceh. As the largest city to receive the full fury of the tsunami, Banda Aceh is struggling to wake from a nightmare.

Members of the Sai Organisation sprang into action by formulating immediate relief and rehabilitation plans for the tsunami victims in the devastated regions of Aceh on 27th December 2004. Two task forces were formed. One was based at Medan, the closest city to Aceh, and the other in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. Dr K.H. Yeoh of Singapore was appointed as the Medical Coordinator for the Aceh task force. On 30th December 2004, the first task force, was deployed from Medan Centre. They distributed emergency relief supplies such as food, water, medicines, clothes, blankets and other basic necessities. They visited Lhoksueawe, one of the severely hit regions, and did an initial assessment for upcoming reconstruction projects. On 31st December 2004, the second team from Jakarta swiftly arranged bulk of medical supplies that were urgently required by the only two hospitals in operation in Aceh. Due to the large influx of injured victims, medical supplies were quickly depleting and replenishing was hampered due to obliterated roads and damaged transport system. However, with unshaken faith in Bhagavan's bountiful compassion, the task force set out to undertake the difficult task of supplying the hospital with medicines on the day of its urgent requirement. Bhagavan Baba's Divine grace was witnessed in all preparations. Much needed antibiotic medicines were quickly procured, and air tickets were arranged, all in a matter of few hours.

On the 1st day of the New Year 2005, a team of seven Sai devotees flew to Banda Aceh and personally hand carried life saving medical supplies for thousands of the injured victims. The Crisis Centre in the capital city of Aceh informed that there were only two operational hospitals in the region with a capacity of housing 300 patients in total. They admitted that the hospitals were beset with the increasing rate of casualties, and lacked essential medicines and staff of doctors and nurses, many of whom lost their lives in the tsunami. On 3rd January 2005, Medan task force made their second trip bringing staple food and water. This time the team went further into North Aceh regency and surveyed four towns and surrounding villages. The result of the survey concluded that the most important aid required in the region, after medication and food was water. Thus the team, assisted by professionals, set about making necessary arrangements for the installation of water purification units. On 5th January 2005, Jakarta task force with Dr. Yeoh and Dr. Victor Seah of Singapore along with Dr. Arul Jyoti of Malaysia made their second trip to Banda Aceh. They carried with them fresh supplies of broad based antibiotics, anti-depressants and urgent medicines as advised by the Ministry of Health in Jakarta.

On 9th January 2005, in Muara Baru village of North Aceh regency, one water purification unit was installed by the Medan task force. Eight more are soon to be installed. During the two days that the task force was there in the area, doctors and Sai devotees from Medan



also organised a two-day medical relief camp serving 1487 refugees in six villages of North Aceh regency. On 13th January 2005, Jakarta task force managed to hand over another batch of antibiotics and much needed vaccines to the hospitals in Banda Aceh with the help of Singapore Air Force stationed in Medan.

Action plans are also being formulated to provide further relief aid to other inaccessible areas in the Western Coast of Aceh.

### **Thailand**

During the week of 29th December 2004 to 7th January 2005, members of the Sathya Sai Organisation of Thailand and the Institute of Sathya Sai Education went to Phuket to offer assistance to the victims of the disaster. They distributed food, water, clothes, medicines, blankets and other needed materials to the needy people. Four teams, serving four different units at the site of the disaster, provided food for the victims, relief workers, civic officials and medical personnel, and rendered financial assistance to the affected families. They helped coordinate the identification of bodies by family members and served as translators for patients in the hospitals. Sai Organisation is also helping to revive and rebuild small businesses affected by this disaster like helping stall owners, vegetable and grocery vendors, barbers and fishermen.

### **India**

*Tamil Nadu:* With immense grace and love, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba extended urgent relief to the tsunami affected families in Nagapattinam district. A comprehensive package which included items such as stove, provisions, milk powder, etc., was designed with a lot of care, so that every item was beneficial to the recipient and the entire family. All the material was nicely packed in boxes. The beneficiaries in six of the most badly affected villages were identified by the district revenue administration and 5,000 boxes of relief materials were distributed to them. The Panchayat President concerned was also present at every place. The police and STF personnel extended their full cooperation. The relief work was started on 4th January 2005 and was carried on till 11th January 2005. Besides the items in the package, plastic pots to fetch water and buckets were also given. The distribution was carried out in a very orderly manner, and the beneficiaries received the relief materials with gratitude.

*Kerala:* On hearing the dreadful news of tsunami havoc, the Seva Dal group with Mahila Vibhag and leaders of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation rushed to the affected areas in different districts, viz., Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alappuzha and Ernakulam for rescue and relief work. The inhabitants of the affected areas were brought to schools, where the State Government opened relief camps. The inmates of the camp were badly in need of food, clothing and medical care. By the grace of our Lord, timely attention could be paid to satisfy all these urgent needs. At all the places, medical teams with sufficient medicines attended to each and every person who was in trouble.

To help in the rehabilitation measures, the Sai Organisation of Kerala has undertaken to build two schools and two Anganwadis. Besides, 16 destitute children and 50 old persons have been adopted by the Sai Organisation of Kerala.

*Andhra Pradesh:* Many villages in the coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh in the districts of Krishna, Nellore, Prakasam, East Godavari and West Godavari became the victims of the

tsunami which ravaged these places on 26th December 2004. Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Andhra Pradesh rushed to the aid of the affected people and distributed food materials, clothes, utensils and items of daily use in all the tsunami affected areas.

## **Seek What I have Come to Give**

**You are imprisoned in your ego. Though you should try to liberate yourselves from this bondage quickly and safely, most of you do not seek from Me the key to this liberation. You ask from Me trash and tinsel, petty little cures and gains. Very few desire to get from Me the thing I have come to give, liberation itself. Even among the few who seek liberation, only a small percentage sincerely stick to the path of Sadhana, and from among them only an infinitesimal number succeed.**

**- Baba**

**MARCH 2005**

**DIVINE DISCOURSE:  
BHEEMA RATHA SANTHI 2005**

## **RECOGNISE THE SPIRITUAL POWER OF ELDERS**

*Man does not remember God in happy times. He remembers Him only when he is in difficulties, and blames Him for all his sorrows as if God has caused them.*

**(Telugu Poem)**

*Embodiments of Love!*

THE ELDERLY COUPLES WHO participated in the Bheema Ratha Santhi function today experienced great joy. But it is also necessary to understand the inner meaning of this ceremony. The name Bheema does not signify mere physical strength though Bheema could perform any mighty task with success. Bheema was the son of Vayu (wind god). Wind is all-pervasive, all powerful and is present everywhere. Thus, many divine qualities characterised Bheema. People generally tend to recognise merely the physical strength of Bheema, ignoring his immense mental and intellectual potentialities.

### **Inner Significance of Bheema Ratha Santhi**

There are certain traditional rules for the performance of Bheema Ratha Santhi ceremony. But there is no age restriction as such for it. Normally, married couples celebrate the Shastyabdha Poorthi ceremony to invoke the grace of God for peaceful and happy married life when the husband attains the age of 60 years. But attaining the age of 70 years is considered highly significant and auspicious. It is celebrated as Bheema Ratha Santhi. Similarly, reaching the age of 80, 90 or 100 years is an occasion for the celebration of Bheema Ratha Santhi. But due to the effect of Kali Age, the youngsters today do not understand and appreciate the importance of these holy occasions, and neglect their parents when they cross the age of 60 years. They think that their parents have no place in the house and they should live like Sannyasins (renunciants). This is a serious mistake. On the other hand, they should take greater care of their parents when they attain the age of 60 years and above.

Many people presume that those beyond the age of 70 years are useless and a burden on the family and society. But this is not true. In fact, the enthusiasm, dynamism and mental strength increase after a person crosses 70 years. It is only after attaining the age of 70 years that man's will power and Atmic strength develop in full measure. Prior to that, he behaves like ordinary human beings and does not strive to set an example to others. But after the age of 70 years, man's mental faculties and divine power blossom to the highest extent and prompt him to set new goals in life. Consequently, such elderly persons ponder and explore new secrets of life. The divine power possessed by these elderly persons is not seen in the youth. It manifests in many ways in their actions. Today, we find several youngsters talking ill of their parents and making fun of them. This is a grave mistake. Instead, if one analyses carefully their actions, one will find that every action of the elders is purposeful and divine in nature. If the youth of today wish to learn how they should face the challenges of life, they should live with their parents and imbibe their noble qualities by constantly observing them. In fact, there can be no match for the accomplishments of the elders after they cross the age of 60 or 70. Their intellectual acumen and divine qualities can show a new path to mankind. When you realise their great qualities, it will bring about transformation in your own life.

### **Ancient Rishis were the Embodiments of Great Spiritual Powers**

Embodiments of Love!

People today neglect the elders considering them of little worth. This is not correct. In fact, the energy and will power of the elders are not to be found in the youth. When you wish to undertake a new task, you should seek the guidance of the elders to achieve success in it. The age of 60 years is considered as the age of retirement from service. But man's full potential develops at this age only. Retired scientists are highly valuable to society. None can match their intelligence and acumen for new inventions. But their services are not being properly utilised for the benefit of society. Thus, immense potential of the elders remains unutilised. In fact, man is unable to recognise the qualities of his fellow human beings. The term Manava means a person in whom the quality of humanness blossoms in its

fullness. The elders are endowed with exalted and noble thoughts. They set highly valuable ideals to the youngsters. Unable to understand the value of their thoughts, the youngsters disregard them and do not pay any heed to them.

It is to be noted with admiration how the elders brought up their children in a proper way with concern and enthusiasm. Unfortunately, today we grudge even one square meal a day to them. This is highly deplorable. What you give to elders will come back to you tenfold. The world can benefit a lot from elderly people. None can estimate the immense spiritual power they possess. The ancient Rishis of India were the embodiments of this great spiritual power. The noble thoughts propounded by them are most valuable. They made marvellous plans for the blissful future of man. The objective behind holding this function is to recognise the great spiritual power of these elders so that the youngsters are inspired to follow the ideals set by them. Our ancients investigated the noble ideals of the great saints and sages and propagated them to the whole world. They realised the greatness of these Rishis. Even the kings and nobles derived great benefit from the great wisdom of the Rishis by seeking their advice regularly. The great treatises on spiritual and temporal matters composed by these great Rishis of yore are a subject of study and enquiry even today. Unfortunately, modern youth are not able to understand even a fraction of the great truths expounded in those treatises and lack the spiritual wisdom attained by ancient saints and sages. Therefore, we should promote the performance of this great ancient tradition of Bheema Ratha Santhi from now onwards. It has great significance and value for the coming generations. It signifies the nourishment and nurture of the quality of humanness through spiritually elevating and noble endeavours.

### **Draupadi Symbolised the Power of the Atma**

Once when Bheema and Draupadi were sitting together on the bank of a river, Draupadi asked Bheema, "Where does the Atma dwell?" Draupadi was highly intelligent and could answer this question herself. She was the embodiment of truth and righteousness. She was ready to make any sacrifice for the sake of her husbands. She symbolised the power of the Atma. So, Bheema kept silent and allowed Draupadi to explain the principle of the Self.

The Atma is the primordial principle of divine power. Though it uses the vesture of the body, it is neither the body nor the mind nor the Buddhi (intellect) nor Chitta (mind stuff) nor Ahamkara (ego sense). When you go closer to a jasmine plant, you experience the fragrance of jasmine flowers. Do you think the fragrance is coming from the flowers? No, no. It is caused by the divine power given by God to jasmine flower. Divine mysteries are beyond the comprehension of man. Draupadi revealed such divine mysteries which were not known to anybody. We should therefore try to understand the greatness of Draupadi.

She taught many tenets of Dharma to Arjuna also. During the Mahabharata war, after the gruesome massacre of the young Pandava children, Arjuna tracked down Aswatthama, the perpetrator of the atrocity and dragged him before Draupadi. Instead of cursing the evil doer, she persuaded Arjuna not to kill Aswatthama who was the son of her husbands' most revered Guru.

Oh Partha! It is not righteous to kill a person who is afraid or has lost courage, who is asleep or intoxicated, who seeks refuge or is a female. You should not kill Aswatthama, for he is your preceptor's son. (Telugu Poem)

Draupadi further pleaded with Arjuna to forgive Aswatthama for his heinous act. Arjuna replied, "You are preventing me from keeping up my vow." To this, Draupadi said, "Tonsuring his head and

removing the crown jewel from his head is equivalent to killing him.” As per Draupadi’s advice and as a token of punishment, Arjuna shaved off his head with his sword and took the crown jewel.

In ancient times, the Rishis were not shaving off their hair since their hair was endowed with sacredness and power. Once Draupadi was alone as her husbands had gone out. She took out one strand of hair from her head and dropped it in water, chanting some Mantras. That single hair with the potency of Mantras could bind all the hills around. Later on, a number of Rishis came together and enquired as to how a single hair could bind all the hills around. They concluded that it was the strength of the hair of Draupadi and her will power that could perform this stupendous task. It is difficult to comprehend such latent divine phenomena. Unfortunately, today man is unable to realise his innate divinity. Though born as a human, he is forgetting the very quality of humanness. He is cultivating demonic qualities.

### **Avatars Manifest their Divinity in many Ways**

Dear Students!

Get rid of demonic qualities and develop humanness. Only then can you rise to the level of divinity. Always remember three things – unity, purity and divinity. Unity implies the oneness of human race. Where there is unity in humanity, divinity will manifest there. Avatars manifest their divinity in many mysterious ways.

Once I stayed in Goa in the Raj Bhavan when Nakul Sen was the Lt. Governor of Goa. His wife’s name was Indu. I slept in the front hall of the Raj Bhavan. Nakul Sen and his wife slept in their bedroom. There was a window in their bedroom from where they could see what was happening in the front hall. After I slept, Nakul Sen’s wife saw through the window a brilliant light emerging from My body. Unable to bear the effulgence of that brilliant light, she tried to wake up her husband. Nakul Sen would not like to be disturbed at that hour. He admonished her not to disturb him. But she insisted that her husband should wake up and witness that brilliant light emanating from Swami’s navel. At last, Nakul Sen woke up and had the divine Darshan of that effulgence.

In the early years of the Advent of this Avatar, a great devotee by name Karanam Subbamma used to serve Swami. Her devotion to Swami was unparalleled. In those days, caste differences were widely prevalent and were observed strictly in Puttaparthi. Especially, the Brahmins used to keep distance from the Harijans. Since Subbamma was an orthodox Brahmin, she used to observe these practices meticulously. One day, I informed Subbamma that I would be visiting the Harijanwada (colony of Harijans). Subbamma felt very unhappy and tried to dissuade Me from going to that place, saying, “Oh Swami! Why should You visit that place?” I asked her, “Why should I not go? Why should I not eat the food offered by the Harijans? I will certainly go there.” So saying, I started for the Harijanwada. However, as she was a great devotee of Swami and was very much attached to Me, she followed Me. The people living in the Harijanwada were very poor. They had no amenities in their house. They spread an old cloth on the floor and requested Me to sit. After eating the food, I felt drowsy and fell asleep. Thereafter, a big sound emanated from My navel. The people in the house were fear-stricken and ran out on hearing that loud sound. Thus, the Divine power manifests from the bodies of the Avatars in many different ways. Similar is the mysterious power of the hair. That is why the ancient sages had long hair.

Long ago, when I went to some African countries on tour, the devotees there presented Me with an iron brush. However, I had no necessity for it. If ever I put the brush in My hair, it would get stuck. My hair is so thick and strong. This body is nearly 80 years old. Still, the hair on My head is very strong. Even if one tries to pull out one hair, it is not possible. It is full of immense power. This is the

mystery behind the hair of divine personalities and ancient Rishis. In fact, every individual has certain divine powers, which he should try to nurture. One should enquire within and know the reality. Today the youth are not making any effort to protect their God-given energy. They are frittering away their energy in ever so many ways. They waste a lot of energy daily with the result that they become prematurely old. I am now nearing 80 years. Can you say I look like an 80-year-old man? No, not at all. I do not have even a single white hair even at this age (loud applause). Especially, the head is the seat of all power. That is why you see an effulgent halo around the head of divine personalities. Hence, one should carefully protect one's head.

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

You are all men and women of noble qualities and are strong in body and mind. But, unfortunately, you are wasting your energy in vain pursuits. You become weak by wasting your energy. When I clench My fist, not even ten persons can open it. Divine power is immeasurable and beyond description. All of you should try to realise your innate divinity and enjoy eternal bliss. The divine power latent in a human being has no limits. Whether it is fine arts like music or any other human endeavour, when it is suffused with divine power, it reaches great heights. Offer your talent to God and sanctify your life.

– **From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 10th February 2005.**

## **BHEEMA RATHA SANTHI 2005**

THERE was virtually a downpour of heavenly bliss in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam when Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba performed the spiritual marriages of 275 elderly couples in a unique function named "Bheema Ratha Santhi" on 10th February 2005. More than 100 of these couples were from Puttaparthi and other nearby villages. A few days before the function, Bhagavan sent a team of doctors to check the health of these elderly couples in villages to ensure their active participation in the function. He also directed the organisers to provide wheelchairs to those elderly couples who had difficulty in walking.

On 9th February 2005, i.e., one day before the function, Bhagavan distributed wedding clothes and gold and silver ornaments to the elderly couples which they were to wear on the day of the function. Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue of the function, was beautifully bedecked for the occasion. There were beautiful banners with writing "Bheema Ratha Santhi 2005" on all corners of the Hall which was decorated with bright colour festoons and other decorations. The dais was specially decorated with garlands and bouquets of flowers. Elegant enclosures were made in the Hall for seating each couple separately with low level railings on which silk curtains were fixed. Two chairs were placed in each enclosure for the couples, and a table was provided on which the entire Puja material with a photograph of Bhagavan was placed for the performance of the ceremonies. Mango leaves and plantain saplings tied to the enclosures invested the place with auspiciousness and gave the entire Sai Kulwant Hall the look of a vast wedding hall.

On the morning of 10th February 2005, the couples dressed in their wedding garments assembled in Sri Pedda Venkama Raju Kalyana Mandapam in Puttaparthi village, from where they were to come in

a procession to Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue of Bheema Ratha Santhi 2005 function. This unique procession of 275 elderly couples in their finest wedding garments started from the Kalyana Mandapam exactly at 8.00 a.m. At the head of the procession were the Veda chanting students of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus. Then came the brass band and Nadaswaram troupe of the Anantapur Campus of the Institute. They were followed by a group of folk dancers in their tribal finery, who enlivened the occasion by their folk dance. This magnificent procession meandered its way through the main bazaar of Puttaparthi. Huge crowds of villagers came out of their houses to see this unique procession. This grand procession entered Sai Kulwant Hall at 8.30 a.m. As the folk dancers took the centre of the Hall for their performance, the organisers conducted the couples to their seats in a very orderly manner. All the while, Bhagavan blissfully stood at the portico of the Mandir watching the couples in their wedding finery and kept showering His divine blessings on them.

The ceremonies for the performance of spiritual wedding of the couples started with the worship of Lord Ganesh. As the Vedic priests chanted the Mantras, the couples performed the worship according to the instructions given by the priests. Each couple was accompanied by a student of Anantapur Campus to help them in the performance of the rituals. The students had received instructions from Bhagavan Himself on the previous evening regarding their duties during the function. Bhagavan had taken care of such meticulous details so that the function had all its traditional flavour and the ingredients of a marriage function. After the worship of Lord Ganesh, the sacred ceremony of Raksha Bandhan (sacred protective thread) was performed in which the couples tied the sacred thread on each other's wrist amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras. After Raksha Bandhan, the couples took the vow to stand by each other in attaining the goals of life – Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Usually, in marriage the couples take the vow for the first three goals, but in the spiritual marriage the priests instructed the couples to repeat the vow for Moksha also as directed by Bhagavan. This made everybody realise what sacredness was attached to this spiritual marriage. The next ceremony was to put jaggery mixed with cumin seeds on each other's head with chanting of Mantras.

The sacred moment of tying the Mangal Sutra by the husband around the neck of the wife was drawing near. Ocean of compassion that Bhagavan is, He Himself went to each and every couple and handed over the Mangal Sutra to the husbands with His blessings. Before this ceremony of tying of Mangal Sutra, the couples were instructed to perform Lakshmi Narayana worship, silver idols of which were given to them. Before tying the Mangal Sutra they chanted the sacred Mantras as instructed by the chief priest to worship the Mangal Sutra. The auspicious moment came at 10.05 a.m. when the husbands tied the Mangal Sutra around the neck of their wives with the accompaniment of band and Nadaswaram music and chanting of Vedic Mantras. After this, the couples poured yellow rice on each other's head. Everybody was delighted to see this ritual. Bhagavan Himself came to some of the couples and blessed them by sprinkling Akshatas (sacred rice) on them. After this, the couples exchanged garlands. The grand function of Bheema Ratha Santhi concluded at 10.30 a.m. with chanting of benediction Mantras by the priests.

During the performance of these ceremonies, there was virtually a shower of precious gifts from Bhagavan which the organisers and senior devotees gave to the couples. The couples, their relatives and all devotees were offered a sumptuous and grand wedding feast after the celebration of the marriage. Dinner on the previous night was also offered to the couples earlier.

By far, this was one of the grandest and finest functions organised at Prasanthi Nilayam. No effort was spared by the organisers to make it a most glorious event of Bhagavan's 80th Birthday celebrations.

The hearts of the elderly couples were inundated with gratitude for their Beloved Swami under whose Divine guidance this unprecedented and unique function was organised.

This grand function had some very special features. The main feature of this function was that the Avatar of Kali Age Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself gave Mangal Sutras to each couple and showered His blessings on them to achieve not only the goals of Dharma, Artha and Kama but Moksha also. Elsewhere marriages are performed in a ritualistic manner, but these spiritual marriages were performed not only for the peace and happiness of the couples but for their spiritual growth and redemption also. Another uniqueness of this function was that it was celebrated for Loka Kalyana (peace and happiness of the world). It was directed towards establishing world peace and unity of all religions through collective prayers at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan.

The grand finale of this function came in the afternoon with the Divine Discourse given by Bhagavan when He explained the significance of this function and emphasised the need to revere and respect the elders. (Full text of Bhagavan's Discourse has been given in this issue elsewhere.) To add further joy to this occasion, renowned Carnatic musician Padma Shri Smt. Sudha Raghunathan enthralled the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall with her delightful devotional music. Besides classical Ragas, she presented soul-stirring Bhajans to the delight of all. Bhagavan blessed the artiste and materialised a gold chain with a locket for her. The music programme which started at 5.20 p.m. after the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan came to a close at 6.05 p.m. with offer of Arati to Bhagavan.

## **BHAGAVAN'S ADDRESS TO SRIKAKULAM DEVOTEES**

# **DO NAMASMARANA UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES**

**You struggle hard in life merely for the sake of filling your belly. You acquire many forms of knowledge from various fields. But you are not able to enjoy total bliss. So, take refuge in God and contemplate on Him. He will certainly show you the right path.**

**(Telugu Poem)**

Embodiments of Love!

WHETHER ONE IS A PAUPER OR a millionaire, intake of food is natural to every human being. But, having attained the sacred human birth, it is unbecoming of man to spend his entire life merely for the sake of filling his belly. Why don't you spend a few moments in contemplation of God instead of spending your entire lifetime in pursuit of physical comforts? There are, of course, a few people in this land of Bharat who sanctify their time in contemplation of God. But a vast majority of people are wasting their human birth in vain pursuits.

**Do not Crave for Fleeting Pleasures**

Embodiments of Love!



It is not only in Srikakulam district but in many other places all over India that people are struggling to eke out their livelihood. In spite of straining hard, they are unable to attain peace, happiness and comfort. Only those who are spending their time in contemplation of God are able to experience peace and happiness. People suffer because they spend all their time and energy in mundane pursuits. They are not able to enjoy mental peace and physical comforts in full measure. The body is like a water bubble. It is nothing but a bundle of bones. Mind is like a mad monkey. It is a mistake to strive for the pleasure of the transient body and wavering mind. It is, of course, the duty of every human being to make efforts to keep the body healthy, so that he is not dependent on others. But many people spend their entire life in pursuit of physical comforts and pleasures. There are only a few who are centred on eternal peace and happiness. Human birth is meant to experience divinity and not to crave for fleeting pleasures. Human body is a divine gift. Instead of making its proper use for adoring God, it is being put to improper use. Do not be under the mistaken notion that body is meant for eating and enjoying physical pleasures only. Certain duties have been assigned to man by performing which he will be able to experience happiness at the level of the body, mind, senses and spirit. One should enquire what the purpose of human birth is. The goal of man's life is liberation.

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(worldliness).

(Telugu

Poem)

The body should be used as an instrument to rise from the level of humanness to divinity. Human life is redeemed only when we experience divinity. There are many people who are making efforts in this direction. But only a few are able to realise the truth and achieve the goal. One may undertake any type of activities but one should always aspire to attain peace of mind. Without peace of mind, every endeavour of man will only add to his restlessness.

Embodiments of Love!

You are really fortunate to have come here all the way from Srikakulam in spite of your financial constraints and various other difficulties. Swami is very well aware that all of you have come here to experience divine bliss. You were feeling sad that Swami did not talk to you even after two days of your stay here. In fact, last night you were all praying intensely. In response to your sincere prayers, I have decided to address you this morning. It is not My intention to satisfy you with mere words. I am ready to extend all the help required to fulfil your aspirations (loud applause). Many of you are facing problems due to shortage of water. Some of you do not have even proper food to eat. Food and water are very essential for everyone. Do not give room to worry and anxiety. God is not stone-hearted. His heart is filled with compassion. He will certainly take care of your needs. Swami's concern for you is hundred times more than that you have for yourself. You need not worry at all. Develop the feeling that difficulties and suffering are for your own good. Even insurmountable difficulties will vanish like thin mist when you have firm conviction. Hence, do not be unduly perturbed about your problems. Difficulties come and go. Not only poor people, even a millionaire cannot escape from difficulties. Swami blesses you all that you will be out of your difficulties soon.

**Chant the Divine Name Constantly**

Consult the elders of your villages and take the help of those who are willing to cooperate with you. I will see to it that there is plenty of water available in the mountainous area of Srikakulam district. Do not be depressed or bogged down by small problems. Having put on the vesture of human body, one cannot escape from difficulties. The physical body may undergo difficulties but you should see to it

that your mind rests in peace. Mind is the basis of happiness for everyone. All physical comforts will be of little use without peace of mind. Only through contemplation of God can you attain peace of mind and not by any other means. Hence, chant the Name of God incessantly unmindful of the difficulties that come in your way. It is because of contemplation of God's Name that you have been able to experience peace in spite of the innumerable difficulties you faced. God is the refuge of the poor and the forlorn. He is always with them through all the vicissitudes of life. Do not think that God is in some distant land. God is by your side always. In fact, He is present in the inner recesses of your heart. Never think that God is away from you at any point of time. Neither friends nor relatives can come to your rescue. God is your sole refuge. He will protect you under all circumstances. In spite of numerous difficulties, the Bharatias never swerved from the Godward path. If Bharat occupies a pivotal position among all nations, it is only because of Bharatias' unwavering devotion to God. There are many affluent countries where people lead a luxurious life, but they do not have peace of mind. It is the good fortune of the Bharatias that they are able to enjoy peace of mind. Their devotion to God is responsible for this. It is the culture of Bharat that has been protecting the Bharatias in all respects since ancient times. The glory and grandeur of this culture is beyond all description. One who has peace of mind will have moral strength. Hence, chant the Divine Name constantly.

Yesterday you went round the entire village of Puttaparthi singing the glory of God; thereafter, you entered the portals of Prasanthi Nilayam and experienced peace. It is not possible to experience peace by any other means. Hence, never forget God. Sanctify your time by chanting His Name. Contemplation of God should be man's constant endeavour. There may be some jealous people who will try to dissuade you from chanting God's Name. They may say, "What is the use of chanting God's Name? It will not help you to eke out your livelihood. You have to work hard for your survival. So, stop chanting God's Name." Do not pay heed to such narrow-minded people. Never forget God's Name. You may not be aware, people all over the world are facing hardships. They are suffering from physical ailments and mental agitation. Only the Bharatias are able to enjoy peace of mind because of their devotion to God. There is no happiness greater than experiencing peace of mind.

#### **Difficulties are Precursors of Happy Days Ahead**

Mental peace can be obtained only by constant contemplation of God. This cannot be purchased from the market. It is only by constant contemplation of God that mental worries can be overcome. This is the experience of people all over the world.

To be born is a worry, to be on the earth is a worry; world is a cause of worry and death too; entire childhood is a worry and so is the old age; life is a worry, failure is a worry; all actions and difficulties cause worry; even happiness too is a mysterious worry.

(Telugu Poem)

Only contemplation of God will remove all types of worries. This is the royal path for man to achieve freedom from worries. Adopting any other path in place of this sacred and noble path will only land you in worries and troubles. March forward on this divine and glorious path. All your actions should bring you peace and happiness, not troubles and tribulations. Even when you are undergoing difficulties, always think that they are meant to bring you happiness. Every human being undergoes difficulties only to enjoy happiness later. However, he does not realise this during the period of suffering. But in course of time, when suffering ends and happy days arrive, he would realise the truth. Hence, always remember the truth that sorrows and difficulties are precursors of happy days ahead. In fact, real happiness comes out of difficulties only.

Embodiments of Love!

You are the repository of unlimited love. The more you share it with others, the more it grows; it never diminishes. Supposing, you go up a hill and sing the glory of God. The divine vibrations will spread to a large area and the people hearing it even at a distance will feel happy and peaceful. Children also feel happy when they listen to music. Music casts its charm on animals too. Even the heart of a stone-hearted person will melt by Namasankirtan. The history of India is replete with instances which establish the efficacy of Namasankirtan as a mean to attain peace and bliss.

Suppose you are digging a pit. When the soil is taken out from it and stacked by its side, it forms a mound. The soil that is dug out of the pit and the soil that is piled up next to the pit are the same. When you redeposit the piled up soil in the pit, it gets covered up. This is what you have to realise today. You need not feel sorry, "Oh! I have fallen into this pit of sorrows and difficulties. How can I come out of this? How am I to bear this?" Fill by your devotion to God the soil of happiness into the pit of suffering. It is only by your devotion that you can overcome your difficulties.

### **Love is your True Wealth**

Embodiments of Love!

You have come here because of your love and devotion to Swami. Go back to your places with the same feelings of love and devotion. After reaching home, continue to experience the same bliss that you have experienced in the presence of Swami. Then, you will forget all your difficulties and worries. Happiness and sorrow come in our life to develop in us the spirit of equanimity.

Pleasure and pain, good and bad coexist, none can separate them. You cannot find pleasure or pain, good or bad to the exclusion of the other. Pleasure results when difficulties fructify. (Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Love is the only wealth that does not diminish. It is the property of God. Therefore, cultivate pure and selfless love. God's love will always follow you wherever you are and will protect you at all times. Do not ever consider that money alone constitutes your wealth. In fact, love is your real wealth. The wealth of love always grows; it never diminishes. Only those who realise the principle of love will be able to understand this truth. You have given joy to all by the Namasankirtan you have done yesterday in the streets of Puttaparthi. Continue this Namasankirtan wherever you are throughout your life. Especially, when your spirits are down with sorrow, sing full-throated the glory of God. Never feel diffident to sing the glory of God, thinking that others may make fun of you. Irrespective of what others may think or say against you, continue this sacred activity of Namasankirtan. You will then be charged with divine power.

### **Develop Divine Love**

Embodiments of Love!

I am very happy that you are all gathered here. I bless you that you always have joy, happiness, comfort and peace. Today 5000 devotees from your place have come here to share the happiness of Swami's proximity. All of you, please go to the canteen and partake of Swami's Prasadam happily. Swami's Prasadam will become Akshaya (inexhaustible) and cause Kshaya (end) of all your sorrows and difficulties. Everything that is granted by Swami is suffused with love. Whatever is granted by Swami is always free. God will never have monetary considerations. Wherever any service activity is

associated with money, it becomes tainted. The entire property of Swami consists of love only. This divine love should become your very life-breath. All your past Karmas will be washed away if only you cultivate this pure love.

Embodiments of Love!

Having come here from such a long distance, fill your hearts with love. Some time ago, there was a singer by name Saluru Rajeswara Rao. He used to visit Swami regularly. He remained absorbed so much in music that he would sing while walking in streets, unmindful of what others thought of him. Today his son has come here to present devotional songs in the presence of Swami. Devotional songs fill the hearts of people with overwhelming joy. Rajeswara Rao used to sing a particular song on Sri Krishna melodiously “Challagaaalilo Yamunathatipai Shyama Sundaruni Murali ...” (Shyama Sundara is melodiously playing His flute on the banks of the Yamuna, while the cool breeze is blowing). His voice as well as his feelings were sweet. Both Rajeswara Rao and another devotee Adi Naryana Rao used to come here regularly. They composed “Sai Katha” and sang those songs melodiously. The lives of such pure-hearted devotees are sanctified, wherever they may be. Those who sell their God-given talents can never be truly happy. Rajeswara Rao and Adi Narayana never made business out of their musical talents. They sang with love and devotion and experienced bliss. Such devotees, whether dead or alive, attain eternal glory. There was another well-known devotee by name Ghantasala Venkateswara Rao. He underwent many difficulties. But he was always devoted to Swami. Whenever he was in a difficult situation, he used to sing, “Oh God! Won’t You pull me out of these difficulties?” Even when he was sick and was hospitalised, he used to sing lying in the hospital bed, “Oh! Lord! How long have I to suffer this agony! Won’t You relieve me of this pain?” Once I went to the hospital to see him. I consoled him saying, “My dear Ghantasala! Never think of these difficulties and suffering. These things happen to test your faith in God. You should come out successful in this test by constant Namasmara.”

A devotee who is constantly engaged in Namasmara under all circumstances will become immortal. Namasmara is the only wealth that lasts forever. Therefore, undertake this Sadhana as a lifelong activity. Whether your voice is good or not, continue to sing the glory of God at least in your heart. Thereby, you will acquire merit that will protect you throughout your life. If you do this Sadhana, God will always help you in all your endeavours, be they physical, moral, worldly, religious or spiritual. Always pray to God before eating your food. By doing so, the food will be sanctified and its essence will be assimilated in your body. Your heart will also be purified. That is why, our ancestors prayed thus before partaking of food:

Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir  
Brahmagnou Brahmanahutam  
Brahmaiva Thena Ganthavyam  
Brahma Karma Samadhina.

(Brahman is the ladle as well as the oblation. He is the sacrificial fire as also the sacrificer. And finally, Brahman is the goal of one who is engaged in the act of sacrifice.)

When you pray in this manner before you partake of your food, God immediately responds thus:

Aham Vaishvanaro Bhutva  
Praninam Dehamasrita

Pranapana Samayukta

Pachamyannam Chaturvidham.

(I am present in all beings in the form of digestive fire. United with the Prana (exhalation) and Apana (inhalation), It is I who consume the four kinds of food.)

The prayer thus made invokes an immediate response from God. That is reaction, reflection and resound. Therefore, constantly engage yourself in Namasmarana which will confer bliss on you.

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

- **From Bhagavan’s Address to Srikakulam devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 23rd August 2004.**

## **CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM**

### **A Drama on the Unity of Religions**

The Bal Vikas students of Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh presented a beautiful dance drama on the theme of unity of religions in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the afternoon of 4th February 2005.

As the story unfolds, a sacred mountain is shown symbolically to represent Divinity. The followers of each religion claim it as their place of worship and fight among themselves until the revelation comes to them through a beautiful song, “Manava Jati, Prema Matamu, Sai Daivam ...” which conveys the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba: There is only one race, the race of humanity; there is only one religion, the religion of love; there is only one God who is omnipresent.

The drama emphasised the truth that fights between the followers of different religions were meaningless as the source of all of them was one Divinity, though they call it by different names. Beautiful dances and acting of the children, sweet and appropriate songs contributed to the successful portrayal of the theme of unity of faiths. The drama which began at 4.00 p.m. in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan came to a close at 4.30 p.m. At the end of the drama, Bhajan singing started. The Bhajans were first led by Vizianagaram devotees and later by the Institute students. The programme came to a close with offer of Arati to Bhagavan.

### **Chinese New Year Celebrations 2005**

Chinese (lunar) New Year was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on the 9th lunar day which fell on Thursday, 17th February 2005. On this occasion, a magnificent programme of devotional music was presented by the Chinese devotees who had come from Singapore and Indonesia to celebrate this auspicious day in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. At the outset, a group of ladies devotees highlighted the main features of Chinese New Year celebrations which are held for 15 days. On the New Year Day, children dressed in bright coloured new clothes pay their respects to their parents and parents-in-law and seek their blessings for the New Year. People exchange a pair of oranges for good luck and prosperity when visiting friends and relatives. Adults give to children red packets (hong bao) with their good wishes. Besides narrating these traditional features of the

celebrations, the devotees enacted these sacred practices to the delight of all. Chinese children in their white dress paid their obeisance to their Divine Parent Bhagavan Baba, offered a pair of oranges to Him and received blessings from Him. They also offered a basket of oranges and another of red packets containing sweets to Bhagavan who graciously blessed these which were later distributed as Prasadam to all the devotees.

After performing these traditional rituals, the Chinese devotees started their musical programme. They began with a prayer song propitiating the god forms of Siva, Vishnu, Narasimha, Lakshmi and Varaha. Next, they sang 17 Chinese songs expressing their love and devotion to Bhagavan as well as to Lord Krishna, Buddha and goddess of mercy. In the end, they sang Chinese Bhajans. The pleasant surprise was their Bhajan in Telugu which their lead singer sang and the entire group followed line by line. Bhagavan's love can do many miracles, and this was one which every devotee witnessed when the entire group sang the Bhajan in chaste Telugu!

After this music programme, Bhagavan blessed two speakers to address the gathering. The first speaker was Sri Wee Lin who shared with all his personal experiences of Bhagavan's Divinity. He also spoke about the Seva activities undertaken by him and his team of Sai devotees in North Korea when it was hit by tidal waves. At the end of his speech, Bhagavan delighted everyone when He materialised a gold chain with a locket for him. The second speaker was Sri Anil Kumar who observed that the word "Sai Ram" was uniting the entire world and was acting as a panacea for all the ills of man today when man was miles and miles away from smiles! Bhagavan Baba, he said, will always come to our support. At this, Bhagavan asked him to repeat what he had said. When Sri Anil Kumar repeated his words, Beloved Bhagavan said, "Not just support you; He will come and literally lift you up." At the end of Sri Anil Kumar's speech, Bhagavan again waved His hand and created a large diamond ring. Sri Wee Lin who had received a gold chain a few minutes earlier was again blessed with the ring too. Bhagavan lovingly slipped the ring onto his finger.

At the conclusion of the function, oranges were distributed as Prasadam to all the devotees. Another traditional Chinese Prasadam of red packets containing sweets was also distributed. Bhajans started after the distribution of Prasadam. The function came to a happy conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.00 p.m.

### **A Scintillating Mridangam Recital**

The devotees at Prasanthi Nilayam had a rare treat of Mridangam music when Mridangam maestro Padma Bhushan Sri Umayalpuram Sivaraman of Chennai gave a scintillating performance in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the afternoon of 19th February 2005 in Sai Kulwant Hall. The Principal of Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music, Sri R. Krishnamurthy sang various Ragas to the accompaniment of Sri Sivaraman who gave a solo performance also. It was a thrilling moment for both the artistes when Bhagavan expressed His appreciation by applauding the emotional finishing of the song 'Devadi Deva' in Sunada Vinodini Raga. The scholarly rendering of Purva Kalyani Raga Kriti 'Parama Pavana Rama' also drew ovation from the devotees for the brisk Swarakalpana and the scintillating Tani Avartam of Sri Sivaraman. The programme which started at 3.25 p.m. enthralled the audience for over half an hour and came to a close at 4.10 p.m. At the end of the programme, Bhagavan materialised a beautiful gold bracelet for Sri Sivaraman. Bhagavan also honoured him and Sri Krishnamurthy with a silk Dhoti, and gave clothes to Sri Ajit Prasad, a student of Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music who very ably supported Sri Krishnamurthy in vocal.

### **Thyagenaike Amrutatthwamanasu: A Drama**

The students of Brindavan Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning enacted a beautiful drama on the theme of sacrifice in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 24th February 2005. Taking several episodes from the Puranas and the freedom struggle of India, the drama portrayed how the people of Bharat practised the ideal of sacrifice to set the highest standards of noble and ideal life. Episodes from the lives of Karna, Bharata and freedom fighter Khudi Ram Bose were presented in a realistic manner to show the idealism of the Bharatiyas that it was only sacrifice which could lead man to immortality. The drama successfully depicted through these episodes and the transformation of a young painter how this sacred land of Bharat was Punya Bhumi, Karma Bhumi and Thyaga Bhumi (the land of merit, action and sacrifice). Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba sat through the entire performance and gave the participants the coveted opportunity of group photo with Him at the end of the drama. The drama which started at 4.15 p.m. came to a conclusion at 5.35 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end.

## **NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES**

### **TSUNAMI RELIEF WORK BY THE OVERSEAS SATHYA SAI ORGANISATIONS**

THE FLOWERS of Bhagavan Baba's grace and blessings were in full bloom as the Overseas Sathya Sai Organisations continued to respond with love and compassion to the needs of the victims of the tsunami disaster.

#### **Sri Lanka**

Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee initiated a disaster relief effort, providing medical treatment and counselling for the needy. An eighteen-member team of doctors, nurses and volunteers from the USA and Canada under the leadership of Dr. Mahesh Ghayal departed for Sri Lanka on 29th January 2005. Upon arrival, they met the leaders of Sri Lanka Sai Organisation and several villages near Batticaloa were identified as areas that were in great need of assistance. The team discerned their needs and delivered the required services to the stricken communities. Functioning as a unit of Sai selfless workers, they provided comprehensive aid in the form of medical treatment, psychological counselling and socio-economic assistance to the survivors of the catastrophe. Most importantly, they provided Sai love.

The flowers of Swami's grace appeared in many shapes and hues. Children were comforted and counselled. One mother and father lost four young daughters, only one son survived. The parents were despondent and had lost their will to live. The team members gave them psychological counselling, Swami's Vibhuti, love, hope and encouragement. The next day the father emerged from his profound depression, the mother came for Bhajans and the son who survived remembered how to smile.

Dr. Allen Levy conducted a workshop for members of Sri Lankan Sai Organisation so that they could continue the uplifting service after the team left. These workshops on relief and rehabilitation work

were interactive and inspirational. The team counselled more than 1400 men, women and children. Medical clinics were conducted in tents and the team treated 108 patients.

The team distributed bed sheets, clothes, bicycles, sewing machines, items for personal hygiene and toys for the children. School uniforms and school supplies were given to the students. Food was served to the people in the nearby Sai Centre and in addition food packages were distributed to people in the relief camps with love and humility, emulating the Grama Seva performed by Swami's students.

Gayatri Mantra was chanted for protection and purification of the surrounding areas. At the camp sites, children sang Bhajans and the National Anthem of Sri Lanka. All who participated, the servers and the served ones alike, were spiritually uplifted.

### **Indonesia**

During the first week of February 2005 a task force from the Sathya Sai Centre of Medan, Indonesia installed two water purification units in an area near Lhoksuewawe, Aceh. These units are very much needed to supplement the limited supply of water provided by the Government. Sri Sathya Sai Central Council of Indonesia is currently working with the Government of Indonesia to assist in the rebuilding of Aceh, which was devastated by the earthquake and tsunami. The Sai Centre of Medan is now engaged in serving the refugees who have been housed in shelters by the Government in the Lhoksuewawe area.

### **Thailand**

On 29th December 2004, a team of twenty-five Sai devotees left the capital for the South. They travelled in one of the Sathya Sai School buses and another vehicle. The bus went straight to Krabi, one of the worst hit areas in Thailand, and preparations were made to open a kitchen for distribution. Medical supplies, clothing, blankets, water and food were taken to the site.

All volunteers met the local people and a plan of action was conceived. The plan included three areas in which Sai service was very much needed. The first was at the Pracha Santhi Suk Foundation, which had been converted into an area to receive the remains of hundreds of people who did not survive the tsunami. Sister Lorraine Burrows and other Sai devotees worked from morning until night assisting the people who were searching for their relatives. There was a desperate need for volunteers who could speak both English and Thai as well as other European languages in order to assist the thousands of foreign visitors who were looking for their loved ones. The second area was at Krabi hospital. Here also there was a great need for translation and understanding for the patients and foreigners in the hospital. The hospital also served as one of the focal points for the distribution of food, medical supplies and clothing. The third area was the preparation and distribution of food. Devotees worked from morning till evening preparing food. More than one thousand boxes of vegetarian food were distributed everyday.

On 23rd January 2005, a medical camp was held in a school in Chengdau, a district 80 kms from Chengmai. 262 people were seen by the medical team and medicines were given to patients. Bhajans were sung during the whole session. Clothes, quilts, slippers, eating utensils and toothbrushes were distributed to 300 people. Food was served to 720 people, and all felt uplifted.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba says, "It is not so much that other people need our service, but rather we who need opportunities to serve." We, His children, are grateful for the opportunities He gives us to serve God in man and help us realise and manifest our divine nature.



## BHARAT

**Andhra Pradesh:** Srikakulam district conducted a veterinary camp in Kattula Kaviti village treating 1256 animals and vaccinating 192 calves. It carried out a free medical camp treating 362 patients, conducted Grama Seva in 15 villages giving food provisions known as Amritha Kalasams (each containing 5 kg rice, 1 kg dhal, 1 kg oil and 1 kg tamarind) to 38 selected poor families. These families were also given cooking vessels, Saris and Dhotis. In one of the villages a drinking water well was dug. The district organised Sri Sathya Sai Divya Sandesh Maha Sabha in Sankili village inviting people from 92 villages. 5230 people took part in the meeting held on 23rd January 2005, in which significance of Nama Sankirtan, Seva and Bhagavan's message (full text given elsewhere) given on 23rd August 2004 to the devotees of the district at Prasanthi Nilayam were explained. This district opened 2 new Bhajana Mandalis in Ondrujola and Ohorlangi villages in January 2005.

Hyderabad district conducted a veterinary camp in Veera Reddy Palli village on 23rd January 2005 treating 150 cattle. It carried out a free medical camp examining 500 patients and giving free medicines and identified 19 cataract cases to be treated at Hyderabad. This district started an extended school building at Nagayapalli Thanda built under Sri Sathya Sai Gurukula Seva Yajnam. On this occasion, Narayana Seva was carried out to 1000 people. Notebooks and pens were given to all school children. The school children trained by Bal Vikas Gurus took part in the cultural programmes arranged on the day.

Kurnool Samithi conducted a free kidney check-up camp and advised 12 patients on follow-up treatment on 9th January 2005. This district conducted a health check-up of 62 inmates of Bharat Seva Asramam; they were also provided toothbrushes, pastes, tongue cleaners, steel plates and glasses. The district conducted a neurology camp treating 15 patients on 16th January 2005. It carried out Narayana Seva for 58 people on 23rd January 2005 and provided drinking water in Burujula village by digging a borewell on 27th January 2005.

Medak district distributed sweets and fruits to 350 prisoners in the District Central Jail at Sanga Reddy town after conducting Bhajan and Satsang. Similarly, 100 prisoners in Siddhipet Jail were given sweets and fruits on 25th December 2004. This district distributed blankets to 80 selected poor persons, did Narayana Seva to 800 people and performed two free marriages giving the necessary material to the couples on 1st January 2005 at Siddipet. This district conducted a medical camp treating 900 persons and giving free medicines. It also distributed Sai Protein food to 600 children.

**Assam, Manipur and N.E. States:** In order to arouse public awareness about Bhagavan Baba's mission and to spread His message of love, Tinsukia district of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations of Assam, Manipur and N.E. States and other neighbouring districts organised a two-day devotees meet on 4th and 5th of January 2005 at the oil town, Digboi. The programmes included a procession, Bal Vikas cultural programme, exhibition, public meeting, etc.

The people of the town were thrilled at the huge rally of around 400 persons starting from the old Delhi Public School premises, the conference venue. It went through the main roads of Digboi with banners of messages of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Around 300 devotees attended the conference on both the days. This unique public function generated unprecedented enthusiasm in the area and it was a happy augury that the youth and the Seva Dal volunteers shouldered various responsibilities

with zest. The cultural programme of Bal Vikas students was appreciated by the large number of audience.

**Delhi:** A short-term winter course on Indian Culture and Spirituality for college students was conducted from 25th December to 30th December 2004 by Sri Sathya Sai Trust, Delhi and Punjab and Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Delhi. One hundred and sixty five boys and one hundred and fifty five girls from Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana and Chandigarh participated in the programme. Besides topics on Indian Culture and Spirituality, students were also exposed to the concept of Seva, spiritual games, quiz and other value-oriented programmes. This course was held for the third successive year.

**Karnataka:** Fourth Anniversary of the inauguration of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Whitefield was celebrated on 19th January 2005 in the hospital premises. The celebrations to mark this event were simple but touching. The day started with Suprabhatam in the grand dome area of the hospital, after which the Bhajan group led the Nagar Sankirtan around the hospital and the residential campus. This was followed by greeting the residents in the campus by conducting house visits. Later, patients in the wards and the CCUs were individually greeted with a picture of Swami and a packet of Vibhuti.

The function started at 10.00 a.m. in the dome area with the chanting from the Narayana Suktam. The Director, Dr. A.N. Safaya, then gave his welcome address and briefly highlighted the work done by the hospital during the last four years, with Swami's grace and blessings. It was satisfactory to note that the hospital had performed nearly 10,000 cardiac and neuro surgeries, an equal number of cardiac cath procedures and over 2,80,000 consultations during the last four years since its inception. There was a panel discussion on the achievements, uniqueness and vision of the Institute. The participants were Dr. A.S. Hegde (neurosciences department), Dr. P.K. Dash (cardiology department), Dr. Anil Kumar Mulpur (ctvs department) and Dr. Geeta Rangan (neurology department). Dr. Hegde spoke about the role played by spirituality in the healing process of patients treated in this hospital, which he attributed to Bhagavan. Dr. Anil Kumar spoke about the uniqueness exemplified in the five S's, namely, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Students, Seva Dal, Staff and Self-satisfaction.

As the main function ended, the invitees were taken to the exhibition in the basement of the hospital. The theme of the exhibition was "My Life is My Message". It depicted through pictures, quotations and creatively designed posters the entire gamut of service projects undertaken by Bhagavan. This was followed by the inauguration and sapling planting of the "Sai Nutrition" garden. This initiative by the Institute would serve in improving the greenery in the hospital campus and also produce fruits and vegetables for the canteen and dietary kitchens. There was a Narayana Seva wherein senior functionaries of the organisation served food to the Narayanas, who were assembled in the campus for the occasion. This was followed by lunch for all the invitees.

In the afternoon, there were three programmes: The first was a magic show for the patients held in one of the wards. The second programme was felicitation of all the support staff, the silent workers and the pride of the hospital, who work round the clock to ensure that the hospital runs smoothly and efficiently, and is maintained spick and span. Three: there were two friendly volleyball matches wherein staff displayed their athletic prowess for all to see!

In the evening, there was a cultural programme, which began with the group song, "Hum ko Tumse Pyar Kitna..." sung by the ladies staff. This was followed by a Nataraja dance programme and a skit titled "No Service is Small", both performed by the Bal Vikas children of the hospital. After the

events, the Director distributed tokens of love and appreciation to all these children, who had put in a lot of effort to make the evening programme a grand success. This was followed by a music programme, which was a bouquet of devotional songs offered at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan by some gifted doctors and staff, who excelled, not only in their area of expertise but also in the field of music. The language mix of the songs was diverse, from Bengali to Tamil and Oriya to Hindi. The visual projections of the meaning of the songs along with appropriate slides served well to heighten the experience of the event. The fourth anniversary ended with Arati. In the heart of hearts, everyone expressed their gratitude to Bhagavan for making them a part of His Divine Mission and silently rededicated their lives for the furtherance of His Mission.

**Maharashtra and Goa:** Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Maharashtra and Goa made a magnificent start of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba by holding a grand and holy function entitled “Sri Sathya Sai Namasmarana – A Spiritual Renaissance” at Andheri Sports Complex, Mumbai on 29th January 2005. The programme was inspired by the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the importance of Namasmarana for the redemption of mankind in the Age of Kali and to usher in an era of peace and divinity in the world. It was presented by Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma, a renowned santoor maestro.

Besides Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma, several leading artistes including Sri Suresh Wadkar, Sri Anup Jalota, Smt. Kavita Krishnamurthy, Smt. Richa Sharma, Smt. Padmaja Phenany Joglekar and Begum Parveen Sultana (all devotees of Bhagavan) rendered Namasmarana Bhajans in the function. The uniqueness lay in the fact that they did not sing individual Bhajans but rendered Namavalis, which are the hallmark of Sri Sathya Sai Namasmarana Movement.

The stadium was full to capacity with 30,000 people, who sat in rapt attention listening to the melodious Namavalis being sung by all the artistes. The laser show on Sarva Dharma Message of Bhagavan was the highlight of the presentation, followed by an Audiovisual show on the major achievements of Bhagavan in the realm of social service. The entire audience of 30,000 sat through the entire show which started at 6.30 p.m. and concluded at 11.30 p.m. Several celebrities including the Governor of Maharashtra attended the function.

The stage was very magnificently created by way of a three dimensional set of Prasanthi Nilayam and the same was looking gorgeous, creating a feeling for the audience as if the artistes and the audience were actually seated in Sai Kulwant Hall at Prasanthi Nilayam. Before the show concluded with Arati, all the artistes and celebrities were called on the stage to sing together, the Namavali dear to Bhagavan, viz., “Mandir Mein Tum Ram Ho Sai, Masjid Mein Noor Mohammed...”. This was really unique. Indeed Bhagavan’s Divine Presence was felt by one and all during the entire show. All the artistes were felicitated by a memento of crystal glass carrying the logo of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan. The entire show was covered by ten cameras.

**Orissa:** In the Annual Car Festival at Puri, 300 Sai workers and Seva Dal volunteers undertook Seva activities which included first aid, canteen and food supply, mobile supply of drinking water, stretcher service, removal of debris and sanitation and cremation of unclaimed bodies.

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Dharmagarh in Kalahandi district undertook a project to construct two kilometre long road for the adopted village Birmal. The work started on 10th September 2004 with 150 Seva Dal volunteers of Dharmagarh Samithi and its Bhajan Mandalis. The construction work is being done on every Sunday and it is to be completed before the 80th Birthday of Bhagavan Baba.

Sri Sathya Sai Rural Community Centre cum Cyclone Shelter which started functioning on 6th January 2001 has so far provided free treatment to nearly one lakh persons.

A district level Bal Vikas rally of Keonjhar district was held at Joda from 15th to 17th October 2004, in which 201 students and 40 Gurus took part. The programme started at 6.30 p.m. on 15th October 2004 with Bhajan and cultural show. Indoor and outdoor competitions were held on this occasion on 16th October 2004, a discussion on the theme “Sai Education and Building Personality” was organised which was followed by a cultural programme. On 17th October 2004, a grand rally was organised which covered important areas of the town. In the valedictory session, the participants were awarded certificates and prizes.

**Rajasthan:** The central objective of Sai Mission is “Love All Serve All”. Sai devotees of Rajasthan have adopted a more effective way to spread this basic message to the people at all levels through organising “Sri Sathya Sai Prem Seva Sandesh Vahini”. It is Rajasthan Parikrama Programme (a chariot built on a car depicting Sai activities through colourful exhibits displayed all around this chariot). The Vahini glides along with 400 students from 2-3 schools in busy market places and thickly populated streets. The students carry placards bearing Bhagavan Baba’s sayings.

In the valedictory function, the students were provided with Sai Prasadam and Sai literature specially designed and published for this purpose as gift which reached the parents developing their awareness about Sai Mission. Also colourful pamphlets containing short profiles of the life and mission of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba were distributed to general public. The programme from 9th September 2004 to 25th December 2004 had covered 10 cities, viz., Bhilwara, Chittorgarh, Ajmer, Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Padampur, Bhadra and Kota. Cooperation of school management and teachers was conspicuously observed in this programme. Devotees experienced Bhagavan’s Leelas during the organisation of this programme while covering 11 villages for door-to-door Narayana Seva. In these programmes, about 3,500 students actively participated and 40,000 people observed these programmes during Vahini’s 95 km Parikrama in cities, towns and villages of Rajasthan.

An 80-hour Akhanda Bhajan was organised by Bhilwara Samithi from 14th January 2005 to 17th January 2005. Devotees from other adjoining Samithis also participated.

State Conference – 2005 of Sai Organisation was held on 6th February 2005 in Sri Sathya Sai College for Women, Jaipur. 99 devotees attended and deliberated on three years action plan in connection with Bhagavan’s 80th Birthday celebrations and other Sai activities.

**Tamil Nadu:** As part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Tamil Nadu organised a function at Sundaram on 20th February 2005 to honour octogenarian couples. Significantly, this unique function was organised in the Silver Jubilee year of Sundaram. 147 couples of all faiths, including Christians and Muslims, participated in this function, which was presided over by Prof. Rangabashyam, a renowned surgeon and was addressed by a Muslim priest and a Christian priest. One of the speakers was Maj. Gen. Aban Naidu who narrated his experiences of Bhagavan’s Divinity since the year 1958. Another speaker, Sri Ramamurthy, recollected his student days with Bhagavan at Kamalapuram where Sri Mehboob Khan was the teacher who had special love for Bhagavan. A Bal Vikas student spoke about the glory of Bhagavan. To add joy to the occasion, mandolin maestro Sri Rajesh gave a performance for half an hour in honour of the couples. Special care was taken to prepare food for the couples. Besides wedding clothes, the couples were given various other gifts with love and reverence.

A Conference of ex-Bal Vikas students of Tamil Nadu was held at N.K.T. National Girls High School Auditorium, Chennai on 19th December 2004. A total of 744 students (338 boys and 406 girls) and 108 Gurus participated in this Conference. All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Sri

V. Srinivasan delivered the inaugural address. The speakers at the Conference highlighted the importance of Bal Vikas in developing values in children and making them role models for a new social order. The participants responded with overwhelming enthusiasm to the inspiring speeches of the learned speakers. This was reflected in the scintillating speeches of six speakers, both ladies and gents, from the alumni. The group discussions that followed and the presentations by group leaders highlighted their deep sense of gratitude to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for giving to society this illuminating movement for its uplift and well being. All the participants expressed their resolve to work for the spread of this movement and serve Bhagavan Baba. At the end of the deliberations, an action plan was drawn up. The Conference concluded with Mangalarati to Bhagavan in which all the participants joined with lighted candles.

## **An Appeal to Devotees**

Everyday, a large number of letters from devotees all over the world are coming to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Due to His immense love for His devotees, He personally opens and reads every letter, spending much of His valuable time. It is but natural for devotees to relate their problems to Bhagavan and pray for His grace for their redressal. However, it may not be necessary to write lengthy letters to Bhagavan relating their problems and difficulties as though the Omniscient Bhagavan is not aware of the problems of His devotees. The devotees are, therefore, requested to ensure that their letters to Bhagavan are as brief as possible and to the point, confining to not more than two or three sentences.

**Publisher**

## **Chinna Katha** **Endless Cycle of Birth and Death**

ONCE MAHARSHI AGASTYA met a farmer. Though a man of virtues, the farmer was undergoing a lot of suffering as he was mired in the problems of worldly life. Maharshi's heart melted at the suffering of the farmer, and he proposed to him, "My dear! Come, I will take you to Vaikuntha (heaven)." Without denying the offer of going to heaven, the farmer said, "Swami, my sons are very young. I will definitely go with you after ten years."

After ten years, the Maharshi went to him and said, "My dear! The period of ten years asked for by you was over yesterday. Now come with me to heaven." The farmer said, "Swami! During this period, my elder son got married. I will go with you after seeing my grandson." After the passage of another ten years, the Maharshi went to the farmer's house and stood before it. The farmer was nowhere to be found. Maharshi saw a dog near the courtyard of the house. By his yogic power, the Maharshi recognised that it was the farmer who had taken birth as dog after his death. Giving knowledge to the dog with his power, the Maharshi asked, "Will you go with me now?" But the dog said, "My young

grandsons do not know that these are difficult times as thieves frequent this place at night. I have to guard this house. I will come to heaven after ten years.”

After ten years, Maharshi Agastya went to that house again. There was no dog. The entire house had undergone change. By his yogic power, the Maharshi came to know that the farmer had taken birth as a snake and it was living in a hole at the back of the house. Below the hole was the money hidden in the ground by the farmer. The snake was protecting that money. The Maharshi decided that this person should somehow be granted liberation this time. He called the inmates of the house and told them, “There is a lot of money under the hole at the back of your house. But first you should kill the snake which is holed up there.” All the inmates of the house joined together and started breaking the hole with iron rods. The snake was forced to come out. The grandsons of the farmer killed that snake with iron rods. The very persons, for the protection of whose money the farmer took birth as a snake, became the cause of his death. From that day, his attachment to life came to an end. That was the end of Moha (attachment). Did it bring Moksha (liberation)?

What is the lesson we learn from this story? The fundamental cause of man taking birth again and again are his desires and his actions with attachment. In spite of being shown the path of liberation, the farmer in this story did not make use of it. Why? The iron chains of attachment pulled him down!

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**Atma is the ocean, Prakriti (Nature) is a wave of that vast, ageless, boundless ocean and the Jivi (individual) is just a drop of that wave. You cannot give up the wave or the ocean. Once you enter the depths of the ocean, it is all peace; agitation, noise, confusion are all only on the outer layers. So also in the innermost recess**

of the heart, there is a reservoir of Shakti where you  
must take refuge.

**APRIL 2005**

**SIVARATHRI DISCOURSE - I**

## **SIVA CONSCIOUSNESS IS ALL-PERVADING**

*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)**

Embodiments of Love!

NO ONE SEEMS TO HAVE MADE AN effort to know the inner meaning and significance of Sivarathri. In fact, the meaning is contained in the word Sivarathri itself. “Siva” means auspicious and “rathri” means night. Thus, Sivarathri means auspicious night. This auspiciousness is present everywhere. Then the question arises, “Who is Siva?” Siva is the divine consciousness which pervades all living beings. This Sivatwa (divine consciousness) permeates not only human beings, but birds, beasts and animals as well. In fact, every moment in our life can be considered as Sivarathri. We need not wait for Sivarathri on a particular day in a year.

**Divinity is Indescribable and Immeasurable**

Embodiments of Love!

Siva consciousness is all-pervading. It is unbounded and unlimited. Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Sruthimalloke Sarvamavruthya Tishthati (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, Divinity permeates the entire universe). If we analyse carefully, it will be obvious that all that we witness around is Siva consciousness, and nothing else. Siva does not mean a particular form with matted hair, donning a tiger skin. Wherever we look and whichever form we come across, it is resplendent with Siva consciousness, whether it is the form of a child, an elderly person, a woman or a man. How can you describe this all-pervading Siva consciousness or limit it to a particular time and place? Some children perform a particular dance to portray Siva Tandava (cosmic dance of Siva) symbolically. But, how can one describe the

transcendental Siva principle which words fail to describe and the mind cannot comprehend? Siva is described as Mukkanti (the Lord with three eyes). All of us have only two eyes. But Siva has a third eye as well. We are aware of only the past and the present. We cannot visualise the future. Siva, who can visualise the future with his third eye, is therefore referred to as Mukkanti.

People attribute different forms to God and describe Him in many different ways. Each one describes Him according to his imagination, ascribing a particular name and form to Him. But no description can fully reveal Divinity. Nameless, formless God is omnipresent and all-pervading. He is Avangmanasagochara (neither words can describe nor the mind can comprehend Him) and Aprameya (immeasurable). Who can describe such Divinity? Divinity signifies only one thing, that is, consciousness. This consciousness assumes the form that it enters – it may be the form of a dog, a crow, a crane or a human being. Easwaratwa (Divinity), therefore, connotes consciousness. This consciousness is present in all human beings, nay, even in insects, birds, beasts and animals. One of its names is Sivatwa (Siva consciousness).

### **God Assumes all Names and Forms**

Some people limit Sivatwa to the form of Siva but it is not correct. Sivatwa is present in the entire cosmos. In fact, all the devotees sitting in this Hall are embodiments of Siva. Sarvam Sivamayam (all that you witness in this objective world is the manifestation of Siva). It pervades all the three worlds. It exists in all the three periods of time – the past, present and future. It is indescribable. Any length of time is insufficient to describe it. Sivatwa therefore cannot be described as this or that. No one can say that it is present here and not there. It is present everywhere. People worship it by attributing different names and forms to it.

Just as consciousness is the same in all, divine love does not observe any difference between living beings. Your love for your father, mother, brother, sister, etc., is based on your earthly relationships with them. But divine love is the same for all. In fact, every living being is the embodiment of divinity. God assumes all names and forms. Hence, you are also the form of God. Once Parvati asked Siva, “Oh Lord! You are present everywhere. But how can people recognise your omnipresence?” Easwara replied, “The consciousness that is immanent in me pervades all living beings. It permeates every cell of their body. One cannot explain it; one has only to experience it.” The principle of consciousness pervades all living beings. People worship Siva and sing his glories. Sivatwa is the divine consciousness that is present everywhere and permeates every object of the universe.

Siva does not care to tend his hair. He keeps his hair in its natural state as matted locks. He keeps his body also in a natural state without any refinements whatsoever. His ash-smeared body appears in different colours to different people. Who can describe the colour and effulgence of Siva’s body? Once there started an argument between Lakshmi and Parvati about the physical appearance of Siva and Vishnu. Lakshmi asked Parvati, “Parvati! What made you choose Siva as your husband who always keeps his body smeared with ash?” Parvati then asked Lakshmi, “Amma! The colour of your husband’s body is blue. Why don’t you change it?” When they were arguing thus, Saraswati entered the scene. She is the embodiment of equanimity. She said to both of them, “There may be some differences in their physical appearance. But I do not find any real difference between them. The same divine consciousness permeates both these forms of Siva and Vishnu. I realise it. Since you are not realising it, you are entering into argumentation. Hence, forget all outward differences.”

Saraswati symbolises the transcendental principle which is beyond all the three Gunas (attributes). As mentioned in the Puranas (ancient texts), it is this principle practised by Saraswati which imparts peace and serenity to the world. Differences lie in the minds of people but God is beyond all

differences. It is they who ascribe different names, forms and attributes to attributeless, formless God. As are the feelings, so is the form. As is the form, so are the attributes. Based on our imagination, we picture God in different forms. But it is a mistake to be carried away by our imagination. People describe God as Rudra as well as Santhaswarupa (embodiment of peace). But God is always Santhaswarupa only. He is always pleasant and smiling. To consider such an embodiment of peace in a different form is only the imagination of the devotees. All differences are the result of man's imagination.

### **Realise the Oneness of God**

Man should go beyond these differences and understand the oneness of God. Understanding of unity is divine. Man forgets the Divine because he is deluded by the deep wine of worldliness. God is one and He is present wherever you see, be it a city or a village, sky or forest, mountain top or deep sea. You can realise God by cultivating love for God. It is only love that binds God. It is this divine love that will help you to understand oneness of God. God is one without a second. Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam, Bhavateetam Trigunarahitam (God is one without a second, eternal, pure, unchanging, witness to all functions of the intellect, beyond one's imagination, beyond the three Gunas of Sattwa, Rajas and Thamas). Love for God makes us realise our unity with divinity. When we have fusion with God, there will be no scope for confusion. Artists like Ravi Varma have portrayed God in different forms, giving expression to their imaginative skills. Whatever be the different forms of portrayal by poets and artists, God is only one. Evil company, bad conduct and wrong food habits are responsible for the delusion which makes us see diversity in unity. Once we get rid of them, we will see unity and divinity everywhere. God is present here, there and everywhere. It is foolishness to search for Him. His is the form which knows no limits and boundaries. Vinayaka appears as only one, wherever you see. He has no attributes whatsoever. He is beyond all Gunas (attributes). He is Ganapati. He has no leader above him. That is why he is called Vinayaka. Since he has no leader above him, even Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara worship him.

### **Embodiments of Love!**

People today are creating differences among human beings by attributing different names and forms to nameless, formless and attributeless God. This is a serious mistake. Divinity is being divided by devotees. Devotees who divide God are evil-minded. God is one. Never create divisions in the name of God. When we do not realise the oneness of God, we engage ourselves in futile arguments and counter arguments. Whether it is Rama, Krishna, Siva or Vishnu, all these are only different names ascribed by devotees to God. But God is one. We ascribe these names to God only for our own satisfaction. Divinity, however, has no difference at all. The noblest path is to realise the oneness of God and worship Him. Do not be confused by the different pictures of God painted by painters and artists. Worship God in any form you like. There can be no objection to that. But the underlying unity between the different names and forms should never be forgotten. It is a misconception to think that Rama may be angry if you worship Krishna and vice versa. Such differences are there in the devotees, but not in Rama and Krishna. It is man who harbours differences and negative feelings, not God. God is always positive. There is no chance for negativity to enter Him.

Dear Students!

Do not ascribe any differences or negative feelings to God. You observe negativity in God because of your own negative feelings. God is one; contemplate on Him, worship Him. See divinity and unity everywhere. Never entertain negativity.

– **From Bhagavan's first Sivarathri Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the morning of 8th March 2005.**

## **SHOWERS OF BLISS ON SIVARATHRI**

THE holy festival of Sivarathri was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam with great piety and solemnity on 8th March 2005 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. On this occasion, mammoth crowds from all parts of the world thronged Prasanthi Nilayam to celebrate this sacred festival in the Divine proximity of Bhagavan.

On 8th March 2005, every inch of space in Sai Kulwant Hall and its surrounding areas was filled since early morning with devotees eagerly waiting for the Divine Darshan of their Beloved Bhagavan on this auspicious day. Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.15 a.m. amidst chanting of Vedic hymns by the Institute students. As soon as Bhagavan entered the Hall, a wave of bliss ran through the entire congregation. A group of students of the Institute welcomed Bhagavan with blowing of conch and playing of Panchavadyam music. After showering His blessings on the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall, Bhagavan came to the dais and blessed three speakers to address the gathering before His Divine Discourse.

Describing Bhagavan as the incarnation of the combined form of Siva and Parvati, the first speaker, Sri Anil Kumar, a faculty member of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, narrated how Bhagavan graciously granted him the experience of His Ardhanareeswara (androgynous) form in Kodaikanal when he witnessed the mark of anklet on His left foot. On enquiry, Bhagavan reminded him that He was the incarnation of Siva and Parvati. The second speaker was Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Member of Prasanthi Council. Dr. Reddy explained the teachings of Bhagavan contained in His famous saying: Follow the Master, Face the Devil, Fight to the End, Finish the Game. He concluded that man should win the game of life by realising his divinity. The last speaker was Sri G.K. Raman, Chairman, Sri Sathya Sai Trust, Tamil Nadu. Sri Raman observed that self-realisation was possible only by following the path of honesty, integrity and purity in life, and by total surrender to God.

After these speeches, Bhagavan gave His first Sivarathri Discourse (full text given elsewhere). After the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, the Institute students recited Stotras in praise of Siva which included Lingashtakam, Bilvashtakam, etc. The morning programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.45 a.m. Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees in the end.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.30 p.m. amidst Vedic chants, Panchavadyam music and blowing of conch by the Institute students. Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, two speakers addressed the gathering. Sri S.V. Giri, former Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, was the first speaker. Sri Giri observed that the festival of Sivarathri signified control of mind which was the key to man's liberation. The second speaker was Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak, Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. At the outset, Sri

Gokak narrated certain personal incidents and expressed deep gratitude to Bhagavan for His protection and blessings. Bhagavan, he said, is the embodiment of all forms and gods, and all the people of the world professing different religions are His children since according to Bhagavan, there is only one religion, the religion of humanity.

After these brief speeches, Bhagavan gave His second Sivarathri Discourse (given elsewhere in this issue), and brought it to a close at 5.15 p.m. with the Bhajan, “Prema Mudita Manase Kaho ...” which the entire multitude of devotees followed with deep devotional fervour. Night-long Sivarathri Akhanda Bhajans started with this Bhajan of Bhagavan as the boys and girls students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning led Bhajans alternately thereafter. Before leaving for His abode in Poornachandra, Bhagavan exhorted the devotees and students to sing Bhajans with feelings and devotion.

Sivarathri Akhanda Bhajan thus started by Bhagavan continued throughout the night. Besides the students of the Institute, many groups of staff of the Ashram and groups of Indian and overseas devotees led the Bhajans by turns. This filled the entire milieu with spiritual vibrations throughout the Sivarathri night. Many devotees observed night-long vigil and participated in Bhajans with devotion and enthusiasm.

Every heart was filled with bliss when Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall to shower His blessings on the devotees and students on the morning of 9th March 2005. After taking a full round of the Hall, Bhagavan came to the dais and occupied His chair, listening to the Bhajans led by the Institute students and followed by the devotees in chorus. With Bhagavan’s profound blessings and in His Divine Presence, the Sivarathri Akhanda Bhajan came to a happy and blissful conclusion with offer of Arati to Bhagavan at 6.55 a.m. At the conclusion of the Sivarathri celebrations, Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees.

In His unbounded love for devotees, Bhagavan gave another Discourse on the afternoon of 9th March 2005. Before Bhagavan’s Divine Discourse, two speakers addressed the gathering. The first speaker was Sri Ajit Popat, an ardent devotee of Bhagavan from the U.K. Dwelling on the significance of Bhakti (devotion), Sri Popat said that we should make our Bhakti so intense that it becomes our great Shakti (spiritual power). The next speaker was Dr. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Quoting from Bhagavan’s recent Sivarathri Discourse, Dr. Venkataraman said that Siva signified divine consciousness which pervaded every atom of the universe as also every cell of human body.

After these speeches, Bhagavan delivered His nectarine Discourse, narrating the incidents of His childhood days to the joy of all devotees. Sivarathri celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam came to a happy conclusion at 6.35 p.m. with offer of Arati to Bhagavan and distribution of Prasadam to all the devotees.

## **SIVARATHRI DISCOURSE – II**

# YOU ARE THE CHILDREN OF IMMORTALITY

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. Character is valued far higher than the very life itself. People have forgotten the basic principles of this great culture and are imitating Western culture. Alas! The Bharatiyas are not aware of the greatness of their cultural heritage just as a mighty elephant is not aware of its own strength.

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

NO ONE HAS BEEN ABLE TO FULLY realise the uniqueness, greatness and sanctity of this holy land of Bharat. The culture of Bharat is one of the holiest and noblest cultures of the world. It encompasses equally all human endeavours, from the smallest to the biggest. Unfortunately, the Bharatiyas have forgotten this great culture and are practising alien culture.

## Glory of Bharatiya Culture

Today Sathya (truth) and Dharma (righteousness) have declined. However, they cannot be rooted out completely. There is nothing more sacred than truth and righteousness. They ensure peace. They are like the two eyes of man. Man is losing the vision of these two eyes and thereby becoming blind.

This is the country in which truth is held high, but this principle has been forgotten. Though modern students pursue higher education and acquire degrees, they are losing sight of truth and righteousness. Instead of fostering such a sacred and noble culture and leading their lives in accordance with the principles laid down in it, people are wasting their time in vain pursuits. It is only the practice of the great human values of Sathya (truth), Dharma (righteousness), Santhi (peace) and Prema (love) that made Bharat the great spiritual leader of the entire world. Sathya and Dharma are essential for Santhi (peace). Even more essential than anything else today is Thyaga (sacrifice). Thyaga does not mean giving up all worldly possessions. Real Thyaga (sacrifice) lies in putting these human values into practice in our day-to-day life. It is our misfortune that we have forgotten these great principles of Sathya and Dharma. We should never lose sight of these divine principles in our life. It is only when we foster these human values, we are entitled to be called Bharatiyas in the real sense. Losing sight of even one of these values will not entitle us to this great appellation. Our life must be a continuous journey from Sathya (truth) to Prema (love) in the order of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema. These values must enter the core of our heart and permeate every cell of our body.

The creation emerges from truth and merges into truth,  
Is there a place in the cosmos where truth does not exist?

Visualise this pure and unsullied truth.

(Telugu Poem)

A human being is sustained by the values of truth and righteousness right from his birth. In spite of many difficulties, the women of Bharat have always fostered these values in children alongside

performing their household duties and domestic chores. Swami knows quite well how much suffering the parents undergo in bringing up their children. The students today aspire merely to acquire high education and big degrees. They should rather aspire to grasp the essence of truth and righteousness.

First of all, one should understand the inner meaning of Sathya and Dharma. The word “Sathya” consists of three letters “Sa”, “Tha” and “Ya”. The letter “Sa” signifies Sattwa (piety), “Tha”, Thyaga (sacrifice) and “Ya”, Yama and Niyama (observances for sense control and rules for inner purity). These are the qualities which connote Sathya. You can now estimate the vastness and depth of the meaning of Sathya. It emerges from the heart of man. Unfortunately, today we have lost the human values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema which formed the core of Bharatiya culture. Modern man does not know what Sathya and Dharma stand for. Dharma is taken to be duty. This interpretation is not correct. This is only an English translation, rather inadequately expressed! The real interpretation of Dharma is Dharayati iti Dharma (that which sustains is Dharma). It sustains human life. When one adheres to Sathya and Dharma, one’s life will be sanctified. We suffer hardships and humiliations in life because we do not follow Dharma. The Pandavas along with Draupadi led a noble life by following Sathya and Dharma. It was, in fact, Draupadi who explained the inner meaning of Sathya. Man should always be guided by the principles of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema in his journey of life.

### **Earn the Grace of God**

Markandeya is another example of the life of virtue. He was born out of a boon granted by Easwara to his parents. Easwara asked his parents whether they wanted a virtuous son with a short life-span or a son not so virtuous but who would live long. The parents opted for a virtuous son. Accordingly, Markandeya was born but he was granted a life-span of sixteen years. Nevertheless, the parents were joyous as they had been blessed with a virtuous son. Years rolled by and Markandeya entered his sixteenth year. Remembering the words of Easwara, his parents became grief-stricken. On enquiry by Markandeya, they revealed that his death was very near. Markandeya did not want to waste any more time. He went to the temple of Easwara and started chanting the sacred Panchakshari Mantra, Om Namah Sivaya, with all sincerity and devotion. He lost himself in the contemplation of Easwara. As he had not returned home, his parents went to the temple and sat at the entrance. They were shedding tears thinking of the impending end of Markandeya’s life. Immensely pleased with the sincere devotion of Markandeya, Siva appeared there and saved him from the noose of Yama (God of death), and granted him the boon of long life to the joy of his parents.

It is only God who can save the life of a human being. Some doctors claim that they can give good medicines or perform surgery to save the life of a person. They make several promises but fail to fulfil them. Except God, none else can save or prolong the life of a person (loud applause). With God’s grace, one can achieve anything in this world. Dear students! You must strive to earn the grace of God right from your childhood. When you start praying thus from an early age, you will surely earn His grace and protection.

### **Understand the Real Import of God’s Names**

Embodiments of Love!

Today is the holy day of Sivarathri. Siva means auspicious. Where there is Siva, there cannot be Shava (death). This holy day of Sivarathri must be spent in the constant contemplation of God, chanting the holy name of Siva right from early in the morning. Siva is also called Neelakantha. As he swallowed poison, his throat turned blue. The name Neelakantha is highly sacred. God has many other names like Achintya (beyond thoughts) and Aprameya (immeasurable). Every name of God has a



deep inner meaning. You can understand the real meaning of these names by God's grace only. Divinity is eternal. It cannot be attained so easily. Nobody can define it. One of the names attributed to Lord Siva is Mrityunjaya, which means one who has conquered death. People usually consider it only an ordinary word. But this divine name of God has a deep inner meaning.

Parents sometimes have a difference of opinion between them about naming their children. But the real name of man is Amrutaputra (son of immortality). Every human being is Amrutaputra. The Upanishads also declare him to be so. The Upanishads reveal the true identity of a human being by addressing him as Srunvantu Viswe Amrutasya Putrah (Oh, the children of immortality! Listen).

Dear Devotees and Students!

You are all Amrutaputras, not Anrutaputras (sons of immortality, not falsehood). One who is an Amrutaputra is not affected by change and death. You are verily the embodiments of the changeless, eternal principle of divinity. Once Parvati requested Siva to give a name to their son. Siva gave the name Amrutaputra. One day Parvati was putting the child to sleep. She was rocking the cradle and singing a lullaby, "Oh Amrutaputra! Sleep my dear! Sleep. If you are awake, the whole world will be awake." Watching the scene, Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu, came there and enquired about the name of the child. Parvati told her that his name was Amrutaputra. Lakshmi further enquired where she got that name from. Parvati replied that it was Lord Siva who gave that name to the child. Since he is the son of Easwara, he is Amrutaputra, she said.

### **Study of Scriptures Deepens one's Understanding**

Embodiments of Love!

In fact, you are all Amrutaputras. But you cannot understand the full import of this appellation unless you read the ancient sacred texts which contain the true meaning of such terms. You should strive to live up to that great name. The names given to children by elders in our country have a lot of significance and meaning. They are not given just casually or for fun. Study of ancient scriptures is necessary to understand the underlying meaning and sanctity of these names. But, unfortunately, we attach little importance to the study of the scriptures. We are not trying to understand the eternal principles of Sathya and Dharma, and are ruining our lives by taking to wrong path. We are simply repeating the words Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema without making any effort to understand them and put them into practice in our life.

Dear Students – Boys and Girls!

People call Easwara as Kailasavasi (the Lord who resides in Kailasa). Where is Kailasa? It is in the depth of your heart. When you contemplate on him in the innermost recesses of your heart in total silence, then you can visualise him. Therefore, one should practise Mouna (silence). Mouna implies total stillness of thought and speech.

Embodiments of Love!

You are all Amrutaputras. Hence, constantly remain in that awareness. Proclaim yourself to be Amrutaputras. Whatever name has been already given to you, prefix "Amrutaputra" to that name. It will be a big mistake if you consider yourself Anrutaputra. Hence, realise your true nature and call yourself Amrutaputra.

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

**–From Bhagavan's second Sivarathri Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the afternoon of 8th March 2005.**

**Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning**

## **ACHIEVING GREAT HEIGHTS**

### **A Joyous Ceremony**

**“THIS INSTITUTE** will attain great heights and will become the leader for the whole country,” declared Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on the occasion of the joyous ceremony held in the Institute Auditorium on 24th February 2005 when Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak took charge as Vice Chancellor of the Institute from Sri S.V. Giri.

Bhagavan was offered a traditional welcome with Poorna Kumbham amidst chanting of Vedic hymns when He came to the Institute at 8.00 a.m. At the outset, Sri S.V. Giri welcomed Bhagavan and introduced the incoming Vice Chancellor Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak, an IAS of Maharashtra cadre and the son of the first Vice Chancellor of the Institute, Dr. Vinayak Krishna Gokak. Sri Giri emphasised the unique spiritual ambience of the Institute and said that the goals of the Institute were social manifestations of Bhagavan’s Divine Mission. He expressed gratitude to the Revered Chancellor for His grace throughout his tenure as Vice Chancellor of the Institute. Thereafter, Sri Sanjay Mahalingam, a Ph.D. student in the Faculty of Management, highlighted the achievements of the Institute during the tenure of Sri S.V. Giri. Sri Giri blended pristine values with modernity and the Institute acquired total connectivity with state-of-the-art infrastructure and video-conferencing among the Campuses, said Sri Mahalingam. He added that many new courses were started during Sri Giri’s tenure and the Bio Sciences Department received the ‘Special Assistance Project’ from the UGC.

Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak, the new Vice Chancellor, described the Institute as an island of hope amidst chaos and a spiritual lighthouse for the whole world. “What distinguishes this great institution is the emphasis on Educare: enabling the students to realise the divine potential within”, said Sri Gokak. He concluded his talk with prayer to Bhagavan for His guidance.

The Revered Chancellor then delivered His Benedictory Discourse. In the end, Bhagavan blessed Sri Giri by adorning his wrist with a gold bracelet, saying, “Idi Prema Kankanam” (this is a bracelet of love). He also blessed his wife with a bracelet and a necklace. Prasadam was then distributed to all the students, staff and guests. As the Arati concluded, Bhagavan said that we should never forget chanting Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu (May all the people of the world be happy!). How could there be individual welfare without universal welfare? World peace alone would lead to individual peace. That note was a wonderful conclusion to a unique ceremony.

### **Glorious Performance of Institute Students**

As many as 20 students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning passed the GATE (Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering) 2005 with high ranks, while one of them secured the first rank in this all-India examination.

To celebrate this landmark achievement of the Institute students, a felicitation function was held in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the afternoon of 11th March 2005. The Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, graced the occasion by His Divine Presence. Congratulating the students on their glorious success, the Vice Chancellor of the Institute, Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak said that the extraordinary performance of the Institute students had brought glory to the Institute. This, he said, was the result of the integral system of education of the Institute and the grace of Bhagavan who had blessed them to appear in this examination.

After his speech, Sri Gokak announced the names of the successful students who came one by one and received the blessings of Bhagavan. The first to come was Sri Naresh Kumar who had secured first rank in India in the examination. Bhagavan lovingly blessed him with a shawl and gave him a beautiful watch. Thereafter, Bhagavan materialised a gold bracelet for him and tied it on his wrist with His Divine Hands amidst a thunderous applause of students and devotees. All the 20 students were thus blessed by Bhagavan and were given a shawl and a watch each while the applause of the students and devotees continued.

After the felicitation ceremony, two of the successful students made a brief speech. The first was Sri Naresh Kumar who expressed his gratitude to Bhagavan for providing him excellent education in His educational institutions which, he said, were unique in the world since God Himself was the teacher in them. The next student Sri D.V. Hemant said that the students of the Institute had the unique opportunity to inculcate values under Bhagavan's loving care and guidance.

Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, Sri S.V. Giri, former Vice Chancellor of the Institute addressed the gathering. The extraordinary success of the students was nothing but Divine grace, said Sri Giri. He exhorted the students to imbibe the qualities of Sraddha, Bhakti and Vinaya (steadfast faith, devotion and humility) to achieve success in life. He advised them to cherish the continuous blessings of Bhagavan.

In His Discourse, Bhagavan said that His students were His property. They were highly virtuous and were endowed with purity of heart. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close at 5.35 p.m. with the Bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina ...". At the conclusion of the function, Arati was offered to Bhagavan. Prasadam was distributed to all on this occasion.

#### **A Unique Poets Meet**

The students of the Institute do not merely excel in studies, they get grooming in the Institute for the blossoming of their talents in many fields of learning. This was seen on 25th March 2005 when a poets meet was held in Sai Kulwant Hall, in which 18 students of the Institute took part. The Revered Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba graced the occasion by His Divine Presence.

The programme started at 4.00 p.m. and the young budding poets took their turns to recite poems to express their feelings in as many as 12 languages, which included Tamil, Telugu, English, Oriya, Nepalese, Assamese, Malayalam, Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Kannada, Tulu and Lithuanian. What made this literary meet unique was not merely the number of languages but the variety and subtlety of subjects chosen and the depth and profundity of the feelings also. This excellent poets meet concluded at 4.45 p.m. At the end of this programme, all the young poets offered their obeisance to Bhagavan and received blessings and also gifts from His Divine Hands. Bhagavan also gave them the coveted opportunity of group photos with Him.

## **FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SANATHANA SARATHI EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS**

THE First National Conference of Editors and Publishers of all regional editions of "Sanathana Sarathi" was held on 7th March 2005 in the premises of Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam. More than 50 delegates associated with regional languages editions, namely, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Nepalese, Assamese, Sindhi

and Oriya participated in this Conference. The main objective of the Conference was to have uniform high standard of publication of all editions of “Sanathana Sarathi”. The deliberations of the Conference were conducted in three sessions.

### **Proceedings**

The first session started at 10.00 a.m. with chanting of Vedic Mantras by the staff members of Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust. Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations inaugurated the Conference and delivered the inaugural address. It was significant, Sri Srinivasan observed, that the First Conference of “Sanathana Sarathi” editors and publishers was being held in the 80th year of the Advent of the Avatar Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He pointed out that nobody in human history had done so much for humanity as Bhagavan. The role of the editors of “Sanathana Sarathi” was to create awareness about this and also about the Divine Mission of Bhagavan to redeem mankind, said the learned speaker.

After this inaugural address of Sri Srinivasan, four speakers addressed the gathering. The first speaker was Sri K.S. Rajan, Convener, Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust. Sri Rajan traced the history of “Sanathana Sarathi” since its inception in 1958 and observed that “Sanathana Sarathi” was a sacred magazine and the devotees considered its arrival as a blessing from Bhagavan. It was therefore necessary, he said, that Bhagavan’s message should form the main part of the magazine. The next speaker, Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy, Warden, Brindavan Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, said that “Sanathana Sarathi” gave to its readers the experience of Bhagavan’s Divine love which they were hungering for and which could relieve them of the tyranny of flesh and slavery of the mind. He emphasised that the quality of “Sanathana Sarathi” should be compatible with the importance of the message it conveyed. The next speaker, Sri Anil Kumar, a faculty member of the Institute, gave a detailed outline of the tasks which all the editions of “Sanathana Sarathi” should undertake to enhance the quality, variety and richness of their contents. The last speaker of this session, Sri G.L. Anand, Editor, “Sanathana Sarathi” (English), observed that “Sanathana Sarathi” was one of the most widely read magazines as its subscribers were spread over 118 countries of the world, and it was being brought out in 12 Indian and 10 foreign languages, besides English. He outlined the factors which could help in the improvement of the quality of the contents as well as physical get-up of all editions of “Sanathana Sarathi”.

After the first session, the delegates were divided into three groups for group discussion on specific issues to bring all the editions of “Sanathana Sarathi” to the high level of perfection. These groups deliberated on the issues of their concern from 3.30 to 4.30 p.m. and formulated their recommendations. The group leaders of these three groups, Sri Gangadhara Bhat, Editor, “Sanathana Sarathi” (Kannada), Sri N. Ramani, Editor, “Sanathana Sarathi” (Tamil) and Sri C.P. Malhotra, Publisher, “Sanathana Sarathi” (Hindi), presented these recommendations in the valedictory session (6.30 to 7.30 p.m.) presided over by Dr. Jagdish Narain, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust. Besides other participants, Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman, Prasanthi Council and Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Member, Prasanthi Council also took part in this session. In his speech on this occasion, Dr. Goldstein emphasised the need for spreading Bhagavan’s Divine Message of love and peace to all parts of the world to usher in an era of peace and harmony in the world. Before the conclusion of the Conference, Sri V.N. Prahlad, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust offered a vote of thanks to all the participants and the staff of the Book Trust who made this Conference a grand success. The proceedings of the Conference concluded with Arati.

### **Recommendations**

The Conference recommended that all efforts should be made to bring all editions of “Sanathana Sarathi” to the highest level of perfection from all aspects. It was recommended that special attention should be given to improve the quality of the contents. The physical get-up should be improved to enhance the readability of the magazines. The Conference also recommended that a Coordination Committee should be set up to coordinate and monitor the working of all regional editions of “Sanathana Sarathi”.

## **SRI KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI DISCOURSE - II**

# **PROTECT THE HONOUR AND DIGNITY OF WOMEN**

**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 Sloka)**

Embodiments of Love!

ONE MAY UNDERTAKE PENANCE for a long time, one may master all the scriptures, one may visit any number of places of pilgrimage, one may undertake acts of benevolence and charity, but one cannot cross the ocean of worldliness without serving the noble souls.

### **Learning without Practice is Useless**

You may be knowing that Ravana was a great scholar. He mastered the four Vedas and six Sastras. In spite of this knowledge of scriptures, was there any transformation in him? No. Instead of developing Daivatwa (divine qualities), he developed Danavatwa (demonic qualities). The ten heads of Ravana symbolise four Vedas and six Sastras. Rama severed Ravana’s ten heads since he did not put into practice the knowledge he had acquired. Mere learning of sacred texts and chanting of Vedas will not bring about any transformation. By cutting the heads of Ravana, Rama propagated this truth in the world. Ravana did not have ten heads in a literal sense. In fact, four Vedas and six Sastras represented his ten heads. The message that Rama conveyed was that mere acquisition of knowledge is of little value. All that God teaches is for the benefit and welfare of humanity. It is enough if one puts into practice at least one of the teachings of the Vedas. All your knowledge is useless if you do not put it into practice. Ravana learnt this lesson when he was on deathbed. Only then did he realise his mistake and repented for it. By sincere repentance he attained purity and sacredness.

You find that even the Primary School children join the senior students in Veda chanting at Prasanthi Nilayam. They know all the Vedic Mantras, but they do not have the required capability to put them into practice. They are however aware that mere recitation of the Vedas is of little use.

Only God exists. The world is but an illusion. This sacred teaching of the Vedas should be publicised and should be imparted to everyone. You find many Sadhakas (spiritual aspirants) chanting and teaching the Vedas. It would be fruitless if one does not practise what one preaches. It is like a gramophone record which plays the song but does not experience its melody. So, one should recognise, understand and practise the sacred teachings of the Vedas. Lord Krishna practised what He preached. His teachings are meant to be put into practice. You read in the Mahabharata about many great scholars and persons of great eminence who acquired the knowledge of the Vedas, but they failed to put this God-given knowledge into practice. God has no preferences or dislikes whatsoever. He observes no differences. All are equal for Him. But He watches how much a person puts His teachings into practice. Many people undertake penance, study the scriptures, visit places of pilgrimage and do Japa (repetition of God's Name), but what is the use? Many ask Me for a Japamala (rosary). Is it to adorn your neck for publicity or is it for spiritual experience? One hand is enough if one wants to practise this Sadhana. (At this point, Swami demonstrated with His hand as to how one should do Japa.) The five fingers of the hand can be used as the rosary of one hundred and eight beads. You can thus chant the Name 'Rama Rama' one hundred and eight times. This Sadhana requires neither a Japamala nor a fixed place. It can be done while walking or even while lying down till you go to sleep. When there are such easy and sacred paths, why should one go for strenuous Sadhanas foregoing sleep?

### **Unparalleled Idealism of Draupadi**

What is Papa (sin)? Hurting, abusing and killing others is sin. What is Punya (merit)? Helping others is merit. Therefore, one should not retaliate to an evil act with an evil act. Instead, one should be magnanimous in forgiving the offender. There are many such sacred teachings in the Mahabharata. Draupadi is known for her chastity. She protected her husbands in many ways. After the gruesome massacre of the young Pandava children, Arjuna tracked down Aswatthama, the perpetrator of the atrocity, and dragged him before Draupadi. Instead of cursing the evildoer and pronouncing punishment on him, she fell at the feet of Aswatthama, the son of her husbands' most revered Guru, and said:

It is at the feet of your father, Dronacharya that my husbands learnt all that they know. Being the son of Dronacharya, was it proper for you to kill my children? How could you have the heart to kill them who were unarmed, young, quietly asleep, were not having any grudge against you, and were not contemplating any harm to you? You are a scholar and not a demon. Then how did you perpetrate such a heinous act? (Telugu Poem)

When Arjuna was about to kill Aswatthama, Draupadi fell at his feet and reasoned with him thus: "Arjuna! Will my sons be revived by killing Aswatthama? His mother too would experience the same kind of sorrow that I am undergoing at the loss of my sons. Having studied the Vedas and Sastras, how is it that you are not able to maintain your tranquillity?"

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)

When Draupadi was praying like this, Bhima could not bear to see this. Exploding with anger, Bhima roared:

This Draupadi is a stupid woman, for she pleads for this wretch's freedom. She feels no anger against this murderer of her sons. (Telugu Poem)

He clenched his fist and proceeded towards Aswatthama to kill him. In that uncontrollable rage, he argued with Draupadi, "Are you mad? Why are you trying to save this man who mercilessly slit the throat of your five sons? I will break the head of this child-killer into pieces with my fist. Do not come in my way." At that moment Draupadi fell at the feet of Bhima and pleaded with him to spare the life of Aswatthama. She prayed to him for regaining his composure. People around, who were witnessing this scene, were wonderstruck. They were wondering whether Draupadi was really mad! In fact, the world will be better if everyone is afflicted with such madness. Thus, when Draupadi pleaded with her husbands for saving the life of Aswatthama, he fell at her feet. Draupadi was happy at the change of heart in Aswatthama and told him, "Do not fall at my feet. Instead, fall at the feet of your mother. Never make her sad as you made me. Never cause her anguish; take good care of her." Even the loss of five sons did not make Draupadi shed tears of sorrow. Draupadi prayed for the safety and happiness of not only her husbands but everybody. She exercised full control over her grief. Let us think to what extent we follow the example of Draupadi.

Thus, Draupadi pleaded with Arjuna and Bhima to forgive Aswatthama for his heinous act. "To kill others is a great sin. Do not commit this sin," she argued with Arjuna. Arjuna replied, "You are preventing me from keeping up my vow." To this Draupadi said, "Tonsuring his head and removing the crown jewel from his head is equivalent to killing him." Arjuna accepted Draupadi's advice and as a token punishment shaved Aswatthama's head, took his crown jewel and sent him away.

There are many such noble women like Draupadi. She stands as an ideal for all women. Why are we forgetting the teachings of such great women? Today women are treated as mere puppets. But they are full of courage, valour, sacrifice, determination and truth. Men do not possess the great qualities that women have. It is because of such great women that the Bharatiya culture attained high esteem. Otherwise, it would have declined long ago. Do you ever recognise the fact that women are endowed with such great qualities as courage, valour, determination and righteousness? These qualities are not to be easily found in men. Why? Most of them are afflicted with the disease of anger which is ruining them.

One with anger will not be successful in any of his endeavours. He will commit sins and will be derided by one and all.  
(Telugu Poem)

It is possible that women may also succumb to anger and indulge in sinful deeds, now and then. Such women should be pardoned and encouraged to make amends; they should not be denounced and condemned. The quality of patience and perseverance in women is great. In fact, it is the quality of equanimity in times of difficulty that was characteristic of Draupadi, which saved the Pandavas. There are several such women in present times also. The bad qualities of anger, passion, jealousy, envy and pride are more prominent in men. Women are able to control such evil qualities from overtaking them. In view of this, is it not our duty to encourage and honour such women who preserve and promote peace and harmony? On the contrary, women are belittled and slighted. No, no, this should not happen. Such women with noble qualities deserve to be encouraged and respected.

A few days ago, you witnessed a function in this Hall, where the glory of womanhood was highlighted. A playlet was put up in this Hall by Chethana, in which the greatness of Sita as the ideal

woman, was presented. Sita and Draupadi were great Pathivrata (women of chastity). Such efforts to highlight the greatness of women need to be encouraged.

### **Only Sathya and Dharma can Protect the World**

The spirit of peace and forgiveness demonstrated by Draupadi should be propagated and violence should be condemned. The lesson of peace and non-violence is very essential for Bharat. Sathya and Dharma (truth and righteousness) are the main characteristics of Indian culture. If these two are protected, the country can be protected. If you want to protect your country, you need not join the army and fight a battle. If you protect truth and righteousness, they will in turn protect the country. It is not great to kill the enemies in a war. First and foremost, protect truth and righteousness. The country will automatically be protected. Indian culture exhorts Sathyam Vada (speak truth) and Dharmam Chara (practise righteousness). When you do this with perseverance, you will become brave, courageous and powerful. When you protect Sathya and Dharma, God will, in turn, protect not only you and your country, but the whole world. Consider truth as your life-breath and righteousness your armour. If you have these two, you will have everything. You don't need to fight with anybody in the world. The world has not done any harm to you. There is nothing great in attacking those who have done no harm to you.

Dear Students!

Protect truth, foster righteousness. That is enough. Truth and righteousness are inseparable. One cannot exist without the other. There cannot be Sathya without Dharma. Similarly, there cannot be Dharma without Sathya. Consider these two as your very life-breath. This was the teaching of Draupadi.

Sathya Dharmamu Santhi Premalatho

Nee Nitya Jivana Yatra Saginchu.

(Oh man! Carry on your life's journey with the help of truth, righteousness, peace, and love). You must hold on to these principles, come what may. Never give up these in any situation. God will surely protect you. History is replete with examples wherein people held steadfastly to the principles of Sathya and Dharma, and were constantly protected by God. One such example is that of the Pandavas. They faced insurmountable difficulties. But they were always saved because they followed Sathya and Dharma and their chaste wife Draupadi always held fast to these principles. It was this adherence to Sathya and Dharma that made Draupadi one of the greatest among women. She symbolised Sathya and Dharma. If you hold on to these two principles, they will remain with you till the end. You may argue, "Where are Sathya and Dharma in the present-day world? Whom are they protecting?" This is a totally wrong argument. In fact, Sathya and Dharma are present in women even today. They will never give them up. If you protect Sathya and Dharma, they will, in turn, stand before you and protect you. They are the manifestation of divinity. Unfortunately, today instead of Sathyam Vada (speak truth) and Dharmam Chara (practise righteousness), people are following the distorted version Sathyam Vadha (kill truth) and Dharmam Chera (imprison righteousness). This is utter perversion. You should lead your lives based on Sathya and Dharma and consider them as more important than your very life.

Several women come to Me with a heavy heart and tell Me "Swami! My husband has died. This has caused me deep sorrow." Then I would respond saying, "Very happy." They feel very unhappy with



My attitude and question Me, "What is this, Swami? Are You happy on hearing the news of my husband's death?" What am I to say? I am always happy. I do not know what sorrow is. I always discharge My duty.

It is God who protects everybody. Therefore, pray to God always. Forgetting God and depending on the mercy of human beings! What madness! You must depend on God for everything in your life. That is real Tapas (penance).

### **Protection of Women is the Responsibility of Men**

It is the women of Bharat who have protected and sustained this country since ancient times. They are, in fact, the very life of Bharat. They are the very embodiments of truth and righteousness. And truth and righteousness have, in turn, protected Bharat always. How much respect and reverence we must show towards women! On the contrary, there are several people today who put them to untold suffering. Due to bad habits and bad company, people lose their sense of discrimination and ill-treat women. No woman should be put to any suffering. They must be revered and respected and protected in all ways. Women in Bharat have always been held in high esteem. There are many chaste and noble women in Bharat. Still the Bharatiyas are undergoing difficulties. What is the reason? Whose fault is this? It is only because the Bharatiyas are not giving proper respect and place to women in society. The fault lies squarely with men.

The truthful character of the women is really their Tapas (penance). Therefore, such noble women must be encouraged and honoured. If you can put this one great principle into practice, your life will be sanctified. Those who ill-treat their wives can never be happy and prosperous. If men cannot protect their wives who are prepared to sacrifice even their lives for the sake of their husbands, what for is their existence? Women are really the presiding deities of their homes. Our primary duty is to protect them. Never let your wife shed tears. Where women shed tears, those homes will be ruined in no time. Women set ideals to society. They are the epitome of idealism. Never cause them distress.

Men should lead a life of truth and righteousness. Only then can they protect the country and become worthy of being called real men. Otherwise, how can they consider themselves worthy of the status of human beings? Several people go to temples. When they visit a temple, they must make a vow that they would respect and protect women. Only then will they be protected. It is only when the women are safe, the whole world will be happy. Therefore, if you wish to protect Dharma in the world, you must first protect your Dharma towards women.

### **Embodiments of Love!**

Imagine a situation wherein you are in the role of a woman and some men torture you. How miserable and helpless you would feel! Women are prepared to sacrifice everything for the sake of their husbands. But men do not have such spirit of sacrifice. You should also cultivate such a spirit of sacrifice like women. Only then will you be fit to be called men. Otherwise, you will be men only in form, but lacking in masculinity. You consider women as Abala (weak). But the truth is they are the embodiments of Shakti (power). Only I know the plight of women who have lost their husbands. It is our duty to protect such women. If you can discharge this duty properly, you will be happy throughout your life.

### **Embodiments of Love!**

You must follow Sathya (truth) even in small matters. King Janaka, a great renunciant king, used to propagate truth and righteousness to his subjects by his own example. His daughter Sita also led a pious life based on truth and righteousness. Instead of reading cheap novels, you should study the life

story of such ideal women. You should study the ancient history of Bharat, which is so sacred. The character and morality of women in Bharat are worthy of great respect. You will become worthy of being called men only when you undertake to protect such great women. Will you become men by merely sporting a moustache or growing a beard? Moustache and beard are not the real signs of masculinity. You must protect women and uphold the dignity of the family. Only then can you be called brave, courageous and valorous.

Embodiments of Love!

Consider women as embodiments of truth. Even if some minor faults are noticed in them, do not give importance to them. Respect and revere them. Do not use even a single word that would hurt them. If they really wish, they can achieve any great task. You should be prepared to lay down even your life for the sake of protecting and helping women. At least from today, all of you should come forward to protect the honour and dignity of women in the world. Women also should consider their husband as God and adhere to Sati Dharma (duty of a chaste wife). As regards men, they are duty bound to protect women. Similarly, it is the duty of a woman to take care of the family. Her duty is to foster and maintain the entire family as a unit. If women are protected, they in turn will protect the entire world. Love and respect them. Never belittle them and never treat them as mere playthings. I hope, all of you men will, at least in future, undertake to protect the dignity and honour of women and thereby protect your own dignity and honour. I conclude My Discourse blessing you all.

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

- **From Bhagavan’s second Sri Krishna Janmashtami Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the evening of 6th September 2004.**

## **CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM**

### **Excellent Tribal Dances**

Devotees from far and near have been offering their homage to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba by organising a variety of programmes as part of His 80th Birthday celebrations. In a unique programme held in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 3rd March 2005, the tribals of Nilgiri Hills, Tamil Nadu expressed their love and reverence for Bhagavan by performing tribal dances depicting their rich cultural heritage. These dancers represented three tribal communities, namely, the Todas, the Kotas and the Badgas.

The programme began after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall on the afternoon of 3rd March 2005. The first to present their tribal dance were the Todas. Wearing their traditional Toda shawl made of thick white cloth embellished with red and blue strips of embroidery, the dancers danced in a circle with the accompaniment of tribal songs and clapping of hands. Although no musical instruments were used, sheer simplicity and rhythmic movements of the dancers delighted one and all.

Next to present their dances were the village elders of the Kota community, with the accompaniment of music from their traditional tribal musical instruments called kob, kolu, pur and thabak. Joyous

sounds of their songs and graceful movement of their feet to the rhythm of simple music lent beauty and charm to their dance.

The last group to perform was the Badgas. Wearing a white Dhoti and a full sleeve shirt, they wrapped their body with a white shawl and wore a white turban on their head. Their musical instruments were more modern but the sweetness of their music had its own traditional charm. They also danced in a circle to the accompaniment of their songs and music.

To add further joy to the occasion, some students of the Institute also presented excellent dance items. This was followed by Bhajans. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan.

### **Holy Holi Festival 2005**

It was a unique Holi celebration at Prasanthi Nilayam when the Bal Vikas students of Bihar and Jharkhand presented a colourful musical programme filled with beautiful colours of devotion and sacredness on 26th March 2005 in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam.

The programme in the morning began at 8.00 a.m. after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall. Starting with a dance and song of invocation to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the programme comprised as many as six Holi songs rendered with piety and gaiety reminiscent of the Holi of Brij where Krishna played Holi with Radha and the Gopikas, merging the body, mind and soul in the festivity of Holi. Sweet music, colourful dresses and rhythmic dance movements of the students made it a very sweet and beautiful presentation. The programme which started at 8.00 a.m. in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan came to a happy conclusion at 9.00 a.m. with a very inspiring song in praise of Bhagavan whose grace destroys delusion and illumines the hearts of people with divine awareness. Bhajans which started after this programme were led by the devotees of Bihar and Jharkhand. The morning programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.25 a.m. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end.

### **Pavitra Holi – A Drama**

This excellent drama was enacted by the Sai Youth of Bihar and Jharkhand on the afternoon of 26th March 2005 in Sai Kulwant Hall to highlight the inner meaning, glory and importance of the holy festival of Holi.

As the play opens, some youth play Holi. But they encounter objections from some people of other religions. Similar is the quarrel between the two groups of villagers. Through their prayer to the Lord, the youth meet a learned man in the guise of a Vidushika (jester) and also Seva Dal members of Sai Organisation who tell everybody that Holi is the festival of love, joy, friendship and amity between man and man. Past enmity, hatred, prejudices, anger and desires should be burnt in the fire of Holi and a new beginning should be made in life to strengthen the bond of love between man and man.

These sacred lessons of Holi were depicted through this excellent drama. Bhagavan graced the occasion by His Divine Presence and blessed the cast at the end of the play. After this play, Bhajans were also led by the devotees of Bihar and Jharkhand. The programme came to a close at 5.15 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

**NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES**

## **80th Birthday Celebrations: The Work has Begun**

### **1. Medical Camps**

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** The Sathya Sai Organisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in cooperation with the citizens' association UG Roma, organised a medical camp on 19th February 2005 to provide free medical care to the residents of Ciljuge, Bare and other housing regions in the Zivinice Municipality and Kiseljak. 35 medical volunteers from the Bosnian International Medical Association and the public health centre JU 'Dom zdravlja' including doctors, laboratory technicians, pharmacists, nurses and medical students offered their services at this camp held at the Second Primary School. Nearly 650 consultations were provided at the camp in various specialities such as pulmonology, gynaecology, epidemiology, paediatrics, dental extractions, cardiology, ultrasound, stomatology, neurology and blood tests. Nearly 800 kg of food items such as sugar, cooking oil, pasta, juices, coffee, sandwich, jam, sour cream and bread were distributed during the course of the medical camp.

**Sri Lanka:** On 10th February 2005, a 10-member team of Sai devotees departed for one of the most devastated areas of tsunami-hit Sri Lanka. The team comprised individuals from Canada, U.S.A. and Argentina. With coordination and help from the Sathya Sai Organisation of Sri Lanka, the team went to Aliyavalai in the northeast coast of Sri Lanka. This village was one of the worst-hit areas in the aftermath of the disaster. Assisted by three translators from the Vavuniya Sathya Sai Centre, the team organised relief work. A camp clinic was set up and 450 patients were seen with a range of conditions including skin lesions, wounds and respiratory tract infections. A well baby clinic was also conducted where over 150 children ages 0-3 were seen. Grief counselling was another crucial area addressed by the Sai team. The counsellors established heart-to-heart communication and trust with individuals and families. They were an exemplary conduit of Bhagavan's love that poured forth unceasingly and left an indelible mark on the lives of those who gave and those who received. Adopting the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values approach, efforts were made to instil in the children a sense of confidence, pride and responsibility. On the last day, a ceremony was held at the seashore to pray for the departed souls and for the welfare of those who were affected. For many of the children, this was the first time they had returned to the beach after the disaster, signalling a new beginning – without fear and full of hope. Cooking pots were distributed to every family within the camp. At the school, over 250 packets of meals were given to the children on a daily basis. Door-to-door Grama Seva was also performed and people were visibly grateful for Swami's Love. All children at the school received books, school bags and a number of age appropriate toys. Special monitor books were given to the older children. For extra-curricular activities, sports equipment was provided to the school including cricket gear and soccer balls. Medical supplies and medications were supplied to the hospital. There were eleven nurses in the clinic who had much difficulty coming to work. As the roads were destroyed, it would take them hours to walk to the clinic. So each nurse

was given a new bicycle to help them commute. As one member of the team wrote, “In the end, the measure of impact is not in the numbers. It is in the ineffable love and smile on the faces of our new friends and the spiritual change in each of us.”

## **2. Community Service Programmes**

**U.S.A.:** On 23rd December 2004 and 20th January 2005, devotees from the Arcadia and Glendale Sai Centres in Southern California distributed 500 blankets to the homeless. After the weekly Bhajans on Thursday night, the group set out to downtown Los Angeles to deliver these blankets to the needy who were sleeping on the sidewalks, under shop-awnings and in vacant plots, inside tiny shelters made out of cardboard boxes and on the hard concrete sidewalk. As the devotees lovingly covered their shivering brethren with blankets, the grateful look and beaming smiles on their faces was yet another reminder from Bhagavan of His benign omnipresence.

**El Salvador:** For over 8 years, devotees at Sai Centre in Sensuntepeque have been conducting a study circle within the federal prison in their town. About 60 inmates attend this weekly meeting. The change in the participating prisoners has been so notable that the Prison Director was inspired to take the Sathya Sai human values diploma course offered by the Sathya Sai Institute of Human Values, despite this requiring him to travel four hours every Friday and Saturday for three months. He is now able to evaluate the progress of prisoners who attend Sai study circle and give recommendations to the judges for shorter sentences. With the help of Sai devotees, light meditation is being introduced for all the prisoners. Bhagavan’s miracles serve as constant reminders of His ever-present grace. One of the inmates was afflicted with severe diabetes and was unable to walk; nor could he consume any refreshments offered by the devotees. In a dream, Swami told him that he could take the refreshments. At the next meeting, he took some cookies and fruit punch, and today he is walking without pain.

## **3. Public Meetings**

**Denmark:** On Saturday, 5th March 2005, a public meeting was held at the Unitarian Church in Copenhagen on the life, teachings and humanitarian works of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Over 80 guests were in attendance. The programme started with the welcome remarks by Poul Moeller, Danish National Coordinator, who also introduced the two guest speakers – Dr. Thorbjörn Meyer, Zonal Chairman and Joergen Trygved, CEO and President Russian Carbon Fund. The film “His Work”, depicting the many projects initiated and inspired by Bhagavan Baba, was screened, followed by a question-and-answer session. The meeting concluded with uplifting devotional music by the “Danish Divine Light” group.

**Spain:** A seminar on ‘Practical Values in the Workplace’ was held in Valencia on the 19th and 20th of February 2005 with a view to explore different aspects of the Sathya Sai EHV programme. Nine speakers gave presentations on a broad range of topics such as ‘What is Educare?’, ‘How to Integrate EHV into Extra-curricular Activities?’ and ‘The Role of the Teacher’. The speakers shared their inspiring experiences about human values in action. One speaker, for instance, talked about how he and his colleagues had integrated Sathya Sai EHV into an asylum for the mentally ill – using Sai Educare as both philosophy and method in the daily activities of the asylum – with astonishing and life-transforming results.

Another speaker illustrated how he and his team were implementing Sai education techniques in the running of a prestigious music and dance festival in the city of Granada, Spain.

**United States of America:** On 29th January 2005, the members of the Sathya Sai Baba Organisation of Northern California and Nevada joined together in Livermore to begin the celebrations of the 80th Year of the Advent of Bhagavan. As the 275 guests settled into their seats for the afternoon programme, some of the region's musical talent played traditional folk songs. Following this introduction, 20 minutes of devotional singing ensued with songs stressing the unity of all faiths in a variety of languages including Hebrew and Zulu. The Master of Ceremonies, with reference to the letter from the Prasanthi Council, introduced a pledge and commitment that the region would have an opportunity to sign:

"We pledge to Sri Sathya Sai Baba who is the inner resident in our hearts, that we will live by the principle of 'unconditional love' to our fellow human beings and consciously practise 'selfless service' in our daily lives, for the benefit of all. We shall strive for unity in thought, word and deed and purity of intent, so that we may realise the divinity in us, and in all beings. We shall make this possible by seeing Sai in all and all in Sai."

The Regional President outlined how 'Unity, Purity and Divinity' would be implemented in the Region during the upcoming year. Guest speaker Dr. John Goldthwaite spoke of his experiences of 'Purifying the Heart'. He shared valuable insights to knowing the true Self. Following his inspiring words, he led the audience through a series of exercises that stressed the need for inner reflection. He also emphasised that spiritual seekers should not judge others. The afternoon session closed with devotional singing and collection of food for distribution to the needy.

– **Prasanthi Council**

## **BHARAT**

**Andhra Pradesh:** Srikakulam district conducted a mega medical camp in Polla tribal village on 13th February 2005, treated 1800 patients for different ailments and gave them medicines sufficient for one month. This district also gave Amruta Kalasam (each consisting of 10 kg rice, 2 kg Ragi flour, 1 kg wheat flour, 1 kg oil, 1 kg sugar, 1 soap, 100 gm coconut oil packet, one steel plate and one glass and one salt packet, total cost of all these items being Rs. 450) to 120 selected poor Girijan families. It also distributed food, bread and clothes to 1800 needy people. During Ratha Saptami on 14th February 2005, this district organised a big Seva camp at Sri Suryanarayana Temple situated in Arasavelli Kshetram and provided bathing facilities to 2000 pilgrims, accommodation to 1200 pilgrims, footwear care to 6000 pilgrims, cloak room facility to 1500 pilgrims, Narayana Seva to 7000 pilgrims, drinking water and buttermilk supply to thousand of pilgrims and carried out sanitation work in the temple premises.

West Godavari district conducted Sri Sathya Sai Koti Namarchana at Narsapur on 13th February 2005 in which 1000 couples took part. This district conducted free Upanayanam for 45 boys on 17th February 2005 in Gargapuram village, opened a newly-built Bhajan Mandiram in Perupalem village on 19th February 2005, and took part in the Bhumi Puja for

Sri Sathya Sai Drinking Water Project at Polavaram on 11th February 2005. This district conducted a mega medical camp in Tekur, a remote tribal village, treating 1500 patients of different ailments and distributed medicines worth one lakh rupees.

**Assam, Manipur and N.E. States:** As part of three year action plan (2003-05), the devotees of Sarpara-Uparhali in Kamrup district assembled on 23rd January 2005 in a remote village, Bholapara and listened to the different speakers who highlighted the principles of Sai Seva and Sai Mission. People coming from different walks of life including devotees were briefed about the Divine Mission of Sai Avatar and the role of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. While participating, the youth speakers highlighted the Bharatiya tradition of Avatarhood with reference to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba – the Avatar of Love.

**Haryana and Chandigarh:** Various competitions at school and college level in the districts of Ambala, Yamunanagar, Sirsa, Gurgaon, Jind and Chandigarh were held, wherein 277 competitors took part and 1826 students, teachers and others participated. Spiritual talks on the glory and significance of Indian Culture were conducted in 10 schools in Hissar district, wherein 2000 students and teachers participated.

To beat the severe cold wave in the State, a Vastra Seva (distribution of clothes) was conducted at Chandigarh, Ambala, Gurgaon and Rewari, distributing 436 new woollen blankets, 213 sweaters, 200 woollen shawls, 123 Saris and 21 school uniforms benefiting 1200 needy people.

**Tamil Nadu:** The Anniversary of Sundaram, the abode of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in Chennai, was celebrated on 19th and 20th January 2005. Significantly, this is its silver jubilee year as this grand edifice was inaugurated by Bhagavan on 19th January 1981. The programme began at 5.00 a.m. on 19th January 2005 with Nagar Sankirtan, in which hundreds of devotees took part. Other programmes included Abhishekam of Sri Shirdi Sai Baba, Sahasranama Archana, Narayana Seva and distribution of uniforms and school material to tsunami affected children. In the evening, there were programmes of vocal music, instrumental music, Veda chanting and Bhajans. In the end, an audio and visual presentation was made on tsunami relief work done by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. The programmes on 20th January 2005 included band music by Bal Vikas children from Chennai Metro, devotional music and Bhajans by ladies devotees followed by Veda-parayanam. The programme concluded with Arati to Bhagavan. Prasadam was distributed in the end.

**Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal:** Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations of Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal organised a seminar on “Legal Profession and Human Values” on 2nd December 2004 at Allahabad. An exhibition on the Life and Mission of Bhagavan was also organised which was highly appreciated by media and was well attended by devotees, general public and members of the Bar Association.

Justice Shivaraj Patil of Supreme Court of India delivered the keynote address wherein he explained to the august gathering of 600 eminent judges, advocates and devotees that a man from an ordinary background could reach great heights in his career if he had the strength of the prayer of poor people who were helped by him sometimes by following Bhagavan’s axiom of “Love All, Serve All”. Justice A.P. Mishra, retired judge of Supreme Court of India and Chairman of Human Rights Commission and Sri V.B. Upadhyaya, former Advocate General, U.P., laid great emphasis on practising human values in legal profession.

They observed that such programmes were the need of the hour. A cultural programme based on human values was presented by the Bal Vikas children on this occasion.

## BACK COVER MATTER

### Negation of Love is Negation of God

Self is the denial of separateness; separateness is the denial of wholeness, holiness, God. The denial of God is Godlessness, God privation, atheism. Atheism therefore, as you now understand it, is not the denial of this or that religion or this or that concept of God. It is rather the denial of life of love, which is the nature of God; it is the assertion of the life of the little self, which is the negation of the Being of God. In short, real atheism is the denial of love, the assertion of selfishness.

- Baba

MAY 2005

### UGADI DISCOURSE

## LOVE IS YOUR ETERNAL WEALTH

*The creation emerges from truth and merges into truth,  
Is there a place in the cosmos where truth does not exist?  
Visualise this pure and unsullied truth. (Telugu Poem)*

*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.*

(Telugu Poem)



### *Embodiments of Love!*

THIS MORNING YOU ENJOYED listening to the melodious devotional songs and Bhajans presented by the devotees from Hyderabad. This musical presentation was not merely a joy for the ears but a feast for the soul also.

### **Make Proper Use of your Intelligence**

Wherever you see, you cannot find anything more powerful and more valuable than love. There is nothing beyond love. All descriptions to estimate its greatness will be inadequate. In this vast world, there is no human being or living being without love. Saint Thyagaraja sang:

Oh Rama! In Your pure and unsullied form of love, You indwell all beings from an ant to Brahma as also in Siva and Kesava. Please be my protector too. (Telugu Song)

What is the form of an ant and what is the form of Brahma? Brahma is infinite. On the other hand, ant is a tiny creature. There can be no comparison between them. But one can learn many lessons from this tiny ant also.

Once a hungry bear went to an anthill and said to an ant, "I am very hungry. Please give me some food." The ant smiled at the request of the bear and said, "How big is your form and how small am I? Yet you ask food from me! However, let me see what I can do for you." It is natural for ants to store food for six months in their anthills. The ant went inside and with the help of other ants brought out some of the food they had stored for future. The bear wondered, "How could a tiny creature like an ant store so much food!" If one has the desire and puts in the necessary effort, one can do anything; it does not matter whether one is big or small.

It is said, Jantunam Nara Janma Durlabham (out of all living beings, human birth is the rarest). Ants, though tiny in form, are able to acquire food, share it with other ants and also store for future. It is surprising that human beings are unable to provide food for themselves in spite of all their intelligence. In fact, there is no being superior to man in intelligence in this world. But he is unable to make proper use of his intelligence. He conducts himself in an unworthy manner because of his selfishness and self-interest. Humans do not lack anything in their life. Everything is at their disposal. But they lack the discrimination to make proper use of the resources available. In spite of having everything in plenty, they are not able to give up their pettiness. There are many lessons to be learnt even from ants. When an ant bites you, you feel the irritation and immediately try to kill it. But you do not make efforts to kill the evil qualities within yourself. Deep-rooted selfishness and self-interest are making man's intelligence perverted and leading him astray. When you give up selfishness, then your power and intelligence will become manifold. Man is endowed with immense power of intelligence but he is not trying to make its proper use. Man, in fact, is misusing his intelligence due to his ignorance.

## **Use God-given Body for others' Welfare**

Embodiments of Love!

Students today read all sorts of books and fill their heads with useless information. There is little use in studying a Pustaka (book) if the Mastaka (head) is filled with rubbish. Students should acquire the knowledge which will help them to lead a noble life and save them from the cycle of birth and death. They should acquire that knowledge which will make them immortal. Modern students have become proficient in bookish knowledge. They have the intelligence to answer any question from textbooks. But they are not making efforts to translate their bookish knowledge into practical knowledge.

*One may acquire a high academic qualification such as M.A. or 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)**

The knowledge one acquires should be utilised for the benefit of society. You should utilise your wealth and knowledge not for selfish purposes, but for the welfare of others. God has given you the human body not merely to eat, sleep and enjoy worldly pleasures. Paropakartham Idam Sariram (human body is meant to do good to others). The body is given to you to serve others. Of what use is your education and intelligence if society is not benefited from them? Presently, man is making new discoveries and inventions but till this day he has not really understood the purpose of human birth. What is the meaning of the word Manava? 'Ma' means Ajnana (ignorance), 'Na' means without, 'Va' means to conduct oneself. Hence, Manava is one who conducts himself without ignorance. It is only by the grace of God that man acquires intelligence, knowledge and wealth. Man should understand this and lead a sacred and divine life. He should use his God-given gifts for the welfare of others. But man is acting contrary to it and thereby ruining himself. Animals like bulls and buffaloes render service to man in a number of ways. It is unfortunate that man is not able to understand even such a simple thing. Instead of developing Manavatwa (humanness), man is acquiring Danavatwa (demonic nature), and thus courting Dinatwa (miserable way of life). Vyashti (individual) signifies humanness and Samashti (society) symbolises divinity. Hence, one can attain divinity only by serving society.

## **Educare Manifests Man's Latent Divinity**

Embodiments of Love!

Despite our high education and intelligence, there is a great scope for learning valuable lessons which Nature teaches us. One can learn even from small creatures like ants, birds and animals. These lessons of life cannot be taught in the classroom. Even teachers are not making efforts to understand the principle of divinity within. Education is not meant to merely eke out a livelihood. You have to share

your knowledge with others, give joy to one and all and thereby rise to the level of divinity. Samatwa (equal-mindedness) is the hallmark of a true human being. Manavatwa without Samatwa is of little worth. Hence, develop Samatwa in the first instance. It is only through Samatwa that you can attain Divyatwa (divinity). Divinity is latent in every human being. But man is becoming weak as he is unable to realise his latent divinity. In order to realise one's divinity, one should cultivate sacred feelings.

Manavatwa has not come into existence in the recent past; it has been there since ages. Human being is born from the womb of the mother, but humanness originated from divinity and has been present at all times. There is divinity in every human being. As he is unable to recognise his innate divinity, man is forgetting his humanness itself. What is the use of being human only in form but not in practice? Human birth will find fulfilment only when man practises human qualities. All the sacred texts such as Upanishads and Sastras are meant to show mankind the path of redemption. What is the use of studying sacred texts if their teachings are not put into practice? Man should manifest his latent divinity by following their teachings. The sacred texts will bring out the hidden treasures of divinity from within. That is why I have introduced educare programme in the educational institutions. Education is related to worldly knowledge. It can be acquired by going through books, whereas educare is meant to manifest the latent divinity in man. Education has temporary benefits, whereas educare bestows everlasting happiness. One cannot become great by mere acquisition of education. One should practise educare and manifest one's latent qualities.

Educare is the need of the hour. Only through educare can you realise divinity which is present in every atom and every cell of your body. In fact, you are seeing divinity every moment but are unable to recognise this truth. You can call yourself educated only when you recognise divinity which is all-pervasive. Education is related to secular knowledge which can be acquired from books. However, little benefit accrues by gathering information from books. What is required is transformation and it is possible only through educare. Acquisition of information which cannot lead to transformation is a mere waste of time. But man has developed a taste for such information. Man's intelligence, knowledge and power are all the gifts of God. They have to be nourished and made proper use of through educare.

### **Love Unites All**

Truly, God has endowed man with immense potential. That is love. It is beyond all description and measure. There is no greater power than this. But man is frittering away this power without realising its value. He is under the mistaken notion that love means physical and worldly relationship. No, no. This is not true love. True love is that which unites you with one and all. People utter this word repeatedly without actually knowing its meaning. Love does not hurt anybody. It always helps. Hence, consider love as your true property. There is no property more valuable than love in this world. You

are misusing the God-given gift of love by diverting it to worldly matters and sensual pleasures. Your foremost duty is to make proper use of love by following the dictum, Help ever, Hurt never. There is no greater Dharma than this.

**Embodiments of Love!**

Love is your only true and eternal wealth. But you are misdirecting it towards mean and worldly pursuits. It should be treasured in your heart and utilised for sacred purposes. You may share it with any number of people, it will never diminish. But man today is unable to understand and experience the true spirit of love. Love is the life-breath of every being. In order to understand love, you have to dive deep into the ocean of love. Love cannot be understood from a superficial level; you have to immerse yourself completely in it. Worldly love is such that you can just taste it and give it up. But divine love is not like that; once you taste it, you will never leave it. Love is God's property. Safeguard and protect this property with utmost care. Love is God, God is love. Hence, you cannot separate love from God. Live in love. That is the only way you can understand love and experience God.

### **Ramayana Expounds the Principle of the Atma**

**Embodiments of Love!**

It may be easy to give lectures on love, but it is difficult to understand it. Make every effort to comprehend it. If you understand the nature of your love, you will understand the love of others. Love is in you, with you and around you. Once you understand love, you will become the very embodiment of love. If you just talk about love without understanding it, then you cannot become the embodiment of love. The more you understand the principle of love, the nobler you become. Once you understand the principle of love and put it into practice, others will also try to emulate you. In the Ramayana, the four brothers Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna set an ideal to the world how love should be put into practice in life. Their wives also demonstrated this great ideal to the world. Many people extol only the virtues of Rama and ignore the model conduct of other characters of the Ramayana. In fact, each of them was as great as Rama.

Take, for example, Sumitra, the mother of Lakshmana and Satrughna. People do not attach much importance to her role in the Ramayana. In fact, her name does not figure prominently in the epic. But the fact is that she was a paragon of virtues. Her name 'Su-mitra' itself signifies that she was a good friend to one and all. She shared her happiness with others. Kausalya and Kaikeyi had one son each, whereas Sumitra had two sons. When we enquire into the reason, we can understand the mystery behind it. After the performance of the Putrakameshti Yajna, Dasaratha distributed the sacred pudding equally between his three wives. Kausalya and Kaikeyi took their share of the pudding to their respective Puja rooms. Each of them was happy thinking that her son would be the future king of

Ayodhya. But Sumitra had no such thoughts. She carried her bowl of pudding to the terrace and placed it on the parapet wall while drying her hair in the sun. Suddenly, an eagle swooped down and carried away the bowl of sacred pudding. She immediately ran down and informed Kausalya and Kaikeyi about what had happened. Kausalya and Kaikeyi came to the rescue of Sumitra and shared their pudding with her. Kaikeyi gave half of her share to Sumitra. Kausalya did the same. In due course, Kausalya gave birth to Rama, Kaikeyi to Bharata, and Sumitra to Lakshmana and Satrughna. The sons of Kausalya and Kaikeyi were happily playing in their cradles whereas Sumitra's sons were crying all the time, and were not taking milk. Sumitra went to Sage Vasishtha and told him about her predicament. Sage Vasishtha closed his eyes. His yogic vision enabled him to know the truth. He said to Sumitra, "As you partook of the sacred pudding given by Kausalya, you gave birth to Lakshmana who is an Amsa (part) of Rama. Similarly, Satrughna is born out of the share of pudding given to you by Kaikeyi. So, he is a part of Bharata. Put Lakshmana by the side of Rama and Satrughna by the side of Bharata. Then they will rest peacefully." Sumitra did as instructed by Vasishtha. Both Lakshmana and Satrughna stopped crying and started playing blissfully in their cradles. This was the basis of the intimate relationship between Rama and Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna.

Sumitra experienced great bliss to see her two sons Lakshmana and Satrughna always in the company of Rama and Bharata. No one can know why and how God ordains certain events to happen. As the four sons of King Dasaratha grew up, Lakshmana always followed Rama and Satrughna followed Bharata. Both Lakshmana and Satrughna were very brave and valorous. Without them, there could be no Ramayana. Lakshmana loved to be in the company of Rama. Similarly, Satrughna followed Bharata. Thus, the four brothers Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna grew up together in an environment of love, unity and amity. The four brothers were virtually inseparable and manifested their divinity in equal measure. There was no discord between them. The unity between the four brothers is, in fact, the sum and substance of the story of Ramayana. Similarly, their blessed mothers Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi were the models of unity and amity. None can describe in full the glory of the Ramayana. Many writers have described the glory of the Ramayana in their own unique style. Thus, there are numerous books which describe the story of the Ramayana. But it is not possible for anyone to fathom the mysteries of the Ramayana.

Once when Kausalya was engaged in some work, Bharata came running, sat on her lap and started crying. Kausalya was a bit surprised and enquired as to what made him cry. Bharata replied, "We were playing a ball game and each time Rama was deliberately losing the game so that I could win." The bond of unity and love between the brothers was such that they always tried to please each other. They experienced supreme bliss in the company of each other. The eternal Rama principle is transcendental and beyond all description. It was only Lakshmana who could understand Rama. Similarly, it was Satrughna who could fully understand the nature of Bharata.

When Rama was going to the forest to fulfil the command of his father, King Dasaratha, Lakshmana followed Him. He experienced great joy in accompanying his elder brother Rama to the forest. Similarly, Satrugna also experienced great joy in the company of Bharata and accompanied him wherever he went. What does the name 'Satrugna' imply? It means the one who destroys Satrus (enemies). Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna were ideal brothers. It is not enough if we merely extol their ideals, we must also try to experience that great bond of love in our day-to-day lives and share it with others. The Ramayana is not a mere story. It explains and expounds the principle of the Atma. The Ramayana Tattwa has to be understood properly and translated into our life. Therefore, one should study the Ramayana with devotion and sacredness and experience the principle of the Atma.

### **Ramayana Teaches the Principle of Unity**

#### **Embodiments of Love!**

The Ramayana is not merely a Grantha (sacred text); it is full of the Gandha (fragrance) of sacredness which it spreads everywhere. When the fragrance of its sacredness spreads in the country, the country will prosper and its inhabitants will experience love, peace and bliss. Not only that, in a few years time, nay, very shortly, the whole world will realise the sacredness and greatness of the Ramayana and follow its ideals (loud applause). In fact, Rama Tattwa (principle of Rama) is present in all in the form of the Atma. Today we find many nations, religions and castes in the world. No. No. Within a short period of time, the whole world will have one race, one caste and one religion.

The greatest truth propounded by the Ramayana is the unity of mankind. When there is such unity, then people will attain purity of heart. The purity of heart will bring the people close to each other. When there is amity among people, the whole world will experience bliss. Thus, the Ramayana can give bliss to one and all. Hence, everybody should chant the Divine Name, "Rama! Rama! Rama!"

The female characters of the Ramayana also set an ideal to the world. Sumitra gladly sent Lakshmana to follow and serve Rama when He went into exile for 14 years at the command of His father Dasaratha. Even when she heard the news that Lakshmana had fallen unconscious during the war with the Rakshasas (demons) in Lanka, Sumitra was not perturbed. She was always confident that no danger would ever befall Lakshmana since he was in the service of Lord Rama. Thus, during the entire period of 14 years of Rama's exile to the forest, all the brothers and their wives were always thinking and wishing the well-being of Rama; so were their mothers. Such was the nobility of their hearts.

Similarly, Lakshmana's wife Urmila did not feel sad even for a moment when her husband accompanied Rama to the forest. She was, in fact, painting a picture of Rama's coronation when Lakshmana came to inform her of his decision to accompany Rama to the forest. When Lakshmana suddenly entered her room, she wanted to get up and look who the visitor was. In the confusion, the

paint got spilled over the unfinished painting. “How come this painting got spoiled when actually I wanted to portray the beauty and majesty of Sri Rama on the occasion of His coronation and show it to the world”, she thought. Urmila had a very compassionate heart. She always entertained noble thoughts. She was always contemplating on Rama during His exile to the forest. Not only she, the wives of Bharata and Satrughna, Mandavi and Srutakeerthi were also engaged in constant contemplation of Rama. Contemplation on Rama helped them to understand unity in divinity. Considering the ideal of unity between the brothers, their wives and other characters of the Ramayana, it becomes apparent that the main emphasis of the Ramayana is on the principle of unity.

Embodiments of Love!

Any amount of narration of the greatness and nobility of the characters of the Ramayana will be found inadequate. Every incident, every character, every episode of the Ramayana is full of bliss and divine mystery.

*The story of Lord Rama is amazing,*

*It purifies the lives of the people in all the three worlds,*

*It is like the sickle that cuts the creepers of worldly bondage,*

*It is like a good friend who helps you in times of need,*

*It is like a shelter for the sages and seers doing penance in the forest. (Telugu Poem)*

The story of Rama is most wonderful and endless. It is essential for every human being to put the ideals set by Rama into practice in his day-to-day life.

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

– **From Bhagavan’s Ugadi Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 9th April 2005.**

## **CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM**

### **Joyous Ugadi Celebrations**

The festival of Ugadi marking the advent of the new year for the people of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 9th April 2005 with great devotional fervour. Besides the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, the programme included devotional music and Panchanga Sravanam (almanac listening). Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue of celebrations, was beautifully decorated for this occasion. Special decorations were made on the dais with fresh coconuts and flowers.

Amidst sweet notes of Panchavadyam music and chanting of Vedic Mantras, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.40 a.m. to shower His blessings on the devotees on this auspicious day. At the outset, former Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning,

Sri S.V. Giri addressed the gathering. Quoting from Shikshavalli of Taittiriya Upanishad, the learned speaker explained the factors which contributed to the harmonious relations between a teacher and his students, and added that this was being put into practice in Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning where Bhagavan Himself is the Universal Teacher. Thereafter, the programme of Panchanga Sravanam, a traditional practice of Ugadi celebrations, started at 8.35 a.m. The Pandit who read the Panchanga (almanac) said that the name of the new year was Parthiva; he prayed that it should become the year of Parthiswara (Lord of Puttaparthi) and bring about peace and prosperity as it was falling in the 80th year of the Advent of Bhagavan. He then read out the positions of stars and planets and explained their significance. He concluded with prayer to Bhagavan whose Anugraha (grace) could undo the impact of all Grahas (planets).

Panchanga Sravanam was followed by a scintillating music programme presented by the Sai Youth of Hyderabad. Beautiful devotional songs set to sweet music along with appropriate commentary were a delight for the ears and a feast for the soul. Starting with Sai Vandana (prayer to Sai) at 8.50 a.m., the programme concluded at 9.45 a.m. The singers earned the appreciation of one and all and blessings of Bhagavan who gave them the coveted opportunity of group photo with Him at the end of the programme. The morning programme came to a happy conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.50 a.m. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end.

The programme in the afternoon started with the arrival of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.20 p.m. Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, Sri Sanjay Sahni, Principal, Brindavan Campus of the Institute, addressed the devotees. Referring to the Vedic saying describing God as the embodiment and master of time, Sri Sahni observed that the best way to adore the embodiment of time was to make the best use of time and follow the path of goodness as taught by Bhagavan by His own example. After the speech of Sri Sahni, Bhagavan gave His Divine Ugadi Message (full text given elsewhere) and brought it to a close at 5.20 p.m. with the Bhajan, “Rama Rama Rama Sita ...” After the Discourse of Bhagavan, there was another excellent musical presentation of devotional songs which concluded at 6.10 p.m. Ugadi celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam came to a happy conclusion with this music programme. In the end, Arati was offered to Bhagavan and Prasadam was distributed to all.

### **Sri Rama Navami at Prasanthi Nilayam**

The holy festival of Sri Rama Navami was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 18th April 2005. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba showered His benedictions on the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall and gave a nectarine Discourse on this occasion.

The programme started at 8.00 a.m. with Veda chanting. Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, Sri S.V. Giri, former Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning gave a brief talk on the values propounded in the epic Ramayana. Quoting from the dialogue between Sage Narada and



Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana, Sri Giri observed that Lord Rama was the embodiment of all virtues, and model for the entire mankind.

After the talk of Sri Giri, Bhagavan gave His Sri Rama Navami Message. Narrating some episodes of the Ramayana in His inimitable style, Bhagavan exhorted the devotees to follow the ideals set by the noble characters like Urmila, Sumitra, and the four brothers Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna. After Bhagavan's Divine Discourse, the devotees tasted the sweet melody of Bhajans in praise of Lord Rama which were led by the Institute students. The programme came to a close at 9.45 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end.

### **Bhagavan Leaves for Kodaikanal**

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was given a hearty send off in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the morning of 19th April 2005 when He left for Kodaikanal, a summer resort in Tamil Nadu. All along the route of Bhagavan from Prasanthi Nilayam to Sri Sathya Sai Airport, Puttaparthi, people in large numbers were gathered to have His Divine Darshan and to offer their salutations to Him. Some of them offered flowers, some waved Arati and some broke coconuts. They hailed "Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Babaji Ki Jai" as soon as they got a glimpse of their Beloved Bhagavan. At the airport also a large number of students and devotees had gathered to offer their Pranams to Bhagavan and wish Him a happy journey. Here, Bhagavan along with a group of students and a few senior devotees boarded the Indian Airlines plane which left at 12.30 p.m. for Madurai from where Bhagavan travelled by car and reached Kodaikanal in the evening.

*Seva is twice blessed. It blesses both, the one who does and the one who receives. Its blessings are twofold. It eradicates ego and confers Ananda (bliss).*

- Baba

## **DIVINE DISCOURSE:** **SADHANA CAMP FOR KERALA YOUTH**

# **UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF SERVICE**

*Karma is responsible for the birth, existence and death of man. It holds sway over all stages of his life as the very deity of human existence. It is responsible for the joy and sorrow of man.*

**(Telugu Poem)**

*Embodiments of Love!*

HAPPINESS CANNOT EXIST without sorrow and sorrow cannot be separated from happiness. It is said, Jantunam Nara Janma Durlabham (out of all living beings, human birth is the rarest). Man is the crest jewel of the entire creation. He is the main cause behind the phenomenal progress of the world. But man today is unable to realise his humanness. Because of identifying himself with his physical form, he has forgotten his humanness. Since he calls himself a human being, it is his duty to realise the greatness of humanness.

### **Immense Divine Power of Man**

A person cannot call himself a human being merely on the basis of his birth and educational qualifications. Actually, real humanness cannot be found in academic degrees. Even birds and beasts can be taught certain skills to perform wonderful feats imitating human beings. Man, in fact, has a special status in the entire creation. But he does not try to realise his true nature. It does no credit to a human being to derive satisfaction from studying scriptures and talking about them. Real merit lies in practising the ideals of humanness in one's life and setting an example to others. Man has no authority to teach ideals to others without putting them into practice himself first. In fact, he is gifted with human birth to be an ideal in the entire creation.

There is immense divine power in man. He is not simply a Dehadhari (one with body). He is endowed with Vijnana (wisdom), Prajnana (constant integrated awareness) and Sujnana (discrimination). He should channelise these powers in the right direction. First and foremost, one has to understand the true meaning of Jnana. Some people think that knowledge acquired by reading numerous books is Jnana. No, this is not correct. Real Jnana is the knowledge that emerges from within oneself. This should be experienced, put into practice and then shared with others. In the ultimate analysis, this would enable one to be greatly benefited and enlightened. One can be called a human only when one has human quality. One should therefore understand the real meaning of the term, human quality first. Human quality emerges from one's own Self. It cannot be acquired by reading books, listening to others or talking about it.

### **Acquire Practical Knowledge**

*Embodiments of Love!*

You have come all the way from Kerala to acquire Jnana. You should also know the real meaning of the terms Prajnana, Vijnana, Sujnana. Mere textual knowledge without practical knowledge becomes 'allergy'. On the other hand, when bookish knowledge is transformed into practical knowledge, it becomes 'energy'. Practical knowledge is the real knowledge. One has to acquire practical knowledge by which one can gain experience. This experience can be shared with others. Such practical knowledge and experience give strength to a person. However, this strength should not be considered as mere physical strength.

Just as there is electrical energy in a live wire, similarly, there is latent energy in the human body which manifests in different ways. It can be harnessed for different purposes like reading, writing, walking, talking, etc. It has, however, no form. Nevertheless, it travels throughout the body of a

human being from head to toe. By tapping this energy, an Ajnani (ignorant person) can become Jnani (one of wisdom). Energy is most important for all the progress and advancement of man. It can be acquired only by practice.

Embodiments of Love!

All that we teach to others must be supported by practice. Everything is reaction, reflection and resound of one's own inner being. Every word we utter is the resound of the inner being. Reflection is that which is contemplated upon, experienced and put into practice. Reaction is, however, very important. Reaction comes out of action. Hence our actions must always be pure and sacred. Reaction, reflection and resound occupy an important place in the life of a human being. All the worldly knowledge man acquires is the product of resound. Resound comes out of reaction and reaction transforms itself into reflection. The unity of these three constitutes humanness. Man should not waste his time in empty rhetoric. Every word he utters must be the product of his deep contemplation and knowledge of its inner meaning. It is only after that he should try to teach others. Unfortunately, these days mere bookish knowledge is considered as true knowledge and a lot of time is spent in acquiring it. Real knowledge is in the Mastaka (head) and not in the Pustaka (book). One should, therefore, cleanse one's Mastaka of all impurities.

*Oh man! Do not exult over your erudition. All your learning is just a burden on your head without humble prayer and devotion to God.*  
(Telugu Poem)

### **Depend upon the Power of the Self**

Embodiments of Love!

It may be necessary for you to adapt yourself to modern techniques and new practices from time to time. The world today is undergoing phenomenal changes. All those changes may not be important for you. Nevertheless, you are required to study several branches of knowledge in modern times to cope up with these rapid changes taking place all over the world. However, this study does not constitute Vidya (real knowledge). Hence, there is no greatness in pursuing secular education. Avidya breeds Avidya. One has to make efforts to distinguish between Vidya and Avidya. Vidya is that which helps you to understand, recognise and realise the principle of the Self. It enables you to recognise your true nature and realise the truth. On the other hand, Avidya constitutes indiscriminate use of words and vain argumentation.

Embodiments of Love!

You are all students. Continue to be a student all your life. It is a mistake to think that you have completed your education and are now engaged in service activities. You are not servants working under somebody. In fact, you are leaders. While performing service activities, never consider yourself as the doer. Always think that whatever service activities you are undertaking are for your own upliftment. These service activities must be undertaken to develop self-confidence which will lead to self-satisfaction, self-sacrifice and ultimately to self-realisation. Thus, service is meant to realise your true Self. It should never be considered as help for others. You may be thinking that you are helping others by joining the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation and undertaking service activities. This is not correct. In fact, you are yourself the beneficiary of all your service activities and not others. Also, you need not seek the help of others in these service activities. You can depend upon your own innate strength and energy. The power of your Self will help you in all your endeavours. Your Self will

protect you from within in all your endeavours; you do not need the protection of anybody else from outside.

Members of the Seva Dal!

You may be thinking that you have come here for undertaking service. This service is not for others but for yourself. Just as you eat food to satiate your hunger, every service activity undertaken by you is for your own satisfaction. There are many things which you have to learn during the next three days. This being the first day, I spoke to you in detail so that you would understand the meaning of service. What is Seva Dal? Each member of the Seva Dal is like a Dal (petal) of a beautiful flower. Petals have a pattern of their own which lends beauty to the flower. If you sow a seed, it will grow into a plant in due course of time and yield beautiful flowers. However, the seed by itself is not attractive. When the plant grows and yields flowers, the beauty and fragrance of the flowers will give joy to one and all. There are several petals in a flower. The flower appears beautiful as long as there are petals in it. Once the petals fade and fall down, the flower ceases to exist. Hence, all of you should form yourself into a beautiful flower. Let everyone experience and enjoy its beauty and fragrance.

**- From Bhagavan's Inaugural Discourse on the occasion of third Sadhana Camp for Kerala youth in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 11th April 2005.**

## **SADHANA CAMP FOR KERALA YOUTH**

ON the eve of Vishu, a four-day Sadhana Camp was held at Prasanthi Nilayam from 11th to 14th April 2005 in which 1300 youth from Kerala took part. The theme of the Sadhana Camp was "Able and Noble Instruments of Bhagavan". During the course of the Sadhana Camp, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba gave two nectarine Discourses. Besides, there were illuminating talks by eminent educationists, and cultural and music programmes.

### **Divine Discourses of Bhagavan**

On the morning of 11th April 2005, Bhagavan blessed the participants with His Inaugural Discourse. The programme started after the arrival of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.40 a.m. Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, Prof. E. Mukundan, State President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, Kerala gave an introductory speech. Stating the theme of the Sadhana Camp, Prof. Mukundan reminded the youth that there were three most important features of a good instrument of Bhagavan. First, he/she should be soft, strong and straight. Secondly, he/she should remember ABC – Avoid Bad Company. Thirdly, he/she should keep in mind DEFG – Don't Ever Forget God.

In His Inaugural Discourse, Bhagavan explained the meaning of educate and Seva and exhorted the youth to acquire the knowledge which would enable them to realise their Self. (Full text of Bhagavan's Discourse has been given elsewhere in this issue.) Bhagavan concluded His Discourse at 8.50 a.m., after which Bhajans started. The programme in Sai Kulwant Hall came to a close at 9.30 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan. Bhagavan blessed the participants with another inspiring Discourse on the morning of 13th April 2005 prompting them to develop Ekatma Prema (non-dual love). Citing the examples of Jayadeva, Gauranga, Eknath, Mira and Sakkubai, Bhagavan counselled the youth to experience divinity with single-minded devotion to God and achieve the goal of life.

### **Proceedings of the Sadhana Camp**

After the inaugural session in Sai Kulwant Hall, the participants of the Sadhana Camp assembled in the Conference Hall on the first floor of the North Indian Canteen, the venue of the Sadhana Camp, where the proceedings were conducted on all the four days of the Camp from 11th to 14th April 2005.

The proceedings on 11th April 2005 started after Veda chanting by Sai Youth. Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy, Warden, Brindavan Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning was the first speaker. In his inspiring talk, Sri Narasimha Murthy explained the significance of the Sadhana Camp and exhorted the youth to develop Daiva Bhakti (devotion to God) and Jiva Karunyam (compassion for living beings) which formed the basis of a happy life. A galaxy of erudite speakers including Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, Sri Sanjay Sahni, Principal, Brindavan Campus of the Institute and Sri Anil Kumar from Prasanthi Nilayam Campus addressed the participants on all the four days of the Camp. Other speakers who provided valuable insights to the participants included Dr. T. Ravikumar, Sri Ruchir Desai and Dr. Shiv Kumar from the Brindavan Campus, Prof. Sudhir Bhaskar and Sri Srinivas Srirangarajan from the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus. Some research scholars and students also addressed the participants. They were: Sri Shashank Shah, Sri Sanjay Mahalingam, Sri Bharat Kumar and Dr. Deepak Anand.

Group discussions were held on all the days after the sessions in which the participants discussed each day's proceedings with their respective group leaders and observers. Besides these group discussions, a few of the youth got the rare opportunity of sharing their thoughts with the audience in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. Four speakers, two boys and two girls, spoke on the morning of 12th April 2005 and an equal number spoke on the morning of 13th April 2005. Bhagavan showered His blessings on all and also materialised a ring and a chain for two of them. On the concluding day also, Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy spoke to the participants and exhorted them to put into practice the insights they had gained in this Sadhana Camp.

### **Uttishtha Jagrata: A Drama**

This very inspiring drama was enacted by the Sai Youth of Kerala on the afternoon of 12th April 2005 in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Based on the life story of Swami Vivekananda, the drama portrayed selected incidents from his life which provided a clarion call to the youth to sanctify their life by following the path shown by Swami Vivekananda. In conclusion, it conveyed that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is inspiring the youth to take to the path of service and sacredness and develop their character. The drama earned the appreciation of the viewers and blessings of Bhagavan who gave the cast the opportunity of group photo with Him. He graciously materialised a gold ring for one of the actors also.

### **Excellent Musical Presentations**

Devotional music was seen at its best when some renowned musicians of Kerala and Sundaram Bhajan Group of Chennai made their musical offerings at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan during this Sadhana Camp and also as part of Vishu and Tamil New Year celebrations. While Sundaram Bhajan Group delighted the devotees with their Bhajans and devotional songs on the morning and afternoon of 14th April 2005, Kerala musicians enthralled them on all the four days from 11th to 14th April 2005. The Kerala singers who made these excellent musical presentations were: Smt. Radhika Tilak, Ms. Gayatri Ashokan, Sri T.S. Radhakrishnan, Sri Ganesh Sundaram, Sri Biju Narayan, Sri Kavalam Sreekumar and Sri Padma Kumar. Not only were their presentations of excellent quality, their treasure

of songs was also verily inexhaustible, which included Thyagaraja Kritis, light devotional songs, Malayalam songs, and Bhajans sung in Carnatic style. The singers displayed both devotion and talent and earned the appreciation of one and all and the profound blessings of Bhagavan. Bhagavan materialised a gold chain for one of the Kerala musicians who gave a soul-stirring presentation on the afternoon of 12th April 2005.

### **Tamil New Year and Vishu Celebrations**

A unique feature of this year's Tamil New year and Vishu celebrations was that both fell on the same day, and were celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam in a combined function held on 14th April 2005 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Soul-stirring devotional music programmes by the devotees of Tamil Nadu and Kerala enthralled the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall on this occasion.

Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue of the celebrations, was aesthetically decorated with beautiful festoons, colourful umbrellas and many banners with Bhagavan's sayings. The devotees of Kerala also arranged the celebrated Vishukkani, the customary symbol of prosperity in front of the dais, besides other Kerala style decorations. On the morning of 14th April 2005, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.30 a.m. and showered His blessings on the devotees on this blessed day. Along with usual Veda chanting by the Institute students, Bhagavan was welcomed into the Hall with sweet notes of Panchavadyam and Nadaswaram music.

The programme began with a scintillating musical presentation of devotional songs by the singers from Kerala. Thereafter, the Sundaram Bhajan Group of Tamil Nadu enthralled the devotees with their choicest Bhajans. After these musical presentations, two speakers from Tamil Nadu and one from Kerala addressed the gathering. The first speaker was Sri G.K. Raman, Convener, Sri Sathya Sai Trust, Tamil Nadu. Sri Raman conveyed to Bhagavan the gratitude of the people of Chennai where water was now available even during summer due to Sathya Sai Ganga Canal. Addressing the Kerala youth, Sri Raman counselled them to adhere to truth, integrity and honesty which made one a good human being. The second speaker, Sri Ram Subramanian, Senior Advocate, Madras High Court underlined the value of surrender to God and gave the example of Hanuman who was the perfect model of total surrender to Lord Rama. The last speaker was Prof. E. Mukundan who declared that the youth who had participated in the Sadhana Camp had resolved to perform Grama Seva in each and every village of Kerala after their return from this camp. After this, the Sundaram Bhajan Group started Bhajans which were followed by devotees with great devotional fervour surcharging the entire milieu with spiritual vibrations. The morning programme came to a close at 9.00 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

The afternoon of 14th April 2005 was also devoted to the singing of glories of the Lord. It was the Sundaram Bhajan Group again which kept the audience spellbound with their brilliant presentation of devotional songs in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Marathi. The ladies singers also gave an excellent presentation during this period. The music programme which started after the arrival of Bhagavan at 3.00 p.m. came to a happy conclusion at 4.40 p.m. The Sundaram Bhajan Group singers received Bhagavan's blessings in the end and also had the rare opportunity of group photos with Him. Arati was performed at 4.45 p.m. As Bhagavan moved towards His residence, once again Nadaswaram and Panchavadyam music filled the Hall, this time marking the close of the New Year celebrations.

*Sathya Sai Prabhu (Lord) and Sathya Sai Sevaks are inseparably bound by love and loyalty. Sai exists for you and you exist for Sai. We cannot be apart from each other.*

- Baba

## **DIVINE DISCOURSE: 9TH MARCH 2005**

# **I AM THE TEACHER OF TRUTH**

*Everyone has to face the consequences of his actions. Who has made the bats to hang from the branches of a tree with their heads downwards? It is their fate. Likewise, nobody can escape from the consequences of Karma.*

**(Telugu Poem)**

IT IS NATURAL FOR ALL LIVING beings to bear the consequences of their actions, good or bad. None can escape from them. Human beings in this world, however, think that they are undergoing suffering without having done anything wrong. But the fact is otherwise. Whatever pleasure or pain one undergoes, it is certainly the outcome of one's actions.

Every human being performs actions and experiences their fruits as a consequence. Nevertheless, he keeps doubting whether it is a natural consequence of his actions or it is due to any unknown reason. Man has been trying to know the truth about this phenomenon which he experiences in his life without knowing its real cause. Not only human beings, even insects, birds and animals have to experience the consequences of their Karmas (actions). For example, bats hang from the branches of a tree with heads downwards. It is their destiny. That is how they are born to live.

### **Sathya Sai always Keeps His Promise**

It is this inevitable law of Karma which guides the destiny of all living beings; it is the cause of their endless cycle of birth and death. Good Karmas do bear good results and vice versa. I will explain this subject today with some examples. There used to be a great devotee by name Karanam Subbamma in Puttaparthi. She was very rich. She had no children. Whatever she had, she used to give in charity to one and all with the feeling, "I am only sharing my God-given wealth with my fellow human beings." With such feelings of equanimity, she led a pious and noble life. She had, however, one desire. She used to pray, "Swami! At the time of my departure from this earthly sojourn, please pour a few drops of water into my mouth with Your Divine Hands." I promised her that I would do so. Six years after I gave that promise to her, I had to go to Chennai. That was the time of Second World War. Once in every hour, there used to be an air raid siren and the streets would become deserted in no time. After staying there for a few days, I started My return journey straight to Bukkapatnam from Chennai in a car. Meanwhile, Subbamma fell seriously ill and was taken to her parental home in Bukkapatnam from Puttaparthi. There she died. Subbamma's brothers and relatives made all arrangements for taking

her body for cremation. In those days, it was not easy to get firewood to cremate a dead body, especially in the villages. However, they procured some firewood and kept everything ready.

While passing by the house of Subbamma, I noticed many people gathered there. I enquired, "Who is going to be cremated?" Washerman Subbanna was there. He replied, "Swami! Subbamma is dead." I went into the house where her body was kept. Her relatives were about to take her body out for cremation. All of them were crying. They told Me, "Swami! She is gone, thinking of You till her last moment." Then I asked, "Where has she gone?" pretending as if I did not know anything. They said, "The doctor came and told that there is no life in her body." I smiled at their answer. I had not forgotten the promise given to her. I removed the cloth that covered her face. Ants were crawling all over her body. I gently called her name, "Subbamma!" She opened her eyes and looked at Me (loud applause). She held My hands with eyes full of tears and enquired, "When did You come, Swami?" I replied, "I have come just now." I wiped her tears gently with a towel and said, "Subbamma! Look here." She smiled and asked, "Swami! Do You still remember the promise You gave me? How compassionate You are!" I created Vibhuti and smeared it on her forehead. I then poured a few drops of sacred water into her mouth and said, "You were worried that Swami was not by your side at the last moment. Now you have seen Swami, talked to Swami and held Swami's hand. Now close your eyes peacefully." Subbamma drank water from My hands and breathed her last. Thus, I kept My promise to Subbamma. Sathya Sai always keeps His promise (loud applause). His name is Sathya. Whatever He says is truth.

### **Subbamma Comes Back to Life**

While this strange phenomenon was going on, all her relatives and the doctors who attended on her were watching the happenings with wonder. They could not believe their eyes. They were saying, "How come! Subbamma was dead. There was no breath in her body. How is it that she opened her eyes and started speaking? Perhaps it is due to the divine power of Sai Baba."

The dead body of Subbamma was then cremated by her relatives as per their family custom. From Bukkapatnam, I had to go to Puttaparthi. A bullock cart was kept ready for Me. The brother of Griham Ammayi (Easwaramma) also sat in the bullock cart with Me when we were returning to Puttaparthi. His name was Chandramouli. We saw smoke emanating from the cremation ground where Subbamma's mortal remains were being consigned to flames. Chandramouli said, "Swami! You were with Subbamma till her last breath. Now her body is being cremated. You could have waited for some more time." I told him, "Chandramouli! I gave word to Subbamma that I would be present by her side during her last moments and pour water into her mouth. That I did. She departed very peacefully. Now I am going to Puttaparthi after fulfilling My promise." Chandramouli felt very happy. In fact, Subbamma was held in high esteem by the entire village. She was the head of the village, being the wife of the Karanam. Entire property of the village was in her name. However, since she came into Swami's fold, she had no other interest in life except Swami. Right from early morning till she went to bed, she was constantly engaged in Swami's work only.

On certain occasions, I would go out in the hills without informing her. Poor lady! She used to go round the hills in search of Me. She would pack Upma, Dosa, Vada, Idli, etc., in a tiffin carrier and come in search of Me. At last, when she could find Me, I used to enquire teasingly, "Subbamma! What have you brought for Me?" She would reply, "Swami! I have brought the items of Your taste." Then I would tell her, "Give Me Dosa." She would then serve Dosa in a plate. Then I would tell her playfully, "Subbamma! I don't like this Dosa. Give Me Idli." Later, I would ask for Upma, Vada, etc.



Poor Subbamma! She used to serve Me all those items. From morning till evening, she would prepare a number of items because she was not sure what I would ask for at a particular time. Ultimately, I told her “Subbamma! You need not worry. I don’t need anything. I ask for this and that only to make your devotion and surrender known to the world.” Subbamma then requested Me, “Swami! I am happy that I have been able to serve You food and You have accepted these items with love and affection towards me.” She then requested Me to put a small quantity of this food in her mouth. I took a small piece of Idli from the plate and put it in her mouth with a little Chutney. She felt extremely happy. Thus, Subbamma experienced great bliss in the divine proximity of Swami till her last breath. Chandramouli, who was a witness to My showering love and grace on Subbamma on a number of occasions, observed, “Swami! How compassionate You are towards the devotees! We don’t have words to express Your love and compassion towards devotees, especially Subbamma.” True! Words fail to describe Swami’s love and compassion towards Subbamma. Subbamma’s devotion towards Swami was also unparalleled. In fact, the devotion of Subbamma surpasses even that of Prahlada.

The news of Subbamma’s coming back to life spread very fast. This incident became the talk of the entire village. People said in one voice, “Sai Baba has kept His promise; Subbamma has attained liberation.” Soon this news spread far and wide. Many people came in their cars from Bangalore to Puttaparthi to have Darshan of Swami. Thereafter, many elderly persons would come to Me with the request, “Swami! Please promise that You will pour water into my mouth with Your Divine Hands at the time of my departure from this world.” I used to tell them, “My dear ones! All cannot get this. If you have deservedness, I will come on My own at the appropriate time.” Kondama Raju also had a yearning for it. One day, he requested Me, “Swami! You are born in our family, in our lineage. You have brought honour and glory to our entire clan. I pray that You sanctify my birth in this family and pour water into my mouth at the time of my death.” I assured him that I would certainly fulfil his wish. He felt very happy, for he knew that once Swami gave His word, He would certainly stick to it. He was 112 years old then. Every morning, he would walk from the village to the New Mandir to have My Darshan. One day I asked him, “Why do you walk all the way from the village to the Mandir and back. There may be cattle on the way and if they attack you, you will fall down and get injured.” He would say very boldly, “Swami! When You are protecting me and constantly standing by my side, which animal could attack me?” One day, he told Easwaramma to prepare Obbattu (a sweet dish like pancake). Meanwhile, he lay down on his bed. At that time, I went there to fulfil My promise. Easwaramma put it in a plate and placed it before Me. Bit by bit, I fed a little to Kondama Raju. He relished it much and said to Easwaramma, “This Obbattu is excellent. You never prepared such a delicious one earlier.” She said, “You are relishing it much because Swami is feeding you.” After this, I poured water into his mouth. Kondama Raju closed his eyes and passed away peacefully. With this incident of Kondama Raju, it was once again revealed to the whole world that Sathya Sai Baba always keeps His promise, come what may! True to My Name, I always adhere to Sathya (truth). Kondama Raju always called Me by the name Sathya. Easwaramma, however, called Me Sathyam. Others called Me by other names like Sathyanarayana, Raju, etc. The lives of Subbamma and Kondama Raju were thus redeemed. I manifest My Leelas (divine play) in many ways to fulfil My word. I go to any extent to fulfil My promise. However, many people make promises and do not fulfil them. When I say to some devotee, “I am with you”, then I am always with him. He may forget this with the passage of time, but I never forget it.

### **My Days at Kamalapuram**

The elder brother of this body, Seshama Raju, wanted Me to acquire higher education. So, he took Me along with him to Kamalapuram and admitted Me in a school. In Kamalapuram, there was a businessman by name Kotte Subbanna. He brought a new medicine to his shop. Having come to know of My poetic talent, Kotte Subbanna requested Me to compose a poem to advertise this new medicine. I agreed to his request, but asked for some more information about the medicine. Then, I composed a song about the efficacy of the medicine and trained a few small children to sing it. They went round the streets with placards in their hands and sang the song composed by Me. The song ran thus:

*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 Kotte 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)

By the time the task of advertising the medicine was completed, all its stock in Subbanna's shop had been sold out. He felt very happy. Then he called Me and offered a pair of knickers and a shirt to Me. But I flatly refused saying, "Subbanna! I did not compose that song for the sake of new clothes. I don't need them. I won't touch them. Please take them back. If you thus offer some money or articles in return for My services, I will not even step into your shop." He realised My sincerity and strong feelings. After this, Kotte Subbanna never made such a request. He said to Me, "It is enough if I get Your love."

I never complain against anybody nor do I criticise anyone. True to My name, Sathya, I always adhere to truth. It so happened that I went to Pushpagiri to attend a scout camp. A big fair was held there. I was away from the house for a few days and there was nobody to fetch water from a distant well for household purposes. Hence, the wife of Seshama Raju had to shoulder that responsibility. By the time I returned from the scout camp, Seshama Raju had also come back to Kamalapuram. He was angry that there was nobody in the house to help his wife. No doubt, he loved Me but this incident made him very angry. He was then drawing lines in a notebook with the help of a wooden ruler. As soon as he saw Me, he shouted at Me, "Hey! Come here. There was no one in the house to fetch water for the last few days. Your sister-in-law had to attend to that job also, besides her normal domestic chores." So saying, he beat Me hard with the ruler. The ruler broke into three pieces. My hand was swollen and it was giving Me a lot of pain. I did not give a reply nor did I reveal this incident to anybody. I tied a bandage on My hand with a wet cloth. The next day, Seshama Raju's son died. He gave a telegram to Pedda Venkama Raju (Swami's father). Venkama Raju immediately rushed to Kamalapuram. He started from Puttaparthi, reached Bukkapatnam and from there came to Kamalapuram. The Griham

Abbayi (Swami's father) enquired from Me, why I was having a bandage on My hand. I tried to explain away very casually as if nothing had happened. I told him there was a slight pain due to a blister on the palm and therefore I put a bandage on it.

There was a lady belonging to the Vaisya community in the neighbouring house, who used to make her living by selling Dosas. She tried to reason with Griham Abbayi, saying, "What! Venkama Raju Garu! Can't you take care of your son? Why should you put Him to so much suffering by keeping Him under the care of His elder brother at such a distant place? The poor boy has to fetch water from a long distance carrying two big pitchers in a Kavadi (a bamboo stick with pitchers on either side) on His young shoulders daily." Thus, she narrated several incidents which revealed the suffering I was undergoing there. Griham Abbayi was deeply moved on hearing My plight. In the evening, he took Me outside the village on some pretext and said, "My dear son! I have come to know that the injury on Your hand was due to Your elder brother's beating. I myself never beat You till date. You are undergoing so much suffering here. Come! Let us go back to Puttaparthi." But I told him that I would come later. At the time when this incident happened, Griham Abbayi made a comment which rings in My ears even today: "Sathyam! If one is alive, one can make a living even by selling salt. I can no longer put You to such an ordeal. Can I not provide for Your living with my meagre income?" So saying, he shed tears.

#### **Puttaparthi is My Headquarters**

My parents loved Me very much. They did not want Me to leave Puttaparthi. I gave them this promise. Right from childhood all loved Me. Sathya Sai is the only one who is loved by everybody. (loud prolonged applause) Making Puttaparthi as My headquarters, I am continuing My Mission as Sathya Bodhaka (Teacher of Truth).

Subbamma's devotion cannot be described in words. She was an orthodox Brahmin and would not allow anyone to enter her house. I was the only one who was permitted to move about in her house. All other Brahmins of the village faulted her for this breach of rules. I built a residential colony in commemoration of the great love and devotion Subbamma had towards Me and named it Karanam Subbamma Nagar, which is next to Gokulam. I also purchased some cows and engaged some people to look after them. Some of these people were accommodated in a few of those houses in Karanam Subbamma Nagar. Thus, I made efforts to see that the name of Subbamma is remembered forever by devotees. I have always attached high value to the name of Subbamma.

I have also constructed a home for orphan children near Puttaparthi. They have been provided food, clothing and education so that they are able to lead a life of honour and dignity. Those who could not pass even Class 1 have now passed 10th Class. They learnt all subjects like Telugu, English from scratch. They are learning music too. I have also built houses for these boys so that they may stay there comfortably. Thus, there are so many service activities that I have undertaken right from My childhood. If they are all to be narrated now, it can go on for hours together.

Dear Students!

I have great love for you. I wish that all of you should come up well in life and earn a good name. I love such boys who earn a good name. I will give you whatever you want. In fact, I give Myself to such boys.

– **From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 9th March 2005.**

## Love without Desire is Supreme

*The supreme secret is that man must live in the world where he is born like the lotus leaf, which though born in water floats upon it without being affected or wetted by it. Of course, it is good to love and adore God with a view to gain some valuable fruit either here or hereafter; but, since there is no fruit or object more valuable than God or more worthwhile than God, the Vedas advise us to love God, with no touch of desire in our minds. Love, since you must love for love's sake; love God, since whatever He can give is less than He Himself; love Him alone, with no other wish or demand.*

- Baba

### NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

## 80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

### THE WORK CONTINUES

#### Medical Camps

**Sri Lanka:** From 11th to 25th March 2005, 152 Sai volunteers from the United Kingdom and Australia in collaboration with Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Sri Lanka served the people in the tsunami affected areas in Sri Lanka. Dr. Upadhyaya, Member of Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee, headed this massive relief mission that comprised eye and ENT specialists, neurosurgeons, general physicians, dental surgeons, paediatricians, gynaecologists, pharmacists, optometrists, nurses and other skilled individuals from various disciplines. They brought with them six tonnes of general and medical supplies that included medicines, antibiotics, vitamins, medical equipment, as also stationery, toys and clothes for children. The medical equipment included phaco-emulsification machines that are used for cataract surgery, slit lamps, optical microscopes, orthopaedic and neurosurgical equipment.

These 152 volunteers worked as seven teams in different locations throughout their relief mission. The logistics of the relief operation were well planned and coordinated between the UK, Australia and Sri Lanka Sai Organisations and demanded a lot of dedication, patience and perseverance. This stupendous task of taking surgical and general medical equipment to six locations simultaneously would not have been possible without Bhagavan's grace.

The teams in the North, East and South of Sri Lanka provided the following medical services: eye examination, cataract surgery, neurosurgery, orthopaedic surgery, health check for school children, grief counselling, classes on dental hygiene for children, psychological support, provision of medical equipment and supplies to the hospitals. They performed about 800 cataract surgeries and 200 dental surgeries. 22,000 consultations in various specialities, 2000 dental consultations, and several hundreds of orthopaedic procedures were accomplished. They disbursed around 7000 pairs of eyeglasses. The

doctors screened several thousand school children from 58 schools and updated their health report cards. The seven teams worked together and there was no distinction between the UK, Australian and Sri Lankan teams. On the completion of their relief mission, medical supplies including medicines, two-phaco-machines, medical equipment worth thousands of dollars were donated to the hospitals where the teams had worked. It was evident throughout the relief mission that Bhagavan's grace was abundant everywhere and His love manifested both in the hearts of those who were served and also in the hearts of those who served. In the year of unity, the UK, Australian and Sri Lankan relief teams have spread Bhagavan's message of love in all the tsunami affected areas of Sri Lanka.

**USA:** A medical camp was conducted on 12th March 2005 in the First Baptist Church in San Augustine, Texas. 120 volunteers travelled from all over Texas and from the neighbouring State of Arkansas to serve in the camp. The place was filled with smiling faces, and the greetings of "Sai Ram" echoed everywhere. Several of the volunteers reached the campsite one day before the camp, set up the booths and organised the area for the medical camp.

The camp commenced after prayer by Rev. David Burcham, the Pastor of the Church. The brief inaugural ceremony consisted of remarks by the Hon. Mayor of San Augustine, Camp Directors Drs. Prasad and Chintapalli. Hon. Mayor Pat Fussell welcomed the volunteers and appreciated their efforts. He underlined the fact that several people in the country did not have medical insurance and had not seen a doctor for many years.

The team included 19 doctors, 5 registered nurses, 4 laboratory technicians, 3 social workers, 3 nutritionists, 5 translators and 79 volunteers. The doctors, specialised in internal medicine, paediatrics, family practice, nephrology, orthopaedics, anaesthesia, pathology, radiology and dentistry offered their services with great devotion and love. Blood screening services for diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and obesity were provided. Specially trained paediatricians discussed the emotional and developmental problems with the families. Screening for vision, hearing, foot and dental problems were done. Women volunteers did breast examinations and patients who needed further evaluation by Mammograms were referred to the local area Health Network personnel who were on site. Osteoporosis (bone density) screening services and free blood sugar test kits were provided to the patients with diabetes or over 50 years. To prevent adult onset of diabetes mellitus, health education about diet, meals plans and physical exercises were discussed. The doctors also explained to the patients the benefits of preventive health care, meditation and prayer. The State Health Department provided immunisations for those who had not completed their immunisation schedules. 30 children, 78 men and 136 women were seen in consultation at the camp. The residents of the city with tears in their eyes thanked all the volunteers and requested the team to come again. Volunteers and patients experienced the pure love of Bhagavan.

## **2. Community Service Programmes**

**Greece:** On 5th March 2005, despite the heavy rain, 17 dedicated Sai devotees from Athens cooked and distributed 80 portions of hot food, sandwiches and sweets for 70 needy people near Koumoundourou Square. They gave out 18 bags of raw food, two big boxes of concentrated milk, one litre oilcans and sugar packets to 12 families. In addition, they also provided clothing and shoes to all the people.

On 12th March 2005, seven Sai devotees distributed 26 bags of raw food to the needy families in the courtyard of St. Paraskevi Church in Perama district of the city of Piraeus. Some bags were delivered

at the homes of these families who were living at a distance from the church. Large boxes of nearly new clothes and shoes were also given to the low-income families.

**South America:** A Sri Sathya Sai School with a free medical clinic was inaugurated on 23rd March 2005 in a poor rural area on the outskirts of Ariquipa, Peru in the presence of the Hon. Mayor of Ariquipa, the Deputy Mayor of Ariquipa, and office bearers of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation. On 8th March 2005, flyers were circulated in the area, and the first student was registered. On 10th March 2005, the rest of the 35 students were inscribed and a waiting list was also started. On 21st March 2005, first meeting with parents and students was held to explain the objectives of education in human values, to require parents to participate in learning certain skills and to have a deeper understanding of the programme. On 30th March 2005, classes were started. The school is fortunate to have three well-trained teachers who have already been working with the Sathya Sai Human Values programme.

### **3. Public Meetings**

**Australia:** On 20th February 2005, a public meeting was held in Melbourne's Town Hall, located in the heart of the city. The venue fits the grand occasion of spreading Bhagavan's message of love to more people and thereby to realise the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. The meeting was attended by approximately 700 people.

After the Australian National Anthem, Sri Albert Barelds, Deputy Central Coordinator of Sai Organisation of Australia, briefly described the occasion and introduced the speakers: Dr. Pal Dhall, Zonal Chairman, Sri Neville Fredericks, Central Coordinator of Australia and Smt. Sandra Cranage-Dzanovic who represents the Sai young adults. Dr. Pal Dhall gave an overview of the teachings of Bhagavan that unite humanity and accept all faiths. He elaborated on the educational and medical implications of Bhagavan's message of love and the impact this has had around the globe. Sri Neville Fredericks spoke about the five human values in everyday life. He described how even the simple values Sathya (truth), Dharma (righteousness), Santhi (peace), Prema (love) and Ahimsa (non-violence) could be used to run a big corporation or business successfully. In a short but moving address, Smt. Sandra Cranage-Dzanovic inspired the august assembly by narrating how the teachings of Bhagavan influenced her, firstly as a young girl, then as a Sai Youth and now as a mother. The film "His Work", depicting the many projects initiated and inspired by Bhagavan was screened. The meeting ended with the reading of a message from Bhagavan.

**USA:** On 22nd January 2005, a public meeting was held in a Town Hall in Seattle, Washington. Around 240 persons attended the meeting. The meeting began with brief remarks by Sri Ashok Kumar, Regional President of Sai Organisation. He spoke about Bhagavan and Sai Organisation, and introduced the speakers: Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman, Prasanthi Council and Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Member, Prasanthi Council. Dr. Goldstein delivered a powerful and uplifting talk on Swami's Divinity, His love and His mission. He exhorted everyone to follow Swami's teachings and realise the Self, which is the purpose of life. Dr. Narendranath Reddy urged everyone to follow the 4 F formula of Swami, i.e., "Follow the Master, Face the Devil, Fight to the End and Finish the Game." He also emphasised how practical and simple Bhagavan's teachings were to understand and practise. Finally, the meeting concluded with the screening of the film "His Work".

**– Prasanthi Council**

**BHARAT**

**Andhra Pradesh:** The Guntur District Organisation distributed clothes and blankets to all inmates of 250 houses on 13th March 2005 in Pallepalem, a seashore village affected by the tsunami and fed all the villagers sumptuously. This district conducted a medical camp treating 263 patients, planted 200 shady trees, started Bhajans and Bal Vikas classes, and cleaned drains in that village. This district started a drinking water distribution centre in the local N.R.T. Centre on 8th March 2005. It distributed coloured rice, butter milk and water to 8000 pilgrims at Kotappa Konda pilgrim centre from 6th to 8th March 2005.

The Srikakulam District Organisation as part of Sri Sathya Sai Sahasra Grama Seva Maha Yajnam, conducted medical camps in 14 villages treating 4503 patients in March 2005. It gave new clothes to 36 children in a home for the mentally retarded in Srikakulam on the occasion of Ugadi festival. This district carried out Grama Seva in 89 new villages. The Grama Seva consisted of Sri Sathya Sai Vratams, Nagar Sankirtan, honouring the aged, food provisions to selected poor, sanitation works in the villages and service to poor pregnant women.

**Assam, Manipur and N.E. States:** The long cherished dream of the devotees of the Dibrugarh Samithi saw fulfilment when the main building of Prasanthi Divine Valley School was inaugurated on 20th January 2005 in Hatimura village near Dibrugarh. In the public meeting held on this occasion, ideals of Sai education were expounded. The highlight was the inspiring talk delivered by the Member of Parliament, Sri Sarbananda Sonowal. The cultural performance of Bal Vikas students was highly appreciated by the large number of people who attended this function. The whole area could feel a new fervour as the youth and Seva Dal members of the Samithi created a new atmosphere on different aspects of human values in the village surroundings.

**Himachal Pradesh:** Six general medical camps and three eye camps were organised in different parts of Himachal Pradesh in the months of February and March 2005. The villages covered were Sehra Thana, Khundia, Ghumarvi, Bathri, Dhama, Jabloo and Goodwin. Many of these villages are in the remote areas of the State. Ten thousand needy people of the State were benefited by these medical camps. 180 eye operations were successfully conducted by eye surgeons. Every patient was provided free medicine as per the prescription of the doctor. Follow-up action was undertaken by the active workers of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. All the patients felt grateful to Bhagavan Baba for the positive and speedy recovery.

An exhibition on the Life and Message of Bhagavan Baba was held at Mandi during the Maha Sivarathri Festival from 8th March to 14th March 2005. Thousands of people from the State and other regions of the neighbouring States came to see the exhibition and to understand the teachings of Bhagavan Baba. The exhibition was displayed at another place known as Sujampur Tihra from 23rd March to 25th March 2005 during Holi festival. Thousands of people came from nearby villages to witness the glory of Bhagavan Baba and went back in ecstasy. On 26th March 2005, the exhibition was displayed within the campus of Government College, Ghumarvi in district Bilaspur. Thousands of young members of the student community, both from schools and colleges, were motivated and are now participating in Bhajans and other activities of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation.

**Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal:** The Cancer Patients' Ward in the Paediatrics Department of KG Medical University, Lucknow has been adopted by the Sai Organisation. Our Seva Dal members thoroughly cleaned the ward rooms, especially their toilets. Damaged valves and drain-pipes were replaced. The chemotherapy room attached with the wards, being very vital was given complete face-

lift by putting fresh decorated tiles on the floor and side walls. The walls, doors and windows were painted. New curtains were put up. The old damaged electric wiring and plumbing were replaced completely. A much-needed new air conditioner was installed to maintain proper temperature. Bhagavan's photographs were put up to adorn all the rooms.

Before formally handing over this humble offering to the hospital authorities on 3rd April 2005, Bhajan was arranged in which the hospital authorities and the patients of all religions participated enthusiastically. Bhagavan's presence was experienced throughout the session. Seva Dal members visit this ward every Sunday. They provide food for one week, fruit and medicines to poor families. Blood for the deserving patients is arranged from the quota of blood donated by our Seva Dal Youth in blood bank in previous Blood Donation Camps.

Mahila Wing of the Lucknow Samithi has been visiting the Women Model Jail in Lucknow and arranging Bhajans, moral and ethical teachings for the inmates of the jail and their children. Now even the inmates lead the Bhajans. There has been remarkable change in their behaviour. They eagerly await the visit by our Mahila group. They have developed faith in Bhagavan Baba and His teachings. Every time, Prasadam in the form of Vibhuti, fruit and other edibles is distributed to all present. Our Organisation is arranging for the school fees of the children of the inmates so that they can turn out to be good citizens of our country.

On the auspicious occasion of Holi this year, a cultural programme was presented by the inmates and their children. Eight women who completed their jail term were given sewing machines to enable them to lead an independent life.

This tree shall not be transplanted; it will grow where it first arose from the earth. This Avatar has no affinity or attachment with members of the family wherein He appeared. Unlike appearances of Rama, Krishna, etc., where life was around the family, this Avatar is for the Bhaktas, the aspirants, the Sadhus and the Sadhakas only.

- Baba

## **TRAYEE BRINDAVAN ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS AT KODAIKANAL**

THE anniversary of Trayee Brindavan was celebrated on 26th April 2005. On this auspicious day, Sai Sruthi – the divine abode of our Beloved Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba at Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu wore a festive look. It was exquisitely decorated with flowers of jasmine and Kanakambaram. The



decoration was unique in all its aspects, depicting the traditional floral decoration of Tamil Nadu. The devotees in thousands, unmindful of inhospitable chilly weather started forming up the queue in front of Sai Sruthi main gate as early as 5 a.m. to have Divine Darshan and benign blessings of Bhagavan on this auspicious occasion.

The joy and ecstasy of the devotees knew no bounds when Beloved Bhagavan appeared to grant His Divine Darshan to the accompaniment of Bhajans by students of Sri Sathya Sai institutions. Bhagavan in His immense grace and love bestowed His blessings on all the devotees. Narayana Seva and Vastra Danam was performed to 430 beneficiaries both gents and ladies in the Divine Presence. After the divine blessings of Bhagavan, Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees. In the evening also Bhagavan blessed the devotees with His Divine Darshan followed by soul-stirring devotional music by students. The day's programme concluded with Maha Mangala Arati offered to Bhagavan.

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## Realising the Highest Goal

**Bharatiya culture enjoins on everyone to believe that the real nature of man is supreme and that he should ever be conscious of this truth. The Bharatiyas of past ages**

**had faith in this great reality. They achieved victory in their endeavours as a result of this faith and rose to lofty heights. They reached the peak of progress. We have slid down into the present state, mainly because we have lost faith in the Atma. Loss of faith in the Atma or Self involves loss of faith in God Himself. That Omnipresence, that inner motivator of all, who is the warp and woof of our body and mind, our emotions and intellect – strengthening faith in Him is the only means of realising the highest goal of man.**

**- Baba**

**JUNE 2005**

**EASWARAMMA DAY DISCOURSE**

**EARN GOD'S GRACE  
BY SERVING YOUR PARENTS**

*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, the love of one's mother is much more powerful and noble than that of all the relatives and friends. The mother is, therefore, held in high esteem all over the world. That is why everybody calls his country as motherland. Bharat is our motherland. The sacredness of the mother's heart and the power of her blessings are unparalleled. But, unfortunately, people today are not able to understand properly the sacredness of mother's love, not only in our country but in all the countries of the world.

Never Forget the Love of your Mother

In this sacred land of ours, there have been many great centres of spiritual power since ancient times. Great and holy men like Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Vivekananda could acquire spiritual powers only because they received the blessings of their mothers. They also earned the grace of Mother Kali whom they worshipped as the form of God. Vivekananda earned great name and fame by the grace of Mother Kali. In fact, the people of West Bengal achieved greatness by worshipping God in the form of Devi (mother goddess).

It is a grave mistake to forget the mother who is endowed with great divine powers. In our scriptures also, the mother has been given the highest place. It has been said, *Matru Devo Bhava* (revere your mother as God); *Pitru Devo Bhava* (revere your father as God); *Acharya Devo Bhava* (revere your teacher as God); *Atithi Devo Bhava* (revere your guest as God). Thus, the mother has been given the first place in that order. It is only when we uphold the honour and dignity of the mother that we will be entitled to be called true sons. The life of a person who is unable to earn the love of his mother is a mere waste. Hence, we should do our best to win the love of our mother. No one can describe the love of a mother in words. It is only by the strength of his mother's will that a son would come up well in life. Hence, we should respect and love our mother. She must be given the pride of place in our life. Only such people who earn the love of their mother can become the leaders of their country. We may or may not worship other deities, but we should certainly worship our mother as God. We should never forget the love of our mother. The love of mother is supreme. It is only by the love of their mother that divine feelings develop in children. Where there is a virtuous mother, there will surely be peace and prosperity. It is foolish to crave for the love of other people, ignoring the love of one's own mother. One should, therefore, revere one's mother and try to experience her love.

### Mother is your Living God

The mother of Ramakrishna Paramahansa was noble and virtuous. She belonged to a poor family, and had to face great hardships in life. But she earned the grace of God by her sterling virtues and firm faith in God. It is only when one respects one's mother and wins her love that one can be called a human being in the real sense. There is no God greater than one's mother in this world. Unfortunately, today people forget this sacred truth and go here and there in search of God. Where is the need to search for God when you have living divinity right in front of you in the form of your mother? Many people undertake spiritual practices like penance, pilgrimage to holy places, worship and other rituals in order to see God. But what is the use? You cannot win the grace of God without first winning the love of your mother. The love of the mother flows as an undercurrent in every human being. Read the life story of any great person; you will come to know that they could reach such great heights in life only because of their mother's love. When one leads one's life in accordance with one's mother's noble ideals, one will be relieved of all kinds of suffering. One may or may not respect others, but one must respect one's mother. In fact, one should dedicate one's entire life to win the love of one's mother. Mother's love is always selfless. We should learn to cultivate such love. Wherever you go, whomsoever you meet, you can find that people become rich and prosperous only with the blessings and love of their mother. If you cannot win the love of your mother, how can you hope to win the grace of God? Hence, first and foremost you should strive to win the love of your mother. The heart of the mother is very tender. Therefore, do not do anything which will hurt the feelings of your mother.

One of the main teachings of the culture of Bharat is: revere your mother and father as God. A person who is able to win the love of his mother can win everything else. Ramakrishna Paramahansa earned a great name because he could win the love of his mother. Not only that, he could win the grace of Mother Kali and attain her divine vision. There were many people in Bengal who were the masters of great wealth, high education and great scholarship. But they could not achieve anything worthwhile in life due to their lack of faith and devotion. It was only Ramakrishna Paramahansa who could lead an ideal life by loving his mother and obeying her commands. He taught others that there was nothing greater and nobler in this world than mother's love. The mother is God, verily. It is, therefore, not good and proper to hurt the feelings of the mother who is the embodiment of love. It is only when we develop love towards our mother will our life become happy and prosperous. Hence, first and foremost, we should strive to win the love of our mother. Whatever the mother does is for our own good. We must develop such firm faith. You take the life story of any great person in this world; he owes his greatness to his mother.

Modern students do not try to win their mothers' love. The mother undergoes great ordeals; she is prepared to undertake even hard labour to earn a few rupees to bring up her children and educate them somehow. What a great sacrilege will it be to forget the love of such a noble mother! Only a person who wins the love of his mother can earn God's love. We are not born from the earth or the sky; we are born from the womb of our mother. It is possible that at times differences may arise between a mother and her son. But no mother would hate her son on that account; she would not forsake him. There may be sons who hate their mothers, but there are no mothers who hate their sons. The mother will always aspire for the welfare of her son. Even if they go to a court of law in a matter

of dispute, the mother will always say, "He is my son and I am his mother." They cannot refer to each other in any other manner. The mother will always strive for the safety, health and welfare of her children. People today are facing great difficulties because they are ignoring the love of their mother. If you are able to win the love of your mother, you can win the love of all other people. The love of your mother will always be with you, constantly guarding and guiding you in all your endeavours. Unfortunately, people today do not realise this truth. They think, "It is enough to provide a few morsels of food to that old lady." They are so narrow-minded and selfish! It is a great mistake to think that their responsibility will end by providing some food to their mothers. The mother should always be held in high esteem and served with love and devotion. She should be made to feel happy and contented.

Pundarika was a great devotee of Lord Panduranga. He held the view that service to the parents was of paramount importance. One day, he was serving his parents by massaging their feet. In order to test his love towards his parents, Lord Panduranga appeared before him. But Pundarika did not want to be distracted from his attention and continued to serve his parents. Then, Lord Panduranga asked him, "My dear son! I have come to give you My Darshan; but you are not looking at Me. Whom are you serving with such single-minded devotion?" Pundarika replied that he was serving his parents. Then, Lord Panduranga queried, "Is not God greater than parents? Won't you have My Darshan at least for one second?" But Pundarika was not distracted. He replied, "My parents are living divinities for me. I cannot have Your Darshan unless I put my parents to sleep. If You wish to give me Your Darshan, You stand there on the brick till then." So saying, he pushed a brick towards Lord Panduranga. The Lord then commended his love and devotion towards his parents and declared, "The world will always remain safe and prosperous if all people cultivate such love and devotion towards their parents. May such noble sons like you proliferate in this world!" Great and noble ideas of sacrifice and detachment continued to develop in Pundarika. He spent his time happily serving his parents and winning their love.

#### Mothers in Ancient Times Fostered Values in their Children

There were many ideal mothers in Bharat in ancient days. They contemplated on God and chanted the Divine Name incessantly. They chanted Mantras like "Om Namo Narayanaya" before eating their food. They would never eat food without chanting the Divine Name. They inculcated such noble habits in their children also. Thus, mothers in ancient times were ideal. They used to inculcate in their children moral values and put them on the right path. There are few such ideal mothers in the world today. Mothers these days always think, "My son should get good marks and rank in the examination. He should acquire a high degree and earn lakhs of rupees. He should rise to a high position in life." A large majority of modern mothers think in this manner. Very few of them teach their children, "My dear! Pray to God daily. Never forget God." That is the reason why the country of Bharat is facing innumerable difficulties. Our ancients always used to pray daily. They chanted, Rama! Krishna! Govinda! They chanted the Divine Name incessantly. But things have changed. Now, there is no such contemplation on the Divine Name. On the other hand, worldly desires have increased enormously. The culture of Bharat exhorts the people to adhere to the principle of Sathyam Vada (speak truth) and Dharmam Chara (practise righteousness). Unfortunately, today people act contrary to



such noble ideals. They are distorting those ideals as Sathyam Vadha (kill truth) and Dharmam Chera (imprison righteousness).

Once Easwaramma came to Me and requested, “Swami! Many poor mothers have come here along with their children. They have no food to eat. Kindly bless them.” Then I rendered them proper help and thus fulfilled Easwaramma’s wish. On another day, she came to Me and expressed her anguish thus: “Swami! Small children of five years’ age are daily walking to Bukkapatnam and back to attend school. How can they study after walking such a long distance daily?” Then, I called their parents and advised them, “These tiny tots can learn more from their mothers than from their teachers in a school. Instead of sending these small children to such a long distance for education, you first teach them what little you know. You teach them at least two or three letters of the alphabet which you know.” Later, I established a school in Puttaparthi and fulfilled the wish of Easwaramma.

Though the mothers of those days were not well educated, they never gave up praying to God. Love God. There is no use wasting your time in worldly matters. Never try to imitate others. Try to develop faith in the truth that manifests from your own heart. It is not good to hate other castes and religions. Develop faith in your own religion and follow it diligently.

Once when I was a student, some political leaders approached Me and requested, “Raju! We understand that You write good poetry. We have arranged a meeting where a large number of people are expected to come. We request You to please write a good song that can inspire the people.” Those were the days of the Second World War. Adolf Hitler was marching forward to conquer various countries in Europe. He was trying to invade Russia. India was then under the control of the Britishers. Taking the situation into account, I wrote a small playlet. In that playlet, I kept a rubber doll in a cradle and sang the following song, rocking the cradle gently:

*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.*

*Then what else is the reason for your crying?*

*Is it because the countrymen lack unity?*

*All the countrymen shall unite and fight to win freedom;*

*Go to sleep, my child, go to sleep.*

(Telugu

Song)

The mothers of those days used to sing such inspiring patriotic songs and teach their children good things. They tried to mould their character to inculcate in them love for their country. There was no scope at all for untruth in their talk. By their truthful words, they put their children on the path of truth.

*Embodiments of Love!*

If you want that you and your children should attain purity and sacredness, constantly contemplate on God. If the parents lead a good and noble life, their children will also be

good and noble. Hence, the parents should be good in the first instance. Unfortunately, today the parents are unable to set an example to their children, with the result that the children are taking to bad ways. The parents should, therefore, sanctify their life by contemplating on God. But the people of Bharat are forgetting these sacred teachings. The mothers in ancient times used to impart good lessons to their children in songs like this:

*Get up early in the morning at the crowing of the cock,  
Have a bath after your morning ablutions,  
Wear a proper dress.  
Eat properly and moderately.*

(Telugu Poem)

But what to speak of children, even elders do not follow the rules of cleanliness today. They do not even clean their teeth properly. That is why we ourselves are generating all sorts of diseases. For both, good and bad, we only are responsible. When we cultivate sacred feelings, we will be rewarded with good results. If sacred feelings are to take root in us, we have to cultivate good habits.

Once the village of Puttaparthi was affected by infectious diseases like cholera and plague. Several people died due to these diseases. Then, I warned the children of the village that these diseases would spread through drinking polluted water and eating impure food. I, therefore, advised them to take proper care in this regard. I advised them to drink clean and pure water. I told them, "Do not eat too much. Avoid unclean food. Eat only clean food in small quantities. Not only that, keep your mouth always fresh and clean. Several diseases affect you due to unclean mouth. It is not good to eat anything and everything when you feel hungry. Eat only wholesome food. God's grace is important both for good health and happiness in life. Hence, always pray to God." Happiness can be attained only through constant contemplation on God, nothing else. It is not something that can be attained from outside. It springs forth from one's own heart. In order to attain health and happiness, we should constantly contemplate on God and thereby sanctify our time.

In ancient times, parents put their children on Godward path by their example. Such youth were a source of strength for Bharat. Unfortunately, today children do not obey their parents. Modern youth dismiss the wise words of their parents as mad talk. But these are truthful and sacred words spoken by the parents with purity of their hearts. God showers His grace on those who pray with a pure heart. Since ancient times, the women of Bharat have been offering such prayers to God in all sincerity and devotion. That is how Bharat has been maintaining a high position in the world.

**Sanctify your Life by Constant Contemplation on God**

Engage yourself in good activities right from early morning. Then you will automatically develop good habits. In fact, the country needs such youth today. Who are the youth? People generally think that the boys and girls above the age of 18 years are the youth. This is not correct. Persons endowed with noble thoughts can only be called youth. Hence, one must cultivate noble thoughts. As soon as you get up, your first action should be chanting the Divine Name, Rama! Krishna! Govinda! Again, before you go to bed, you should chant the Divine Name. When you chant the Divine Name, you will always have good thoughts. Unfortunately, people today totally forget chanting of the Divine Name. People think that they are highly educated and have high degrees, but their

degrees will not enable them to tread the right path. Education that does not develop self-enquiry is no education at all. It will only lead to agitation! Mere reading of books does not constitute education. Reading of books will contribute only to bookish knowledge. That is artificial knowledge. Real knowledge comes out of the heart. When young men and women realise and propagate this truth, the country will make all-round progress.

*Embodiments of Love!*

There is no need for you to read voluminous books. Even a small book is good enough if it can help you to contemplate on God. Do not be satisfied with acquiring mere bookish knowledge. Such knowledge is only superficial knowledge. What you need really is the knowledge of the Self. Strive to acquire that knowledge. It manifests from within. It cannot be acquired from outside. Is it not a fact that the more you dig the river bed, the more the water that comes out of the sand? Similarly, the more you remove your bad thoughts, the more the sacred knowledge and sacred thoughts manifest in you. Purity, steadiness, wisdom and such other noble qualities are present in your heart. First and foremost, develop sacred thoughts. Do not bother about what others talk about you. Do not leave your sacred path due to the adverse comments of others.

The mothers in ancient times imparted such sacred teachings to their children. That is why the children in those days, specially in the sacred land of Punjab, engaged themselves in constant contemplation of God. Due to these sacred thoughts of its people, the land of Punjab attained great sacredness. However, it is not the land that is important. What is important is that the thoughts and feelings of the people should be focused on God. Many people ask, "Where is God?" I tell them, "My dear! I am God; you are also God." This is the truth. Why should we be afraid of speaking the truth? God resides in the heart of every being. All are the embodiments of God. There is divinity in every human being. If it were not so, we would not have existed in this world. It is only because of faith in God that man has had his existence in this world till today.

There lived in a village a husband and his wife. The wife was constantly chanting the Divine Name, Rama, Krishna, Govinda, performing worship of God and singing His glories. The husband, however, did not apparently perform any worship. The wife felt sorry that her husband was not uttering the name of God even once in a day. One night, the husband could not get sleep and kept tossing in the bed. In this state of restlessness, he unintentionally uttered "Rama!" His wife was overjoyed on hearing the Divine Name from the mouth of her husband. The next day, as soon as she got up from her bed, she collected all the rice available in the house, cooked it and fed the poor people in jubilation. The husband asked her, "What is the matter? You are cooking and feeding the poor today. What is the special occasion?" The wife replied, "Yesterday night, I heard the Divine Name of Rama from your mouth. I was overjoyed to hear it. Hence, this celebration." On hearing his wife's reply, the husband felt sad that the Name of Rama which he treasured in the inner recesses of his heart had come out. "Has my Rama gone out from my heart today?", he felt worried. Many people do not show their love and devotion for God. They keep their devotion close to their heart. However, one day or the other it gets manifested on its own.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Contemplate on the Divine Name, whatever be your religion, caste, creed or sex. Choose the Name of God you like and chant it constantly. The mother of Ramakrishna Paramahansa inculcated noble virtues in him and shaped him into a man of great wisdom

and devotion. All mothers today should follow her example and strive to put their children on the right path. If you constantly contemplate on God and chant His Name, that itself will purify your thoughts and feelings. Never forget the Divine Name. Constant remembrance of the Divine Name will sanctify your life. Therefore, contemplate on the Divine Name incessantly.

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

- From Bhagavan’s Easwaramma Day Discourse in Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu on 6th May 2005.

### **EASWARAMMA DAY CELEBRATIONS AT KODAIKANAL**

Celebration of Easwaramma Day on 6th May is now an event of global magnitude in which lakhs of Bal Vikas children in all parts of the world take part. A series of cultural, spiritual and social welfare programmes are organised in the memory of the Divine Mother Easwaramma who set great ideals to the world by her exemplary life. More particularly, her love for children and concern for the poor and downtrodden make her life a shining example of ideal womanhood for the entire mankind. Sai Organisations all over the world celebrate this day to express their love and gratitude to the Divine Mother Easwaramma.

This event assumes added glory and majesty when it is celebrated in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. A unique feature of this year’s celebration was that the venue was Sai Sruthi, the Divine Abode of Bhagavan at Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu. Preparations for the celebrations of this auspicious day started on 5th May 2005 itself when on the evening of this day Sai Sruthi reverberated with Nadaswaram music. The entire premises of Sai Sruthi bore a festive look with decorations of flowers of Jasmine and Kanakambaram, colourful buntings and festoons. Life-like photographs of the Divine Mother Easwaramma, aesthetically decorated with flower garlands, adorned Sai Sruthi.

Devotees in thousands braving the inhospitable cold weather started queuing up in front of the main gate of Sai Sruthi as early as 4 a.m. The programme started at 6.30 a.m. with Nadaswaram recital. Every available space in Sai Sruthi was occupied by devotees eagerly awaiting the Divine Darshan of their Beloved Bhagavan. Veda chanting started as soon as Bhagavan came to bless the assembled devotees. As Bhagavan proceeded to the area where Narayana Seva was arranged, the students of Sri Sathya Sai institutions started soul-elevating Bhajans. After the Divine blessings of Bhagavan, food, Dhotis, Saris, blankets, raincoats and bedsheets were distributed to needy people. Bhagavan keenly watched the distribution of clothes and Prasadam. The morning programme came to a close with Mangalarati to Bhagavan.

The afternoon programme commenced with Bhajans led by the students of Sri Sathya Sai institutions. Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations addressed the gathering in the Bhajan Hall. In His Discourse (full text given elsewhere), Bhagavan exhorted the devotees, particularly the children and youth, to sanctify their life by earning the love of their parents. After the Divine Discourse, an excellent play titled “Kali Yuga Nachiketa” was presented by Group III Bal Vikas students of Madurai district. Bhagavan sat through the

entire programme, blessed the children at the end of the play and also posed for photographs with them. In the end, Mangalarati was offered to Bhagavan and Prasadham was distributed. Easwaramma Day celebrations at Kodaikanal came to a happy conclusion with the staging of this beautiful drama.

**VALEDICTORY DISCOURSE:**  
**SADHANA CAMP FOR KERALA YOUTH**

**GIVE UP DUALITY TO EXPERIENCE  
UNITY AND DIVINITY**

*God is love and love is God. When you hold on to this principle of love and develop love to love relationship, you will attain the state of non-dualism.*  
(Telugu Poem)

*Embodiments of Love!*

You have all come here TO take part in the conference. Though your stay at Prasanthi Nilayam is short, your experiences are profound as you have described them at length in your speeches. However, you have yet to experience what you expect and deserve.

*The day on which all the devotees gather and sing the glory of God melodiously; the day on which the sufferings of the poor are lovingly removed and all people live like brothers and sisters; the day on which groups of Dasas (servants of God) who constantly contemplate on God are served a sumptuous feast; the day on which noble souls visit us and narrate the stories of God lovingly; enjoy that day as the real day. All other days are mere death anniversaries. Do I need to say more, oh noble souls?*

(Telugu Poem)

Non-duality Signifies True Devotion

*Embodiments of Love!*

In this conference, you have deliberated upon many subjects such as duties and responsibilities of youth and how they should mould their character. Let all your activities be suffused with love. Modern youth fail to understand the true meaning of love. Love cannot exist if there is a feeling of duality. Ekatma Prema (non-dual love) is true love. Give and take relationship does not reflect the true spirit of love. One should keep giving and giving without expecting anything in return. That is true love. It is the sign of selfish love to desert someone in times of his difficulties. When you give up Swartha (selfishness) and strive for Parartha (welfare of others), only then can you have Yathartha Prema (true love). You should know the difference between Padartha (matter) and Yathartha (reality). Yathartha transcends Padartha. *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma* (verily all this is Brahman). Consider everything as divine and treat the dualities of life such as pain and pleasure, loss and gain with equanimity. *Sukhadukhe Samekruthwa Labhalabhau Jayajayau* (one should remain unaffected by happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat). Never be carried away by the vagaries of the mind. When you go by the mind, you see only matter since the mind is related to matter. Have no concern with matter. If you associate yourself with the mind, you cannot achieve non-duality. You can develop true love and devotion only when you give up duality.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Understand that the same principle of love exists in you and others. It is essential for every devotee to understand this principle of unity. One who observes duality cannot be called a true devotee. Non-duality signifies true devotion. Share your love with others without any expectation. Love everybody for the sake of love. When you extend your love to others, you can attain the state of non-dualism. The worldly love that you indulge in from morning to evening is not true love at all. True love is that which is focused on one form, one path and one goal. It is a great mistake to divide love and divert it to many directions. *Love is God. God is love. Live in love.* Only then can you realise the principle of oneness and attain fulfilment in life. *Prema Muditha Manase Kaho Rama Rama Ram...* (Sing the sweet name of Rama with your heart filled with love). You may choose any name you like, but you should chant it with love.

#### Develop One-pointed Love for God

Love is most sacred, sweet and non-dual. It is a great mistake to divide love and associate it with multiplicity. Your love should remain steady in pleasure and pain. Where there is love and devotion, there is no scope for differences. All differences are the making of your mind. Develop the feeling of oneness that you and I are one. Never think that you and I are different. When you give up the feeling of duality, you will attain unity and divinity. That is the sign of true devotion.

The principle of oneness cannot be explained in words; it has to be experienced through love. But you do not understand the true meaning of love because you interpret it in the physical and worldly sense. Consequently, your love is never steady. It keeps changing every now and then. True love has no connection with the physical body. It should not be tainted with body attachment. The body is made up of matter. All that is related to matter will never give you peace and happiness. Hence, transcend the matter and see the reality. Develop Ekatma Bhava (feeling of oneness). *All are one, be alike to everyone.* It is a big mistake to attribute worldly feelings to love. There is no scope for dualism in love.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Your names and forms are different but the principle of love is the same in all of you. That is why I address you as the “embodiments of love”. Love is always one, it should not be divided. Consider God as one and love Him wholeheartedly. Such one-pointed love towards God can be termed as true devotion. Devotees like Jayadeva, Gauranga and Eknath developed such divine love and sanctified their lives. Likewise, Mira and Sakkubai had unwavering love and devotion towards God. They did not worship various names and forms. They followed one path. They installed one name and one form in their heart and contemplated on their chosen deity incessantly. Those who are dual-minded and change their path every now and then are bound to ruin their lives. Hence, never be dual-minded. Experience divinity with Ekatma Bhava. You may worship Rama, Krishna, Easwara or any other name and form of God, you will reach the same goal. Never forget the goal.

#### Mira's Non-dual Love for Krishna

Names and forms appear to be different, but the reality behind all these is one and the same. However, people are unable to look deep within themselves and experience this oneness. The power of love is unparalleled. There is no power greater than this. Love cannot be understood by experiments and investigations. It can be understood only through love and nothing else. Mira's husband Rana could not tolerate her singing in the Mandir all the time. He commanded her to go out of the Mandir. This came as a great

shock to Mira. She thought to herself, “Is Krishna inside the Mandir and not outside? When Krishna is present everywhere, how can Rana take me away from Him?” After understanding this reality, she left her home and set out for Mathura. Mathura is not merely the name of a town. In fact, the heart suffused with Madhura Bhava (sweetness) is Mathura. She sang, *Chalo Re Man Ganga Yamuna Teer, Ganga Yamuna Nirmal Pani Sheetal Hota Sarir* (Oh mind! Go to the banks of the Ganga and Yamuna; the water of Ganga and Yamuna is pure; it will make the body cool and serene). Here Ganga and Yamuna symbolically mean Ida and Pingala (left and right subtle channels in the spine). The centre of the eyebrows where Ida and Pingala meet stands for Mathura. This is the real meaning of the song. But people these days do not enquire into the inner meaning of these truths. They are carried away by the worldly meanings and interpretations. Do not go by these interpretations. The feelings of one’s heart are most important. They are true, steady, changeless and eternal.

Mira proceeded towards Mathura chanting the Name of Krishna incessantly, crossing rivers, hills, dales and forests and ultimately reached Brindavan. Her husband Rana repented for having ill-treated Mira and came there. He prayed to her for forgiveness. After some time she went to Dwaraka, but she found the temple doors closed. In spite of her repeated prayers, the doors did not open. Then she said, “Oh Krishna, you don the crown of peacock feathers and the yellow robe. Make my heart Your temple. Dwell in the altar of my heart.” She banged her head against the temple door, calling out to Krishna. Krishna manifested there and she merged in Him. Mira installed Krishna in her heart. In this way, Mira experienced her oneness with Krishna through her non-dual love for Him. If one wishes to tread the path of devotion, one should hold on to the principle of love firmly. Ordinary mortals do not have such firm determination, but a true devotee will never deviate from the path of love under any circumstances. No other path except love can take you to God. Develop love more and more. Love is with you, in you, around you. Love is changeless wherever you are; love is your sole refuge.

Suffuse all your Activities with Love

*Embodiments of Love!*

Fill your hearts with love and let love be the guiding principle of all your activities when you return home. When you have love in your heart, you do not need to worry about anything. God will always be with you, in you, around you and will look after you in all respects. When you say, “Krishna, I will follow You,” it means that Krishna is separate from you. It is possible that you may lose your way. Hence, you should pray, “Krishna, please be with me always.” In fact, He is always in you. When you enquire deeply, you will experience this truth. It is impossible to be away from Him. Many devotees proclaim, “Oh God, I am in You, I am with You and I am for You.” They repeat these words in a superficial way; they do not say from the depth of their heart. Actually, God is never separate from you. Pray to Him wholeheartedly with firm conviction that He is always in you, with you, above you, below you and around you. When you offer such a prayer to God, He will certainly redeem your life.

You have one more day for deliberations. I will further explain all these truths in detail so that you can easily understand them. Do not feel satisfied with what you have experienced so far. There is much more to be experienced which will fill your heart with bliss. How can you say that your hunger is satisfied by eating a little? There is a lot of scope for you to experience divinity in full measure in the days to come.

- From Bhagavan's Valedictory Discourse on the occasion of third Sadhana Camp for Kerala youth in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 13th April 2005.

Manishi (man) will be transformed into Maharishi (sage) by engaging in selfless service. The merit that can be obtained from service cannot be acquired even from the practice of rigorous austerities. Service brings human beings closer to each other, and promotes affection and friendship. Without this friendship and feeling of love for one's fellowmen, one cannot attain intimacy with the Lord. – Baba

### *Celebrations at Brindavan*

## **SPREADING DIVINE VIBRATIONS**

### **YAJNAS FOR THE WELFARE OF THE WORLD**

Sacred chants of Vedic Mantras along with offer of oblations in the sacred fire filled the air with spiritual vibrations when ceremonies were held to perform Yajnas for three days from 16th May to 18th May 2005 for the welfare of the world at Brindavan (Whitefield), Bangalore in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The venue of these ceremonies was Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall which was beautifully decorated with flowers, plantain and mango leaves. While four Yajna Kundas were set up on the dais, one was set up below the dais in the Hall for the performance of these ceremonies. An altar was also set up on the dais where Kalashas (sacred vessels) were placed for worship by the priests. All the Yajnas were conducted by the priests from the Kollur Mookambika temple, Udipi and Shirdi Sai Temple, Bangalore.

On the first day, i.e., 16th May 2005, Bhagavan came to Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall at 7.20 a.m. in a majestic procession comprising the Veda chanting group of students and the priests who carried the Poornakumbham led by Nadaswaram musicians. The entire Hall reverberated with sacred chants from the Vedas as the priests started making preparations for the conduct of Dhanvantari Homa that was scheduled for this morning. Before commencing the Yajna, the priests performed Ganesh Puja, Kalasha Puja and offered other traditional prayers. At 8.00 a.m., Bhagavan blessed the sacred fire which was placed in the Yajna Kunda by the priests amidst sacred chants. When the priests started the performance of the Yajna, Bhagavan sat in His chair near the Yajna Kunda and blessed the performance of the Yajna. The environment was surcharged with sacred vibrations as a group of priests seated near the Yajna Kunda engaged themselves in the performance of the Yajna and another group of priests seated on the dais chanted Vedic Mantras. Besides, the students of the Institute sang Bhajans and recited Mantras. Amidst sacred chants and Nadaswaram music, Poornahuti blessed by Bhagavan was offered in the Yajna Kunda by the priests at 9.45 a.m. After this, the priests offered Arati to Bhagavan and received blessings from Him. Durga Suktam, Mantra Pushpam and other sacred chants continued till 11.00 a.m. when the ceremonies came to a happy conclusion. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end. Chanting of Vedic Mantras by the priests and



students continued in the afternoon also. After the Vedic chants, there were Bhajans led by the students of the Institute. The programme in the afternoon concluded with offer of Arati to Bhagavan at 6.00 p.m. Prasadam was distributed to all in the afternoon also.

On the morning of 17th May 2005, Puja was started by the priests at 7.00 a.m. with the chanting of Vedic Mantras. Beautiful decorations were done on the dais with flowers of different colours. The altar where Kalashas were placed was also aesthetically decorated with fresh flowers. Three Yajna Kundas which had already been made on the left side of the dais were also decorated and sanctified by chanting of Mantras by the priests. Bhagavan came to the Hall at 7.45 a.m. and blessed the Ritwiks and the sacred Yajna fire. After receiving blessings from Bhagavan, fire was lit in all the three Yajna Kundas and groups of priests sat around each Yajna Kunda to perform Rudra Homa, Mrityunjaya Homa and Durga Homa simultaneously. While the priests offered oblations into the Yajna Kundas with chanting of Mantras, the Institute students recited Vedic chants and a group of ladies devotees chanted Lalita Sahasranama. The Yajnas continued up to 10.00 a.m. sanctifying the environment and filling the air with sacred vibrations of Divine Name. At the conclusion of the Yajnas, the priests offered Arati to Bhagavan and received blessings from Him. Bhagavan also distributed clothes to them. The morning programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 10.30 a.m. and distribution of Prasadam to all. Sudarshan Homa was performed on the afternoon of 17th May 2005. Before the start of the Yajna, there were Bhajans led by the Institute students from 4.00 to 4.30 p.m. Bhagavan came to Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall at 4.30 p.m. and blessed the priests to start the Yajna. Bhagavan also blessed the sacred fire which was placed in the Yajna Kunda by the priests. Thereafter, the priests started Vedic chants appropriate for the performance of Sudarshan Homa and offered oblations into the Yajna Kunda. The students also continued to recite Vedic Mantras. At the conclusion of this sacred Yajna, Poornahuti blessed by Bhagavan was put into the Yajna fire at 8.30 p.m. amidst chanting of Mantras, sounding of the bell and sacred notes of Nadaswaram music. The programme concluded at 9.00 p.m. with offer of Mangalarati to Bhagavan.

The Yajna ceremonies started on the morning of 16th May 2005 concluded with the performance of Shatachandi Homa on the morning of 18th May 2005. A Yajna Kunda for this Yajna was specially constructed in Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall in front of the dais. Puja was started by the priests at 6.45 a.m. with prayer to Lord Ganesh. Sacred Yajna fire was lit amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras and auspicious Nadaswaram music at 7.15 a.m. With the blessings of Bhagavan, the priests started the performance of the Yajna by putting oblations into the sacred fire with the chanting of Durga Saptashati, Durga Suktam, Sri Suktam, Gayatri Mantra, Sai Gayatri, etc. Institute students and ladies devotees also joined the chanting of sacred Mantras. The Yajna continued in this way for nearly three hours. At 10.25 Poornahuti material blessed by Bhagavan was put into the Yajna fire amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras, Nadaswaram music and ringing of the Mandir bell. Chanting of Mantras continued for some time after this. At 10.50 a.m. Mangalarati was offered to Bhagavan by the priests. Bhagavan showered His blessings on them and distributed clothes to them. After the performance of the Yajna, renowned singers Smt. Parveen Sultana and her husband Ustad Dilshad Khan sang Bhajans in praise of Devi and Bhagavan Baba. The programme concluded with offer of Arati to Bhagavan at 11.20 a.m. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end.

### **BUDDHA PURNIMA CELEBRATIONS**

The holy festival of Buddha Purnima was celebrated at Brindavan (Whitefield), Bangalore on 23rd May 2005 in which thousands of devotees from India and overseas countries took part. Apart from a large number of devotees from India, over 2000 devotees came from overseas countries, viz., Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Taiwan, Korea and Nepal to celebrate it in the Divine proximity of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The celebrations continued on 24th May 2005 also.

Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall, the venue of celebrations, was beautifully decorated on this occasion with banners, buntings, plantain leaves and flowers. An electronic display panel in the Hall conveyed the central message of Buddhism in these famous words: *Buddham Saranam Gachchhami, Dhammam Saranam Gachchhami, Sangham Saranam Gachchhami*. Exquisite decorations on the dais looked very charming with aesthetic flower arrangement. An altar was set up on the dais in an artistic manner, in which beautiful idols of Buddha were placed. Candles were ceremoniously lit before the idols of Buddha in the altar on the morning of 23rd May 2005 before the commencement of the programme. Later, Buddhist priests, who had come from Sri Lanka and Indonesia to participate in the celebrations, performed the Abhishekam (sacred bath) of the idols with the accompaniment of holy chants.

On the morning of 23rd May 2005, Bhagavan came to Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall at 7.55 a.m. in a grand procession led by a group of Buddhist priests from Sri Lanka and Indonesia followed by traditional dancers of Sri Lanka in their traditional dress. Meanwhile, Buddhist devotees in the Hall played sweet tunes of Sai Bhajans. As soon as Bhagavan came to the dais, the devotees gathered in the Hall waved colourful Buddhist flags. At the same time, the dancers displayed their art to the beat of drums to the delight of the mammoth gathering in the Hall. Soon after this, Bhajans commenced which were led alternately by the ladies and gents devotees of Sri Lanka. Singing of the glories of the Lord went on for nearly one hour surcharging the environment with sacred vibrations. At the conclusion of Bhajans, Arati was offered to Bhagavan and Prasadam was distributed to all. Later in the day, Narayana Seva was performed, and food and clothes blessed by Bhagavan were distributed to the needy.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan came to the Hall at 3.25 p.m. amidst sacred chants by the overseas devotees. Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, three speakers blessed by Bhagavan addressed the gathering. Introducing the speakers, Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman, Prasanthi Council observed that Buddha showed the way to bliss, enlightenment and salvation to mankind. Quoting from a Discourse of Bhagavan, Dr. Goldstein exhorted the devotees to rely on their innate reality to achieve the goal of life as shown by Buddha. After this, Sri Karu Jayasuriya, a former Minister of Sri Lanka, addressed the gathering. Sri Jayasuriya said that the values taught by Buddha to mankind 2500 years ago have been revived by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for modern man to follow and redeem his life. The next speaker, Sri Mangala Munasinghe, High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in India, said that man should remove the poison of desire, anger and jealousy from his heart and inculcate the values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa taught by Bhagavan. Narrating her personal experiences of

Bhagavan's Divinity, the last speaker, Kumari Mala Sabaratnam of Sri Lanka observed that the teachings of Bhagavan, such as '*Help Ever, Hurt Never*', '*Hands that Serve are Holier than Lips that Pray*', could transform mankind if they were put into practice.

At the end of these speeches, Bhagavan graciously released the souvenir to commemorate 40 years of Sai Seva in Sri Lanka and two books entitled "Baba My Father" and "Buddha and Baba". After this, Bhagavan gave His Buddha Purnima message. (Full text of Bhagavan's Discourse has been given elsewhere in this issue.) The programme concluded with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.00 p.m.

In the evening, traditional dances of Sri Lanka were presented by the dancers to the beat of Sri Lankan drums in Sai Krishan Kalyana Mandapam in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. Based on the famous street pageant of the sacred Buddhist temple enshrining the tooth relic of Buddha, the dances kept the audience spellbound for over 30 minutes. The programme which started at 5.25 p.m. came to a close at 6.00 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

On the morning of 24th May 2005, there were Bhajans which were led by the overseas devotees who had come from ten countries to take part in Buddha Purnima celebrations. It was really a grand presentation that delighted one and all. The programme which started at 9.00 a.m. came to a close at 9.30 a.m.

On the afternoon of 24th May 2005, Bhagavan came to Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall at 4.00 p.m. After Bhagavan was seated on the dais, a musical programme of rhythms on Sri Lankan and Indian drums was presented by Sri Lankan devotees. After this excellent presentation on drums, Bhajans commenced which were led by overseas devotees. The programme in Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall came to a close at 4.35 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan. Soon after this, Bal Vikas children of Sri Lanka presented a drama entitled "Life with the Divine" in Sai Krishan Kalyana Mandapam. The drama beautifully depicted the creation of the universe from the primordial sound Aum, and the relationship of five basic elements with five human values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa propounded by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The dances of the children, their costumes, appropriate lighting and music effects portrayed the scenes of the creation of the five elements and the universe beautifully. The drama was a superb presentation from all points of view and brought out the main theme clearly that man should live in harmony with five elements by putting human values into practice in his life. At the end of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the cast and posed for photographs with them. The programme came to a close at 5.45 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan. Buddha Purnima celebrations concluded with this beautiful drama.

### **An Exhibition on Nama Sankirtan**

A very informative and educative exhibition was set up in Sai Krishan Kalyana Mandapam, Brindavan (Whitefield), Bangalore on the theme of Nama Sankirtan (singing the glories of the Lord) on 28th and 29th May 2005 as part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. On the morning of 28th May 2005, Bhagavan inaugurated the exhibition which was later opened for public. Organised by the Spiritual Wing of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Karnataka, the exhibition entitled 'Sai Nama Kirtana Kali Yuga Sadhana' depicted the efficacy of chanting the Divine Name in the

spiritual development of man. It was based on the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and conveyed valuable lessons for the Sadhana of Nama Sankirtan . A section on Hindustani and Carnatic music gave very useful information about Indian music. Similarly, the section on Bhajan singing was informative and educative. Another section described the life stories of great saints, poets and musicians who attained liberation through Nama Sankirtan. An interesting aspect of the exhibition was the audio-visual presentation of each section and the interactive section of the Raga section where as many as 27 Bhajans were made available on computers. One could listen to these Bhajans and also view the name of their Raga as well as the Arohana and Avarohana of that Raga.

### **BUDDHA PURNIMA DISCOURSE**

#### **DEVELOP THE SPIRIT OF ONENESS**

##### *Embodiments of Love!*

Many dignitaries from Sri Lanka have spoken to you about the great teachings of Buddha. First of all, you have to understand that God is omnipresent. There is no place where you do not find God. The essence of the teachings of all scriptures is that God is present everywhere. Out of their ignorance, some people argue that God is limited to a particular place.

Divinity Indwells all Beings

Truly speaking, Divinity is present in everyone and is all-pervasive. This is the basic truth of all doctrines and philosophies. See everywhere God. If you see God everywhere, nothing bad will happen to you. This Ekatma Bhava (principle of oneness) should be understood by the Bharatiyas.

*See no evil; see what is good,*

*Talk no evil; talk what is good,*

*Hear no evil; hear what is good,*

*Do no evil; do what is good,*

*Be always with God.*

Some people call Him Rama, some others adore Him as Krishna and still some others worship Him as Buddha. Names and forms may vary, but God is one. God is not limited to a particular name, form, region or religion. There is only one God who pervades every atom of the creation. Words fail to express the glory and grandeur of Divinity. People may describe Divinity in a number of ways, but no description can ever portray Divinity in full measure. In fact, to describe Divinity is a sign of delusion. Where is God? You are all the embodiments of God. God pervades all beings as their life-breath. Such transcendental principle of Divinity cannot be described. One may do one's best to describe it at any length, yet all descriptions will fall short of what reality is. Water is infinite; a container cannot hold more water than its capacity. As is the size of the container, so is the quantity of water collected. Likewise, God is infinite, but each one describes Him based on his limited understanding. Divinity is much more than what human mind can comprehend.

*Embodiments of Love!*

It is impossible for anyone to describe Divinity in full measure. God is one, but people may describe Him in various ways depending on their feelings. Divinity is one. It is sign of ignorance to divide God in the name of religion and limit Him to a particular name and form. God is limitless and boundless. He is Sarvantaryami (all-knowing inner reality). He is Sarva Bhutantaratma (indweller of all beings). How can anyone describe such Divinity? God is present in everyone in the form of Atma (Self). Develop such self-confidence and spirit of oneness. *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). (Pointing to the tumbler, Swami said) This is water. Telugu people call it Neeru, Tamilians call it Thanni, so on and so forth. Different people call it by different names, but water is the same. Likewise, the same God is extolled by various names. The indweller is the same in all beings. People worship God by different names and forms, but God is one. The principle of the Atma which resides in everyone is the true divine power. Only those with self-confidence are true Bhaktas (devotees). You cannot call yourself a devotee if you lack self-confidence. Without self-confidence, you cannot achieve anything in life. Therefore, first and foremost develop firm and unshakeable self-confidence. From self-confidence arises self-satisfaction. Self-satisfaction shows you the path of self-sacrifice which ultimately leads to self-realisation. Self-confidence is the basis for self-realisation.

There is Nothing like my God and your God

Today many people practise meditation without knowing what it is. In the process, they waste a lot of time. What is meditation? Is it to sit cross-legged with closed eyes? No. Not at all. People undertake meditation with a deluded mind. Consequently, they are unable to achieve the desired result. What is meant by meditation? To think of God at all times and under all circumstances is true meditation. You should install God in your heart and discharge your duties with the feeling that God is the basis of everything. Only then can you be called a true devotee. Wherever you go, whatever you may do, recognise the truth that there is only one God and He is all-pervasive. Never give scope for differences saying, my God and your God. Where is your God? Where is my God? All are one; be alike to everyone. There is only one God and He is present in everyone. It is a big mistake to think that God is different for different people. You should have firm faith that God is one. The process of inhalation and exhalation as indicated by the Soham principle is one and the same in everybody. Soham means "I am God." This clearly demonstrates that God is not different from you. When man comes into the world, the first word he utters is "Koham, Koham" (who am I?). He should constantly keep asking this question until he realises his true identity. He should realise his true nature and proclaim, "Soham, Soham" (I am God) before leaving the world.

Never attribute multiplicity to Divinity on the basis of different names and forms such as Rama, Krishna, Jesus, Allah, Buddha, etc. You may call Him by any name, but God is one and the same. But these days, we do not find teachers who can make lasting impression on the hearts of people by imparting such sacred teachings. All the time, man keeps searching for God elsewhere. How can you find God elsewhere? Some people may call Him Allah; others may call Him by some other name. Does God become different for different people just because they call Him by different names? No, no. These are only names. To think that God is different for different people is a great delusion. You may call Him by any name. God is one.

Sri Lanka will be Safe and Secure

When you develop such spirit of oneness, you will certainly have Sakshatkara (vision of the Divine). Everyone should develop Ekatma Bhava (spirit of oneness). *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings). It is sheer ignorance to say, “My God is different from your God”. Those who quarrel with each other in the name of religion are foolish people. For some time now, certain types of differences have cropped up in Sri Lanka. Whatever others may say, we have to firmly believe that God is one. It is a great mistake to develop differences on the basis of our deluded thinking.

Once an old woman went in search of Jesus. When she met him, she asked, “Are you Jesus?” Jesus replied, “That is the name given to me. But you can call me by any name, I shall respond.” Names and forms are bound to change. When you are born, people call you a child. As you grow up, you are called a boy, then you become a man and later on a grandfather. But the child, boy, man and grandfather are one and the same. Childhood, youth and old age are merely the different stages of your life. But you are one and the same. Similarly, names and forms may be different, but God is one.

*Embodiments of Love!*

You have come here all the way from Sri Lanka because of your love for Me. My love for you is hundred times more than the love you have for Me (*prolonged loud applause*). Sri Lanka had to face many hardships, even from the time of Ravana. But Sri Lanka can never be put to harm. It will always be safe, secure and prosperous (*loud prolonged applause*). God is the leader of your country. As long as you have faith in God, you have nothing to fear. May you all enjoy safety and security! Wherever you go, whatever you do, have firm conviction that God is always with you, in you, around you, above you, below you. Do not be carried away by what others say. Have God firmly installed in your heart. You can never be put to any harm. No danger can ever befall you. Lead your lives with such courage and conviction. God will certainly bless you with success.

*Embodiments of Love!*

The hearts of the people of Sri Lanka are sacred. Hence, they will always enjoy safety and security. Difficulties will come and go like passing clouds. You don't need to be afraid of anything. God will always protect you. Be courageous and face difficulties with fortitude. You are the embodiments of Love. Where there is love, there cannot be any adversity. Love is God. God is Love. Hence, fill your hearts with love.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Very soon I will visit Sri Lanka and bestow eternal bliss on all of you (*thunderous applause*). In the present situation, it is difficult for Me to walk. However, difficulty is only for the body. It comes and goes. I do not care for such physical constraints. I will certainly come to your country very soon and fulfil your long cherished dream. Right from a child to an old man, devotees in Sri Lanka think of Swami always. Your prayers and penance will certainly find fulfilment very soon. Cherish this sacred feeling in your heart. The passage of time will not affect the intimate relationship that exists between you and Me. It is eternal and everlasting.

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

- From Bhagavan's Buddha Purnima Discourse in Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall, Brindavan (Whitefield), Bangalore on 23rd May 2005.

**NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES**  
**80th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS:**  
**THE WORK CONTINUES**  
**MEDICAL CAMPS**

**Venezuela**

On 27th February 2005, the Sai Organisation of Venezuela conducted its 5th cataract eye camp at the Instituto de Micro Cirugia Ocular hospital in Caracas. Ten cataract eye operations were performed in two operating theatres. Eight doctors were assisted by a team of forty devotees who provided food, transportation, and most importantly loving care. All such operations performed since 2003 have been successful and this medical camp brought the total operations performed to 100. In addition to eye surgeries, members of the Sai Organisation of Venezuela provided laboratory services and postoperative care free of cost with love. The patients, who were selected from economically poor neighbourhoods, were happy to receive the treatment with loving care.

**Brazil**

The Sathya Sai Organisation of Brazil organised a medical camp on 4th February 2005 in São Paulo. Five doctors, 3 dentists, 5 nurses, 1 pharmacist, 5 psychologists and 88 Sai volunteers served 256 patients. Paediatric services, infantile nutrition services, dental services, ophthalmologic prevention, blood pressure check-ups, cardiology services, and quality life and healthcare education were provided with love and dedication. Sai volunteers prepared refreshments for the patients and arranged separate rooms for meditation and devotional singing. Seeing the whole environment charged with divine fervour, one patient remarked, "Everything that is made with love works."

**USA**

The Sai Centres of Manhattan and Scarsdale, New York joined the Sai Centres of Shelton and Norwalk, Connecticut to organise a Health Fair on 2nd April 2005 at Hart Magnet Elementary School, Stamford, Connecticut. With unity and love, 17 doctors, 5 lab/clinical assistants, 1 diabetic educator, 2 nutritionists, 10 Spanish translators and 58 Sai volunteers participated in this health fair. A total of 155 patients received medical care and health information. Screening booths were arranged for height/weight/BMI, blood pressure, asthma screen, eye, cholesterol/HDL/glucose, haemoglobin and mammograms. In addition, preventive healthcare booths such as obesity/dietetics/nutrition, cancer, stress management, diabetes, HIV, coronary diseases and hypertension provided information and awareness. Family practitioners and specialists in paediatrics, cardiology, internal medicine, oncology, obstetrics and gynaecology, and psychology served the patients with loving care.

Impressed with the services provided by Sai volunteers, many patients requested the Sai centres to hold another health fair before winter. The Principal of Hart Magnet Elementary School was pleased with the services, as the patients were able to spend time with doctors from various disciplines and discuss about their health problems. She felt that the health fair was unique because even those who buy expensive health insurance often do not get access to all medical services on the same day.

**2. Community Service Programmes**

**Italy**

A free canteen for needy people was started in the premises of the Sai Centre in Faenza. The project was also welcomed by the local social services with great interest. In 1997,

Bhagavan blessed the project. To date, members of the Faenza Sai Centre have served approximately 17,000 meals to the needy.

#### Thailand

On 6th March 2005, the students of the EHV classes along with their teachers visited the slums in Klong Toey, Bangkok. They distributed 418 food packets to the children and adults. Each food packet had milk, noodles and a fruit. The students also spoke and taught human values songs to the children. On 16th March 2005, Sai devotees helped the fire victims of Klong Toey slums in Bangkok to purchase necessities such as rice, noodles, milk, towels, toothbrushes, toothpaste and mugs.

#### USA

With the blessings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the devotees of Arizona in collaboration with the researchers and students of Arizona State University started an IT project called “iCARE”, which stands for Information Technology Centric Assistive and Rehabilitative Environment. The goal of the project is to do selfless service to those who depend on others for their day-to-day activities, and thereby to achieve individual transformation. When the idea for this project was conceived in 2001, the devotees approached the local deaf and blind support organisation. Then the requirements were gathered from the blind children, students and adults, their families and friends, disability specialists and mobility instructors. They also nailed down the most important challenges faced by the blind individuals.

After much research, four devices were designed: 1) iCARE Reader Device that can help the blind to read a book or paper; 2) iCARE-Interaction Assistant, a wearable camera that can help the blind to identify and greet people; 3) iCARE Information Assistant that can help to get information from anywhere in the world; 4) iCARE Haptics, a touch interface for the blind and the rehabilitating patients with neurological disorders, which can help to feel objects. Bhagavan’s sweet words “I will help, I will help” in an interview is the only energy that made all the above possible.

Two blind students received a degree in computer science using the iCARE Reader Device. Eleven more children from the nearby schools are now being trained. It is also currently deployed at a local organisation for blind children. The iCARE Information Assistant is being considered for deployment in many locations. Research on other iCARE projects is well underway.

The iCARE project was presented at the World Health Organisation’s Global Health Forum summit in Mexico City in November 2004 as a demonstration of one of the missions of WHO, namely, helping disabled individuals realise their fullest potential. The project was awarded the prestigious Governor’s Innovator of the Year award. The above accolades are but minute facets of Bhagavan’s infinite glory and a confirmation that His Divine Will shall always prevail.

### 3. Public Meetings

#### Japan

The year 2005 marks the 30th anniversary of the birth of the Sai Organisation in Japan. In celebration of this milestone, the 8th All Japan National Convention was held in the city of Nagoya for three consecutive days from 19th March. Over 300 people attended the convention. The theme of the convention was “Unity, Purity and Divinity”. After the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, Sri L.P. Chablani, National Chairman of the Sai



Organisation of Japan, welcomed everyone. A slide show summarising 30 years of growth of the Sai Organisation in Japan was then presented.

Dr. Pal Dhall, Zonal Chairman, gave an inspiring talk on the emerging awareness of spiritual oneness. He emphasised that scientists, politicians, and policy makers now realise that only the path of unity showed by Bhagavan could solve the current social, economic and medical problems in the world. Sri Makino explained the importance of the Vedas, which was followed by workshops on the five elements and a Japanese folk dance. All the participants vowed to burn one of their vices as an offering to the Lord. On the final day of the convention, Dr. Pal Dhall and Smt. Tehseen Dhall conducted a workshop on human values in parenting, which was followed by an inspiring talk on “One with Sai” by Sri Ryuko Hira.

A unique feature of this Convention was a picture of Swami made from 39,000 coloured origami cranes, which formed the backdrop on the stage. Devotees in all 24 Sai Centres throughout Japan worked in unity to create this one-of-a-kind picture by writing “Om Sai Ram” on little origami coloured papers and then folding them into cranes.

#### Canada

On 23rd March 2005, a symposium on Character Education was organised in Toronto. It was attended by over 30 people. The speakers, Ms. Carole Alderman, Ms. Nancy Campbell, Ms. Sandra Dean and Dr. Yassin Sankar emphasised the need for character education with many quotes from Bhagavan’s Discourses, which elevated the minds of the educators, parents, trustees from school boards and City Councillors. At the Holiday Inn in Brampton, Ontario, a four-day interactive workshop on human values, starting 25th March was organised by Ms. Carole Alderman. Over 100 participants across Canada, many of them educators from private and public schools, attended the workshop. The participants felt the need for value education and were encouraged to explore avenues for introducing the character education programme in their schools and communities.

#### Switzerland

On 12th March 2005, the Sathya Sai Centre of Ticino organised a public meeting. About 40 people attended the meeting, of whom over 20 were newcomers. Speaking about Bhagavan and His work, Sri Gioachino Carenini, President of the Sai Centre, and Smt. Suzanne Carenini, EHV Coordinator of Switzerland and South Europe, inspired everyone to know more about the teachings of Bhagavan. Sri G. Bebedelis, EHV Coordinator of Greece, concluded the presentation with an inspiring talk on “Know Thyself.”

– Prasanthi Council

### **B H A R A T**

Andhra Pradesh: Uravakonda Samithi of Anantapur district started 80-day Annasatram on 27th April 2005 in the premises of the Avatar Declaration Centre to provide midday meals to about 80 selected persons as part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan. Sumptuous lunch was served to 800 people, cooking vessels were given to 8 selected poor families, new Saris and blouses (stitched) were given to 70 poor women, new Dhotis and shirts (stitched) were given to 25 men and one sewing machine was given to a poor woman for eking out her livelihood in the inaugural function of Annasatram which will be carried out up to 15th July 2005.

Mahabubnagardistrict constructed 2 mini water tanks at Palkonigutta Thanda village to meet the drinking water needs of Girijans.

Assam, Manipur and N.E. States: Sai workers of Diphu organised a free medicine distribution cum counselling camp in a virtually inaccessible remote village of the district. The daylong camp held on 24th April 2005 at Donghap M.E. School came as a boon to a large number of hill tribes suffering from malaria, stomach problems, recurrent fever, skin diseases like eczema, etc. Faculties drawn from district health authorities educated the villagers on health and hygiene and the need to observe certain disciplines in life to remain free from ailments. Stress was laid on the importance of preventive measures to keep at bay malaria as well as the scourge of modern times – AIDS. The District Council authorities requested the Sai Organisation to conduct more such camps in remote areas.

Orissa: As part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the youth of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Cuttack district have decided to offer a divine project, “Sai Barnalee” at the Lotus Feet. The project includes:

1. Sri Sathya Sai Yuva Chetana Saptaha
2. Grama Pushpanjalee
3. Sai Youth in Sai Sannidhi

The objective of this project is to create moral and spiritual awareness among college-going students (through “Sri Sathya Sai Yuva Chetana Saptaha”), to make them aware of their responsibilities towards society by involving them in Grama Seva in 80 villages (through “Grama Pushpanjalee”) and finally to give an opportunity to them so that they can have Bhagavan’s Divine Darshan at Prasanthi Nilayam (through “Sai Youth in Sai Sannidhi”).

As part of this divine project, Sri Sathya Sai Yuva Chetana Saptaha was observed from 21st February 2005 to 27th February 2005 at Cuttack which was attended by 140 college students. During this weeklong programme, competitions like paragraph writing, debating, painting, guess the plot, listen and write, quiz, etc., were conducted among the participants to test their aptitude and attitude. Discussions on “Divine Grace is Proportionate to Human Effort”, “Awareness is Life” and “Discipline is the Mark of Intelligent Living” were also held. Opportunity was also given to the participants to put various questions, and the questions asked by them were answered to satisfy their spiritual hunger.

The valedictory function was held on 27th February 2005. Justice Manoranjan Mohanty, Member, Judicial Central Administrative Tribunal, Orissa attended the function as Chief Guest and distributed prizes and certificates to the participants. On this day, most of the participants made their commitment to take part in Grama Seva in 80 villages during the “Grama Pushpanjalee” phase which is to be observed during March 2005 – June 2005. The grand weeklong programme came to a happy conclusion with offering of Mangalarati to Bhagavan.

Tamil Nadu: As part of Silver Jubilee celebrations of Sundaram, the Divine Abode of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba at Chennai, Sri Sathya Sai Sahasranama Koti Archana was performed from 23rd January 2005 to 24th April 2005. 6612 Mahilas and 4698 gents devotees participated in this Yajna. The devotees from nearby districts of Chengalpet, Vellore, Thiruvallur and Kancheepuram also participated in it. On the concluding day of

the Sahasranama Koti Archana, i.e., 24th April 2005, Ganapati Homa and Dhanvantari Homa were performed which were attended by over 400 devotees.

Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal: Pokhri is a small remote village with 70 hamlets of poor farmers without electricity in the hilly district of Pauri Garhwal in Uttaranchal. A small water channel flows nearby. Sai Organisation thought of utilising the Head from this channel and generate electricity by installing a micro hydro turbo-generator set and provide electricity to the villagers as part of Bhagavan's 80th Birthday celebrations. The turbine-wheel and gear box were fabricated in the local workshop and the 7.5 kw generator and other electric accessories were procured from Meerut.

Modifications of fabricated equipment at site, necessary adjustments, installation and a series of trial runs took a few months. Heavy duty cable (750 metres ) was laid from generating Head to the houses in the village. Complete set of one tube-light with accessories was installed in each house. The Sai Organisation bore all the expenditure on this humble effort. A team of several members and villagers took keen interest in the work. A village mechanic was trained during this period and he will be useful later on for its maintenance. Complete system was formally inaugurated on 18th April 2005 after Nagar Sankirtan in the morning by our team and the villagers along with their headman who joined joyfully. As there are no rains during April, May and June, water is diverted for irrigation. As such electricity could be provided to 10 houses only. Later on when sufficient water is available, electricity would be provided to all the 70 houses. The villagers were immensely happy as they had the boon of light for the first time and expressed gratitude to Bhagavan and the Sai Organisation for this gift of love. The village headman has been requested to look after the maintenance and security of all the equipment as the same has become their property now. Bhagavan was the source of constant inspiration, guidance and strength for the whole team throughout the period. The Sai Organisation is extremely happy that Bhagavan gave them this opportunity to serve their brethren and seek His grace and blessings for similar future projects.

### **Experience your Reality**

**Devoid of sorrow that is inevitable in dealing with sensory objects, having no intentions and desires, one should be immersed in the bliss of one's own reality. Man alone, of all creation, has the qualification to achieve this supreme joy. What a tragedy that he should neglect his right and wander about seeking petty pleasures, empty tinsel! Children playing with dolls and sticks call them elephants and horses; but it does not make them real elephants**

**and horses. Ignorant men play in all seriousness, imagining the objects of the world to be real, and they laugh and weep, in joy and in sorrow, they blossom and droop while up or down. But that does not make the Maya Jagat (illusory world) less unreal!**

**- Baba**

**JULY 2005**

**DIVINE DISCOURSE: 23rd JUNE 2005**

## **UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLE OF FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH**

THE PRESENT VICE CHANCELLOR and the former Vice Chancellor have narrated their experiences. When Vyashti (individual) identifies himself with Samashti (community), he realises Parameshti (God). It is very difficult to understand Parameshti which is beyond both Vyashti and Samashti. There will be harmony between Vyashti and Samashti when one develops equanimity.

### **Know what is True and Eternal**

One should realise that Samashti is the basis of everything. People are not able to understand what is meant by 'I' and 'you'. 'Where are you studying? Where am I studying?' In these two sentences, there are two different identities of the same principle of Samashti. Few have truly understood the principle of Samashti so far. But there lies in it the transcendental principle of Parameshti. However, the transcendental principle of Parameshti is much more difficult to understand. Our Gokak (Prof. V.K. Gokak, first Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning) also found himself in such a situation. He read very voluminous books. He knew answers to many intricate questions. But he could not understand what was true and eternal. Similarly, he could not understand the difference between Atma (Self) and Anatma (non-Self). Truly speaking, Anatma has no existence. There is only Atma everywhere. After some time, Gokak realised this truth and understood it clearly. I provided help to him at that time. Man wants help of many types for the sake of clarity. This help will provide a lot of lasting

strength to a true devotee. This help is not temporary. It is true and eternal. When you keep on enquiring what is true and eternal, then gradually the veil of Maya will be removed.

After some time, Gokak came close to Me. All his doubts disappeared and he held on to the principle of divinity which is formless, true, eternal, pure and unsullied. It is not possible for all to understand this divine principle. This principle of truth is present in you, Me and everyone equally. One who takes truth as the basis will never become unsteady. Everything may change, but truth will remain changeless.

### **Attain the State of Doubtlessness**

The principle of Karma (action) is difficult to understand. One type of Karma may be responsible for all your doubts. But another type of Karma will destroy your doubts and take you to the state of unity. Gokak realised this truth and became doubtless. When you attain the state of doubtlessness, you realise the truth. This is the royal path of attaining Moksha (liberation). What is the real meaning of Moksha? Moha Kshaya (removal of attachment) is Moksha (liberation). So long as one has attachment, one cannot think of liberation. Hence, one should strive for detachment in the first instance.

Gokak firmly held on to the principle of truth. One day, he came to Me and asked, “Swami! Am I the knower or the conscience is the knower?” I told him, “There is something else between conscience and conscious. That is Maya.” Maya is responsible for all delusion. Do not become a victim of Maya. When you cast aside Maya, then truth will manifest from within. What type of truth is it? Truth can neither be heard nor seen though it appears that it is seen and heard. But it transcends both. All that is seen or heard cannot be experienced by the heart. When you transcend the senses, you see the dawn of consciousness. Truth is that which is close to consciousness. Next morning, he came to Me again and said, “Whatever doubts I had yesterday, they have been removed. But I am finding it difficult to understand the origin of doubts.” Then I told him, “Take for example, bats; they move about like birds, procreate like birds and gather their food like birds. But contrary to the nature of birds, they hang head downwards from the branches of trees. You may doubt whether they are birds or animals. Doubts come to man in the same manner. At one point of time, all these doubts will stop coming to you. This is not something related to Me and others; it is related to you and Me.”

Vyashti constitutes Samashti and Samashti is the collective form of Vyashti. In the final analysis, Samashti is the expansion of Vyashti. One who understands the relationship between Vyashti, Samashti and Parameshti can know the truth. This is what Gokak understood ultimately. Everyone has to make an effort to understand this truth. We are leading our lives in fun and frolic, but this is not the reality. We can understand the reality only when we transcend worldliness. Total change cannot come instantly. Gokak understood this truth fully well. Hence, he held on to this principle of fundamental truth firmly. In the end, he forgot everything else.

### **Dawn of Truth and Experience of Bliss**

At that time, Gokak was studying Savitri (an epic poem written by Sri Aurobindo). All his inner thoughts were focused on Savitri. There exist inner thoughts in every human

being which cannot be seen. One day or the other, truth becomes manifest all of a sudden when you are consistent in your Sadhana. At that time, Guru Purnima was fast approaching. He said, “Swami, I can see light approaching me on the path I am proceeding.” After saying this, he closed his eyes. He did not utter a word. I went near him and touched his head. I told him, “My dear, now you go home, have a cup of coffee and come.” But he did not say anything. He had transcended the state of duality. He went home, prayed to Savitri and came back. Ultimately, he could get all the answers from Savitri. From then onwards, he started contemplating on Savitri. He used to come to Me both in the morning and in the evening. One day when he came to Me, he was all smiles. I asked him, “You seem to be very happy, what is the reason?” “Swami! This bliss is Your blessing. It has not come from me”, he replied.

*Nityanandam, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnanamurtim, Dwandwateetam, Gagana Sadrisham, Tattwamasyadi Lakshyam, Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam* (God is the embodiment of eternal bliss, He is wisdom absolute, beyond the pair of opposites, expansive and pervasive like the sky, the goal indicated by the Mahavakya Tattwamasi, One without a second, eternal, pure, unchanging, witness of all functions of the intellect).

### **On Experiencing Illumination**

I told him to remain in that state forever. Next day morning, he came again. He said, “Swami, I have been in the same state.” He said that he did not even think where the blissful state had come from. Knowing very well that he should not speak much at that time, I asked him to go home and come later. He left. Next morning at Brahmamuhurtha time, he came again. He knocked at the door thrice, but I knocked six times. He understood the meaning and left the place silently. After this, no scope was left for questions and answers. Thereafter, he stopped asking questions. He went on contemplating on Savitri. Ultimately, he attained the state of non-duality.

One day when he was meditating with closed eyes, I slapped hard on his head twice. Then he started experiencing illumination. As illumination dawned on him, he lost interest in all worldly matters. He remained in that state. On another day, I told him to close his eyes. He did accordingly. As he closed his eyes, I pressed his Bhrumadhya (centre of the eyebrows) with My thumb. Instantly, all his doubts disappeared. He said, “Swami, I am one, God is one, love is one. I do not require anything else.” I told him to go and come the next day morning. Gokak was very punctual and always came at the correct time. As he came again and again in this manner, he had the vision of Savitri. He could visualise Savitri every now and then, but not continuously. He considered Savitri as the fundamental principle. He held on to this principle firmly. In this manner, he could attain the state of divinity. As you proceed on the path of Sadhana continuously, certain powers will manifest in you. You should not attach any importance to them. Once you understand the fundamental principle, you will have everything. That fundamental principle is one, and not two. Truth is one, not two. Everything else is untruth; it is like passing clouds. He forgot everything else. He focused his mind only on the fundamental principle.

Once when I was at Kodaikanal, he sent a lengthy telegram to Me. I then sent him a telegram with the message, “I know, this is right. Don’t change your mind.” From then onwards, there was no further correspondence between us. However, once he asked his wife to write a letter to Me. Her name was Sharadamma. She was also a Mahajnani (one of great wisdom). She used to write in such a way that two words written by her would have four different meanings. Thereafter, only Atmic relationship existed between us. He attained the state of absolute silence. He did not touch any book nor did he ask any question. He did not write any letters either. All that he said was, “Swami! All Your answers have touched my heart.” Then I told him, “Both of us understand the relationship that exists between us. You don’t worry about anything else.” After that, the relationship between us at physical level ceased to exist. At the same time, our relationship at spiritual level became more intimate. Before leaving his mortal coil, he wrote these words, “I have reached You.”

- **From Bhagavan’s Divine Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 23rd June 2005.**

## **Functions Galore at Brindavan and Prasanthi Nilayam**

### **A RICH VARIETY OF CULTURAL PROGRAMMES**

#### **CULTURAL PROGRAMMES AT BRINDAVAN**

##### **Annual Day Celebrations of “Sai Gitanjali” and “Sai Darshan”**

Annual days of “Sai Gitanjali” and “Sai Darshan”, two main Sai centres of Bangalore, were celebrated at Brindavan on 28th May 2005 and 8th June 2005, respectively.

A large number of devotees of Sai Gitanjali took part in the celebrations that were held in Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall, Brindavan on the morning of 28th May 2005 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. On this occasion, the devotees of Sai Gitanjali organised a soul-elevating Bhajan programme imparting joy to one and all. Mangalarati was offered to Bhagavan at the conclusion of Bhajans and Prasadam was distributed to all. The venue of celebrations in the evening was the premises of “Sai Gitanjali”, J.P. Nagar (Bangalore). Another programme of Bhajans was conducted there followed by distribution of Prasadam.

Annual day celebrations of “Sai Darshan” comprised two programmes, one in the morning and the other in the evening on 8th June 2005. The morning programme was conducted in Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall, Brindavan where 111 Archaka/ Purohit (priest) couples were honoured. The Hall was beautifully decorated for this occasion. Sweet strains of Nadaswaram welcomed Bhagavan when He came to the Hall at 7.40 a.m. As soon as Bhagavan was seated on the exquisitely decorated dais, the programme started with the chanting of Vedic Mantras in the Presence of Veda Purusha Bhagavan Baba Himself. After Veda chanting, the programme of honouring the Archaka / Purohit couples started. They were offered gifts and clothes with great reverence. After this, there were

Bhajans which were led by the devotees from “Sai Darshan”. At the conclusion of Bhajans, the couples were led to Trayee Brindavan and were granted the sacred opportunity of performing the Parikrama (circumambulation) of the Divine Abode of Bhagavan. The programme of honouring the Purohiths concluded with offer of Prasadam and distribution of gift packets to them.

In the evening, a group of children from “Sai Darshan” enacted the drama titled “Dasanudasa Kanaka” portraying beautifully a few episodes from the life of Kanakadasa, a renowned and revered saint-singer of Karnataka of 16th century. The play was a superb presentation depicting the power of Bhakti (devotion) which made Lord Krishna of Udipi temple turn right around to bestow the bliss of His Darshan to Kanakadasa when he was denied entry into the temple due to his low caste. Excellent acting of the children combined with sweet music and some selected compositions of Kanakadasa earned the appreciation of all devotees and praise of Bhagavan. Bhagavan blessed the children at the end of the play and gave them the coveted opportunity of group photo with Him. The programme which began with the arrival of Bhagavan in Sai Krishan Kalyana Mandapam, the venue of the drama, at 5.10 p.m. came to a close at 5.55 p.m. with offer of Arati to Bhagavan.

### **Mass Upanayanam Function**

A grand function was held in Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall on 12th June 2005 in which over 500 children between the ages of 8 to 18 years were administered Upanayanam (sacred thread) and were initiated into the chanting of Gayatri Mantra in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Karnataka State which organised this “Samoochika Upanayanam Mahotsava” (mass Upanayanam function) as part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan provided all the Puja material as also the clothes for the Vatus (children) and their parents which they were to wear on the day of the function.

The Vatus along with their parents and relatives came to Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall in a grand procession at 6.45 a.m. on 12th June 2005. They were led by Nadaswaram musicians and were wearing the dress provided for this occasion. As soon as they entered the Hall, the organisers led them to their allotted seats in an orderly manner. The programme started with chanting of Vedic Mantras by the priests and Institute students as a mark of auspiciousness. Bhagavan was offered traditional welcome with Poornakumbham by the priests when He came to the Hall at 7.45 a.m. The priests started the ceremonies and Puja after seeking the blessings of Bhagavan. As instructed by the chief priest, the Vatus and their parents started Puja along with repeating of the Mantras recited by the chief priest. In the meantime, sacred fire was lit in the Yajna Kunda in the Hall and a group of priests performed the Yajnas which included Ganapati Homa, Navagraha Homa, Mrityunjaya Homa, Sathya Sai Homa, etc. After this, oblations were offered into the sacred fire along with chanting of Gayatri Mantra. The priests were joined in the chanting of this sacred Mantra by the Vatus, their parents and relatives and all the students and devotees in the Hall sanctifying the entire environment by these holy chants. Yajna was continued in this manner up to 8.50 a.m. when Poornahuti (final oblations) material blessed by Bhagavan was offered into the sacred Yajna fire amidst



Vedic chants and auspicious notes of Nadaswaram. Soon after this, sacred threads blessed by Bhagavan were distributed. The parents and Vatus were asked to perform its Puja as instructed by the chief priest.

The sacred ceremony of Yajnopaveet Dharana (wearing of the sacred thread) was performed at 9.35 a.m. when the Vatus helped by their parents wore the sacred thread amidst chanting of the sacred Mantras. The ceremony of Brahmopadesha (initiation into the chanting of Gayatri Mantra) followed soon after this. The parents put a mixture of Jeera (cumin seed) and jaggery on the heads of their children and recited the Gayatri Mantra which the children were asked to repeat. Thus concluded the sacred ceremony of mass Upanayanam with Arati at 9.45 a.m. After this, the Vatus and their parents and relatives were given the opportunity of circumambulating Trayee Brindavan, the Divine Abode of Bhagavan. The Vatus, their parents and relatives were offered a sumptuous feast after the conclusion of this grand and sacred function.

### **A Captivating Musical Presentation**

On the afternoon of 16th June 2005, devotees in Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall were enthralled by a very captivating presentation of devotional music by the renowned Hindustani classical singer Sri Falguni Mitra who was ably assisted by Smt. Pratima Mitra on harmonium and Sri Rajendra Kakod on tabla. The programme started at 5.10 p.m. after Bhagavan's arrival in the Hall. Soul-elevating rendering of popular Hindi Bhajans by the artiste immersed the devotees in bliss. Bhagavan sat through the entire performance and blessed the artistes profusely at the end of the programme which lasted for nearly one hour. Bhagavan also distributed clothes to the artistes and posed for photographs with them. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan.

### **Excellent Cultural Programmes by Brindavan Students**

A series of very illuminating and elevating cultural and musical programmes were presented by the students of Brindavan Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba from 4th to 17th June 2005 in Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall, Brindavan, Whitefield (Bangalore).

*Akhanda Bhajan:* The first such programme was Akhanda Bhajan for 24 hours which started on the afternoon of 4th June 2005 with the blessings of Bhagavan. It continued throughout the night and came to a close on the afternoon of 5th June 2005. Besides the students of the Institute, groups of old students and Bangalore devotees also led the Bhajans, which were attended by a large gathering of devotees, surcharging the entire milieu with spiritual vibrations.

*The Vedas and their Significance:* A very informative and educative programme on the Vedas was presented by the students on the afternoon of 7th June 2005. The students not only dwelt on the origin and definition of the Vedas, they chanted specific Mantras to illustrate what the four Vedas contained. They also explained the four Mahavakyas (profound statements), the four parts in which each Veda had been divided and the eleven different ways of chanting the Vedic Mantras in correct intonation and rhythm. In the end, they prayed for the blessings of Bhagavan who, they said, is the source of the Vedas and who has incarnated to foster the Vedas and to re-establish Dharma. In response to

their prayers, Bhagavan blessed the gathering with His Divine Discourse and concluded it with the Bhajan, “*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho Rama Ram Ram ...*” The programme came to a close with offer of Arati to Bhagavan at 6.15 p.m.

*Devotional Music Programmes:* The students made offerings of devotional music at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan on 9th and 14th June 2005. Interspersed with appropriate commentary, both the presentations expressed the students’ heartfelt love for Bhagavan who showered His blessings on them after the conclusion of these programmes.

*A Unique Poets Meet:* The students presented a very interesting programme of poetry recitation entitled “Kavyanjali” on the afternoon of 10th June 2005. Poems in many languages, viz., English, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Bengali, Nepalese, Malayalam, Oriya, Hindi, etc., were recited by these budding poets to the delight of one and all in Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall. At the end of the programme, Bhagavan showered His blessings on the participants and gave shawls and other gifts to each one of them with His Divine Hands.

*Gayatri Mantra and its Significance:* On 11th June 2005, the students presented the programme entitled “Gayatri Vijaya”, delineating the meaning and significance of the Gayatri Mantra. Giving detailed analysis of this most important Mantra of the Vedas, the students restated the teachings of Bhagavan in this regard as to why this Mantra was called Panchamukhi (representing five elements, five senses, five values and five Pranas), and what its three parts represented, viz., materialisation, vibration and radiation as also praise of the Divine, meditation and prayer.

The appropriateness of this programme was very much enhanced as it was organised on the eve of the mass Upanayanam function that was to be held next morning at the same venue. Moreover, the children who were to be initiated into the chanting of Gayatri Mantra in the proposed mass Upanayanam function were present in the Hall along with their parents during the presentation of this very educative and informative programme. The programme which commenced at 4.25 p.m. came to a close at 6.10 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

*An Interesting Quiz Programme:* On the afternoon of 15th June 2005, the students organised a very informative and interesting quiz programme. The subjects chosen were the life and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and Sri Shirdi Sai Baba and the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. It was gratifying to note that the students had fairly detailed knowledge of the life and teachings of both the Kali Yuga Avatars as also of our scriptures. Another interesting feature of this programme was that the first line of some Bhajans sung by Bhagavan was played and the students were asked to sing the next line. Then, the entire Bhajan sung by Bhagavan was played to the delight of the listeners. It was a very lively and informative programme which provided joy not only to the students but to all the devotees in Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall.

*Suryopasana:* The last programme presented by the students during Bhagavan’s stay at Brindavan was entitled “Suryopasana” (worship of the sun). This very interesting and informative presentation was made on the afternoon of 17th June 2005. The programme began with the chanting of Vedic Mantras for the worship of the sun. Besides chanting the Mantras, taken mainly from the Suryopanishad, the students enacted the episode of

initiation of Rama into Aditya Hridayam (a treatise on the worship of the sun) from the Valmiki Ramayana and another episode from the Mahabharata portraying the story of Ekalavya's gratitude to Guru Dronacharya. Another very interesting feature of this programme was the demonstration of the various postures which comprise the practice of Surya Namaskar (worship of the sun by chanting Mantras along with performing various yogic postures). The programme which started at 4.00 p.m. came to a close at 4.30 p.m.

This was followed by Bhajans. After Bhajans, Sri Sanjay Sahni, Principal, Brindavan Campus of the Institute made a brief speech expressing deep gratitude to Bhagavan on behalf of the students, staff and devotees for showering His love and grace on all during His stay at Brindavan from 7th May 2005 onwards when He came to Brindavan from Kodaikanal. Sri Sahni also narrated a few incidents how Bhagavan saved the lives of some students and their family members when they were faced with grave dangers. The programme on 17th June 2005 came to a close at 5.15 p.m. with offer of Arati to Bhagavan.

### **An Excellent Dance Drama**

After the arrival of Bhagavan at Prasanthi Nilayam from Brindavan on 18th June 2005, the children of Sri Sathya Sai Deenajanoddharana Ashram (a Home for orphan and destitute children) were the first to present a programme in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam in Bhagavan's Divine Presence. They presented a dance drama on 20th June which was a memorable day in the life of the inmates of this Ashram because on this day three years ago, they came into the benign soothing lap of their Mother Sai and were blessed with a new life altogether. The children enacted episodes from the Ramayana and the Bhagavata to portray the efficacy of Divine Name, devotion to God and practice of human values. The use of folk art of Burra Katha to convey Bhagavan's teachings like sacrifice, morality, good company, etc., was also very appreciable. In the end, the children depicted through their song and dance the central message of Bhagavan's teachings, viz, *Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all the people of the world be happy!). It was really a very commendable effort of the children which showed their talent in acting, dance and music. Another notable feature of this presentation was that all the 62 inmates of the Ashram were actively involved in it. The programme which started at 3.40 p.m. came to a close at 4.30 p.m. Bhagavan showered His blessings on the children at the end of this superb presentation.

## **CULTURAL PROGRAMMES AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM**

### **Tribal Dance by Chhattisgarh Devotees**

A large number of people of the villages adopted by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Durg district, Chhattisgarh came to Prasanthi Nilayam to express their gratitude to Bhagavan for the village uplift measures organised by the Sai Organisation of the district with the blessings and guidance of Bhagavan. On this occasion, a group of dancers of Chhattisgarh presented a very thrilling tribal dance on the afternoon of 21st June 2005 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. The fast movement of their steps and clapping of their hands with the accompaniment of simple musical instruments, namely, drum and

cymbals won the hearts of the devotees who applauded time and again in the course of this vigorous dance which lasted for nearly 20 minutes. Thereafter, Bhajans were also led by the devotees of Chhattisgarh. Bhagavan showered His blessings on the devotees at the end of the programme which concluded at 4.30 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

### **Illuminating Divine Discourse**

Bhagavan blessed the devotees at Prasanthi Nilayam with a nectarine Divine Discourse on 23rd June 2005. Before the Discourse of Bhagavan, the present Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak, and the former Vice Chancellor, Sri S.V. Giri, narrated their experiences of Bhagavan's Divinity. Sri Gokak told that Bhagavan extended the life of his father by 18 years and of his mother by 5 years and cured them of their diseases which were declared incurable by doctors. He described in detail how Bhagavan created faith in him and drew him to His fold. "It is my profound feeling", said Sri Gokak in conclusion, "that Bhagavan Baba is the saviour of the world and has incarnated to elevate mankind to great spiritual heights." Sri S.V. Giri narrated how with Bhagavan's grace he was able to work for six years as Vice Chancellor without any problem despite his precarious heart condition. After these speeches, Bhagavan gave His illuminating Discourse (full text of which has been given elsewhere).

It would be unwarranted to claim that a person who has reached the acme of intelligence has thereby progressed and succeeded in reaching the acme of spiritual wisdom. Scholarship and culture are not related as cause and effect. However learned one is in worldly knowledge, unless one's mind is cultured, the learning is mere junk. The system of education, which teaches culture and helps the culture to permeate and purify the learning that is gathered, is the best and most fruitful.

**- Baba**

### **DIVINE DISCOURSE: 16th MARCH 2005**

## **HUMILITY AND CHARACTER ARE THE HALLMARKS OF EDUCATION**

*The creation emerges from truth and merges into truth,  
Is there a place in the cosmos where truth does not exist?  
Visualise this pure and unsullied truth.*

**(Telugu Poem)**

*Embodiments of Love! Students!*

YOU HAVE JOINED THIS institution to acquire education. First and foremost, try to know what education means. That which fills the heart with humility is education. But students today are interested only in high degrees, not true education.

### **Develop Purity of Thoughts**

However, the students of our educational institutions are an exception in this regard. They do not come here with the sole objective of acquiring degrees. Most of them join our institutions to earn Swami's love and grace by striving to follow Swami's ideals. They develop good character and thereby give happiness to their parents. Education does not mean mere acquisition of degrees.

*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)*

Having entered the portals of this educational institution, you should try to understand the value and true meaning of education. You can be called truly educated only when you understand this. There is a lot of knowledge in Pustakas (books), but what is the use if the Mastaka (head) is empty? Once the Mastaka is filled with true knowledge, there is no need for Pustakas any more. Many elders explain these truths to their children. They enquire as to what the children are learning in the educational institution, and constantly monitor their progress. But modern students give confusing answers to the queries of their elders. Students should earn a good name in society and uphold the reputation and prestige of the institution in which they study. An educational institution is like a gigantic tree. Different subjects are like its branches and sub-branches. Virtues are like the fragrant flowers that you find on the tree. Faith is like the roots. When you water the roots of faith, you get the fruit of Ananda (bliss). A tree without flowers and fruits is of little value. Hence, the character of the students of an educational institution is of utmost importance. The end of education is character. Character is not limited to civilised behaviour and good conduct alone. One should consider the fellow human beings as one's own brothers and sisters. Brothers and sisters come to the same college to acquire education together. Merely attending the college is not enough. One should develop Bhava Shuddhi (purity of thoughts), which will ultimately lead to Jnana Siddhi (attainment of wisdom).

### **Acquire the Knowledge of the Self**

Our students are highly virtuous. I repeatedly say that they are My property. When I have such a property with Me, why should I worry about anything? I asked the boys who appeared in the GATE examination, "My dear ones! How did you write the exam?" They said, "Swami, by Your grace and blessings we have done well. You say that students are Your property. Having been blessed with the opportunity of being Your students, our only aim is to live up to Your ideals and bring a good name to the Institute." I was very pleased and deeply touched by their answer. It is heartening to note that there are such ideal students in our Institute. It is because of such noble students that the country has

progressed and prospered. If there are no men and women of virtues, how can the world shine with all its brilliance?

Our students do not indulge in empty rhetoric; they are men of action. Their sincerity makes Me happy. It is My resolve to impart ideal education to the students and inculcate virtues in them.

*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 education which cannot lead you to immortality? Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal.*  
(Telugu Poem)

Once you acquire the knowledge of the Self, you would have acquired everything else. These words of wisdom are imprinted on the hearts of our students.

*Embodiments of Love! Students!*

You have shown your excellence among lakhs of students by securing high ranks in the GATE examination (*loud applause*). The examiners were highly impressed with the intelligence and behaviour of our students. They wanted to know whether our students came from east or west, north or south. Our students replied, “Sir, we are neither from east nor from west, neither from south nor from north, we are the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning” (*loud applause*). They are not satisfied with what they have achieved. They are striving hard to bring more and more laurels to our Institute. Wherever you go, you find our students leading exemplary lives, propagating the ideals of our educational institutions.

### **Do not Eat Non-vegetarian Food**

People sometimes ask our students what type of food they like to eat, vegetarian or non-vegetarian. They reply in one voice, “Non-vegetarian food gives rise to evil thoughts and feelings; hence, we would never touch non-vegetarian food.” They are 100% vegetarian. Even the students who used to eat non-vegetarian food earlier become vegetarian once they join our institutions. Once someone tried to persuade one of our students to take non-vegetarian food, saying it contained a lot of vitamins. The student replied firmly, “I don’t want these vitamins. Even vegetarian food has all the vitamins I need. What I need is the vitamin of truth. I want to tread the path of truth and spirituality. Along with secular education, I want to acquire spiritual education and propagate it to the world.” There are many such students who are firm in their resolve to spread Sai ideals. It is because of such noble students that our institution has attained worldwide fame. Unfortunately, modern students do not know the purpose of education.

*Oh man! Examine and enquire for yourself what great happiness you have achieved by spending all the time from dawn to dusk in acquiring knowledge and earning wealth while forgetting God.*  
(Telugu Poem)

Students should develop good habits right from their childhood to enjoy good health and happiness.

*Get up early in the morning at the crowing of the cock,*

*Have a bath after your morning ablutions,  
Wear a proper dress.  
Eat properly and moderately.*

(Telugu Poem)

Students should exercise restraint over their food habits. Even birds, beasts and animals observe certain regulations in this regard but man observes no discipline in eating. Having been born as human beings and having acquired education, is it not expected of you to follow proper discipline with regard to food? Even those students who are used to eating non-vegetarian food right from their childhood give up that habit when they join our institutions. Their parents are, in fact, surprised at their transformation. When one of our students went home during vacation, his mother tried to serve him non-vegetarian food. He refused to touch it and requested his mother not to prepare non-vegetarian items in future. He explained to his parents the ill effects of consuming non-vegetarian food.

Non-vegetarian food is the cause of several diseases like cancer. You might have read in journals and newspapers that many people in Singapore and Bharat get infected by harmful bacteria because they eat fish. It is because of unhealthy food that people suffer from several diseases. Many are under the mistaken notion that non-vegetarian food gives them strength, but in reality it ruins their health. Once you lose your health by partaking of non-vegetarian food, you will never be able to regain it even if you spend the rest of your life in forests eating fruits and tubers.

These are the answers which our students give when they are asked questions about their food habits. The explanation given by our students makes such an impact on the listeners that many of them became total vegetarians. Never eat that food which can upset your stomach. When the food is pure, you will have pure thoughts and feelings. Pure thoughts make the mind pure and purity of mind makes a man noble. The people of Bharat are aware of the impact of food on the mind. Even now there are many Bharatiyas who observe strict dietetic discipline and partake of pure food only. Many people occupying high positions are also now leaving the habit of eating non-vegetarian food. Our body is made up of flesh. Why should you feed it again with flesh? Such unsacred food gives rise to unsacred thoughts.

### **Cultivate Good Habits**

*Students!*

It is not enough if you observe discipline with regard to your food alone. It is also essential for you to cultivate good habits. Take part in games and sports. Take part in them in the spirit of sportsmanship. Participation in games and sports along with cultivation of good food habits will give you health, happiness, name and fame.

*Dear Bangaru Students!*

Truly, our students are like gold. It is not possible to describe the noble feelings of our students. They speak from the depth of their heart. The language they speak is not ordinary; it is Atma Bhasha (language of the soul). Because of the purity of their speech and thoughts, they lead a pure and noble life. All the students should eat proper food and maintain good health. They should keep away from bad company. Even a good person

becomes bad in bad company. It is said, “*Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are.*” “*As is your company, so you become.*” Hence, always keep good company. Be in the company of those who speak good words softly and sweetly. Never utter harsh and unsacred words. If you use unkind words, people will treat you like an enemy. If you speak softly and sweetly, people will enjoy your company. When you are in the company of others, make sure that your body is clean and your mouth does not emit bad smell. You should take proper care of your health in every possible way. When your body is clean and healthy and when your thoughts, words and deeds are pure, the whole world will love you.

### **Take Care of your Health**

*Students!*

Do not cause inconvenience to others in any way whatsoever. Wherever you may go, ensure that you are presentable and acceptable in every way. Only then will you earn the respect of others. Always keep your mouth clean. Unclean mouth leads to many diseases. Not merely that, it will cause inconvenience to others. If your mouth emits foul smell, people will try to avoid you. Hence, the moment you get up from the bed in the morning, you should brush your teeth and clean your tongue thoroughly. When you keep your mouth fresh and clean, you will enjoy good health. Though I don't sleep at night, I brush My teeth before going to bed. I brush My teeth at regular intervals so as to keep My mouth fresh and clean. That is why I don't have any health problem. I don't have any pain whatsoever.

Some students ask Me questions about My teeth. I tell them to see My teeth which are strong and healthy. In fact, My teeth are so strong that I can crack a betel nut. My students are struck with wonder to see this. When they ask questions, I give them proper replies. You should take care that no food particle remains stuck between your teeth. Some people use a hard brush to clean their teeth. As a result, their gums start bleeding. But I use only a soft brush.

*Students!*

You should take care of your health in every possible way. It will be a matter of shame if you spoil your health and then submit yourself in the hands of a doctor. Hence, each one has to take care of his own health. One should never be dependent on others. This is what I teach to My students quite often. Get up early in the morning, do some jogging and exercise so as to keep your body fit. During examination days, students try to keep themselves awake late at night to study. They keep dozing with books in front of them. Such a study will take you nowhere. Do not force yourself to study when you are feeling sleepy. Keep the books aside and go to bed peacefully. Study only when your mind is fresh and attentive.

*Oh man! Do not feel proud of your education and scholarship. If you do not worship God and do not contemplate on Him with devotion, of what use is all your education?*  
(Telugu Poem)

*Students!*



First and foremost, take care of your health. Your education will be a mere waste if you do not maintain proper health. Do not rest content with secular education. You should also acquire educare. Education is related to gathering outside information, whereas educare relates to inward transformation. Educare is that which makes the human values blossom from within. Whether you have acquired educare or mere education will become evident in your speech. Do not indulge in loose talk. You should carefully frame your sentences and speak with humility and respect when you speak to elders. True education is not limited to textual knowledge. You should manifest the human values of truth, righteousness, love, peace and non-violence. Truth should not be confined to mere words. It should be translated into action.

*Students!*

You have come here and have acquired education of the highest standard. Share your knowledge with others and lead a virtuous life.

*Let us all move together, let us all grow together,*

*Let us all stay united and share our knowledge,*

*Let us live together with friendship and harmony. (Telugu Poem)*

This is what you have to learn today. Always have a smiling face and be a good friend to others. Who is a good friend? A good friend is one who has good thoughts, speaks good words and performs good deeds at all times. When you lead your life in such a manner, you will become an ideal person and a source of inspiration for others.

(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 16th March 2005.**

## **Chinna Katha**

### **Practice is Important, not Preaching**

ONCE there lived a Pandit (learned man) who was a great expert in explaining the meanings of the Slokas (verses) of the Gita by giving very appropriate examples. He was the recipient of many honours and awards for his talks on the Gita.

Once he went to a king and expressed his desire to give talks on the Gita in the king’s court. The king was very much pleased to make arrangements for his talks in his court. The learned man gave scholarly and detailed explanations of the Gita Slokas everyday. One day, the subject of his talk was this Sloka:

*Ananyashchintyanto Maam Ye Jana Paryupasate,*

*TeshamNityabhiyuktanam Yogakshemam Vahamyaham.*

Explaining the meaning of each and every word of the Sloka, the Pandit gave its essence in these words: “Those who worship Me with full concentration of mind without any other thoughts whatsoever, I look after their safety and well-being.” Listening to this

explanation, the king remarked, “Dear sir! You have not given the correct meaning of this Sloka. Today’s meeting now comes to a close. Go to your house and think about this Sloka calmly and deeply.” The Pandit hung his head in shame and went home with the feeling of great humiliation. Without saying a word to anybody, he went straight to his bedroom and lay down on his bed. He did not stir out to eat his food even. His wife gently came to him and enquired, “Oh dear! I have been watching you since you came back home. You are afflicted with worry. Did the king give you proper respect?” The Pandit told all that had happened. “The king said all this in the court without knowing anything. He has no knowledge of Sanskrit. I have studied the Vedas and possess the knowledge of all the four Vedas and other scriptures, yet the king humiliated me,” the Pandit told his wife. She thought over the matter for some time and then said, “My dear! I see some truth in what the king said.” “What? You are an ordinary woman. You have no learning. You are also blaming me!” shouted the Pandit. His wife did not prolong the talk further. The next day, she went to her husband and said, “Listen carefully to what I say. What the king said is true. Do you want to know the reason? Why did you really go to the king? Didn’t you go with the desire to get some money for the maintenance of your family? Then, what is the meaning of this Sloka of the Gita? Doesn’t it say: ‘I bear the responsibility of your well-being if you worship Me without thinking of anyone else?’ But, how have you acted? Without putting your faith in God, you have accepted the dependence of the king. You say one thing and do quite another!” The Pandit listened to all that she said. He understood that what she was saying was true and what the king said was also true. Praising his wife, the Pandit said, “You are my better half in the true sense. You have opened my eyes.”

For many days thereafter, the Pandit did not go to the king’s court. The king sent his soldiers to call him to the court. The Pandit told them, “I do not need any help from the king. Do we not have our Protector? Tell this to the king.” The same evening, the king came to the house of the Pandit. “You have truly grasped the essence of the Gita. The meaning of this Sloka primarily requires one to put its teaching into practice.” Saying this, the king saluted the Pandit. The Pandit expressed his gratitude to the king for making him understand the truth about the teachings of the Gita.

Gita Slokas are not merely meant to be learnt by heart; they are to be treasured in the heart. They are not meant only for preaching but for putting into practice.

The Atma is a spark of the Divine. Its latent existence can be known by enquirers. God is One. Whatever one’s nationality, whichever religion one professes, one can realise the universal absolute (Brahman) if one masters the science of spiritual advancement (Atma Vidya). Faith in God is the crux, the central point. Other beliefs, concepts and conjectures revolve as the rim, on the periphery.

- Baba

DIVINE DISCOURSE: 15th SEPTEMBER 2004

## MAKE LOVE THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF YOUR LIFE

*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)

MANY PEOPLE WORSHIP GOD IN different ways – some by doing penance, some by charity, some by performing rituals. Some others dedicate their lives for teaching and propagating the sacred scriptures by touring the entire world. Nevertheless, they cannot win God's grace and love. Why? *Sajjanam Sevanam Vina* (without serving the noble souls). It is only by serving noble souls and great men that one can attain the power of penance. No Sadhana other than selfless service will enable one to attain the Divine.

### **Love is the Royal Path for Man's Liberation**

The Punya (merit) of our students is indeed great. They have the good fortune of meeting, listening to and conversing with many noble souls and earn their grace. In fact, many people in Bharat sanctified their lives by having God's Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan (glimpse, touch and conversation). (Referring to Sant Asaram Bapu, Bhagavan said) He has taken a lot of trouble to come here all the way from Gujarat to address our students. It is their good fortune. He has a kind and loving heart. His teachings are very essential for our students. When faith and devotion have eroded and atheism is spreading its tentacles everywhere due to the effect of Kali Age, such teachings are very much necessary, especially for students.

*Dear Students!*

You cannot get fulfilment in life if you have only Darshan or Sparshan or Sambhashan of noble souls. You will attain peace and bliss only when you have all the three. In order to sanctify human life, Navavidha Bhakti (nine modes of devotion) are very essential. They are Sravanam (listening), Kirtanam (singing), Vishnusmaranam (contemplating on Vishnu), Padasevanam (serving His Lotus Feet), Vandanam (salutation), Archanam (worship), Dasyam (servitude), Sneham (friendship) and Atmanivedanam (self-surrender). Modern students are very intelligent. But it is only when they put their intelligence to proper use can they redeem their lives. For this, they should have not merely Sravanam (listening), but Mananam (recapitulation) and Nidhidhyasanam (contemplation) also. For man's life, the path of spirituality is most appropriate. But students today are putting their intelligence to wrong use and are wasting their time by engaging themselves in vain argumentation. God's grace can be attained only through

love and by no other means. It is, in fact, the Raja Marga (royal path) for man's liberation. Students should develop the faith that their lives will be sanctified by treading this royal path.

*Dear Students!*

Education is not limited to mere reading of books. By reading books, we acquire the knowledge of many subjects. We should put this knowledge into practice and strive for God's grace. To attain God's grace, love is most important. Man can acquire great powers by love. It is by love alone that he can control the mind. He can even gain control over Nature through love. Spiritual practices also become fruitful by love alone. The mind can never be controlled if you do not give up bad qualities, bad thoughts and bad company. Human nature can be sanctified only by divine and selfless love. Man is endowed with infinite love. The only property and power that will never diminish in a human being is love. You may share it with any number of people, yet it does not diminish; it will continue to grow. The reference in this context is not to worldly love, but to transcendental love. There is nothing in this world which can equal divine love. Though we talk about divine love, we never try to possess it. Every individual, from the time he gets up from bed till he goes to bed, must strive to make his life worthwhile by inculcating divine love. You must love your fellow human beings, treating them as your friends. The whole world can be united as a single family by cultivating such universal love. It is not possible by any other means. Therefore, develop universal love.

### **Attain God through Love**

*Dear Students!*

You are struggling a lot to acquire education. By this education, you may perhaps secure a degree. But all this education is negative in character. You must acquire positive education which would bring out your latent qualities of love, peace, compassion, forbearance, sympathy, etc. You must cultivate these qualities assiduously by constant practice. Many of our ancients sanctified their lives by inculcating such noble qualities. If human mind is to be transformed, it can be done only by love, nothing else. Mind ... mind ... mind. You know the nature of the mind. It is very strong and powerful. It cannot be controlled by any other way except love.

*Dear Students!*

Dedicate your love only to God. There are many people in the world who devote their love for acquiring education and other worldly purposes. Can they attain God? No, No. You must understand that it is only by constant contemplation of God with single-minded devotion in perfect solitude that you can attain Him. Therefore, dear students! You should realise the truth that God cannot be attained by any other Sastra (discipline) except that of love. God gives Himself to love easily. Hence, attain God through love. There is no power greater than love in this world. Everything in this world is a worry.

*To be born is a worry, to be on the earth is a worry; world is a cause of worry and death too; entire childhood is a worry and so is the old age; life is a worry, failure is a worry; all actions and difficulties cause worry; even happiness too is a mysterious worry.*  
(Telugu Poem)

If you are able to win the grace of God, all your worries will be removed. We are wasting the sacred love that is immanent in us. You may pursue worldly education; nothing wrong in that. But true education lies in attaining divine love, which is permanent, changeless and eternal. Many great and noble souls travelled throughout the world and strove to uplift humanity by their sacred teachings. What would have been the fate of Bharat if such great souls were not born? Everybody should follow the ideals of these great souls. Their teachings should be taken as authoritative like those of the scriptures. You may perhaps think that you are able to speak eloquently in English and therefore feel proud that you know everything. Pride is most reprehensible which ruins man. It lands him in abysmal depths. It is only by the quality of love that a human being achieves sublime heights.

*Dear Students!*

You should, therefore, develop love. Strive to attain the grace of God by faith and devotion, and thus redeem your life. Love is the only means by which man can attain liberation. Many great souls reached their goal only through love. You should follow their example. Never lose your wealth of love. Make love as your primary objective in life. Love may appear to be very simple thing to you. But there is no power greater than love. God is love, love is God. Live in love. That is what you have to learn.

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

- **From Bhagavan’s Divine Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 15th September 2004.**

*From our Archives*

## **A MATCHLESS GURU PURNIMA**

FOR those who essay to cross the ocean of Samsara (worldliness), the Guru is a veritable ship. Who, then, is the Guru? Not every person who instructs, not every scholar learned in the Sastras (sacred texts). The Guru must tread the path of Sastra, devoid of any trace of lust, greed or anger, full of all the traits of right conduct. Such a person alone deserves to be accepted as a Guru. Again, he should have the skill to illumine in the disciple the flame of Jnana which dispels the darkness of his ignorance. He must avoid dragging him down into Samsara by any thoughtless words of his. The Guru will be true to his role only if he gives the disciple the Mantra and the meaning, and instructs him in the fundamental reality. To the human community struggling in the dark, unaware of the Divine, Sage Vyasa brought the resplendent message of the Lord, which could dispel the night of ignorance and light the lamp of wisdom in the heart of man and establish the era of Namaparayana (upliftment of man through the constant recitation of the Name of the Lord). He is thus the Guru of every man, par excellence.

Besides, today it is Purnima, the full moon day. Today the moon (mind) that sails in the firmament of the heart is shining in complete glory, untarnished by sensory desires and

free from the markings of impulse and passion. The moon today reminds one of Paramatma, who is full, untarnished and unblemished. Vyasa first revealed the secret of making the Manas in everyone as clear and full as the moon on full moon day.

For this reason, every Asthika (theist) must refuse to content himself with a feast and a passing recollection of Vyasa; he must endeavour to bring the teaching into the field of experience; he must plant Bijanama (Name-seed) that the Guru vouchsafed to him in the soil of his heart, water it with Prema, fence the sapling by means of Sraddha (steadfast faith), feed it with the fertilizer of Smarana, and from the grown- up tree of the Mantra pluck the fruit of Ananda and taste its sweetness. May he achieve success in this task!

Do not doubt whether such Gurus are available now. The Guru is one, not many; they may appear to be many, but they all derive their power from one source. To observe differences between 'my Guru' and 'thy Guru' is to foster faction. Ananda lies in cultivating harmony and unity. Faction breeds unrest. The title Sishya can be rightfully borne only by those who are free from factionalism and have mutual respect and toleration. Only such deserve the grace of the Guru.

The grace of the Guru can be won only by the acquisition of certain virtues. One must get rid of lust, anger and envy. Prema towards all, full faith in the Mantra that the Guru initiates him into and a longing to realise its meaning to the full, steadiness in the discipline needed to have it and hold it even in the direst distress, virtues such as these have to be cultivated. At least a sincere attempt has to be made to progress on these lines. That is the mark of a real Sadhaka.

Many aspirants have in their anxiety to achieve quick results sought a Guru in haste and, later discovering his defects, are struggling and suffering, for they can neither give up the Guru nor discard the Mantra. But persons in this condition need not despair. Whatever sort of Guru he may be, the Mantra given by him is concerned with the Lord; is it not? Deepen faith in the Nama, respect it as the gift of God and proceed. Then you will forget the defects of the Guru very soon.

Those who seek and do not come across the right Guru need not be dejected. Let them have faith that the Lord is their Guru, their mother, their father, their God. Adopting the name and form that most appeals to them, they should practise the Sadhana with pure and unselfish intent. He will, without fail, even from within, sustain like the mother, provide like the father, teach like the Guru and award the bliss of self-realisation.

Therefore, Oh ye Sadhakas, ye embodiments of the Atma, do not fritter away your allotted time; offer it to Kesava who is Kalaswarupa (embodiment of time). Know that waking from sleep everyday is but another birth and going to sleep at night is but another name for death. On waking from sleep in the morning, pray, "Oh Lord! I am born now from the womb of sleep. I am deciding to carry out all my tasks today as offerings to Thee and with Thee ever present in my mind. Make my words, thoughts and deeds sacred and pure; let me neither cause pain and suffering to anyone nor should I have pain and suffering myself, direct me on these lines." And when you enter the portals of sleep at night, pray, "Oh Lord! The tasks of this day, the burden of which I placed on You, are over; You made me walk as I did; You made me talk as I did; You made me think as I did; so here they are, all my thoughts, words and deeds, placed at Your Feet as offerings. My task is

done. I am coming back to You again.” Adopt this as your daily prayer. This is the Guru Purnima gift to you all.

- From Bhagavan's Guru Purnima Message at Prasanthi Nilayam on 8th July 1960.

## **NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES**

### **80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS THE WORK CONTINUES**

#### **1. Medical Camps**

**USA:** On 16th April 2005, a free health screening camp was held in the working class Hispanic community of Sun Valley near the city of Los Angeles. More than 200 individuals were served at this camp. Besides primary care, dental care, ophthalmology, paediatrics, blood tests, pap smears and mammograms, other specialised services offered at this camp included dermatology, endocrinology, cardiology, pulmonology, orthopaedics and gastroenterology. The love and care of the Sai volunteers was evident throughout the organisation of the event. “We didn’t expect much,” said a male patient who came with his wife and four children ranging in age from 8 to 13, “but we received a lot. Everybody helped us very well.” His wife added, “All the people in the different departments were very kind – in paediatrics, in dentistry, in the blood department.... We are very satisfied.” It was indeed an uplifting experience for all present. The mood at the camp is most aptly described in the words of one of the patients, “I feel as if I am on sacred ground.”

**Guatemala:** For the past eight years, a free medical clinic has been operating in the premises of the Sai Centre in Guatemala, serving the underprivileged through medical aid and health education. Originally operating once a week on Saturdays with one devotee-doctor, the clinic is now open four days a week with four doctors and a psychologist. Eight volunteers handle the administrative and organisational aspects of this enterprise. About 140 patients receive treatment each month. Laboratory tests and prescription medications are provided free of charge. Food is distributed to those suffering from malnutrition. Many patients who avail themselves of medical services at the clinic have since begun attending meetings and study circles at the Sai Centre.

#### **2. Community Service Programmes**

**USA:** On 2nd April 2005, Sai Centres of the North East Region of the USA organised ‘A Day of Selfless Service’ as part of 80th Birthday offering to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. After the daylong service activities, many Centres conducted study circles on the significance of selfless service on the spiritual path. The Farmington Centre in conjunction with the Windsor, Glastonbury, North Haven and Silvermine Centres cleaned, painted and beautified the building and grounds of Maria Sanchez School, one of the poorest in Hartford, Connecticut. The Centres of Norwalk, Shelton and Scarsdale offered medical screening services for parents and students at the Hart School situated in

an underprivileged area of Stamford, Connecticut. Services included general health assessment, blood tests and screening for asthma and respiratory disorders and mammograms for women. The Rochester Centre conducted a Health Fair for the inner city residents of Rochester. The fair offered general physical assessment, screening for body mass index, blood pressure, glucose, HIV, dental hygiene and childhood obesity. In addition, volunteers provided information on child health, wholesome diet and the deleterious effects of lead poisoning, alcohol and smoking. The Billerica, Boston and Shrewsbury Centres renovated the large dining room and dormitory-type bedroom of the Lowell Transitional Living Centre which provides shelter for homeless adults. They also prepared and served lunch for the residents. Sai Spiritual Education children, young adults, adults and senior devotees prepared personal care packages for the homeless, greeting cards and flowers for the residents of a nursing home and entertained the elderly residents at the nursing home.

The Ithaca Centre served food at a Red Cross Centre for the homeless and entertained residents in a nursing home. The Sai Centre at Essex Junction volunteered at the local emergency food shelf. The Buffalo Centre renovated and rebuilt homes for the poor and underprivileged in the local community. The work involved carpentry, dry wall installation, painting and general cleaning. The Amherst Centre worked at the local old age home, offering loving care to the elderly. The Wappinger Falls Centre conducted three simultaneous activities which included a health fair at a Baptist Church, singing at a senior home, and quilt-making. The Syracuse Centre served hot food for many families at the Southwest Community Centre located in downtown Syracuse. They also prepared gift baskets of toiletries and rainwear for each attendee. The Rhode Island Centre visited a home for the elderly. Adults and Sai Spiritual Education children spent time talking to lonely senior citizens there, singing songs and giving out over 80 hand-made paper flowers.

**Africa:** The African Institute of Sathya Sai Education (TAISSE) was inaugurated in Ndola, Zambia on 30th April 2005. The impressive function was attended by many eminent dignitaries from Zambia and overseas countries including UK, USA, Italy, Sweden, Turkey, Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Ghana and Gabon. Honourable Chilufya Kazenene, Provincial Minister of Copperbelt Province was the Guest of Honour, who lauded the Sathya Sai Organisation with these words, “There can be no denying the fact that the Sathya Sai World Organisation is positively contributing to the development of Mother Zambia in the field of education through the successful establishment and running of its schools and institute.” Other dignitaries who spoke on this occasion included the Mayor of the City of Ndola and Councillor Chanda Mushota. The inauguration events highlighted Bhagavan Baba’s mighty works in India, the impact of The African Institute of Sathya Sai Education (TAISSE) in relation to raising public awareness in Africa on the importance of human values, the training of teachers and educationists in Human Values Education with specific emphasis on the school curriculum, the contribution of Human Values to growth and development of human potential in Africa through UN-HABITAT/TAISSE activities (Water for African Cities Project), the Sathya Sai Schools and Institutes in Africa as beacons of light in the corridors of educational planners, and the diverse service activities of Sri Sathya Sai



Organisation in Africa. The highlights of the function included the grand and colourful march past of Sathya Sai School teachers and pupils through the townships led by the Kamfinsa Police Brass Band, the graduation function where TAISSSE Diplomas were awarded, Narayana Seva for orphans and the elderly, the rendition of stirring spiritual songs by the choir of the United Church of Zambia and the extensive coverage of the inauguration activities by the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) TV.

Most recently, the International Selection Committee of Business Directions (BID), comprising a group of companies and prestigious professionals, has decided to present the World Quality Commitment International Star Award in the Gold Category to Sathya Sai School, Ndola, Zambia for achievement, leadership, quality, innovation and excellence in education and training. The award ceremony was held during the 22nd International World Quality Commitment Convention on 29th and 30th May 2005 in Paris and was attended by other award recipients from all over the world together with outstanding leaders from different business fields, quality experts and distinguished personalities in the realm of culture and education.

### **3. Public Meetings**

**Latin America:** 66 public meetings have thus far been held in Latin America (Zone 2) which comprises 23 countries. The first of these meetings was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina. 37 public meetings held during 2004 attracted an audience of nearly 19,000 persons. In 2005, 29 public meetings have been held thus far, with an attendance of over 8,000 people. These meetings have served not only to spread the Divine Message, but also to bring together members of the Sai Organisation to work in a spirit of unity and love. As a result of these meetings, many newcomers have flocked to the Sai Organisation seeking to learn more about Bhagavan's teachings. Public awareness of Swami's teachings was further enhanced by the extensive media coverage that accompanied these events. In some cities, films on Bhagavan were screened on television reaching an audience of hundreds of thousands of people. The meetings were typically addressed by one or two speakers. At most meetings, the featured speakers were Leonardo Gutter, Member of the Prasanthi Council, John Behner, Chairman of Zone 2, and the Central Coordinators of the three regions that form Zone 2. Each meeting witnessed the screening of the film 'His Work'. Some functions incorporated a question-and-answer session with the speakers, while others held a photo display of the Sai service activities carried out in the countries of Latin America and in India. Everywhere, enthused audiences accorded profound reverence and admiration for Bhagavan, His Life and His Message.

**Bulgaria:** The first Sai public meeting in Bulgaria took place on 28th May 2005 in the capital city of Sofia at the Conference Hall of the Russian Centre of Culture. The whole event was sponsored by the Sathya Sai Organisation of Greece. Around 250 persons were in attendance, including guests from the neighbouring countries of Macedonia, Romania and Greece. The introductory remarks by Rositsa Bozhkova of Bulgaria were followed by a reading of Bhagavan's message to the audience translated into Bulgarian. Ms. Iskra Grabul of Macedonia then spoke movingly on the theme of "Truth, Divinity and Purity".

She was followed by George Bebedelis of Greece whose heartfelt presentation on “Love All, Serve All” illustrated the spiritual teachings and humanitarian works of Bhagavan Baba. After the screening of the film ‘His Work’ with Bulgarian subtitles, the two guest speakers invited questions from the audience, most of whom were new to Bhagavan and His teachings. In view of the immense interest expressed by the participants, a Human Values seminar was announced for the month of October.

**Australia:** A public meeting was held in Sydney on 2nd April 2005 at the Sydney Super Dome. Once the backdrop for celebration of athletic excellence at the 2000 Olympics, the Dome resounded with spontaneous applause of approximately 2000 attendees who had been deeply stirred by the teachings and works of Bhagavan. The foyer had an extensive visual and multimedia exhibition on the service projects, medical and educational initiatives including the Australian Sathya Sai School in Murwillumbah, New South Wales. The programme began with an impressive parade of the Five Human Values. Two aboriginal elders welcomed the audience to their country in a brief yet moving traditional ceremony. Albert Barelds introduced the programme at which Dr. Pal Dhall and Neville Fredericks were the speakers. The speakers shared their understanding of Bhagavan’s teachings and their relevance to personal, community and global harmony. Dr. Pal Dhall focused on the unity of faiths and education, while Neville Fredericks spoke on the daily impact of Five Human Values. Three brilliant young musicians who specialise in spiritual music provided musical interludes. The film ‘His Work’ and the message of Bhagavan read out at the end of the programme filled the air with a palpable poignancy. Those who attended left with buoyant spirits embodied in the enthusiastic responses of several audience members. An Italian Catholic lady remarked, “I finally understood that Sai Baba and the Sai Organisation is not a religion, but in actual fact encompasses all religions...the ‘unity of faiths’ display was great...the amount of work Sai Baba has done is incredible.” A representative of an Islamic organisation exclaimed admiringly, “When I heard Sai Baba’s words they sounded like the words of a great Islamic scholar.” An aboriginal elder wondered aloud, “Imagine what our education system would be like if we thought of it as Educare!”

– **Prasanthi Council**

## **BHARAT**

**Gujarat:** The first ex-Bal Vikas Students Conference was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Vadodara. 102 ex-Bal Vikas students from various parts of the State of Gujarat participated in this one-day conference. The main content of the conference was a group discussion cum workshop on two themes, i.e., “Bal Vikas and I” and “Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation and I”. To mark this conference, the Sathya Sai Seva Samithi published the Gujarati translation of the small booklet “Sai Tips to Students” and distributed it to all students participating in the conference.

The 80th year of the Advent of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was celebrated by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Gujarat by organising a novel multi-faith cricketing event – Sri Sathya Sai Conduct Cup 2005 from 10th April to 1st May 2005 at H.L.

Commerce College Ground, Navrangpura, Ahmedabad, Gujarat. *"Life is a game – play it"* was the inspiring theme. *"There is only one religion – the religion of love"* was the focus of this event in which 16 teams of all faiths took part. The event ended successfully with a happy note of sharing of joy of unity in diversity. The message went across the society. And so, the Indian Express, Ahmedabad Newslane dated 2nd May 2005 came out with a caption – "Hindus vs Muslims but the Winner is Communal Amity".

Youth motivation camps were organised at Surat, Ahmedabad and Rajkot in which 80 to 90 youth participated in each camp. Discussions were held in these camps on how to spread the Divine Message of Bhagavan through service activities.

As part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Ahmedabad, Gujarat organised "Sai Saptak" comprising two mega events. The first was Akhanda Bhajan of 80 hours which started on 4th June 2005 at 8.55 p.m. and concluded on 8th June 2005 at 5.00 a.m. Devotees from all over Gujarat were present in large numbers in this programme.

The second event was the celebration of Bheema Ratha Shanti (Divya Saptapadi), in which 24 couples above 70 years participated. The couples were presented clothes, Mangal Sutra, ring, bangles, watch, etc. The chairs were gifted to them on which they were seated while performing this ceremony. Sacred Yajna fire during the Bheema Ratha Shanti Puja was produced in traditional way by churning one piece of wood on the other. The local as well as national news media gave wide coverage of this event.

**Kerala:** Sri Sathya Sai Deenajanoddharana Projects are now functioning in 14 Sai centres in Kerala. Needy old persons and children are adopted in these centres.

Thousands of youth who participated in the Annual Sadhana Camps held in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba are now fully involved in the Sri Sathya Sai Grama Seva Programme. In the month of June, they identified needy school-going children and provided all materials required for their schooling, benefiting thousands of students. Now the youth are moving ahead with a clear plan on Grama Seva. Sai Neethi (lawyers forum) members are also participating in the Grama Seva programme and in legal counselling all over the State.

Three-year programmes in connection with 80th Birthday celebrations of four Beloved Bhagavan are going on very effectively. Work is going on for providing houses to the needy (Sri Sathya Sai Vasthudhara Project). Adoption of thousands of Anganavadis, adoption of thousands of families and providing medical aid to the needy people are the major activities under this programme. Mahila Sangamams (ladies meets) conducted by Mahila Vibhag are attracting thousands of spiritually inclined persons in the State to take part in Seva and spiritual activities of the Sai Organisation of the State.

**Rajasthan:** A medical camp for autorickshaw drivers was organised on 6th March 2005 at Ajmer. Twelve medical specialists examined and prescribed medicines for more than 200 autorickshaw drivers. One multicolour sticker depicting the divine message of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was pasted on each autorickshaw.

Sri Sathya Sai Sanathana Siksha Seminar was organised on 27th February 2005 at Bhilwara in the Mewar Foundation Hall. 150 professionals, which included industrialists, doctors, advocates and journalists attended.

A cattle care camp was organised in village Dadar on 3rd April 2005 by Alwar Samithi. Experienced veterinary doctors examined the cattle and provided medical aid to 967 cattle.

A training camp for Sai Youth was organised at Gajadhar Mansighka Dharmashala at Bhilwara on 3rd, 4th, 5th June 2005. 210 youth and 60 senior devotees attended the camp and followed daily schedule of training from 5.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. Experienced teams of Sai Youth from Mumbai, Nasik and Bangalore gave inspiring talks.

**Tamil Nadu:** A solemn function was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Salem district of Tamil Nadu for distribution of accessories and aids for physically challenged persons at Sri Sathya Sai Community Centre, Salem on 4th June 2005. The entire function was heart warming. All became emotional when the physically challenged persons received the accessories and aids. A lot of preliminary work was undertaken by the members of Sai Organisation to identify physically challenged persons of various categories like hearing impaired, visually challenged, physically challenged requiring artificial limbs, calipers, crutches, etc. Patients requiring artificial limbs were taken to Trichy Multipurpose Social Service Society for necessary measurements and production of appropriate equipment to fit their limbs. The accessories provided in this function were: 9 hearing aids for hearing impaired, 30 walking sticks for visually challenged, 7 crutches, 25 calipers, 9 artificial limbs (hand), 20 artificial limbs (legs), two tricycles and one wheelchair.

## **Cleansing of the Self**

Those who have attachment and hatred cannot escape harm even if they dwell in the forest. Those who have conquered the senses can be Tapasvins (those engaged in penance) even if they are householders. If engaged in acts which are not harmful or condemned, then they are entitled to be called Jnanis (men of wisdom). The home is the Tapovana (place of penance) for attaining non-attachment. Liberation can neither be won by progeny nor by charity nor by riches nor by Yajna nor by Yoga. What is wanted for liberation is the cleansing of the self.

— Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

### **Become a Bhakta**

**Become entitled to the honoured title of a Bhakta. My glory is spread daily through My Bhaktas. Your virtue, your self-control,**

your detachment, your faith, your steadfastness, these are the signs by which people read My glory. Not that I want any such propaganda. But it happens so in this world where men estimate others indirectly rather than directly.

- Baba

**AUGUST 2005**

**GURU PURNIMA MESSAGE**

## **EVERYTHING DEPENDS UPON GOD'S GRACE**

*Everyone has to face the consequences of his Karma (actions). Who has made the bats to hang from the branches of a tree with their heads downwards? Has anyone tied them upside down out of hatred? No, it is their fate. Likewise, nobody can escape from the consequences of Karma.*

**(Telugu Poem)**

Birds fly in the sky with the help of their wings. Bats too have wings and they can also fly. But unlike other birds, they hang from the branches of trees with their heads downwards. Is it not their fate? One may perform any type of action, but one is bound to face the consequences of one's each and every action. This is the law of Nature.

**None can Escape from the Consequences of his Actions**

*Students – Boys and Girls!*

People may act as they please, but they cannot escape from the consequences of their actions. Whether one is a Pamara (ignorant person) or a Mahaneeya (noble soul), one has to face the results of one's actions. Let no one be under the illusion that he can commit sin and go scot-free. Hence, one should enquire before performing an action whether it is good or bad. Wherever you go, the results of your actions will follow you like a shadow. However, it is possible to mitigate the consequences of actions by the grace of God. God is always by your side, and is always blessing you by saying "Tathastu!", "Tathastu!" (so may it be!). Man is not realising this truth and is indulging in wicked deeds. He knows pretty well what is good and what is bad, yet he is unable to give up his evil ways. All that man experiences in life is the result of his own actions, good or bad. You may think

that you can commit a sin surreptitiously and feel that no one has seen you. But you cannot hide your actions from God. The consequences of your actions will follow you wherever you go. A person cannot be judged from his outward appearance. He may appear to be noble and great and speak in a pleasing manner; but his actions may not be compatible with his words. You may undertake any number of good deeds, but they cannot nullify the consequences of your past evil deeds. You have to bear this truth always in mind.

*Embodiments of Love!*

No one can comprehend the ways of God. They are inscrutable, mysterious and full of wonder. The principle of divinity is not visible to the naked eye, but it is this principle which makes you to experience the fruits of actions.

*The stories of the Lord are amazing,*

*They purify the lives of people in all the three worlds,*

*They are like the sickles that cut the creepers of worldly bondage,*

*They are like a good friend who helps you in times of need,*

*They are like a shelter for the sages and seers doing penance in the forest. (Telugu Poem)*

*Embodiments of Love!*

You may not be able to comprehend fully all that is being said. But you will understand it when you experience it yourself. It is impossible to escape from Karma Phala (fruits of action). Sometimes, you may experience Karma Phala later, much after the performance of the action. But you cannot escape from it. You may hide your action by saying that you have not committed any mistake. But you cannot do away with the action or the result thereof. You cannot cover up your sins forever. You read a number of books. But do you practise all that you have learnt? No, no. You practise only that which is necessary and convenient for you. But there is no such option with regard to the results of your actions that you have once performed.

### **Develop Deservedness to Attain God's Grace**

*Students!*

You may wonder if there is a way to escape from the consequences of Karma. Yes, it is possible for those who earn the grace of God. Once you become the recipient of God's grace, you will be saved from experiencing Karma Phala. Hence, you should strive to earn Divine grace. Scholars say, it is impossible to escape from Karma Phala. What they say is true to a certain extent. But once you earn Divine grace, even if you have to experience the consequences of Karma, you will not feel the pain. Take, for instance, a bottle containing a medicine. You find the expiry date mentioned on the bottle. After the expiry date, the medicine will lose its potency. Likewise, Karma Phala will not affect you because God's grace nullifies its potency. Hence, it is possible to escape from the consequences of Karma by earning Divine grace. Man should therefore develop deservedness to earn Divine grace. You will be free from the shackles of Karma once you attain Divine grace.

Lord Easwara had granted only sixteen years of life-span to Markandeya. But Markandeya was unaware of it. One evening, he found his parents full of sorrow. On enquiry, they revealed that his end was imminent, and that was the cause of their sorrow. They said, "Lord Easwara had ordained that you would live only for sixteen years and today happens to be the last day of your earthly sojourn. Tomorrow our earthly ties will

be snapped.” Markandeya was surprised to hear this. He also felt sorry that he was not made aware of it earlier. He said, “I would have made proper use of my time if I had known that I would live for only sixteen years.” 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, Lord 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 admonished Yama, “How dare you cast the noose around me?” Pleased with the devotion of Markandeya, Easwara blessed him with the boon of eternal life.

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 decree. Markandeya’s life story bears ample testimony to the fact that one can escape even from the god of death if one becomes the recipient of God’s grace. Hence, contemplate on God and chant His Name incessantly.

Once when Lord Yama was going round the world, he noticed that everyone was chanting the Divine Name. Wherever he went, he found devotees contemplating on the Lord. “If everyone starts chanting the Divine Name, how am I to discharge my duties?” He wondered and prayed to Easwara, “How can I cast my noose around a devotee?” Then Easwara said, “You may cast your noose around anyone at the appointed time. But remember that only those who have to experience the fruits of their actions get caught in it. It cannot touch those who have no trace of Karma Phala. That is why Markandeya became My property and I showered My grace on him.”

#### **Chant the Divine Name Incessantly**

As demonstrated by Markandeya, devotees can alter the Will of God by their sincere prayers. Nothing is impossible for God; God can accomplish anything. If you surrender to Him completely, He can cancel the consequences of your actions and confer His grace on you. One need not feel depressed or dejected, thinking that he is bound by Karma Phala. God can cancel your Karma Phala if your prayer is sincere. In this manner, God protected the lives of many devotees and alleviated their suffering in response to their prayers. Some people out of their ego doubt the power of God and try to test Him. They think, “Let us see how He will do this.” But God cannot be understood or experienced by such tests. Such tests are futile exercises. Evil qualities like ego, jealousy and hatred will ruin man’s life. One should make every effort to earn the grace of God. *Sarvada Sarva Kaleshu Sarvatra Hari Chintanam* (everywhere, at all times, under all circumstances contemplate on God). That is why Swami is exhorting you to undertake various spiritual practices. No one knows when one’s end will approach. Yama does not care what one is doing, good or bad, at the time when he casts his noose. Many people do Nama Sankirtan. It is also possible that your end may approach while you are singing the glories of God. Hence, you should always be prepared to face Yama by engaging yourself in chanting the Divine Name incessantly. You should undertake spiritual practices and earn divine grace so as to be free from Karma Phala. One need not be afraid of fate; it can easily be changed with sincere prayer. The story of Markandeya proves this point beyond doubt. Everything depends upon God’s grace.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

You may undertake any number of spiritual practices, but never forget God’s Name even for a moment. This will provide you Divine protection and grace. Never do anything that

will make you distant from God. You can achieve anything by prayer. There is no need for you to pray loudly; it is enough if you pray mentally. Some people have a mistaken notion that God will not come to their rescue if they do not pray loudly. God resides in your heart. He listens to your prayers. Contemplate on Him constantly to become deserving of His grace. Worldly difficulties come and go. One should not attach much importance to them. One can overcome worldly difficulties somehow or the other. What is important is the deservedness for God's grace. One should strive to attain it.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Chant the Name of God day in and day out. That alone will protect you at all times. Just as air is all-pervasive, God is present in you, with you, around you, below you, above you. Hence, you should be in constant communion with Divinity. When you develop faith in Divinity, you will naturally have unity. Consequently, there will be no scope for enmity. You need not perform any rituals in order to win the grace of God. It is enough if you do Namasmara (chanting the Divine Name) from the depth of your heart. *Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin...* (one cannot attain peace and happiness without singing the glory of God). If you incessantly chant the Divine Name "Rama", no harm can ever befall you.

*Embodiments of Love!*

It is because of your good fortune that you all have gathered here today. You have earned great merit by coming here. Do not fritter away this opportunity. Make the best use of your stay here and get the maximum benefit out of it. Remember that God is always with you wherever you are.

*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)*

*Students, Embodiments of Love!*

I am very much aware that you think of Swami always. It does not matter whether you chant the Divine Name loudly or silently. I see only the feeling behind it. Nothing can come between God and His devotees. Rishis of yore went to the Himalayas to contemplate on God. Wherever you are, God listens to your prayers. Do Bhajans sincerely. Swami will certainly take care of you. Never give room for any weakness. Be always courageous. When you adhere to Swami's words, the power of Sai will manifest in you. Chant any name of your choice, Easwara, Rama, Krishna, etc., but always remember that God is one. I will never force you to chant a particular name. One should not limit God to a particular name or form. You may call Me by any name, I shall respond.

### **Sai is Always Engaged in Serving Mankind**

Recently, a strange incident took place. Subramaniam of Larsen & Toubro and Chief Engineer Kondal Rao had gone to East Godavari and West Godavari regions in connection with the Water Supply Project work. As they were conducting a survey in a forest area, they were confronted by a group of naxalites. The naxalites questioned them, "Who are you? Why have you come here? Who has sent you here? How dare you enter our area without our permission?" They replied, "We have come here in your own interest. As there is scarcity of water in this region, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has sent us to make arrangements for the drinking water supply." On hearing this, the naxalites were overwhelmed and overjoyed. They said, "We are living in the forests and



hence are not aware of the magnificent service projects that Swami has undertaken.” They guided the engineers as to where to lay the pipes and fix the taps.

The Water Supply Project work in East and West Godavari districts is nearing completion. Plans are ready for the Water Supply Project in Krishna district also (*loud applause*). I am taking up and completing these projects of My own accord without anybody’s asking. Water is very important for the survival of everyone. It is the sustainer of life. What greater service can there be for mankind than providing drinking water to the needy? I do not expect anything from you. I am doing it out of My love for you. East Godavari, West Godavari and Krishna districts are now being covered under Sri Sathya Sai Drinking Water Supply Project. The people of these districts are extremely happy. All living beings need water to sustain their life. I am providing this essential means of sustenance of life to all. You need not ask for it. I am giving it out of My own accord. Till today no government or individual for that matter could provide drinking water to Krishna district. It is only Sai who is providing water to all. I am always engaged in such humanitarian projects. Devotees should pray that everybody should have water to drink. Pray for the welfare and happiness of all. This prayer is the need of the hour. You should never forget this prayer.

You may be worried that Swami is not able to walk. But always remember that Swami is not the body. I have no connection with the body. I am always happy and healthy. Do not pray to God for the fulfilment of your desires. Pray for the welfare of all. When I had a fall, the people of East Godavari and West Godavari came and prayed, “Swami, we want only Your health and not water.” I told them, “Your welfare is My welfare.” They are bringing a helicopter for Me with the prayer that I should pay a visit to East Godavari and West Godavari districts. Very soon, I will be visiting these districts. Treasure the bliss you have received today forever. Do Namasmaraana.

– **From Bhagavan’s Guru Purnima Message in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 21st July 2005.**

*Celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam*

## LOVING DIVINE BENEDICTIONS

A mammoth gathering of devotees from all parts of the world thronged Prasanthi Nilayam to pay homage to their Sadguru Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the holy occasion of Guru Purnima. This being the 80th year of the Advent of Bhagavan, many excellent cultural, musical and other programmes were held during Guru Purnima celebrations this year.

The holy festival of Guru Purnima was celebrated with great piety and solemnity on 21st July 2005. Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue of celebrations, was aesthetically decorated for this occasion. It started reverberating with sweet devotional music when the Nadaswaram group of students started playing their mellifluous tunes beginning with Mahaganapatim Bhaje ... Veda chanting group of students started chanting sacred Vedic Mantras as soon as Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall to shower the bliss of His Divine Darshan on the huge concourse of devotees. Panchavadyam group of students also joined the

Nadaswaram group to welcome Bhagavan with their sweet music when He entered the Hall at 7.35 a.m.

Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, four speakers addressed the gathering. The first speaker was Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations. Sri Srinivasan explained the significance of Guru Purnima and advised the devotees to put into practice three most important lessons taught by Bhagavan, viz., faith in God, service to humanity and Namasmaraṇa so as to become worthy of His love and grace. Obviously pleased with his talk, Bhagavan showered His love on the speaker and also materialised a gold ring for him. The next speaker was Dr. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Explaining the difference between Guru and Sadguru, Dr. Venkataraman observed that the Guru removed the veil of Ajnana (ignorance) that covered reality in man, but a Sadguru created a thirst for Jnana (wisdom) in his devotees. Bhagavan, the erudite speaker said, creates yearning in us for God and gives us the experience of His Divine Love which is totally selfless. Where we see love, we see God because God is nothing but selfless love, concluded the learned speaker. The next speaker, Sri R. Satish, a student of MBA (Final) narrated a personal experience and remarked that on this holy occasion of Guru Purnima we should surrender at the Lotus Feet of our Divine Guru, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The last speaker was Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak, Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Dwelling on the meaning of Guru Purnima, Sri Gokak elaborated that a real Guru would have inner awakening as his mind was fully illumined like the full moon. The task of a Guru was not only to impart information but also to facilitate transformation of the disciple by illumining his mind, said Sri Gokak. He added that interaction between a teacher and a student was necessary as prevailed in the Gurukul system of education.

After these talks, Bhagavan gave His Guru Purnima Message (full text given elsewhere in this issue) exhorting the devotees to strive for God's grace to redeem their lives. Bhagavan concluded His Divine Discourse at 10.00 a.m. after which Bhajans started. Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan was distributed to all during Bhajans. The morning programme came to a close at 10.15 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

In the afternoon, the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning presented a programme entitled "Rama Katha" (story of Rama) enriched with soul-stirring devotional music and lively commentary. The programme, which was prepared under the direct supervision of Bhagavan, started at 4.30 p.m. in His Divine Presence and kept the audience spellbound for more than one hour. Two students in the excellent make-up of Lava and Kusha rendered the Rama story and other devotional songs flawlessly with deep devotional feelings sending the devotees into raptures with each song. It was really a feast for the soul and a most fitting finale of the holy Guru Purnima celebrations, which came to a happy conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.00 p.m.

### **Cultural and Social Welfare Programmes**

#### **The Only Element – A Dance Drama**

This excellent drama on the lofty theme of love was enacted by the children of Sai Spiritual Education of the USA (Region X) on the afternoon of 4th July 2005 in Sai Kulwant Hall. Commencing with the depiction of the story behind the custom of

Thanksgiving in the USA, the drama showed how giving and sharing generated joy and love in human heart. It depicted that man could have peace, amity, happiness and fulfilment in life when he established harmony with the five elements of Nature, viz., earth, water, fire, air and ether by expanding his love which formed the undercurrent of these five elements, and was in fact the only element. The drama concluded with Thanksgiving to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba whose Divine Love is spreading peace and harmony in the world. Meticulously planned and skilfully executed, the drama was a captivating presentation from all aspects, be it the acting of the children, selection of costumes and props or sweetness of music. Dances of the children, especially the dances depicting the five elements in appropriate costumes for each element along with visual presentation of the element in the backdrop, were very appreciable. Simultaneous chanting of the Vedic Mantras relevant to the creation of each element was an added attraction. The drama concluded with the group song “Viswarupa Darshanam” (vision of the Cosmic Form). This was followed by a music programme and Sai Bhajans by the USA group. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan.

#### **Bhagavan Inaugurates the Premises of Easwaramma Women’s Welfare Trust**

The premises of Easwaramma Women’s Welfare Trust located in the northern part of Prasanthi Nilayam was inaugurated by Bhagavan on the morning of 19th July 2005. After inaugurating it, Bhagavan went round it and observed the various activities being carried out there for the all-round welfare and uplift of women especially from underprivileged sections of society. Earlier on the occasion of 10th year of Ladies Day celebrations in the year 2004, Easwaramma Women’s Welfare Project was inaugurated by Bhagavan in a simple function in Sai Kulwant Hall. The seed sown then has now grown in the form of Easwaramma Women’s Welfare Trust under the direct supervision of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. This Trust has been established to benefit women at large. It has been founded on the teachings of Bhagavan to address the problems of women in a meaningful way, and to bring peace and comfort to them, without any distinction of religion, caste, colour or creed. Two schemes have been started under the aegis of this Trust, namely, “Mother and Child Programme” and “Easwaramma Self-Help Programme”.

The Mother and Child Programme has as its objectives the following:

- Monitoring and improving the health and nutritional status of expecting mothers.
- Providing regular pre-natal check ups and medical support during pregnancy.
- Training local birth attendants in early problem identification and in providing support to expectant mothers.
- Counselling and education in health and hygiene.
- Emergency care to ensure safe delivery.
- Providing medical and nutritional support for the newborn child and infants.
- Immunisation programmes for children.
- Education and training in child health and nutrition.
- Assessment of and support in growth and development of the infant.

The programme is to be initially operational in the villages in and around Puttaparthi, with the scope slowly expanding to include a growing circle of villages as the programme moves forward.

The Easwaramma Self-Help Programme for women seeks to empower women to achieve self-reliance and to provide means of steady livelihood and thereby improve the health and quality of life of women, their families and children. The Easwaramma Self-Help

Programme seeks to train women in making a variety of useful products using locally available and environmentally friendly raw materials for sustained development. The Self- Help Programme will work towards establishing opportunities for gainful employment so that no person suffers from pangs of hunger.

On the afternoon of 19th July 2005, Easwaramma Women's Welfare Trust organised a programme of devotional vocal music in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. The vocalists were: Vidushi Sumitra Guha, an exponent of Hindustani vocal and Vidushi Bombay Jayashree, a reputed artiste of Carnatic music. Both the artistes presented Mira Bhajans and Sai Bhajans and earned the appreciation and applause of the devotees. Thereafter, Begum Parveen Sultana presented excellent rendering of two Mira Bhajans, 'Nanda Nandan Giridhari' and 'Sakhiri Mein Giridhar Ke Ranga Rati'. At the conclusion of this soul-elevating musical presentations, Bhagavan blessed all the artistes and distributed Saris to them. The programme which started at 4.10 p.m. came to a happy conclusion at 5.45 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

#### **Guru Purnima Concert by Sai Symphony Orchestra**

A grand and soul-stirring musical presentation was made by overseas devotees to offer their homage to their Sadguru Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the eve of the holy festival of Guru Purnima. More than 60 artistes from nearly 20 countries participated in this "Gurupurnima Concert" presented by Sai Symphony Orchestra on the afternoon of 20th July 2005 in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. The concert comprised famous compositions of well-known composers of the world, namely, W.A. Mozart, L. Van Beethoven, Rossini, A. Dvork and J. Jimenez. The programme which started at 3.50 p.m. enthralled the audience for one and a half hours by its soul-elevating compositions and came to a close at 5.00 p.m. This was followed by Bhajans and distribution of Prasadam. In the end, Arati was offered to Bhagavan.

#### **An Excellent Cultural Programme**

A very lively cultural programme depicting a few episodes from Lord Krishna's childhood and delineating the rich cultural heritage of Assam along with the life story of saint Sankardeva was presented by the Bal Vikas children of Assam, Manipur and North-Eastern States on the afternoon of 23rd July 2005 in Sai Kulwant Hall. The programme presented through a lively dialogue between a father and his son showed the glimpses of rich culture of Assam, its famous temples and the sacred river Brahmaputra in the backdrop. It portrayed how the great saint-poet and reformer Sankardeva (1449-1568) brought about a spiritual awakening in Assam and brought the knowledge of the scriptures like the Vedas and the Upanishads to the doorstep of common people. The programme depicted some childhood pranks of Krishna, like stealing of butter and vanquishing of demon-snake Kaliya. Beautiful dances of the children, sweet music and perfect choreography added to the beauty of the presentation. The programme which began with two prayer songs concluded at 5.00 p.m. with a Sarva Dharma Sai Bhajan.

#### **Bhagavan's Love in Action**

In a function held in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the morning of 24th July 2005, Bhagavan distributed sewing machines and wet grinding machines to 84 women to provide them the means of livelihood. The function was organised by the staff and students of Anantapur Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning as part of the celebration of 80th year of the Advent of Bhagavan. The programme began after the arrival of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall at 8.15 a.m. As soon as Bhagavan was seated on

the dais, the students of Anantapur Campus invoked the blessings of Lord Ganesh by singing a sweet song in his praise. Thereafter, the programme of distribution of sewing machines and wet grinding machines started. All the beneficiaries came near the dais one by one, offered their Pranams to Bhagavan and received the machines and other gifts. This was followed by an excellent presentation of “Sai Katha” with the accompaniment of soulful music by the students of Anantapur Campus. The students narrated the story of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s Advent and sojourn on earth and described His Divine glory. Bhajans started at the end of this programme and Prasadam was distributed to all. The programme came to a close at 9.40 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

Nishkama Karma or selfless service is a fragrant flower of altruistic love. It is not to be performed for the satisfaction of the person rendering the service or the person at whose bidding it is being done. The feeling should flow through the nerves and bloodstream and permeate every cell of the person’s body. Whatever be the nature of work, we should do it as an offering to God.

- Baba

## **DASARA DISCOURSES - II**

# **OBEY DIVINE COMMAND WITH TOTAL FAITH**

*Embodiments of Love!*

EVERYBODY HAS TO FACE THE consequences of his actions; there can be no escape from them. Karma has neither feet nor eyes nor mouth. But man cannot escape from it. That is why our ancients declared that one has to bear the consequences of one’s Karma. The results of Karma do not depend upon your likes and dislikes. It is not because you desire it that something happens. Similarly, something is averted not because you do not desire it. Irrespective of your thoughts and desires, Karma follows its own course.

### **Mysterious are the Ways of God**

The world is full of mystery and wonder. It is nothing but the manifestation of five elements. It undergoes change with the passage of time. Likewise, the physical body which is also made up of five elements is subject to change. Only the indweller is permanent. The ways of God are mysterious and beyond the grasp of human understanding. All that you see is not indeed the reality. In fact, man is incapable of fathoming the deep divine mysteries with his senses. It is not possible for anybody to hold on to the physical body forever. It remains so long as it is destined to be. It will perish at its predestined time. Nobody has any control over death. It is decided at the time of birth itself. The date of departure is imperceptibly written on the body when it comes into the world.

It is not possible for man to comprehend the way the universe functions. Who is responsible for the wonders and mysteries that we witness in this world? What one has to do, when, where and how, all this is predestined. Man has no control over it. Everything happens according to God's Will and His command. It is the primary duty of man to obey the divine command implicitly. Everything in this world, perceptible or imperceptible, happens according to the Divine Will. One need not pay heed to what others say when it comes to obeying God's command. You have to obey the divine command in letter and spirit without adding any comma or full stop to it. Unfortunately, today nobody is making any real effort to understand the mysteries of God's creation. Scientists boast of having unravelled the mysteries of creation, but they do not have true experience of the reality behind the phenomena of the universe. Each and every activity that takes place in this universe is full of wonder. When you observe carefully, you will be able to perceive the unseen hand of God at work everywhere.

(Narrating the story of Markandeya's victory over death, Bhagavan said): God responds to the prayers of devotees and comes to their rescue when they have purity of heart. One with a pure heart can even alter the Sankalpa of God. The story of Markandeya bears ample testimony to this. Markandeya had no desires. He made sacred use of the time granted to him. It is the primary duty of devotees to cultivate noble thoughts and perform sacred actions. Markandeya remained a Chiranjeevi (one with eternal life), served his parents and gave them immense happiness. In the normal course, God's Will cannot be altered. But sometimes God does change His Sankalpa in answer to the prayer of a devotee who is sincere and pure at heart. Such a devotee has the power to change the Will of God. Devotion does not mean mere vocal expression of prayer; one should have purity of heart.

### **All Systems of Philosophy Propound the Same Truth**

Adi Sankara was born in Kerala in 8th century A.D. He propounded the philosophy of Advaita (non-dualism) and propagated the truths which were the base of all scriptures. But he left his body at an early age of 32 years. Ramanujacharya was born in 11th century A.D. and propagated the efficacy of the divine name. That was the time when devotion to God was on the decline. It was because of Ramanujacharya's teachings that people developed devotion and spirit of surrender to God. Madhwacharya lived during 13th century A.D. Though he propagated the principle of Dvaita (dualism), yet he maintained that Jiva (individual soul) and Deva (God) were not different from each other in essence. However, the underlying principle in all the three systems of thought as propagated by Adi Sankara, Ramanujacharya and Madhwacharya is one and the same. The same principle of Atma is present in all beings. It is referred to as Easwaratwa (Divinity). Divine incarnations such as Rama and Krishna can be recognised by their divine forms. Every incarnation has a particular form. But Easwaratwa has no form. It represents the principle of truth that is present in all beings. It is responsible for Srushti, Sthiti and Laya (creation, sustenance and dissolution).

Easwaratwa, which has no specific form, is symbolised by Linga. A Linga is usually placed on a horizontal base which is known as Panavatta. Do you know how it looks like? (At this moment, Bhagavan with the wave of His hand materialised a Linga with Panavatta amidst a thunderous applause of devotees.) Lord Easwara gave a Siva Linga to Markandeya and his parents and exhorted them to sanctify their time in the contemplation of God. They redeemed their lives by worshipping the Linga. Linga represents the Atmic

principle which is present in all. It is not possible for anyone to understand or estimate the power of God. Though the principle of Atma is formless, it can assume any form in accordance with the feelings of devotees. Linga is not something which man has made for worship. It is the direct manifestation of divinity (Sakshat- Akara). This truth was very well understood by Markandeya and his father Mrukanda and hence they worshipped divinity in the form of Linga.

Man is endowed with not one but three bodies – Sthula, Sukshma and Karana (gross, subtle and causal). The physical form represents the gross aspect and can be seen. But the subtle body cannot be seen. It is the source from which our thoughts and words originate. The causal body represents our true nature. But the same principle of divinity is present at all the three levels. Without thread, there can be no cloth. Without silver, there can be no plate. Without clay, pot cannot be made. Likewise, without Brahman (Divinity), there can be no world. Without the Creator, there can be no creation. The Creator can be compared to thread and the creation to cloth. The Creator embodies all the three aspects – gross, subtle and causal. When you contemplate on God, you should transcend the mind. By merely having thread, one cannot make cloth. One has to weave the thread to make cloth. Likewise, self-effort and divine grace, both are essential in order to achieve the goal of life.

### **Experience Bliss by Chanting Vedic Mantras**

Many people today chant Vedic Mantras. Each Mantra is attributed to a particular form of divinity. It is, therefore, necessary that one knows all the relevant Mantras. If one wants to purify one's thoughts and understand one's true self, one should take Veda as the basis. Unable to understand this truth, many people resort to deception when it comes to chanting Vedic Mantras. If one does something wrong and feigns ignorance, it amounts to acting like a thief. Similarly, if one has the ability to chant the Vedic Mantras but does not do so wholeheartedly, he is no better than a thief. All our students can chant the Vedas, but some of them are not joining others in chanting. They are not making proper use of what they have learnt. They are keeping to themselves all that they have learnt. I am observing the students as they chant the Vedas. Having learnt the Mantras, they are expected to chant them. But some of them are keeping silent. In a way, they are resorting to Vidya Chorathvam and Daiva Droham (theft of knowledge and betrayal of God). Only those who chant wholeheartedly what they have learnt deserve Sakshatkara (God-realisation). When the boys chant the Mantras, the ladies sitting on the other side also join them. They have every right to chant the Vedas. None can deny them their right. They feel inspired to chant the Vedas when they see the boys chant. There are many small children sitting here. Who has taught them the Vedas? They hear attentively when the senior students chant the Mantras and learn them by heart. However, there are some educated persons who sit by the side of Veda chanting boys and yet remain tight-lipped. I am observing them. What is the use of sitting with Veda group if they do not make efforts to learn and chant Vedic Mantras? They listen to Vedic chants but do not participate in them. One should listen and also chant the Mantras in order to experience divinity.

The Vedas are the very form of God. There are many Mantras in the Vedas to propitiate the Pancha Bhutas (five elements). The five elements are our very life-breath. They sustain our life. The faculties of Sabda, Sparsha, Rupa, Rasa, Gandha (speech, touch, form, taste and smell) in man represent the five elements of ether, air, fire, water, earth, respectively. The world itself is a combination of the five elements. But people forget to

express their gratitude to the five elements. What a sin it is! We stuff our minds with all unnecessary information but do not make any efforts to acquire the knowledge which forms the very basis of our life. It is therefore incumbent upon everyone to learn the Vedas, contemplate on them and chant them wholeheartedly. There is no point in learning the Vedic Mantras if you do not chant them. There are some who chant the Mantras when they are here, but forget them when they go from here. You may go anywhere but you should repeat the Mantras at least in your mind. You should never become a Vidya Drohi (betrayer of knowledge). A Vidya Drohi is, in fact, Daiva Drohi (betrayer of God); he can never receive the grace of God.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Students may sometimes commit mistakes inadvertently. But once they realise their mistake, they should not repeat it. You should be able to chant the Mantras the next day which you hear today. When all of you chant the Mantras in unison and in perfect harmony, Brahman will manifest right in front of you. Our ancient sages and seers declared: *Vedahametham Purusham Mahantham Adityavarnam Thamasa Parasthath* (I have seen that Supreme Being who shines with the effulgence of a billion suns and who is beyond Thamasa - the darkness of ignorance). The sound of the Vedas is highly sacred. It is extolled as *Sabda Brahmayi, Characharamayi, Jyotirmayi, Vangmayi* (embodiment of sound, mobility and immobility, light and speech). If you understand this divine principle, you will know the significance of chanting the Vedic Mantras which are taken from all the four Vedas, namely, Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharvana Veda. Chanting of the Vedic Mantras signifies the chanting of the Name of God. It is essential for everyone to learn the Vedas. Whatever Vedic Mantras you learn, you should be able to chant them properly. Otherwise, what is the use of learning them? I have seen many boys, who learn the Vedas here, but forget them when they go to Bangalore. They chant one or two Mantras just to show to the elders who visit that place. You should chant the Vedas not for publicity, but for your own benefit of experiencing bliss.

### **Do not Chant the Mantras in a Mechanical Way**

Chanting, practising and experiencing bliss are related to Karma, Upasana and Jnana (work, worship and wisdom), respectively. Karma leads to Upasana which in turn leads to Jnana (wisdom). Once you attain Jnana, you will experience peace and bliss. You should transcend Vijnanamaya Kosha (wisdom sheath) and enter Anandamaya Kosha (bliss sheath). Everything depends on Karma. You should not chant the Mantras in a mechanical way. You should assimilate and digest them. Why do you eat food? Is it to preserve it in the stomach? No. The food partaken should be digested so that its essence is supplied to all parts of the body. In the same manner, you should understand and assimilate the Vedic knowledge and derive strength from it. It should manifest in your thoughts, words and deeds. You will experience bliss when you share your knowledge of the Vedas with others. God is all-pervasive; He is present everywhere in the form of five elements. Each element represents a form of divinity. All the five elements together constitute the form of the Atma. When you realise this truth, you will experience divine bliss.

*Embodiments of Love! Students!*

Whatever you have learnt here, share it with others. But sharing with others is also not enough; you should put your knowledge into practice and derive benefit therefrom. We



prepare many delicious items at home and serve them to the guests. Is it not necessary that we should also partake of them? Likewise, you should digest the Vedic knowledge you have acquired and also share it with others. All knowledge has originated from the Vedas. That is why the Vedas are extolled as *Sarva Vijnana Sampatti* (treasure chest of all knowledge). But, unfortunately, we are not making proper use of this treasure. Chant the Vedas to the extent you have learnt. Never forget what you have learnt. With sincere effort, you will certainly be able to attain Sakshatkara. How did Markandeya attain Sakshatkara? He chanted the Panchakshari Mantra forgetting himself. As a result, Lord Easwara appeared before him and showered His grace on him. Those of you who wish to have the vision of God should digest the knowledge of the Vedas that you have acquired and share it with others.

– From Bhagavan’s Dasara Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 19th October 2004.

### *The Religion of Love*

## SAI INTERFAITH CONFERENCE AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

ONE of the main teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is: There is only one religion, the religion of love. Representatives of five major religions of the world, namely, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism echoed this eternal truth while participating in Sai Interfaith Conference held at Prasanthi Nilayam on 22nd July 2005. The theme of the Conference was: “The Religion of Love”.

The proceedings of the Conference commenced at 8.35 a.m. after the arrival of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall. In his introductory speech, Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman, Prasanthi Council remarked that selfless love represented God and the purpose of all religions of the world was to bring man back to God and make him regain his divine heritage. Thereafter, Dr. Goldstein introduced the speakers who were scheduled to speak in this Conference. The first speaker was Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, President of the Islamic Centre of Delhi, India. Referring to Prasanthi Nilayam as the international city of peace, spirituality, love and harmony, the learned speaker observed that India was emerging as a spiritual land as envisaged by Swami Vivekananda. “Here, Swami Vivekananda’s dream is being fulfilled”, he said. Dwelling upon the teachings of Islam, the erudite speaker remarked that it was his firm conviction that Islam was a religion of love, peace and harmony. He exhorted all to put these teachings into practice. The next speaker was Dr. Ahangamage Tudor Ariyaratne, well known as the founder of Sarvodaya Shramdana Movement of Sri Lanka and a recipient of Mahatma Gandhi Peace Prize. The learned speaker spoke about the teachings of Buddha and said that love and kindness towards all beings ignited in man a certain divine force which could link him to the Divine. Exhorting all to put the teachings of Buddha like Metta (loving kindness), Karuna (compassion), Mudita (altruistic joy) and Upekkha (equanimity) into practice, he observed that Bhagavan Baba’s Divine Presence afforded a unique opportunity to

mankind to redeem their life. “There can be only one Buddha and one Baba for many thousands of years; we have to make them live in our hearts”, said Dr. Ariyaratne. At the end of this programme, Bhagavan blessed both the speakers. He also materialised a gold ring for Maulana Wahiduddhin Khan and a gold bracelet for Sri Ariyaratne.

In the afternoon, the proceedings commenced at 4.00 p.m. after the arrival of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall. The first speaker of the afternoon session was Father Henry Fehren, a well-known Christian scholar from New York, USA. Dwelling on the teachings of Jesus Christ, the learned speaker said that Jesus taught mankind the lessons of love, forgiveness and compassion. Jesus, he said, never condemned anyone and prayed to God to forgive even his tormentors. Forgiveness, he said, was an aspect of love. Father Fehren said that Sri Sathya Sai Baba had been a great inspiration in his life ever since he was ordained to the Holy Catholic Church. He considered invitation to Puttaparthi as a great blessing and likened his journey to this holy centre of spirituality to a pilgrimage.

The next speaker was Rabbi David Zeller, an internationally known singer, teacher and a pioneer in Jewish spirituality from Israel. Narrating his experiences of Bhagavan’s Divinity when he first visited Puttaparthi 33 years ago, Sri Zeller thanked Bhagavan for this great opportunity to take part in this Conference which meant so much for all religions and their followers. Drawing a parallel between human body and the body of human kind, the learned speaker said that just as man became healthy when all his organs functioned harmoniously, the body of human kind would attain health and wholeness when all the cultures, traditions and religions recognised each other and played their role for their health, peace, wholeness and love of entire humanity. Sri Zeller ended his speech with a charming song entitled ‘Shalome’ which meant peace and wholeness.

The last speaker of the Conference was P.S. Jayarama Sastrigal, a well-known Sanskrit scholar of India. Referring to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as Love Incarnate, the learned speaker narrated how Bhagavan gave him a new lease of life twice by curing his serious diseases. Further, he related on the basis of his personal experience, the potency of Sai Rama Mantra for man’s liberation. This Mantra, he said, was the quintessence of the Vedas and the Upanishads and uplifted man to great heights of spirituality. He concluded his speech with verses in chaste Sanskrit in praise of Bhagavan. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan.

## **NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES**

### **80th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS THE WORK CONTINUES**

#### **1.Community Service Programmes**

**Kenya:** Malaria kills up to 1.8 million children in a year in the African continent and 350 million people live at high risk of malaria in 26 African countries. Kenya ranks high among countries where malaria is endemic with 8.2 million cases reported each year.

Annually, 34,000 Kenyan children below the age of five die from malaria, which translates to 90 deaths everyday. Sri Sathya Sai Organisation after several discussions and briefings with National Ministry of Health Malaria Control Programme (MCP) has accepted the Sainet Project as a partner in roll back malaria programme (RBM) and now have a plan to provide 50,000 nets to the people of Kenya particularly to the high risk people (pregnant women and children below 5 years of age) by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's 80th Birthday in November 2005. This project was started on 11th June 2005 in Kitale in west Kenya. Sai volunteers, some of them being experienced doctors from Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, provided two nets along with 4 kg of maize meal to each family. These insecticide-treated mosquito nets in distinctive ochre shade are branded as 'Sainet', and have the message of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba "Love All, Serve All" inscribed on them. A total of 2,200 nets were given with love to 4,400 households with a population of 16,800 spread over 20 villages. Awareness raising sessions were held in each village to inform the people about the use and maintenance of nets and the local environment.

A total of 95 Sai volunteers came from different parts of Kenya: from as near as Eldoret and Kisumu and from as far as Nairobi and Mombassa. They included students and teachers from the University of Nairobi and the Sai schools in Kisaju, Uthuru and Sai Amboseli. Five convoys, each comprising a Canter truck, a minibus and two to three four-wheel drive vehicles carried 12 tonnes of food supplies and 4,400 Sainets to these remote villages. At the first stop, Nabingenge village (literally, mosquito village), Hon. Noah M. Wekesa, M.P. and Assistant Minister of the Government of Kenya and the district authorities welcomed the convoy and gave a rousing talk to the villagers, highlighting how Sainets could change their lives. As volunteers approached the villages, a truly memorable sight awaited them. The womenfolk came singing and dancing, welcoming them to their village. The village elder and the village health committee rushed to greet them. The service was the first ever in Kenya to make these necessities freely available to the poor on a significant scale to create a measurable health impact. Also, this was the first time that nearly 100 per cent coverage of the 20 villages was achieved, using a community-based approach to reach the poor directly as pioneered by Bhagavan Baba through the Grama Seva projects. The medical faculty of the University of Nairobi and the Government of Kenya have jointly initiated a research project to monitor the impact of this unique service among the population in 20 villages. Significantly, Kenya was chosen by Bhagavan Baba as the first country to be blessed by His visit in 1968. The experience with this project in Kenya will provide valuable lessons for design and implementation of similar projects elsewhere in Africa.

**Indonesia:** Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Indonesia has completed a water project in village Mbuliloo, located in the Wolowaru district of the Nusa Tenggara Timur Province of Indonesia. For years, the people of this impoverished region had struggled to cope with lack of fresh drinking water. The scarcity of potable water forced the villagers to survive upon a well in a distant location, which only had toe-deep water to be shared among more than 234 families. The Sai Study Group acquired a privately-owned well and built a tank to collect water from the well. From the tank, 900 pipes were laid over a distance of approximately 7 km to channel the water to individual houses, thus providing clean water to more than 234 families. The local authorities, on behalf of the villagers, submitted a formal letter of appreciation which reads, in part, "*We could never have imagined that in*

*this world full of politics, turmoil and social crisis, there are still people out there who care to help small, helpless people like us. We take this opportunity to express how delighted and thankful we are to Sri Sathya Sai Organisation that has given the greatest gift of kindness that we will never be able to repay. Many thanks from all of us, the people of village Mbuliloo.”*

## **2. Medical Camps**

**United States:** The Mid-Central Region of Sathya Sai Baba Organisation of America conducted a free medical camp at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in St. Louis on Saturday, 11th June 2005. The main goals of this camp were free health screening and health education for the poor. The team of 153 volunteers comprised physicians and nurses, interpreters and non-medical personnel. Services included body mass index check, blood pressure check, blood cholesterol and blood sugar check, lead screen, asthma screen, paediatric assessment, vision test, hearing test, dental check and skin care assessment, mammograms, pap smears and osteoporosis screening. A total of 238 people, including 47 children, benefited from this camp. Health education was provided on first aid, nutrition, exercise, diabetes and other areas of health concern. The emphasis of this camp was also on ideal body weight to reduce heart disease, hypertension and diabetes. Body mass index, which reflects obesity, was done on 153 people. Diet and exercise instructions were given to overweight people. Free bicycle helmets were provided to children. Infant car seat checks were also provided by the St. Louis Safe Kids programme. Distinguished guests included St. Louis County executive, Sri Charlie Dooley and St. Louis Health Commissioner, Ms. Melba Moore. Sri Dooley paid glowing tributes to the Sathya Sai Organisation. He observed that there was great need for this type of free service in the community.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** A medical and a veterinary camp were organised on 21st May 2005 in the city of Modrièki Lug in the Republika Srpska region of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A team of 5 physicians and 1 pharmacist examined 99 patients and disbursed free medications. They were supported by a dedicated team of 29 Sai volunteers from Bosnia, Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. The veterinarian inspected 5 dogs and distributed medicines for poultry to 9 families in the settlement. In addition, 36 packets of food items and clothing were handed out during the course of the camp and play-workshops were conducted for the children.

**Nepal:** Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Nepal has declared 2005 as the ‘Grama Seva Year’ to mark the 80th year of the Advent of Bhagavan Baba. The year-long celebrations were initiated with a medical camp in Kathmandu earlier this year. Held during the Sivarathri festival in the premises of the world-renowned Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu, the camp was aimed to serve pilgrims from various parts of Nepal as well as neighbouring India who visit the temple during this auspicious festival. Altogether 158 patients availed of the medical services. About 60 Sai volunteers worked assiduously during the camp, serving refreshments and assisting the elderly and disabled pilgrims.

## **3. Public Meetings**

**USA:** A public meeting on Bhagavan’s exemplary life, teachings, and social endeavours in the fields of education, medicine and public service was held on 15th May 2005 at the Shrine Centre in Denver, Colorado. Around 200 guests were in attendance at this event

and many of them were first time visitors. Sri Satyanarayan, President of South-western Region of Sai Organisation introduced the two speakers: Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Member, Prasanthi Council and Sri Jonathan Roof, Vice President of Sathya Sai Baba Central Council, USA. Dr. Reddy gave an uplifting talk on Bhagavan Baba as embodiment of love and universal teacher of truth. He emphasised that by following the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba we should be able to realise and manifest our divine nature in this very life. In his insightful presentation, Sri Roof dwelt on the perennial questions that have resonated within the human heart: “Why am I here? What is the purpose of my life? What is the reality of my existence?” The film ‘His Work’ moved even the most stoic of viewers by the sheer simplicity and poignancy of Bhagavan’s exhortation to ‘Love All, Serve All’.

A public meeting on Bhagavan’s exemplary life, teachings, and social endeavours in the fields of education, medicine and public service was held on 4th June 2005 at the prestigious Cobb Galleria in Atlanta, Georgia. The two-hour long event included talks by Dr. Samuel Sandweiss and Dr. Philip Gosselin. Dr. Gosselin, President of the USA Sathya Sai Baba Central Council, articulated the compelling need to spread Bhagavan’s message of universal love. He spoke about the amazing grace of Bhagavan in encouraging people to become better individuals following the faith of their choice. Dr. Sandweiss, member of the USA Sathya Sai Baba Central Council, spoke of his own personal metamorphosis from an enquirer into a devotee and of the tangible, external works that have been conceived and overseen by Bhagavan. His talk was followed by the screening of the film, ‘His Work’. A newspaper report portrayed the impact of the meeting thus, “... even the most stoic of listeners was moved by the sheer simplicity and simultaneous poignancy of the message of Swami – for that is the aspect that stands out most significantly about Him – the fact that He can inspire millions of people across the world to the most fundamental of all positive human actions – service to all ...”

**Mexico:** On 24th April 2005, Mexico City hosted a Sai public meeting at the Convention Centre auditorium which was attended by 3,400 guests. Before the meeting commenced, Bhagavan’s quotes superimposed over beautiful scenes of Nature were displayed on the screen, thus setting a tranquil and peaceful mood. The speakers at the meeting were Sri John Behner, Chairman, Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Latin America and Sri Leonardo Gutter, Member, Prasanthi Council. Sri Gutter gave an inspiring speech about his personal experiences with Bhagavan, His universal teachings, and humanitarian works. Sri John Behner shared his experiences on the Sai path whilst living in El Salvador, focusing in particular on the omnipresence of Bhagavan and His love. The meeting concluded with the screening of the Spanish version of the film ‘His Work’.

**– Prasanthi Council**

**Andhra Pradesh:** Inspired by the teachings of Bhagavan, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Andhra Pradesh conducted preventive and primary health medical camp and Bal Vikas activities in villages named Vengalamma Cheruvu, Kambala Parthi, Bonthalapalli, Narsingapalli Tanda, Diguvacherlopalli and Bandlapalli in the Mandals of Puttaparthi, Kothacheruvu and Bukkapatnam. A door-to-door survey was conducted in these villages and inmates were explained the necessity for keeping their house clean and tidy, to take care about their personal health by taking daily bath, wearing washed clothes, cutting nails regularly, dental care, etc. They were also advised to utilise the

opportunity of specialist treatment by expert doctors relating to eye, dental, ENT, gynaec and general sections who were to visit their villages on the appointed days. On the specified days, the team of doctors along with paramedical and Seva Dal volunteers visited the villages and performed the examination of patients, and distributed prescribed medicines advising them to adhere to the dosages. More than 5,000 people benefited from this free medical service.

Bal Vikas teachers during this camp gathered the children of the villages, conducted Bal Vikas classes, explained about health and hygiene and got the children examined by the doctors, who issued special health cards enabling follow-up action also, besides the present medical treatment. A special feature of this camp was issuing of identity cards and preparation of computerised database for each patient examined, enabling follow-up action as may be deemed necessary.

Nellore district provided help to 18 families affected by fire accident in Babu Jagjivan Ram Colony on 28th June 2005. Each family was given the required utensils, some food provisions, fruits, shirts and pants, Dhotis, Saris and blouses, etc. Students in the affected families were also given notebooks, pens, slates, etc.

Srikakulam district started Sri Sathya Sai Orphanage (Deenajanoddharana Seva) with 9 helpless children at Arasavelli on 4th June 2005. It started Sri Sathya Sai Mahila Vruddhasram also. This district dug nine wells for drinking water in June 2005, three of them in Sompeta tribal villages, one in Polla tribal village, one in Thudi village, two in the vicinity of Kotabommali, one near Srikakulam and one near Narasannapeta.

Ranga Reddy district conducted Bheema Ratha Shanti function at BHEL Mandir on 19th June 2005 in which 50 old couples above 70 years took part. About 100 Sai Youth participated in Grama Seva, and carried out desilting of choked- up drains of Kerelly village, cleaning of the overhead water supply tank and door-to-door visit for distribution of Prasadam along with Namasmara.

West Godavari district carried out 80 hours long Akhanda Bhajan at Tadepalligudem, Tanuku and Kovvur during 16th to 19th June 2005.

**Assam, Manipur and N.E. States:** Patients undergoing treatment in the B. Barooah Cancer Institute, Guwahati received much-needed boost to their spirits when the Guwahati Mahila Vibhag (ladies wing) members organised a unique meet in the Institute premises under the banner “Holistic Healthcare and Medicare” on 19th May 2005 to mark the Sakthi Swaroopini Day. A sizeable number of male and female patients afflicted with the dreaded disease listened with rapt attention to Bhagavan Baba’s soothing words on life and its problems as elaborated by eminent speakers. The wholesome effects of prayer and devotional music were stressed by the speakers. Soulful Sai Bhajans at the end heightened the spiritually charged atmosphere. Fruits, snacks and Vibhuti packets were lovingly handed over to all the inmates in the end.

A largely attended Sai meet in a remote village Rani, about 35 kms from Guwahati city, on 1st May 2005 drew enthusiastic villagers eager to chart out a new approach to life organised by Uparhali – Sarpara Anchalik Samithi. The meet was marked by speeches on various facets of Bhagavan Baba’s life and mission and its wholesome effects on the people, specially the younger generation. All through, an aura of spiritually elevated optimism bound the speakers and the audience by the thread of Sai Love. At the end, as desired by the villagers, a Bhajan Mandali was set up in the village.

**Haryana and Chandigarh:** As part of year-long programmes for celebrating 80th year of the Advent of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and with a view to create awareness in the public at large, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Haryana and Chandigarh organised Sri Sathya Sai Prem Rath Yatra from 1st April 2005. It was taken out in the form of massive rallies which coursed through the cities of Panchkula, Chandigarh, Yamuna Nagar, Ambala Cantt., Ambala City, Shahbad, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Narwana, Jind, Hissar, Sirsa, Karnal, Panipat, Sonapat, Rohtak and Rewari. Around 500 youth, Bal Vikas children and devotees walked through the streets of these cities chanting Sai Bhajans. At many places, tableaux depicting various service activities of the Sai Organisation were put up. This Yatra covered a distance of 126.5 kilometres in these cities. In all, 8250 devotees took part and about one lakh citizens witnessing Sri Sathya Sai Prem Rath Yatra were immensely benefited.

During the same period, a mobile exhibition on the “Life and Mission of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba” was organised for 2 to 4 days in all the afore-mentioned cities. The contents displayed on seventy-two panels chiefly highlighted the life of the Avatar, His mission, His teachings, and services rendered by Him to society. It also gave introduction, aims and various Seva activities undertaken by the Sai Organisation. A large majority of over 15 thousand visitors came to know about Bhagavan Baba for the first time. The impact of the exhibition was evident from the fact that many of these people started taking interest in the activities of Sai Organisation.

Supposing the Lord blesses a man with a hundred years of life; he should not get puffed up with pride and start jumping from a tree with the confidence that he will live for a century. He may live for a hundred years, but may have his legs broken in the fall. So, in accepting the blessing of God, one should also try to lead a righteous life.

- Baba

## **ASHADI EKADASI CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM**

THE festival of Ashadi Ekadasi was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 18th July 2005 with gaiety and piety. Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Maharashtra and Goa which organised the celebrations presented two programmes, one in the morning and the other in the evening.

Sai Kulwant Hall was beautifully done up for celebration of Ashadi Ekadasi. Special decorations were done on the dais. Behind the dais there was a huge cut-out of Lord Vitthala with his beloved devotee Tukaram. The central part of the Hall presented the setting of a film studio with cameras, light reflectors, big banners and other paraphernalia of a film studio. Bhagavan came to the Hall at 9.00 a.m. to shower the bliss of His Divine



Darshan on the devotees on this auspicious day. Maharashtra devotees offered Bhagavan a traditional welcome with Poornakumbham as soon as He came to the dais. Simultaneously, the singers of Maharashtra started singing a beautiful welcome song. Soon after this, Varkaris entered Sai Kulwant Hall from Gopuram gate side with Dindi palanquin. Coming to the central area of the Hall, they offered a Tulsi garland to Bhagavan marking the culmination of the Dindi procession. This was followed by a vigorous and vibrant dance along with devotional singing by Varkaris in their traditional dress. The entire Hall reverberated with devotional songs like 'Vitthal Vitthal Jai Jai Vitthal' and 'Jai Jai Ram Krishna Hari'.

After the conclusion of the Varkari dance, the main item of the programme was presented by the Bal Vikas children and Youth Wing of the Sai Organisation of Maharashtra and Goa. The programme was titled 'God – the only Friend'. It presented the story of a film actor who achieved great heights in his film career and prided upon his success; but one flop film brought the catastrophe and he was left friendless. At this time of adversity, he found that God was his only friend. After developing faith in God, he realised that God was the only doer and the success he had earlier achieved was the work of God who inspired him from within. It was a superb presentation on all accounts, be it acting of the children or realistic story or wonderful sets or melodious songs or sweet music. The play was followed by Vitthal Bhajans and Prasadam distribution. The morning programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 11.05 a.m.

In the afternoon, Bal Vikas students and Youth Wing of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Maharashtra and Goa (Nagpur Zone) presented a musical ballet titled 'Krishna Uddhava' depicting the saga of love and friendship between Krishna and His dearest friend Uddhava. In a way, it was a continuation of the theme of the morning drama 'God – the only Friend'. This extremely touching drama of supreme friendship had quite a few outstanding episodes such as the lifting of the Govardhana mountain by Krishna and melting of Uddhava's pride of Jnana by the supreme devotion of the Gopikas of Vraj. All the sets were extremely beautiful and the acting of the cast thoroughly captured the theme of the ballet. After the conclusion of this excellent play, Bhajans were first led by Maharashtra devotees and then by Institute students. The programme of Ashadi Ekadasi came to a happy conclusion with offer of Arati to Bhagavan at 6.00 p.m.

### *An Important Event in the History of Sai Magazines and Books*

## **SAI EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS CONFERENCE**

CONFERENCE OF EDITORS AND Publishers of foreign language editions of "Sanathana Sarathi", Sai magazines, Newsletters and other Sai publications was held at Prasanthi Nilayam on 19th and 20th July 2005. Organised by the Prasanthi Council on the eve of the holy festival of Guru Purnima, this was the first ever Conference of overseas Editors and Publishers in which 170 delegates from 51 countries took part. It



was significant that this important event in the history of Sai publications and magazines took place during the celebrations of 80th year of the Advent of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The following were the objectives before the Conference:

- ❖ To translate the Divine Message of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba into the languages of this day and age
- ❖ To publish and make accessible in all countries the Divine Message of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba
- ❖ To establish organisational accountability for the sacred responsibility of translation, publication, and dissemination of the Divine Message of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The proceedings of the Conference were conducted in the Conference Hall above the North Indian Canteen from 10.00 to 11.30 a.m. and from 7.30 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. on both days of the Conference, i.e., 19th and 20th July 2005. With the blessings of Bhagavan, the proceedings began on 19th July 2005 at 10.00 a.m. with chanting of Om and Gayatri Mantra. In his introductory speech, Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman, Prasanthi Council remarked that it was our sacred responsibility to disseminate the Divine Message of Bhagavan to the people of the world and to maintain the sanctity of Bhagavan's words. Utmost caution therefore needed to be observed, he felt, in translating the Discourses of Bhagavan so that the translations in foreign languages were as close to the original as possible. After his introductory speech, Dr. Goldstein introduced the speakers who were scheduled to address the delegates during the course of the Conference.

The first speaker to address the delegates was Dr. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Dr. Venkataraman observed that Sai magazines and publications should give first priority to the Discourses of Bhagavan so that the Divine Message reaches more and more people. Practical relevance of Bhagavan's teaching in the modern world and inspiring stories of Seva should also form an important part of the contents of Sai magazines and publications. He emphasised the need for special efforts to reach out to the youth of the world for spreading the teachings of Bhagavan.

Sri Anil Kumar, a faculty member of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, was the next speaker. Sai magazines and publications should cater to the needs of all, devotees and non-devotees, professionals and common men, rural and urban people, said Sri Anil Kumar. Sai magazines should therefore include articles on topics like unity of religions, Seva as Sadhana, healthcare, importance of festivals, experiences of devotees, interviews and articles of reputed persons, he suggested. The proceedings of the morning session concluded at 11.30 a.m. with chanting of the prayer, '*Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu*' by all the participants.

The proceedings of the evening session on 19th July 2005 started at 7.30 p.m. with chanting of Om and Gayatri Mantra by all the participants. Introducing the speakers who were scheduled to address the delegates in this session, Dr. Goldstein informed the participants that many Sai books centres had made great progress and provided maximum

help in spreading the Divine Message of Bhagavan through books and magazines. He then invited the delegates representing the Sathya Sai Book Centre of America, Mother Sai Publications of Italy and Sathya Sai Book Centre of Argentina to address the gathering. They came one by one and informed the delegates about their book centres and the progress made by them. They were, respectively, Sri Robert Bozzani, Sri Enrico Barbieri and Dr. Ricardo Parada.

After these presentations, Sri K.S. Rajan, Convener, Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust addressed the gathering. Sri Rajan gave very interesting facts about the past history of “Sanathana Sarathi” highlighting the devotion with which the volunteers of those days worked for spreading the message of Bhagavan and also the sacredness attached to the magazine by the devotees who were eagerly awaiting the receipt of the same from Prasanthi Nilayam. Further, he also outlined the important Do’s and Don’ts about the contents of Sai magazines. He emphasised that special care was needed regarding the selection of photographs of Bhagavan for publication in books and magazines. The last speaker of this session was Sri G.L. Anand, Editor, Sanathana Sarathi (English). Quoting from the message of Bhagavan on the inauguration of “Sanathana Sarathi” on 16th February 1958, Sri Anand stated that “Sanathana Sarathi” was not an ordinary magazine since Bhagavan Himself had categorised it as a scripture like the Vedas and the Upanishads in His inaugural message. Stating that it was the Divine Sankalpa of Bhagavan which was responsible for its phenomenal growth, Sri Anand informed the gathering that at present “Sanathana Sarathi” was being brought out in as many as 25 languages of the world every month. The first day’s proceedings came to a conclusion with prayer for the welfare of all the people of the world.

The programme on the morning of 20th July 2005 began at 10.00 a.m. with prayer. In his opening remarks, Dr. Goldstein expressed deep gratitude to Bhagavan who had shown great interest in the proceedings of this first Conference of Editors and Publishers of Sai magazines and books. Giving the details of the agenda for the day’s deliberations, Dr. Goldstein identified the subjects of discussion, viz., classification of Sai literature by content, the question of maintaining high standard of translations, the question of copyright and the question of accountability.

After the opening remarks of Dr. Goldstein, Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Member, Prasanthi Council spoke on the subject of classification of Sai literature. Outlining the broad categories in which Sai literature could be classified, Dr. Reddy emphasised the need for such a classification. He said, the classification was necessary and useful for prioritising the works to be translated. After his presentation, Dr. Reddy invited questions from the delegates. What followed was a lively interactive session in which doubts of the delegates were cleared and answers were provided to all their queries. After this, Dr. David Gries gave to the delegates important information about the websites of the Sai Organisation. Further, he showed on the screen the glossary of Sanskrit words which he had compiled for the benefit of all translators.

After the presentation of Dr. Gries, Sri Leonardo Gutter, Member, Prasanthi Council addressed the gathering and emphasised the importance of improvement of quality of contents of Sai literature. His presentation was followed by a brief talk by Sri William

Harvey, another member of Prasanthi Council, who dwelt on the great responsibility of the Sai Organisation since this was the only organisation to which the Avatar had given His name. Thereafter, Dr. Art-ong Jumsai made a brief speech stressing the need for standardisation of textbooks being used by Sai schools and institutions in various parts of the world.

The evening session on 20th July 2005 was an interactive session in which the delegates expressed their views and interacted with each other. This proved to be a very useful and lively session. In the end, Dr. Goldstein summed up the proceedings of the Conference and thanked all for their cooperation which made this Conference a grand success. The Conference came to a happy conclusion with prayer for the welfare of entire mankind.

## **Joy to All Mankind**

From this day, our Sanathana Sarathi is on the march, at the head of the spiritual cohorts – the Vedas, the Upanishads and scriptures – to subdue the evil ego brood – injustice, anarchy, falsehood and licence. May this “Charioteer” fight for world prosperity and, by making the drum of victory sound and resound, spread joy among all mankind.

Bhagavan Baba’s Message on the  
Inauguration of “Sanathana Sarathi”, Mahasivarathri  
16.2.1958

## **Chinna Katha**

### **DON’T BECOME LIKE ME**

A beggar stood before a house and begged for alms, saying loudly, “Mother, please give alms.” The master of the house shouted at him, “What’s this? You think this is a choultry? Go, go.” The beggar calmly asked, “Oh master! Who built this house?” “This is my great grandfather’s house. My grandfather, my father and our ancestors lived in it. Now it is my house,” said the householder with great pride. “Didn’t each of them call it his house, lived in it for some time and then left it? So, if this is not choultry, then what is it?” asked the beggar.

Don’t look down upon a beggar who goes from door to door and begs for alms. Actually, he is waking you up from the slumber of ignorance, saying: Since I did not give alms to anybody in my past life, I have met this fate in this life. Don’t become like me.

The world and all worldly relations are temporary. Only one thing is permanent; that is the proximity of God.

## **BACK COVER MATTER**

### **Understanding Bhakti**

It is impossible for anyone to demarcate what exactly is Bhakti (devotion) and what is not. Bhakti has infinite facets. Only pure, tender, tolerant, calm and loving souls, the very cream of Sadhus, the Hamsas (realised persons) sporting ever in the company of kindred Bhaktas, can understand its purity and depth. Others will find it as difficult to discover Bhakti in a person as discovering softness in a rock or coldness in fire or sweetness in Neem. The Bhakta holds the Lord dearer to him than life; and the Lord too is attached to him in equal measure.

- **Baba**

**SEPTEMBER 2005**

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION**

## **TRUE EDUCATION DEVELOPS HUMILITY AND DISCRIMINATION**

*In childhood, one develops absorbing interest in play and enjoys the company of one's playmates. In youth and middle age, one is engrossed in cultivating worldly relations and earning money. In old age, one repents for not having this and that; one still craves for earning money without contemplating on God even at that ripe age. In this way, man wastes his precious human birth.*

**(Telugu Poem)**

### *Embodiments of Love!*

IN THIS WORLD, THERE ARE millions of educated people. Right from a child to an old man, everyone is interested in reading books and acquiring knowledge. But what is the use of acquiring bookish knowledge? It cannot come to your rescue when you are faced with problems in life. At the most, it helps you to eke out a livelihood.

### **Serve your Parents and Society**

Right from a pauper to a millionaire, everybody wants his children to be well educated. Parents are prepared to spend any amount of money to provide education to their children even if they have to resort to borrowing. In spite of the great hardship borne by the parents in educating them, the children do not have any gratitude towards their parents. They do not introspect: Who is responsible for all my development? Who has made me what I am today? Under these circumstances, we should enquire into the real purpose of education. People think that their education would ensure for them a highly respectable position in society. But the fact is, they lack wisdom in spite of their high academic achievements. We may study a number of books and master various branches of knowledge, but all this does not provide peace and happiness to us. All the knowledge that we acquire from books can take care of only our worldly needs.

Modern parents want their children to pursue only job-oriented education. But, what is the use of that education which does not bring about transformation in children? Neither are the children themselves benefited by this education nor are they able to render any help to their parents. Acquisition of education merely inflates their ego. Humility is the hallmark of true education. If a man lacks Viveka (discrimination) and Vinaya (humility), all his education is of no value. You should understand that your education is meant for the welfare and progress of society. But, in what way is society benefited by the educated people today? Actually, they are learning many things from society and deriving so many benefits from it. However, these so-called educated people lack even that much power of discrimination which is found in uneducated people. Then why should they become egoistic? There is hardly any humility in students today. They show no respect towards their elders nor do they render any service to society. What is the use of their education if they do not respect elders and serve society? In fact, they lead an artificial life. Their walking, talking, reading, writing, everything becomes artificial. If this is the result of education, then why should one go to college at all?

### **Acquire the Knowledge of the Self**

Every student must enquire within himself: “What for am I going to college? What am I supposed to do?” Only when he conducts self-enquiry can he understand the true meaning of education. Mere bookish knowledge is not true education. It is mere transfer of information from Pustaka (book) to Mastaka (head) and from Mastaka to Pustaka without any real learning. They are wasting their time in the pursuit of bookish knowledge instead of acquiring practical knowledge. No doubt there is a lot of information in Pustaka, but what purpose does it serve if the Mastaka is filled with mud? You cannot derive any worthwhile results from such an education. The same was explained by the Chief Guest (Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah who spoke earlier) in his

address. “Though all people learn and study, what is the ultimate result out of this?” he questioned. People spend thousands of rupees for acquiring education. What is the role the educated people play in society today? Do they contribute for peace in society? Do they try to bring about transformation in people in the community? No. In fact, they are unable to inculcate discipline even in their own children. Most children pretend to be well behaved and humble in the presence of their parents, but they behave like rowdies once they step out of their houses.

Students should strive to earn a good name in society. Today’s education is limited to gathering information about the outer world. It does not prepare the students to turn inward and listen to their inner voice. One should acquire Atma Prabodha (Atmic knowledge). That is true education. Without awareness of the Self, all our knowledge is useless. Why should one acquire such knowledge? People today are interested only in exhibiting their power and position; they do not make any effort to cleanse their mind and heart. This is the result of modern education. People today have learnt to speak sweet words, but they do not translate their words into action.

### **Put your Knowledge into Practice**

*Embodiments of Love!*

Mere reading of Granthas (books) is not important. You should assimilate their Gandha (essence). That is true education. People read a number of books, but what is the use? They merely quote from them what others have said. Is this what you are supposed to learn? You should listen to the voice of your heart. True knowledge is latent in everyone. Acquire this inner knowledge and share it with others. But hardly anybody thinks on these lines today.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Put into practice at least one or two principles that you have learnt. Set an example to others by your ideal conduct. There are many learned men. But, do they practise what they have learnt? They appear to be ‘chief’ (men of eminence), but in their conduct they are ‘cheap’. *The end of education is character.* We should consider character as our very life-breath. Education without character is useless like half-cooked rice. We should first practise at least one or two principles ourselves; only then should we venture to preach to others.

Every human being is endowed with Manas (mind), Buddhi (intellect) and Atma (Self). What is the nature of the Atma? It is all-pervasive. True education is that which gives the knowledge of the Self. It originates from the heart. The reference in this context is to the spiritual heart and not the physical heart. The physical heart can become a cause of your anxiety and worry. On the other hand, spiritual heart is the source of true knowledge. Those who attain true knowledge and set ideals to society by translating their knowledge into action are truly noble souls. If you do not put your knowledge into practice, then all your education becomes useless. It is what you practise that matters, not what you speak. It gives Me immense happiness when you put your knowledge into practice.

Happiness is union with God. You are not ordinary mortals. All are essentially divine. In order to realise your divinity, practice is most important. You can experience bliss only when you put your knowledge into practice. Bliss is the very nature of man. You are giving up all that which is natural to you and leading an artificial life. Wherever you see, in colleges and schools, students lack practical knowledge. They give importance only to bookish knowledge. True knowledge is that which originates from the heart. Heart is very important for human existence. When a child is born, the first thing that people observe is the heart beat. You should rely more on your spiritual heart than on the physical heart. Conscience is another name for the spiritual heart. Keep your heart pure. That should be your main endeavour. Whatever is done with love and purity of heart will give you total bliss. In fact, bliss is latent in everyone; but man is unaware of it. You should make every effort to realise your innate bliss. True bliss is eternal, non-dual and beyond the pair of opposites. It transcends duality. Where there is duality, there cannot be bliss. First of all, one should understand the principle of unity. Unity leads to purity and purity leads to divinity. A true human being is one who strives for unity, purity, divinity. Otherwise, he is no better than birds and beasts. First and foremost, develop unity. Consider all as your brothers and sisters and live in harmony with all. In public meetings, we hear many speakers addressing the people as brothers and sisters. But, do they really mean what they say? Do you find unity among brothers and sisters today? No. True happiness lies in unity. Human life can be compared to a tree. Our relations are like branches and sub-branches. Contemplation of God is like the flower from which you will get the fruit of bliss. What is the use of life without bliss?

*Students! Embodiments of Love!*

You can certainly acquire secular knowledge. But you should not rest content with that. You should turn inward and acquire spiritual knowledge as well. Only then can you attain peace.

Love is the most important part of education. Bereft of love, education is artificial. Therefore, develop love in the first instance. Understand that the indweller is the same though bodies are different. You can experience Ananda (bliss) when you understand this fundamental principle. So many of you have assembled here in this Hall. Everyone's attention is focused on Swami. This is the contemplation of God. Let your mind be focused on God always.

When all the tanks and lakes become dry due to lack of water, you can imagine your joy when there is a continuous downpour. You can well imagine the joy of a person who is offered delicious food after he has been starving for ten days. Serve those who are in desperate need of your help. Give them happiness. You can attain divinity only through service. Human life is most precious. But man is behaving like animals and thus wasting his life.

*Students!*

You are students pursuing the objective of acquiring Vidya (education). You should endeavour to acquire true Vidya. There is no point in merely reading books without understanding the true meaning of Vidya. First and foremost, understand the fundamental principle of life. Beings are many, but the divine principle in them is one and the same.

Hence, recognise the principle of divinity that is present in all in the form of the Atma. The Atma is the Adhara (support) and the body is the Adheya (that which is supported). Recognise the Atma as the fundamental basis of your life and everything else will be taken care of. Everyone can have the vision of the Atma. All are endowed with such power. Enquire within yourself what you have achieved by reading a number of voluminous books. You have become hard-hearted. If this is the result of your education, why should you study at all? First of all, develop love. When you have love in you, everyone will become your friend. If your heart is not suffused with love, your life will become artificial. Life is meaningless without love. Love your neighbour. If everyone shares his love with his neighbour, there will be no room for hatred at all. Share your love with everyone and live like brothers and sisters. Today we find conflicts and differences even among brothers and sisters because they lack proper understanding. If people have love, they can understand each other better.

### **Where there is Unity, there is Bliss**

People do not understand the true meaning of love. Their love is tainted with physical and worldly feelings. When you understand the principle of love and develop love-to-love relationship, all will become one. The Vedas say, "*Sahasra Seersha Purusha Sahasraksha Sahasra Paad ...*" It means that all heads, all eyes, all feet are His. Once you understand the principle of oneness that is present in all, you can live with the true spirit of brotherhood.

Our hand has five fingers and each of them has a specific duty assigned to it. All the fingers work in unison and harmony while performing a task. Once there was a quarrel among the five fingers of the hand as to which of them was the greatest among all. The thumb claimed, "It is not possible to undertake any work without me. Hence, I am the greatest." Then the index finger smiled and said, "Look here, oh thumb! How can you perform any task without my support? Moreover, I am used as a pointer to identify individuals. Hence, I am greater than you." The middle finger intervened and said, "There is no point in what you say. I am the tallest among all of you. Two of you on one side and two on the other are serving me as my ADCs. Hence, I am the greatest." Then the ring finger said, "I feel like laughing at your ignorance. Don't you know that people adorn me with gold rings studded with precious stones like diamond, emerald, topaz, etc.? Hence, I am your king." In the end, the little finger said, "I always lead from the front when it comes to teaching a lesson to someone. Hence, I am your leader and you have to follow me." As the fingers were arguing among themselves in this manner, the heart intervened and said, "Oh ignorant ones! Each one of you is as important as the other. You cannot perform any task if there is no unity and harmony among you. In fact, you represent the five human values which are like five life-breaths of man." Hearing these words of wisdom, the five fingers realised their mistake and bent their heads in shame. A deep enquiry reveals that the heart is most important. Hence, one should follow the advice of the heart in all one's endeavours. Understand that all are one and each one is equally important. Do not become egoistic, thinking that you alone are very important. Do not waste your precious time in vain argumentation. Be friendly with all and face the challenges of life with unity and harmony.



*Students!*

You have to lead your lives in an ideal manner. In fact, all ideals are latent in you. They cannot be learnt from books. The principle of 'I' is common in all. If someone asks, "Who is Sai Baba?" I respond saying, 'I'. If someone asks who is the Vice Chancellor? He will say, 'I'. The letter 'I' represents the principle of the Atma. The Vedas declare, *Ekameva Adviteeyam Brahma* (God is one without a second). True spirituality lies in knowing the Self. But you are unable to know the Self as you identify yourself with the body. Identification with the body gives rise to ego. One with ego cannot know the reality. Your welfare and also of others will be ensured when you have a firm conviction that all are one. Develop the spirit of unity. You cannot expect divinity to manifest in you unless you cultivate unity. The Vedas teach the lesson of unity:

*Let us all move together, let us all grow together,*

*Let us all stay united and share our knowledge,*

*Let us live together with friendship and harmony.* (Telugu Song)

Some students do not share even their books with others. How can they attain happiness if they are so self-centred and narrow-minded? You should all stand united. Where there is unity, there is bliss.

*Embodiments of Love!*

There is only one thing that you have to learn. Develop love. The same principle of love is present in you, in Me and in everyone. I see only love in others. Hence, all are one for Me. You too should develop such feelings of love and equality. *All are one, be alike to everyone.* This is what you have to learn today.

Along with the acquisition of secular knowledge, you should also make efforts to understand the principle of oneness. Only then can you achieve unity and harmony. Take, for instance, this rose flower. It consists of a number of petals. Our heart can be compared to a rose flower. The petals of a rose flower may fade and fall by the next day, but the flower of heart remains ever fresh with its petals of virtues. It symbolises the principle of oneness. People worship the Navagrahas (nine planets). You might have observed that there is perfect unity and harmony among the nine planets. (Bhagavan with a wave of His hand materialised a gold ring studded with nine types of gems.) Here you see a Navaratna ring. Whoever wears this ring will be protected by the Navagrahas wherever he goes; he will be successful in all his endeavours. (Bhagavan put the ring on the finger of Justice Venkatachaliah, the Chief Guest of the International Conference on Education amidst a loud applause of devotees.)

Develop unity. Be courageous and develop the necessary strength to face the vicissitudes of life. I don't want to take much of your time. Whatever you have learnt here, let it be imprinted on your heart. Only then can you attain peace and your education will become meaningful.

*Embodiments of Love!*

I shower My love and blessings on all of you (*loud prolonged applause*). Be always united and spend your time in bliss. Make your parents happy. Your body is given to you

by your parents. Hence, first of all, express your gratitude to them for this gift. Only then can you find fulfilment in life.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho ...*" )

- **From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 17th August 2005 on the occasion of the International Conference on Education for the 21st Century: Education to Educare.**

## **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: EDUCATION TO EDUCARE**

AN INTERNATIONAL Conference was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on 17th and 18th August 2005 at Prasanthi Nilayam as part of 80th Birthday celebrations of its Revered Chancellor, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The theme of the Conference was "Education for the 21st Century: Education to Educare".

The participants in the Conference included Vice Chancellors of Indian universities, Directors of Institutes of Education in India and overseas countries, eminent administrators and educationists. The Chief Guest of the Conference was Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah, former Chief Justice of India. Both the Inaugural as well as Valedictory Sessions of the Conference were held in Sai Kulwant Hall, which was aesthetically decorated for this important occasion. The Revered Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba graced the occasion by His Divine Presence both in the Inaugural and Valedictory Sessions, and also gave an illuminating Discourse in the Inaugural Session, providing valuable insights and giving new direction to our present system of education.

### **Inaugural Session**

The proceedings of the Inaugural Session commenced on the morning of 17th August 2005 soon after the arrival of Bhagavan in the Hall at 8.00 a.m. Extending a hearty welcome to all the participants and specially to the Chief Guest, Justice Venkatachaliah, the Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak observed that education system of a country should play a pro-active role for society's development and nation's growth. Commenting on the present system of education, Sri Gokak said that change in this system was the need of the hour and insight for this change had been provided by Bhagavan by propounding the concept of educare which helped a student to realise his inner divine potential. Sri Gokak then introduced the Chief Guest and other speakers.

The Chief Guest, Justice Venkatachaliah then addressed the august gathering. Referring to the horrors of armed conflicts in the 20th century in which millions of people lost their lives, majority of them being civilians, Justice Venkatachaliah cautioned against the dehumanising effects of science and technology in spite of their immense benefits to mankind. The learned speaker observed that there were at present 400 million

children below the age of 14 years in India, and the future of the nation depended on their proper education on the lines shown by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

After this, Bhagavan gave His Divine Discourse (full text given elsewhere) explaining the objectives of education and providing useful guidelines for the conduct of the proceedings of the Conference. After the conclusion of His Discourse, Bhagavan distributed mementoes to the participants. In the end, Prasadam was distributed to all amidst chanting of Vedic hymns by the Institute students. The Inaugural Session of the Conference came to a close at 10.20 a.m. with offer of Mangalarati to Bhagavan.

### **Proceedings of the Conference**

After the Inaugural Session, the venue of the Conference shifted to the Administrative Building of the Institute where the proceedings of the Conference were conducted. The first session of the Conference commenced with the Keynote Address of the Chief Guest, Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah. The theme of the second session chaired by Sri M.K. Kaw, former Education Secretary, Government of India was “Education for the 21st Century”. The presentations in this session included “System of Education for 21st Century in the Context of Scientific and Technological Change” by Dr. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor of the Institute, “System of Education for the 21st Century – Role of Computer and Technological Aids in Teaching / Learning” by Prof. J. Shashidhara Prasad, Vice Chancellor, University of Mysore, “System of Education and the Management of Change” by Dr. Yoginder Verma, Director, UGC Academic Staff College, Shimla and Prof. S. Chakravarty, Director, Jaipuria Institute of Management, Lucknow. The theme of the third session was “Inculcation of Human Values – The Sai Experience”. It was chaired by Sri Venu Srinivasan, Chairman and Managing Director, TVS Motor Company. The presentations in this session included “Sai Students in the Corporate World” by Sri Samir Bhatia and a video show on Grama Seva. Institute students also made their presentations in this session.

Many important presentations of far reaching importance were discussed by the participants in fourth and fifth sessions held on the morning of 18th August 2005 in the Administrative Building of the Institute. The theme of fourth session chaired by Prof. J.S. Rajput, former Director, NCERT, New Delhi was “End of Education is Character”. The presentations in this session included “Education and Character Building: The African Experience” by Sri Victor Krishna Kanu, Zambia, “Experience in Institute of Sathya Sai Education in Thailand and other Countries” by Dr. Art-ong Jumsai, Thailand and “The Constitution of India and the Education System in Relation to Character Building” by Prof. V. R. Mehta, former Vice Chancellor, Delhi University. The theme of the fifth session was “Experience Sharing”, and it was chaired by Prof. V.S. Prasad, Director, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). The presentations that were made in this session included “Education and Character Building” by Prof. G.S. Randhawa, former Vice Chancellor, Guru Nanak Dev University, Chandigarh, “Value of Education vis-à-vis Value Education” by Swami Atmapriyananda, Vice Chancellor, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute, Belur Math, Kolkata, “Health Practices: Their Role in University Work Ethics and Inculcation of Human Values” by Prof. S.P. Thyagarajan, Vice Chancellor, University of Madras, and

“Experience of Inculcation of Human Values among Women” by Prof. P. Geervani, former Vice Chancellor, Sri Padmavathi Mahila Viswavidyalayam, Tirupathi. The proceedings concluded with Valedictory Address by Smt. Kumud Bansal, Secretary, Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, Government of India.

### **Valedictory Session**

The Valedictory Session of the Conference was held on the afternoon of 18th August 2005 in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of the Revered Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The session began after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan who came to the Hall at 3.25 p.m. After the introductory remarks of Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak, Vice Chancellor of the Institute, Sri Sanjay Sahni, Principal, Brindavan Campus of the Institute introduced the speakers who were blessed by Bhagavan to address the Conference.

The first speaker was Sri Sanjay Mahalingam, a research scholar of the Institute. Quoting from an open letter addressed to the teachers of the world by a survivor of a concentration camp of Nazi Germany who witnessed inhuman acts of torture inflicted by so-called educated doctors, nurses and engineers, Sri Mahalingam remarked that there was an appalling lack of vision in the present system of education. He emphasised that education should not only develop the intellectual acumen of the students, it should primarily make them more humane. Quoting from the vision document given by the Revered Chancellor of the Institute for the university education, Sri Mahalingam observed that Bhagavan had set a lofty goal for education which was to inculcate in students the virtues of self-awareness, self-confidence and self-sacrifice so that they could attain the goal of self-realisation.

After this, Sri Jagdish Chandra, a student of M.Phil programme at the Institute, addressed the gathering. The speaker narrated several anecdotes to highlight how Bhagavan inculcated human values in students in His simple and inimitable style by demonstrating to them His own example of self-sacrifice and selflessness. It was a rare opportunity for man to redeem his life by following the teachings of the Avatar who had incarnated on earth to grant the priceless gift of the vision of the Self to the entire mankind, said Sri Jagdish Chandra.

After these two powerful speeches of the students, Sri S.V. Giri, former Vice Chancellor of the Institute gave a brief but insightful talk. Sri Giri spoke about the uniqueness of the system of education of Bhagavan which not only integrated values with academic studies but oriented the students towards social welfare also. The learned speaker added that remarkable achievements of Bhagavan’s system of education had to be replicated to benefit the entire world. In this regard, he referred to the Institute of Sathya Sai Education in Thailand and the Sathya Sai School in Zambia, the success stories of which proved beyond doubt that this indeed was possible.

Smt. Kumud Bansal, Secretary, Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, Government of India spoke next. She said that Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning provided a learning experience to educationists how to cope with the serious problem of indiscipline in educational institutions. Expressing her happiness at the conduct of the students of Bhagavan’s institutions, Smt. Bansal opined that she had no doubt in her mind

that the students here were being moulded by Bhagavan as the future leaders of the country. In conclusion, the learned speaker prayed to Bhagavan for His continued guidance and blessings.

The concluding remarks of Sri Gokak, the Institute's Vice Chancellor, brought the curtain down on a truly enlightening Conference which not only discussed the problems of modern education threadbare but also provided guidelines for reforming the present education system in the light of the rich experiences gained by the participants while studying the education system devised by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in His educational institutions. After the conclusion of the proceedings of the Valedictory Session of the Conference, there were Bhajans led by the Institute students for about half an hour, which were followed by all in the Hall with great devotional fervour. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.45 p.m.

#### **A Drama by the Institute Students on Unity of Faiths**

A drama was presented by the senior students of the Institute on the theme of unity of faiths on the afternoon of 17th August 2005. The drama brought out in a lucid manner the underlying unity and common teachings of the major religions of the world and portrayed how each religion of the world was designed by God for the redemption of man according to specific time and circumstances. Loftiness of the theme was highlighted through the powerful acting of the students to create a positive impact on the audience who expressed their appreciation of the drama by their loud applause time and again during the course of the presentation. In conclusion, the drama depicted that this unity was not a mere imaginary idea; it was a profound reality as could be witnessed at Prasanthi Nilayam. Bhagavan sat through the entire performance and blessed the students at the end of the drama. He also gave them the opportunity of group photo with Him. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.10 p.m. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end.

### **DASARA DISCOURSES - III**

## **BRAHMAN IS THE ONLY CHANGELESS ETERNAL PRINCIPLE**

*Peace has become extinct,  
Truth has become scarce,  
Mind is the cause for both,  
Listen, oh valiant sons of Bharat!*

**(Telugu Poem)**

*Embodiments of Love!*

THE WORD BHARATIYA DOES not merely connote a person born in the land of Bharat. One who considers the culture and land of Bharat as his parents is a true Bharatiya.

### **Atmic Principle is the Fundamental Principle**

Many noble souls took birth in Bharat, followed its great culture and set examples to others. Adi Sankaracharya was one such great luminary who spread the culture of Bharat throughout the length and breadth of the country and earned eternal fame. He taught the philosophy of Advaita (non-dualism). Advaita philosophy of Adi Sankaracharya advocates the oneness of Jiva (individual soul) and Brahman (cosmic soul). Three centuries after him came Ramanujacharya who advocated the Visishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism) system of philosophy which emphasised Bhakti(devotion)andPrapatti (surrender) to God. Two centuries after Ramanujacharya, Madhwacharya propagated the Dvaita (dualism) system of philosophy and showed the devotional path to the people who were vacillating between one system of philosophy and the other. Madhwacharya explained that there were, in fact, three concepts, namely, Dehatma Bhava (body consciousness), Jivatma Bhava (individual consciousness) and Paramatma Bhava (cosmic consciousness).

Nobody should extol a particular school of thought to deride others. The question of adhering to a particular school of philosophy depends upon the mental framework of an individual. The fundamental principle underlying all the three schools of philosophy is one and the same, that is, Atma Tattwa (Atmic principle). One has to recognise this truth.

*Jewels are many but gold is one.*

*Cows are many but milk is one.*

*Beings are many but breath is one.*

*Castes are many but humanity is one.*

(Telugu Poem)

Not realising the fundamental unity underlying the three schools of philosophy, people adhering to the different schools of philosophy derided one another which gave scope for a number of misconceptions in the world about Bharat. In order to explain the truth *Ekatma Sarva Bhutantaratma* (one Atma dwells in all beings), Adi Sankara gave the example of ornaments. He explained that the metal with which various ornaments were made was gold, thus emphasising the fundamental principle of unity. The same principle was explained in a different way by Ramanujacharya who observed that though gold formed the basis for the ornament, it should be termed as gold chain since it had assumed the form of a chain. Adi Sankara, while advocating the Advaita philosophy, quoted the Vedic dictum *Ekameva Adviteeyam Brahma* (God is one without a second). Ramanujacharya, however, said that there could be no Pratibimba (image) without a Bimba (object). He thus explained the oneness of the object and the image, which he termed as Visishtadvaita. Another example given in this context was that of sugarcane juice. Juice is extracted from different varieties of sugarcane and a number of sweetmeats are made out of it. Though the juice is one, it assumes different forms. While Adi Sankara emphasised the oneness of the juice and the sugarcane, Ramanujacharya dwelt upon the different forms the juice assumed. Thus, ever since the times of the three great

Acharyas (preceptors) till today, there are a number of arguments and counter arguments between the three schools of philosophy. Sugar made out of the sugarcane juice is the main ingredient for making various sweets. Though there are different varieties of sweets, sweetness is common in all of them. Similarly, Brahman is the source and sustenance for the entire universe. Wherever you see, you will find the manifestation of Brahman in ever so many forms. The forms are subject to change, and are illusory in nature. Brahman alone is the eternal, changeless principle.

### **Recognise the oneness of the Source of the Universe**

The Upanishads declare that the entire universe is permeated by the same Atmic principle. This truth is contained in the Upanishadic dicta: *Ekatma Sarva Bhutantaratma* (one Atma dwells in all beings), *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings) and *Isavasyam Idam Sarvam* (the entire universe is permeated by God). Everything is Brahman. Since every object in this universe is the manifestation of Brahman, nothing can be disregarded or ignored. This principle of Brahman is “divine”. It is the “deep wine” of ignorance which deludes cynical and perverted people. Disregarding such perversions, we have to realise that the fundamental principle of divinity is one only. This oneness in the culture of Bharat has been propagated since ancient times. In keeping with this great tradition, consider everyone, whether an ant or an animal or a human being, as verily Brahman. Some people may have a doubt in this context whether an animal can be equated with a human being. The behavioural pattern of animals is different from that of human beings. Considering this aspect, one may conclude that they are different. But the underlying Jiva Tattwa (principle of the Self) is one and the same in both. On the basis of this Jiva Tattwa, you cannot differentiate at all between living beings. That is what the Vedas declare: *Sarvam Brahmanam Jagat* (the entire universe is permeated by Brahman). We can understand this truth by a simple example. This is a white cloth and this is an ochre robe. Though the colours are different, the cloth is one. It may be of different colours and put to different uses, but the cloth is one and the same. This illustrates the fundamental principle of unity. The cloth is the source. One has to recognise the oneness of the source. Once you recognise the source, all differences vanish in no time. Unfortunately, today we are giving importance to the names and forms, forgetting the basis and source for all names and forms. As a result, we are facing innumerable difficulties and sorrows.

Adi Sankara explained the difficulties and sorrows of man in this objective world and emphasised the need to seek refuge in the Divine Name 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.)

*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 has to analyse, in this context, as to what it is that is subject to birth and death again and again. The Deha (body) undergoes this cycle of birth and death, but the Atma is eternal. As long as the Atma remains in the body as the indweller, there will be consciousness in the body. The moment the Atma leaves the body, it becomes Jada (inert). This phenomenon is called death. Unable to realise this truth, man subjects himself to sorrow. Birth and death are only for the outer form, not for the Atma. Here is a short story in this context. Once there was a son of a Vedantic philosopher. He was learning the Vedas. By the time he completed his Vedic learning, his mother completed forty years of life. She left her mortal body in her 40th year. The son was deeply immersed in sorrow. Then, his Guru called him and tried to counsel him explaining, "Whom do you consider as your mother? Do you consider the body as your mother? No, this is not your mother. You are wailing over a dead body which your mother has left. In fact, the body is right before you. Why should you weep? The Chaitanya Shakti (power of consciousness) has left the body. The Chaitanya Shakti is your father and mother, not the forms. So, do not have attachment to those forms."

No doubt, relationship does exist with the physical form for some time; but some time or the other, the body ceases to exist. When you realise this truth, you will understand the futility of the relationship with the physical body. The objects may be different, but the source and sustenance for the objects is only one. The same source assumes different names and forms. One should not go by the names and forms, which are subject to change. This simple truth based on the Mooladhara Tattwa (fundamental principle) has been explained by different people in different ways as high-sounding philosophy. This has given scope to some misconceptions. In fact, the underlying principle behind the Advaita philosophy of Adi Sankara and Visishtadvaita philosophy of Ramanujacharya is one and the same.

### **Develop the Awareness "I am I"**

*Embodiments of Love! Students!*

The profundity and depth of Vedanta is limitless and immeasurable. But this philosophy is being neglected today. We should therefore try to understand this philosophy and know its inner meaning. After deep study of Vedantic scriptures, Adi Sankara explained the Vedantic truth in simple and beautiful poetry for the benefit of mankind. He wrote a scholarly Bhashya (commentary) on the Bhagavadgita also. In his commentary on the Gita, he explained that there was Advaita in Dvaita and Dvaita in Advaita. Giving the essence of Vedanta, Adi Sankaracharya declared: *Brahma Sathyam Jagan-mithya* (Brahman alone is real, the world is unreal). The world appears to have innumerable names and forms. One should not get enmeshed in these names and forms. It



is only when we transcend the names and forms and know the underlying source that it is possible for us to recognise the truth. And that truth is *Tattwamasi* (That Thou Art). That is *Prajnanam Brahma* (constant integrated awareness is Brahman). That awareness is *Ayam Atma Brahma* (this Self is Brahman). When you analyse the Mahavakya (profound statement) *Tattwamasi*, it will lead you to the awareness “I am That” and “That I am”. When you are able to realise this truth, you will find that the principle of “I” underlies everything in the universe as the principle of unity. We have to recognise that “I” principle which is universal. It is a futile exercise to get into arguments and counter arguments over this matter and waste one’s time. The only aspect you have to realise is “I am Brahman”. When somebody questions who you are, do not reply by mentioning your name. The proper answer would be “I am I”. This “I” represents and explains everything. The name represents the name given to the body. You are not the body. Hence, say “I am I”. Similarly, when you enquire from somebody who he is, his reply should be “I am I”. Thus, all are “I am I.” Everyone should strive to attain that state of unity. It is only when you think “I am not I” that there will be many questions. Unfortunately, modern students have little faith in these profound Vedantic truths. So, they pay scant attention to them. There may be arguments for and against certain Vedic concepts. Do not enter into arguments. Always have the awareness “I am I”. This “I” principle is beyond names and forms. It represents Brahma Tattwa (Divine principle), which is one without a second.

*Dear Students!*

You have to finally make a firm resolve to realise “I am I.” You should not identify yourself with the body and say, “I am a child”, “I am a young man”, “I am an old man”, etc. These differences relate to the age factor. What is the next stage after old age? Nobody knows. But “I” principle exists in the child, youth and old man. This is the fundamental and changeless principle. Therefore, when somebody enquires who you are, your reply should be, “I am I.” If he is unable to understand this principle, do not bother; you hold on to your principle. It is only when you develop such firm conviction that you will be able to understand your true identity.

On 20th October 1940, I made a declaration revealing My true identity for the first time:

*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)

Since I made this declaration on the 20th of October, people celebrate this day in a big way. We should not give too much importance to dates and try to celebrate them as Birthday, Avatar Declaration Day, etc. Here is a small story. Once Rukmini, the consort of Lord Krishna, invited Him to her palace saying, “Swami! Today is my birthday. Please come for dinner.” Sathyabhama, another consort of Krishna who was present on that occasion, became angry. She argued with Rukmini, “If today is your Puttina Roju (birthday), this is also my Mettina Roju (the day on which I entered the in-laws’ house).

Therefore, He should visit only my house on this day.” Lord Krishna was beyond birthdays and marriage days. However, He was prepared to visit both the houses. He did not differentiate between them. Thus, one has to recognise the principle of unity by transcending all dualities.

(Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan, “*Bhaja Govindam Bhaja Govindam, Govindam Bhaja Moodha Mathe...*”)

- **From Bhagavan’s Dasara Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 20th October 2004.**

Matchsticks that have fallen into water cannot yield fire when struck, however vigorously you try. So, too, hearts soaked in worldly desires and designs may pour out parrot-exhortations but they can have at best only listeners, not practitioners who may receive the advice but would not accept it or act accordingly.

– Baba

## **RECONNECT: SBMAF ALUMNI MEET**

AN ALUMNI MEET OF THE School of Business Management and Finance (SBMAF) of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning was held at Prasanthi Nilayam. Spread over two days, i.e., 20th and 21st August 2005, this was one of those grand programmes which are being organised by the Institute as part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan. Appropriately titled “Reconnect”, the programme provided an opportunity to the alumni to reaffirm and reinforce their commitment to ethics, morality and values in their professional and personal life which they had imbibed as students of the Institute. Significantly, on 21st August 2005 fell the 20th Anniversary of SBMAF.

Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue of celebrations, was beautifully decorated with fresh flowers on this occasion. The programme on 20th August commenced at 3.45 p.m. after Bhagavan’s Divine Darshan amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras by the Institute students. After the introductory speeches of the Vice Chancellor, Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak and two alumni of the Institute, Sri N. Sudhindran and Sri Sanjay Mahalingam, Bhagavan distributed 80 carpentry, electrical and plumbing tool kits along with clothes and gifts to selected 80 needy youth to provide them the means of employment. The youth came to the dais and offered their salutations to Bhagavan before receiving the kits, clothes and gifts. Bhagavan also blessed the souvenir entitled “Fragrance” brought out by the alumni of the SBMAF on this occasion.

### **Panel Discussion**

This was followed by a brilliant panel discussion organised by the alumni of the SBMAF on the theme: “Man Management – The Key to Managerial Success”. The panelists who participated in this programme were: Sri T.N. Giridhar, Director, SSG Capital Ltd., London, Sri Sai Narain, Vice President and Country Marketing Director, Citi Bank, Taipei, Taiwan, Sri A. Raghavendra, Head –

Supply Chain Management (South), Corporate Banking, HDFC Bank, Chennai, Sri Karthik Shenoi, CEO, ICAM Solutions Private Limited, Bangalore, Sri Vijaya Krishnan, Proprietor - Managing Partner, Kavi Infotech, Trichy and Sri Aneesh Mohan, Consultant, Polaris, Chennai. The moderator of the panel discussion was Sri V. Krishnamoorthy, Channel Manager, Sify India – Satyam Group, Chennai. In his opening remarks, Sri Krishnamoorthy said that the alumni of the Institute had secured such high positions as Directors, Vice Presidents and Presidents of the reputed companies in the world since they received value-oriented management education under the direction of their Divine Chancellor, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who envisioned the product of this Institute not only as best managers but also as best men in the world.

The panelists were happy to affirm that lessons of morality, ethics, discipline and spirituality learnt by them during their stay in the Institute proved to be the milestones of their personal as well as their company's advancement, contrary to the false belief in some corporate circles that spirituality and money making could not go hand in hand. Describing their personal experiences of Bhagavan's divine support at crucial moments of their corporate life, some of the panelists described how they were miraculously saved in many critical and stressful situations. One of them aptly observed that for Sai students, STRESS stood for 'Sai to the Rescue in Every Sticky Situation.' Narrating their stories of success as team leaders, the panelists described how the Integral System of Education of the Institute, particularly their participation in games and sports and social welfare activities like Grama Seva cultivated in them positive social attitude which contributed towards their success as team leaders. They emphasised that in corporate life as in any other walk of life, attitude determined the altitude. Describing how the alumni of the Institute were slowly bringing about a change in the attitudes in the corporate world, they narrated how their strict adherence to values and ethics had a sobering effect on others working in their company as also on the managers of other companies with whom they interacted.

They recalled to memory many blissful episodes of the teachings of Bhagavan who had taught them to first manage themselves before managing others. Value-orientation received by them in the Institute had definitely helped them to become better and successful managers, they asserted. In the end, all of them expressed their deep gratitude to Bhagavan whose invaluable teachings had helped them in their personal as well as professional life. This very lively and illuminating panel discussion came to a close at 5.00 p.m. Bhagavan sat through the entire programme of over one hour and blessed the panelists at the end of the programme. Special blessings were however in store for the panelists when Bhagavan later called them to the Bhajan Hall and spoke to them. The evening programme came to a close with soulful Bhajans sung by the alumni Bhajan singers. It was a treat for the ears and feast for the soul.

### **Talks by the Alumni**

The next part of the programme of the Alumni Meet was held on the morning of 21st August 2005. It commenced at 8.05 a.m. after the morning Darshan of

Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall. It included talks by two of the alumni and a music programme entitled “Yadein”.

Introducing the two speakers who were blessed by Bhagavan to share their views with the audience, Sri Subash Subramanian, a research scholar of the Institute referred to Bhagavan’s declaration at the inauguration of SBMAF and remarked that Bhagavan wanted to bring about a total transformation in the outlook of the managers. This, he said, had now become a reality as exemplified by over 700 alumni from 19 batches of the SBMAF, nearly 500 of whom were present here to testify this fact. Expressing gratitude to Bhagavan for His guidance and inspiration to the alumni, Sri Subramanian observed that they could not get a better management Guru than Bhagavan.

After the opening remarks of Sri Subramanian, Sri Amar Vivek, an alumni of the first batch of SBMAF, now a practicing lawyer in the High Court of Punjab and Haryana and also in the Supreme Court of India addressed the gathering. Narrating how Bhagavan had personally guided him to set up rural service projects, Sri Vivek recalled to memory Bhagavan’s words: “If you love Me, love My work” and “If you have My name and My hand, you will have no problem.” Exhorting his fellow travellers to follow the path of spirituality and goodness shown by Bhagavan, Sri Vivek said that all the values were contained in this one advice of Bhagavan: Do Good, Be Good, See Good. The second speaker was Sri Ashok Sundaresan, a Chartered Accountant from Tamil Nadu. Sri Sundaresan said that the students of Bhagavan had the rare privilege of His Divine proximity, and therefore they had a great responsibility also to further His Divine Mission of transforming mankind. “To pay gratitude to our Divine Master, it was our responsibility to align our life and all our actions to Him and seek only His recognition”, counselled Sri Sundaresan.

#### **“Yadein”: Nostalgic Memories**

All through their two-day stay at Prasanthi Nilayam, the alumni were nostalgic about their sweet memories of the days passed in the Divine proximity of Bhagavan as students of the Institute. But its culmination came in the programme entitled “Yadein” (memories) which they presented soon after the talks of the two of the alumni on the morning of 21st August 2005. They poured out their heart in the group songs interspersed with the narration of past incidents recalling to memory the unlimited love and care they received from their Alma Mater during their stay in Bhagavan’s Divine proximity as His students. They virtually relived their past days in these songs and incidents. Sung with purity of heart and full of sweet feelings, the songs overwhelmed not only the listeners but Bhagavan as well, who sat through the entire programme and blessed all of them at the end of the programme. This excellently compered and flawlessly presented programme filled each heart with feelings of love, gratitude and sweetness. It concluded with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.45 a.m.

There was virtually a downpour of Bhagavan’s love and grace on the alumni on the morning of 22nd August 2005. First, Bhagavan called the seven members of

the panel discussion for a personal interview. Thereafter, Bhagavan went into the Bhajan Hall and spent nearly one hour with the alumni seated there, showering His bountiful grace on them. Thus, all of them went back to their respective places fully drenched in the Divine Love of Bhagavan.

#### **Karishye Vachanam Tava: A Drama**

A drama entitled “Karishya Vachanam Tava” (I shall carry out Your command) depicting some very critical situations and ethical dilemmas faced by the managers of today’s corporate world was presented by the management students of the Institute on the afternoon of 21st August 2005. It started soon after Bhagavan’s Divine Darshan in Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.00 p.m. Portraying the difficulties and disappointments faced by two students of a Sai institution when they joined a pharmaceutical company, it excellently showed the grit and determination of the Sai students to carry out the command of their Divine Master for bringing about transformation in the outlook of the managers and clearing the mess of unethical practices which had overtaken their company. Down to earth realistic story, powerful acting of the students and excellent direction made the drama a superb comment on the present corporate world. At the end of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the students and posed for group photos with them. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end. The programme came to a conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.00 p.m.

### **CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM**

#### **Cultural and Music Programmes by U.K. Devotees**

A group of 400 devotees from the U.K. came on a pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam from 26th July 2005 to 4th August 2005. During this period, they were given the coveted opportunity of presenting two music and cultural programmes in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan.

The first programme entitled ‘Sai Prem Ganga’ comprising Vedic chants, instrumental music and a Bhajan medley was presented on the afternoon of 2nd August 2005 by a group of these devotees. At the outset, Sri Ajit Popat of the U.K. made a brief speech giving details of the pilgrimage and their programme. Sri Popat observed that every moment spent in the proximity of Bhagavan was a golden moment. It was the grace of Bhagavan which protected and sustained man, he said. Music programme followed after this and began with prayer to Lord Ganesh, the remover of obstacles. A group of nine boys and girls then recited Vedic Mantras. It was sheer delight to hear sacred Vedic chants from the children of an overseas country in appropriate rhythm and intonation. This was followed by solo devotional songs and instrumental music medley by a visually challenged lady devotee, Ms. Charlotte. The programme of group Bhajans started after this and continued up to 5.30 p.m. At the conclusion of Bhajans, Arati was offered to Bhagavan.

The U.K. devotees presented their second programme on the afternoon of 3rd August 2005. The programme began at 4.15 p.m. with recitation of verses from the Vedas and

the Quran. A group of singers dressed in Qawali costume then made a presentation of Qawalis in praise of Bhagavan. This was followed by Bhajans by the Institute students. The programme came to a close at 5.15 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

### **Devotional Music by USA Devotees**

An excellent programme of devotional music was presented by Sathya Sai Spiritual Education children from Norwalk Sai Centre, Connecticut (USA) in Sai Kulwant Hall on the afternoon of 1st August 2005. The programme which began at 4.00 p.m. in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan enthralled the audience for nearly 45 minutes with its melodious and soulful English songs. Bhagavan sat through the entire presentation and blessed the children and organisers at the end of the programme. Bhagavan materialised a gold chain with a pendant for the lady director of the music programme. He also materialised a gold ring with 13 diamonds for a male organiser. Interestingly, the children sang 13 devotional songs.

Soon after this excellent musical presentation, Institute students presented a musical medley of devotional songs in praise of their Beloved Bhagavan. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.30 p.m.

### **Celebration of Varalakshmi Vrata at Prasanthi Nilayam**

In a grand function held in Sai Kulwant Hall, Varalakshmi Vrata (worship of goddess Varalakshmi, the bestower of prosperity and auspiciousness) was performed on the morning of 12th August 2005, in which more than 900 ladies took part. Sai Kulwant Hall presented a festive look with various decorations on this occasion. Huge pictures of goddess Varalakshmi and Bhagavan adorned the front pillars of the Hall, while a beautiful stone idol of the goddess was placed on the dais amidst eye-catching decoration of flowers.

Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.30 a.m. in a grand procession led by Nadaswaram musicians. As soon as Bhagavan entered the Hall, the Institute students started Veda chanting. Bhagavan was offered a traditional welcome with Poornakumbham when He reached the dais after showering the bliss of His Divine Darshan on the devotees and the ladies who were participating in the Varalakshmi Vrata.

The programme started after the lighting of the sacred lamp by Bhagavan before the idol of Varalakshmi. At the outset, the priests recited auspicious chants and Ganapati Prarthana (worship of Lord Ganesh). They also explained the significance of this Vrata which was being celebrated for Loka Kalyana (welfare of the world), promotion of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa, and for the peace and happiness of the family of the participants. As the priest gave instructions for the performance of the worship of goddess Varalakshmi, the participating ladies carried out the rituals with the Puja material provided to each one of them by the organisers. The Puja came to a close at 8.30 a.m. with sacred Vedic chants to propitiate the goddess. The Institute students chanted Vedic Mantras while Prasadam was distributed to all. In the end, Bhagavan went into the rows of all the ladies who participated in this Vrata and showered His blessings on them. Bhagavan also blessed the two priests who conducted the Puja; He materialised a gold ring with diamonds for one of them. The programme in Sai Kulwant Hall came to

a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.30 a.m. The participants were offered a sumptuous lunch in the South Indian canteen on this day.

In the afternoon, an excellent presentation of Carnatic vocal music was made by the famous Carnatic singer Smt. Nithyashree Mahadevan in Sai Kulwant Hall. At the outset, the artiste expressed deep gratitude to Bhagavan for giving her this golden opportunity of singing in His Divine Presence on the auspicious occasion of Varalakshmi Vrata at Prasanthi Nilayam which she considered as Bhuloka Vaikuntha (heaven on earth). Starting her devotional songs with a prayer song in praise of Lord Ganesh, the artiste enthralled the audience with her devotional songs in praise of Varalakshmi and Bhagavan. Sung with deep feelings of devotion in her sweet voice, the songs had a captivating effect on the audience who expressed their appreciation of the songs with applause at the end of each song. The musical presentation was truly the grand finale of this auspicious function. Bhagavan blessed the artiste at the end and gave her a silk Sari. The programme came to a happy conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.00 p.m.

### **Independence Day Drama**

Patriotic fervour was seen at its best in the drama entitled “Swaarajya” presented by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on the afternoon of 15th August 2005 in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam. Enacted in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan, the drama called to memory the sacrifices made by our freedom fighters to liberate India from the colonial rule of foreigners. The episodes of the sacrifices of Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru, Sukh Dev, Jatin Das for the freedom of the country were so realistically depicted that all eyes became moist with tears. Similarly, the strict adherence of Mahatma Gandhi to the values of Ahimsa and Sathya, the dynamic leadership of Subhash Chandra Bose and the valiant struggle launched by Alluri Sitaramaraju from the forests of Andhra Pradesh recaptured the spirit of India’s freedom movement. The concluding episode of the drama showed that mere political independence was not enough; it could not bring peace and prosperity to people. What was more important was Swaarajya, freedom of the spirit of man from the shackles of greed, jealousy, selfishness and other negative feelings. The drama showed that only the realisation of this eternal truth could provide real freedom, peace and happiness to man in the world, as taught by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Realistic story, lively acting, appropriate patriotic songs and flawless direction made this play a very appropriate Independence Day presentation. Bhagavan sat through the entire performance and blessed the cast at the end of the drama. He also gave them the coveted opportunity of group photo with Him. The programme which started at 4.15 p.m. came to a close at 5.35 p.m. with singing of National Anthem by all.

### **Sri Krishna Janmashtami Celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam**

The holy festival of Sri Krishna Janmashtami was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam with great piety and solemnity on 27th August 2005. The venue of the celebrations was Sai Kulwant Hall which was beautifully decorated for this occasion. Sweet notes of Nadaswaram reverberated in the Hall to welcome Bhagavan on this holy day. Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.50 a.m. amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras and showered the bliss of His Divine Darshan on one and all by taking two rounds of the Hall. At 8.15

a.m., the grand procession of cows from Gokulam and richly bedecked Sai Geeta entered the Hall. The procession included Veda chanting and Bhajan singing groups of students. While chanting continued, Prasadam was distributed to all. Meanwhile, Sai Geeta came near the dais and received the love and blessings of Bhagavan who fed it with fruits. The morning programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 10.30 a.m.

The programme in the afternoon started with a specially prepared musical medley of Stotras and devotional songs sung by the students of the Institute in praise of Lord Krishna. Soulful recitation of Stotras and captivating devotional songs in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan filled every heart with spiritual vibrations. This excellent musical presentation was followed by two speeches on the significance of this holy festival of Sri Krishna Janmashtami. First to speak was Dr. M. Sainath, a faculty member of the Institute. Referring to the teachings of Lord Krishna in the Gita, Dr. Sainath remarked that the Gita offered solution to all the problems of life which man today was faced with. Narrating the story of a child lost in a fair, he said that the child was not attracted by anything in the fair and was happy only when he got the hand of his father. In the same way, man should hold on to the hand of the Avatar who had incarnated on earth to redeem mankind, said Dr. Sainath. The second speaker was Sri Shashank Shah, an M.Phil student of the Institute. Sri Shah narrated a few incidents from the life of Dwapara Yuga Avatar, Lord Krishna and Kali Yuga Avatar, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and pointed out similarities between them. He observed that Lord Rama incarnated to establish Sathya and Dharma and Lord Krishna came to establish Santhi and Prema while Sai Avatar has come to establish all the values, viz., Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. This was followed by Bhajans led by the Institute students. The celebrations of this holy festival concluded with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.50 p.m.

## **80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS: THE WORK CONTINUES**

### **1. Community Service Programmes**

**Indonesia:** The Sai Study Group, Medan organised a series of service programmes during the months of February to June 2005. Medical camps and food distribution were provided in the following areas: Pulo Sicanang, Rantau Panjang, Citaman Jernih, Bagan Kuala, Ujung Kubu and Sei Bulu. During the five month period, a medical team consisting of five doctors and 50 Sai volunteers served a total of 3,433 patients. The ailments treated included asthma, skin problems, rheumatism and influenza. Free medications were also distributed to the patients. Sai workers conducted several food distribution drives to the needy people in the above locations. Each family received a package consisting of, on an average, five kg rice, two tins of milk and a variety of other



items of daily need. To-date, a total of 19,300 kg rice and 890 tins of milk have been distributed, benefiting over 5,000 families.

**Taiwan:** An all-day Parenting Seminar was held at the Taipei American School on 27th March 2005. Dr. Pal Dhall and Dr. Tehseen Dhall from Australia conducted this seminar, which was attended by Chinese school teachers, SSEHV teachers and parents. Dr. Pal Dhall pointed out that all parents wanted to see their children grow up to be moral individuals, but most lacked the necessary skills to do so. He spoke about the invasion of technology into our homes which was bringing along with it many negative influences, and about how the modern system of education was emphasising academic performance alone, and not ethics and character. The dynamics of enabling and disabling parenting practices set many heads thinking and everyone realised how sacred a duty it is to raise a child and many left with a greater understanding of the importance of the Sri Sathya Sai Value-based Parenting Programme. Two workshops were followed by an interactive question and answer session. The programme concluded with the lighting of a candle and passing on the light to everyone, with the prayer that the lamp of wisdom shine brightly forever in all hearts and that the valuable lessons learnt during the seminar help enrich lives and make better parents.

## **2. Medical Camps**

**South Africa:** On 3rd July 2005, a dental camp was organised at the Catherine Booth Hospital where 165 patients were treated. 145 dental extractions were performed and medical services were provided to 20 more patients. On 16th and 17th July 2005, an eye camp was held at the Catherine Booth Hospital where 21 cataract operations were performed. A team of two ophthalmic surgeons and two ophthalmic nurses conducted these surgeries. These volunteer surgeons were impressed with the voluntary service programmes carried out by the Sathya Sai Organisation and graciously agreed to be part of the team. They also assisted in obtaining important equipment such as microscopes that were necessary for the operations. With Swami's grace and blessings, the Sai Organisation of South Africa is thus making great inroads and progress in strengthening outreach programmes to the disadvantaged members of their communities.

**USA:** A daylong medical and dental camp was conducted on Saturday, 25th June 2005 at the Central Arizona Shelter Services facility in Phoenix, Arizona. 80 volunteers from all across the State participated in this camp which served underprivileged homeless people. Twelve physicians and six medical assistants comprised the medical team that rendered services to 150 patients at the camp. Prevention and health education were emphasised in the following areas: smoking, hepatitis and HIV, alcoholism, diet and exercise, and mammogram and pap smear tests for early cancer detection in women. Free haircuts were provided to nearly forty persons. Patients were provided with hygiene kits and appropriate referral services with follow-up care. Sai Spiritual Education children made posters on healthy living. At the dental clinic, a team consisting of four dentists and two dental assistants rendered services to 57 patients. The procedure consisted of thorough examination, evaluation and treatment pertaining to extraction, filling and cleaning of teeth. Free lunch was served around noon time to approximately 375 people.

The Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Central San Jose conducted a Health and Wellness Screening service on 9th April 2005 in the Sunnyvale, California community. The location of the project, Fair Oaks Park, was a predominantly Spanish neighborhood which was selected with considerable help from the City Mayor's office. 49 people were served during this half-day camp, with the participants predominantly of Spanish and Asian Indian origin. The services included blood glucose level, blood cholesterol level, blood pressure, height, weight, and BMI skin fat caliper measurements; risk factor profile, nutritional counselling, exercise recommendations; smoking cessation counselling, alcohol and drug rehab information. The medical team consisted of five doctors, three registered nurses and two medical assistants. More than 50 non-medical volunteers including SSE students participated in the areas of registration, documentation, ushering, sandwich preparation, distribution of flyers, poster displays, and transportation. Approximately 7 volunteers rendered help translating for Spanish patients in the areas of registration, ushering, and doctor's recommendations. A list of local health resources (public hospitals, community hospitals, free clinics and planned parenthood centres) within a 10-mile radius of the project location was prepared and shared with the patients for follow-up. Patients were served food. The Mayor of City of Sunnyvale, Sri Dean Chu visited the project and commended the loving and disciplined service rendered by the Sai workers. The Mayor and the City of Sunnyvale have invited the Sai Organisation to conduct similar projects in other areas of the city in future.

### **3. Public Meetings**

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** On 18th June 2005, a public meeting was held by the Sathya Sai Organisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo. 137 people attended the meeting, which featured two speakers – Dr. Thorbjørn Meyer and Ms. Vesna Krmpotic. The film 'His Work', which was translated into the Bosnian language, was screened at the end of the meeting. Approximately 100 copies of 'Duga', the official magazine of the Sathya Sai Organisation of BiH, and nearly 1000 bookmarks with Bhagavan's photo and quotes were distributed to the attendees. The audience was very much moved by the beautiful life and teachings of Bhagavan. That a meeting of this magnitude could be held in a country which had until recently seen the ravages of war is an eloquent testimony to the healing power of Bhagavan's Divine Love.

**USA:** The Sai Public Meeting held in the Gershman Hall in Center City Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on 12th March 2005 attracted over 300 attendees. Smt. Cathy Daub, the mid-Atlantic SSE regional coordinator, was the master of ceremonies for this event. The first speaker, Dr. David Gries, gave a presentation on the wonderful humanitarian works of Bhagavan Baba. He spoke with sincerity, love and humility and the assembled guests were moved by the magnitude of Bhagavan's compassion as expressed through the numerous service projects that the Sai Organisation had accomplished and continued to accomplish. The second speaker, Dr. Sam Sandweiss, articulated the essential teachings of Bhagavan – that we are all sparks of divinity, but we allow our minds to interfere with the flow of love and light in our lives. The film 'His Work' was screened next, at the end of which a brief pause of awe and reverence ensued. Then a wonderful applause of gratitude and appreciation arose from the audience. Every heart felt Bhagavan's grace

that flowed freely to all present and out into the world sending divine vibrations of peace, love and harmony.

– **Prasanthi Council**

## **BHARAT**

**Andhra Pradesh:** Ranga Reddy district carried out “Bheema Ratha Shanti Utsav” at Vennachedu, Kosagi, Tandur and Parigi covering 115 old couples above 70 years on the lines it was conducted at Prasanthi Nilayam recently. The couples were given new clothes and gifts and treated to sumptuous lunch along with their family members. This district conducted “Farmers Meet” at Kerelly on 2nd July 2005 in which senior scientists of agriculture interacted with 55 farmers assembled and suggested suitable remedial measures to the problems faced by them in cultivation. This district held eye check-up camps at Vennachedu, Kosagi, Tandur and Parigi villages, selected 37 cataract patients and got them operated at Government Hospital, Vikarabad. The patients were given new clothes at the time of discharge.

Prakasam district conducted free eye check-up camps, examined 1312 patients and selected 178 cataract patients for operation. Steps are being taken to get them operated in batches. This district built a school building under Sri Sathya Sai Gurukula Seva Yagnam and handed it over to the concerned authorities in an inaugural function on 26th June 2005.

Srikakulam district conducted a series of medical camps, treating 1512 patients and one veterinary camp, treating 869 animals. It dug 4 drinking water wells at 4 different places, distributed 800 Amrutha Kalasams (food provisions) to selected poor families, gave 56 uniforms to mentally challenged children, and honoured 81 teachers during Guru Purnima.

**Tamil Nadu:** Spiritual marriage for 36 elderly couples was performed in Chennai. The couples dressed in the traditional garments, assembled in Sri Sudharsan Marriage Hall near Varadharaja Swami Temple, and came in a procession to the venue. Messengers of Sai, Mahila Youth, Gurus and Mahila Vibhag assisted the couples individually. The marriage was conducted in a traditional manner on the morning of 24th July 2005.

**Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal:** On the occasion of Guru Purnima, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Lucknow carried out Seva activities in two new villages, Naktamau and Jallabad, on the outskirts of Lucknow. The Gram Pradhans (village heads) suggested that there was a need to conduct an eye check-up camp and a veterinary camp. It was also decided to carry out Narayana Seva on a large scale by providing food for each of the 175 households of the villages. Food packets were prepared by devotees while chanting Vedic hymns and Sai Gayatri. Seva Dal volunteers personally handed over the food packets to each household. More than 40 patients were examined during the eye camp and 19 spectacles were distributed free. The veterinary check-up camp was conducted by going door-to-door. 148 animals were examined and medicines were given free of cost wherever required. The programme ended with Sai Bhajans by devotees which were also attended by the villagers.

## Chinna Katha

### **WHO IS POOR?**

A KING SET OUT WITH A HUGE army to attack a neighbouring kingdom with the objective of extending his kingdom. On the way, he camped at a place with his army to take rest. It was a hilly area. Cold wind was blowing there. While strolling here and there, the king saw a person on the top of the hill. He became curious to know who he was. So, he climbed the hill. That person was wearing only a loin cloth. After seeing him in this condition, the king felt, "Poor man! He is undergoing great suffering due to extreme cold." Thinking thus, he gave him the warm Kashmir shawl and Kurta (shirt) which he was wearing. Then that person said to the king, "Sir! I have my own covering for the protection of my body. It has been protecting me since my birth, and will remain with me till death." The king was surprised at this and asked, "What covering? Where is it? It is not seen anywhere." Pointing towards the skin of his body, the man replied, "This is the covering which has been given to me by God. You give your Kurta and shawl to someone who is more poor than me." The king asked, "Is there anyone more poor than you? Where is he?" The man asked the king, "Well, where are you going now? What is the task that you are going to perform?" The king said, "I am going to attack the neighbouring kingdom with full preparation so that I can merge it with my kingdom." The man said, "Oh king! You want to cause the death of thousands of soldiers just to acquire some square miles of land. Isn't it your covetousness that would be responsible for it? Not contented with what you have, you are craving to have more and more. Then, you are the poorest of all. Who can be more poor than you? It is you who need this Kurta and shawl more than me."

This remark was an eye-opener for the king. He understood that one who lacked contentment was truly poor. Realising this truth, he turned his army back towards his kingdom.

When thoughts and feelings are impure and agitated, one cannot be calm and happy. When the mind is polluted, reactions are polluted. To keep the mind clean, one has to analyse sympathetically situations involving others and their activities, and then decide on how to react to them.

- Baba

### **BACK COVER QUOTATION**

#### **Less Luggage, Happy Journey**

**Life is like a train journey; young children have a long way to go, but elders have to alight from the train pretty soon. You must learn to make**

your journey comfortable and happy. Do not carry heavy, unwanted luggage with you that will make the journey miserable. Do not indulge in fault finding and picking quarrels with others. Do not desire to have the best things for yourselves only. Share with others around you the good things you are given. Anger, hatred, envy and jealousy are the heavy luggage that I ask you to avoid taking with you on the journey.

- **Baba**

#### Forthcoming Festivals at Prasanthi Nilayam

6th Oct. - 12th Oct. .... Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna  
12th November ..... Global Akhanda Bhajan  
(12th Nov. 6 p.m. to 13th Nov. 6 p.m.)  
19th November ..... Ladies Day  
20th, 21st and 24th Nov. .... 8th World Conference of Sri  
Sathya Sai Seva Organisations  
22nd November..... 24th Convocation of Sri Sathya  
Sai Institute of Higher Learning  
23rd November..... 80th Birthday of Bhagavan  
Sri Sathya Sai Baba

## OCTOBER 2005

### **DIVINE DISCOURSE: INTERNATIONAL SAI MEDICAL CONFERENCE**

## **EXPERIENCE YOUR INNATE DIVINITY**

*The Effulgent Lord who shines in every atom and pervades the entire universe will protect you always. He is the Omnipotent Lord of Parthi who will grant you Bhakti (devotion), and will certainly help you in all your endeavours.*

(Telugu Poem)

*Embodiments of Love!*

MANTHINKSTHATHIS survival depends upon worldly possessions like food, raiment, shelter and wealth. But this is not true. The survival of man is dependent only on God's grace. There

are many wealthy people in this world. Can they survive without God's grace? It is a fact that none can achieve anything in this world without the grace of God. Hence, first and foremost man should contemplate on God.

### **Educare Manifests Latent Divinity**

One may read a number of books, acquire many high degrees and visit a number of countries, but these cannot help one to earn God's grace. People today are engaged in acquiring bookish knowledge. They feel very proud of their high degrees. They think that acquiring bookish knowledge is real education. No, that is not so. They forget that people in the past led a happier and better life without bookish knowledge. What is the use of that education which is devoid of educare? What is educare? Educare is that which brings out the latent divinity of man. Divinity is also known as consciousness. It is only because of the consciousness present in him that every individual is able to acquire knowledge of the world around him. But, unfortunately, no one is able to recognise this all-pervading consciousness. In fact, it is only this consciousness that is protecting every human being. In spite of their education and scholarship, people are not able to realise this truth. Education based merely on bookish learning is negative and artificial. People go to foreign countries to acquire such artificial education. What is the use of acquiring such education? Instead, everyone should strive to acquire educare. There is no need to go anywhere to acquire it. It is immanent in every human being. Unity of thought, word and deed connotes educare.

One who realises his true identity is an educated person in the real sense. People enquire, "Who are you?" "Who is he?", etc., but they do not ask, "Who am I?" Man may acquire encyclopaedic knowledge about everything in this world, but of what use is it if he does not know who he really is? Real education is that which concerns itself with enquiring into one's true nature. If you ask someone, "Sir! Where do you come from?", he may reply, "I am from India". That reply is negative in the sense that it limits one to a particular country or place. The real 'I' is to be explored. That 'I' is the real source. The reply that he comes from India refers to the body. The body must have travelled from India. But the consciousness is all-pervading. Without realising the source, if one simply states that he comes from this place or that place, it is not the correct answer. One should know the source. When someone questions, "Who are you?" The correct answer would be, "I am I". We often say, this is my body, this is my mind, this is my intellect, etc. Then who am 'I'? One should know this real 'I'. It is the source. Nowadays, a lot of research is being conducted into the nature of the mind. Whatever research one may conduct, one has to understand that the basic quality of the mind is its unsteadiness. The mind is like a mad monkey and the body is like a water bubble. You are not this mad monkey. You are not this water bubble. The name given to the human race is "mankind". But today that kindness is gone and mankind has become monkey mind. Kindness and compassion are nowhere to be seen in human beings today.

### **Realise the Fundamental 'I'**

When there are no thoughts, there will be no words either. Divinity is beyond thoughts and words. Man should transcend the mind to realise his innate divinity. Realising one's innate divinity is educare. This innate divinity in man is also referred to as the Atma. Without realising the nature of the Atma one cannot understand the nature of the body. Educare helps one to realise the nature of the Atma or the Self. As long as you identify yourself with

the individual 'I', you cannot understand your true identity. It is only when you shed attachment to the individual 'I' and develop the feeling of equanimity can you understand the nature of the Atma or the fundamental 'I'. This Atma Tattwa (principle of the Self) is equally present in every being. This is the fundamental principle. It is only because of this fundamental principle that every living being acquires value. One has to recognise this fundamental principle. Only then does one deserve to be called a human being. In this world, birds and beasts live along with human beings. Man can be differentiated from birds and beasts only when he realises the fundamental 'I' which is the Atma Tattwa. Since ancient times, people in India have been striving to realise this fundamental 'I' which is present in all beings. Life is present everywhere.

Man today has lost his peace. There is restlessness everywhere. In fact, the whole world is in a state of turmoil. People are facing great difficulties and worries in their life since their awareness is limited to their body. This body consciousness makes their life artificial. It does not reveal their true Self. One has to strive to realise the fundamental 'I'. Human body is ephemeral and is bound to perish one day or the other. When we speak of 'I', it should not be limited to the ephemeral human body, but to the fundamental 'I'.

*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 is verily God Himself.*

(Telugu Poem)

Deha (body) with which we identify ourselves saying 'I' is subject to birth and death again and again. But Dehi (indweller) is the eternal Devadeva (God). While the vesture of Deha has birth and death, Dehi is beyond birth and death and is eternal. It shines in every being in the form of consciousness.

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

When a beggar stands in front of your house seeking alms by saying *Bhavathi Bhiksham Dehi* (give me alms), he actually reminds you of your true nature, i.e., Dehi (indweller). The word Dehi refers to divinity. True education is that which gives us the realisation of Dehi. Education is not limited to reading of books and gathering bookish knowledge. Many times I ask Goldstein and Narendra Reddy as to why they publish so many books. Bookish knowledge enables one to merely eke out a livelihood. But there is something more to this bookish knowledge and livelihood, which all of you have to pursue.

*Can you call all those who know how to read and write educated?*

*Can one be called educated merely for 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)

### **Transcend Body Consciousness**

One may acquire a lot of wealth and become a millionaire with the help of bookish knowledge and high academic degrees. But ultimately, people will give value and veneration to a realised soul and not to the one who has accumulated enormous wealth. As long as the body exists, people will call you a rich person or an emperor. Emperor is just a name; this is

not your true identity. The reality is the fundamental 'I', which is the same in all living beings. If you do not know the fundamental 'I', then all other knowledge acquired by you is a mere waste.

The fundamental 'I' is present in you, in him and in every individual. Here is a small example. Suppose you ask, "Who is the doctor?", the doctor will answer, "I am the doctor." In this example, the doctor identifies himself with his body and says, "I am the doctor." But he forgets about the fundamental 'I' present in him. God is present in all as stated in the Vedas: *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings) and *Isavasyam Idam Sarvam* (the entire universe is permeated by God). Different varieties of sweets like Mysore Pak, Gulab Jamoon, Laddu, Khova, etc., are prepared. Names are different, but the fundamental ingredient (sugar) in all these sweets is the same. Similarly, the same Atma Tattwa is present in every human being and, in fact, in every living being. One who realises this truth is the happiest person. It is true that secular education is necessary for one's living in this world. But one has to go beyond this level and explore the realm of consciousness that leads and motivates every living being. Consciousness is present equally in every human being right from a pauper to a millionaire. Man should attain this state of consciousness. This principle of consciousness is changeless and eternal. People in ancient times strove to attain that state and therefore they were aptly referred to as yogis. Who is a yogi? A yogi is one who transcends body consciousness and realises his true identity. You are actually a three-in-one entity – the one you think you are, i.e., the body, the one others think you are, the mind, and the one you really are, the Atma. All the three aspects relate to the same individual.

We often come across people who tell with pride that their sons are employed in lucrative jobs in America. As a matter of fact, who is their son? They may say that so and so is their son, keeping in view the physical relationship with someone who has a name and form. Devoid of name and form, who is the son and who is the father? All these names and forms are acquired only after a person is born. As long as the body exists, there is this relationship of son and father. When the body perishes, who is the son and who is the father? Here is another example. You perform the marriage of your son and bring a girl into your house. You now say, she is your daughter-in-law. Before her marriage to your son, who was this daughter-in-law? The relationship did not exist before her marriage and would cease to exist once you leave this world. It exists only for the middle period. Such relationships are like passing clouds. Unfortunately, today we are leading our lives, keeping such passing clouds as our true relationships. This is not the proper thing to do. All these relationships are worldly and physical. You consider someone as your relative, friend or foe on the basis of your physical relationship with him. Do not give importance to these physical relationships. It is only when you rise above these physical relationships that you will realise the Antaryami (indweller). You may enquire from any of our boys, "Where is God?", they will spontaneously answer, "God is everywhere. In fact, you are God." Their relationship with God is beyond the level of the body.

We lead a life based on physical relationships. But these are not permanent. Such relationships exist today, but may cease to exist tomorrow. As long as there is life in the body, you say, 'I'. Once the body perishes, then who will say 'I'? When you enquire into the



matter deeply, everything in this objective world ultimately reduces itself to zero. All that we see in this world are zeros. Unfortunately, today we consider the zero as hero. But you are not zero, you are a hero. You are the fundamental 'I' which is eternal. That fundamental principle is the hero. It is present in every individual, but it is not noticed. It is the inner motivator.

We often refer to our human body consisting of flesh, bones, muscles and blood as 'I'. Our physical body is not eternal. It is like the passing clouds which come and go. Considering this transient body as eternal, we struggle hard to amass physical comforts. This is not correct. The body must be employed for the purpose for which it has been given. Man is born to realise the eternal truth. We should not lead our life based on Dehabhimana (attachment to the body). Even educated people have attachment to the body. It is only because of our excessive attachment to the body that we are exposed to sorrows and difficulties. Hence, shed attachment to the ephemeral body and cultivate attachment to that which is eternal.

### **Unity, Purity, Divinity are Goals of Life**

As long as you are attached to the physical body, you cannot realise the Atma Tattwa. In fact, the Atma does not have any attachment. The Atma is present in you, in Me and in every living being. *Ekatma Sarva Bhutantaratma* (one Atma dwells in all beings). Realising the nature of the all-pervading Atma is true spirituality. Spirituality is not limited to rituals like worship, religious vows and Bhajans. When someone asked Sita, "Where is your Rama?" She replied, "Rama is always with me." What people generally refer to is the physical body of Rama, the son of King Dasaratha. In fact, the real Rama is not related to any individual. He is neither the son of Dasaratha nor the son-in-law of Janaka. He is immanent in every living being. Relations like daughter-in-law, father-in-law, mother-in-law are for the body. "Where does your uncle come from? Where does your aunt come from? Where do you come from?" When you ask these questions, nobody will be able to give the correct answer. The truth is that all people come from the same source. When one realises this truth, there will be no more worry or sorrow. Hence, one has to realise this unity. When you attain the knowledge of unity, you will know everything else. Bereft of this, you are likely to follow diversity. Do not be such a follower; be an ideal man. You are the Atma. Do not develop attachment to the world. Instead, cultivate spiritual attachment. When you live in harmony with your fellow human beings, you will derive happiness. Then you will experience unity between man and man. A real devotee is one who realises this unity. Unity leads to purity, which in turn provides the experience of divinity. One who does not experience unity, purity and divinity becomes a victim of body attachment and is trapped in the endless cycle of birth and death. You should identify yourself with the indweller which is beyond birth and death and without a beginning and an end.

### ***Embodiments of Love!***

Give up body attachment and realise unity and divinity that are all-pervading. That is real Sadhana. Today people undertake Sadhana, thinking all the while of something else. As a result, they are unable to achieve their goal. The fault lies with you and not with Jagat (world). When you correct your mistakes and do Sadhana in the right way, then you will be able to realise unity in diversity. Many people live long even for 100 years. But they are unable to experience unity. Instead, they see duality all their life. One who realises non-duality is a real Manava (human being). Humanity lies in transcending duality. Hence, give

up duality and experience the bliss of unity. In fact, unity is divinity and divinity is immanent in you. As long as you are under the influence of duality, you are not able to realise unity. Realise unity, develop unity and spread unity in the entire world. Unity alone brings purity and purity is true love. You will be able to understand everything in the realm of spirituality only when you develop pure love. I will take some other opportunity to explain in greater detail the concept of pure love. If you entangle yourself in worldly attachments and still aspire for divinity, how is it possible? Hence, give up attachment and attain unity.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho ...*")

**– From Bhagavan's Inaugural Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 3rd September 2005 on the occasion of International Sai Medical Conference.**

## **INTERNATIONAL SAI MEDICAL CONFERENCE – A REPORT**

AS PART OF 80TH Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, an international medical conference was held at Prasanthi Nilayam on 3rd and 4th September 2005. Organised jointly by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of India and the International Medical Committee of the Prasanthi Council, this was the first conference in the world which focused on the challenges and outcomes of delivering medical care with love, compassion and empathy to the suffering humanity. The theme of the Conference was: "Sri Sathya Sai Healthcare Mission – Sai Ideal Healthcare." More than 900 delegates from 27 countries of the world participated in this Conference which included internationally renowned healthcare experts, leaders in medical education, health administrators, nursing staff, medical equipment suppliers and government officers. They deliberated upon the ideals and principles laid down by Bhagavan to provide ideal healthcare to all, and resolved to further the Divine Mission of Bhagavan of humanising and spiritualising this noble profession so as to check the maladies of commercialisation and materialism which are afflicting it today. Bhagavan graced both the Inaugural and Valedictory Sessions of the Conference in Sai Kulwant Hall by His Divine Presence and gave an illuminating Discourse in the Inaugural Session, providing valuable guidelines and insights on the core issues of the Conference.

### **Inauguration of Medical Exhibition on Global Sai Health Mission**

The Conference started with the inauguration of the medical exhibition by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on 3rd September 2005 at 8.10 a.m. by lighting the sacred lamp. Bhagavan saw the entire exhibition paying close attention to the exhibits, which showcased the work done in relation to Sri Sathya Sai Healthcare Mission worldwide by Sri Sathya Sai Organisations and Sri Sathya Sai Hospitals. The exhibition featured movies and 198 posters depicting medical camps done all over the world, tsunami disaster relief work done in Thailand, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, and Sainet Project, a malaria prevention programme in Kenya. After its inauguration by Bhagavan, over 7000 people visited the exhibition. All were inspired and touched by the work being done by the global Sai Health Mission.

### **Inaugural Session**

After inaugurating the medical exhibition, Bhagavan came to the Sai Kulwant Hall at 8.40 a.m. and formally inaugurated the Conference by lighting the sacred lamp on the dais. The proceedings of the Conference began thereafter in the Hall, which was aesthetically decorated for this event of far reaching importance. After the inaugural ceremony, Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman, Prasanthi Council delivered his welcome address and spoke about Bhagavan's Healthcare Mission, its role as a solution to healthcare crises in many countries and the need in the world at this time for humane medicine. Exhorting the delegates to observe the spiritual principles laid down by Bhagavan, Dr. Goldstein narrated how his own life and physical health had changed for the better by adhering to the advice of Bhagavan on healthy lifestyle choices. After this, Dr. A.N. Safaya, Director, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences spoke on "Introduction to Sai Health Mission". Dr. Safaya highlighted the significance of Bhagavan's health initiatives in rural India and mentioned some of the recent path-breaking projects undertaken by Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences in advancing compassionate and spiritual patient-care. This was followed by a talk by Dr. Alan Gradman, Chief, Division of Cardiovascular Diseases, Western Pennsylvania Hospital, Pittsburg, USA. Dr. Gradman recounted how he and his practice had changed after he incorporated Bhagavan's teachings in his life and work. He stressed the importance of compassion and human values in teaching and practising medicine. After this, Bhagavan blessed the delegates and devotees with His Divine Discourse exhorting them to transcend body consciousness, know their reality and realise the unity of all mankind. (Full text of Bhagavan's Discourse has been given elsewhere in this issue.)

### **Plenary Sessions**

The afternoon session of the Conference was held in the auditorium of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. The first speaker of this session was Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman of the International Medical Committee of the Prasanthi Council who presented an overview of all the healthcare service activities of the overseas Sri Sathya Sai Organisations including medical and veterinary camps together with disaster relief work in the wake of the 2004 tsunami. Dr. Reddy said: "The whole purpose of human life as Swami said this morning is to know who we are. By His very Sankalpa, Swami can cure incurable diseases, He can make the lame walk and the blind to see. He has cancelled incurable cancers and He has raised the dead to life. That is not the purpose why Swami has come. The purpose why Swami has come is to raise our consciousness so that we realise who we are. He makes us realise our innate divinity, manifest that divinity and radiate that joy and love to one and all. That is the reason why Swami has come." The second speaker was Dr. Kanwaljeet S. Anand, Professor of Paediatrics, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences who spoke about the four pillars of paediatric care, namely, Prema, Purity, Prevention and Pain relief. Thereafter, Sri Kalyan Ray, Senior Director of United Nations made his presentation on the Sainet Project, an extensive malaria prevention programme undertaken in Kenya. He delineated the role of government and non-government organisations partnering to provide effective large-scale preventive care. The final speaker of the afternoon session was Dr. Kishore Udipi, Research Director, Medtronic Vascular, Santa Rosa, California. He discussed the role of biomedical and pharmaceutical companies in making technological advances in the field of healthcare.

The morning session on 4th September 2005 began in the auditorium with the presentation of Dr. Neelam Desai, Head of Department, Cardiothoracic Surgery, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Puttaparthi. She presented astounding data on the types and numbers of surgeries carried out in the Super Speciality Hospital since its opening in 1991. "The work done in Swami's hospitals is a testament that Sai Ideal Healthcare is here and now", she said. The next presentation was made by Dr. A.S. Hegde, Chairman, Department of Neurosciences, SSSIHMS, Whitefield. Presenting data from the Neurosurgical Department, Dr. Hegde cited a mortality rate of only 1.39 per cent, which is far lower than that experienced by the most renowned neurosurgeons in the whole world. In the next presentation, Dr. Ramchandiran Cooppan, Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School cautioned about the imminent global epidemic of diabetes. He stressed the importance of preventive measures including nutrition, diet and exercise. After this, Dr. Keki Mistry, Director, D.Y. Patil Dental College and Hospital, New Mumbai presented a comprehensive overview of the medical and veterinary service activities provided by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of India.

The morning session concluded with a presentation by Dr. Anil Nanda, Professor and Chairman, Department of Neurosurgery, Louisiana State University Health Sciences Centre, USA. He stressed the importance of not getting carried away by the available technology, but to treat the patient with utmost care and reverence. A new line was added by Dr. Nanda to the Sanskrit axiom "Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava..." to include "Patient Devo Bhava" – revere the mother as God, the father as God, and now treat the patient as God.

### **Valedictory Session**

The Valedictory Session of the Conference was held in Sai Kulwant Hall on the afternoon of 4th September 2005 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The session began with a speech by Dr. Michael Rakoff, a paediatrician and healthcare consultant, who outlined his experience of applying human values to the practice of medicine. The second speaker Dr. Venkatraman Sadanand, Fellow in Paediatric Neuro-surgery, Chicago, USA said: "We have to love our patients - love, love, love till it hurts. Love till there is nothing left of our body. All that we can see is the God within us. "

In their concluding remarks, Dr. Goldstein and Dr. Safaya stressed the need for more visibility of all the good work done in the healthcare field by Sri Sathya Sai Organisations so that more people could find inspiration to carry out such noble selfless service.

### **Summary**

This Conference was a testimony to the fact that Sri Sathya Sai Healthcare Mission was rapidly taking roots in several countries throughout the world. Inspired by the ideals set by Bhagavan to provide the best healthcare free of cost to most disadvantaged sections of society, the delegates resolved to make Sai Ideal Healthcare globally achievable and sustainable.

The delegates felt that this was a timely conference and the first of its kind and scope. In present time, many countries were experiencing serious problems with healthcare delivery making healthcare a hot topic of their political agenda. Bhagavan's Message and Healthcare

Mission provided a different perspective to those issues by making medicine more humane and patient-centred.

The theme and delivery of the Conference is reflected in an excerpt from Bhagavan's Discourse in August 1976:

*"Look upon your patients as your own kith and kin, as your special guests and as your closest friends, and attend to them lovingly and with unflinching care. I call upon you to maintain this attitude in every situation."*

Delegates from all over the world took this message and experience to their homelands and resolved to put it into practice in their life and work. It is hoped that their renewed approach to healthcare will undoubtedly be brought to the attention of the rest of the world.

## **DASARA DISCOURSES - IV**

# **PURE BODY AND PURE THOUGHTS ATTRACT DIVINE GRACE**

*If one keeps awake the whole night of Sivarathri by playing cards, can it be called Jagarana (vigil)? If a fisherman watches intently to catch fish in a pond, can it be termed concentration?*

**(Telugu Poem)**

*Embodiments of Love!*

MANY PEOPLE PLAY CARDS throughout night, thinking that they are spending their time in the best possible manner. Once I asked an officer, "How did you spend your time last night?" He immediately got up and answered, "Swami! I spent the time very happily."

### **Do not Resort to Perversion in the Name of Sadhana**

I further enquired what sort of happiness he derived. He replied, "I played cards throughout night and enjoyed very much. I did not have even a wink of sleep." I questioned him again, "Yesterday was the holy festival of Sivarathri. What benefit did you derive by spending your time in this manner throughout night?" The officer gave a strange reply, "Since I was busy playing cards throughout night, I was free from all worries. I was happily spending time and observing vigil." Can this be called vigil? Can one-pointed gaze of a fisherman to catch fish from a pond be called concentration? Can such concentration lead to Mukti (liberation)?

Some foolish people resort to such acts of perversion and call it Thanmayatwa (transcendental state) and concentration. It is difficult to imagine the extent up to which man degenerates himself by taking to bad ways and by resorting to such perversions! The body has not been given to man for this purpose. What is it that is contained in the human body? It is full of sweat, urine, flesh, blood and foul smelling waste matter. It is prone to decay and disintegration. Every second, it generates bad odour and waste matter. What is there to be proud of such a decadent body? One has to realise the true nature of the human body and make the best use of it. Do you know why God has given us the human body? Is it for indulging in evil acts and wasting the precious life? No, no. The body is given to man so that he may use it to attain divinity; not for misusing it. You should realise for yourself what sacred purpose it is to be used for. From the time you get up from the bed till you go to bed at night, your time is spent in worldly pursuits. You do not have any time to think of God.

Human body is a sacred instrument given by God and it has to be sanctified by contemplating on God. One should think of God at least one or two times in a day. What should we do to derive happiness and joy? The most appropriate answer to this question is that we should engage all our senses in constant contemplation of God. The eyes should see all that is sacred. The ears should be engaged in hearing good words. The tongue should speak sweet and noble words. It should chant the divine name constantly. Thus, every limb of the body should be sanctified by putting it to proper use. Can the loss of body consciousness of a heavily drunk intoxicated person be called Thanmayatwa? If one abstains from food on account of a quarrel with one's wife, can it be called fasting? Man should make use of concentration and meditation for his spiritual advancement.

### **Keep your Body Pure and Natural**

*Dear students!*

Normally, I do not like to speak about My personal life. However, I am revealing certain aspects of My daily routine with the hope that they will serve as guidelines for you. I keep My mouth absolutely clean by brushing My teeth and cleaning My tongue at night and early morning. I clean My tongue thoroughly on all its sides with a tongue cleaner. I strictly adhere to My routine so that My tongue, mouth and teeth are always clean. I feel happy only when My tongue and mouth are perfectly clean. One experiences sacredness of the body by keeping the tongue and mouth totally clean. You might have observed Me talking to a number of people everyday. I will spend even 20 minutes instead of 10 minutes talking to those who keep their tongue clean and whose mouth does not emit bad odour. On the other hand, I do not talk to those with bad odour even for two minutes. During our sleep, bacteria are generated and they stick to our tongue and teeth on all sides of the mouth. They have to be removed by proper brushing of the teeth and a thorough cleaning of the tongue and mouth. Only then can we be healthy and happy.

Apart from physical cleaning, the tongue must be engaged in speaking sacred and pure words. Following this principle, I put My tongue to proper use by engaging Myself in sacred talk. It is only after I clean My body properly that I come out of My room. By the time I come out, a boy looking after the kitchen brings Ragi Ganji (gruel made of a coarse grain). I partake of the gruel and feel very happy and energetic. Except this Ragi

gruel, I do not take anything else in the morning. I do not have any tiffin or breakfast. After taking the gruel, I once again clean My mouth. Then, I drink some fresh water and come down. Thereafter, I spend some time happily with devotees, giving Darshan and talking to some. I also grant interviews to selected people. In this way, I talk to people in a sacred way with total purity of My body.

There is one important point which should be borne in mind by people who are called for interview. While I enter the interview room with such a pure and sacred body, some people come there with unclean mouth after smoking. I do not like such people in the interview room and ask them to go out immediately. The wife of a smoker may plead with Me, "Swami! I am Your devotee. If You send my husband out, what is there for me to talk to You?" I firmly reply, "Whether it is husband or son, whoever he may be, nobody should enter My room emitting bad odour from his mouth and body. You tell him to go out, clean his mouth and come back. Then I shall speak to him." Such people will go out immediately, clean themselves and come back in ten minutes. Then I speak to them endearingly.

Man should always be natural and pure. He should not become artificial. Some people wear gaudy dresses and apply perfumes to their body. But, of what use is it to apply perfumes when the body is full of dirt and bad odour? We should keep the body pure. Not only that, our thoughts should also be pure. We should spread the message of purity and cleanliness among our associates to make purity prevalent in society. You should have the company of only those who are pure in body and thoughts. Then your purity will shine forth with its natural effulgence. This will earn you the grace of God. My body always emits natural effulgence and divine fragrance. In order to set ideals to others, I always maintain My body and mind in a pure and unsullied condition. The body must always be kept in a clean and fit condition since it is a sacred instrument provided by God. I give utmost importance to the cleanliness of the body so that others would also like to emulate Me. By following My ideals, they would not only earn respect in society but the grace of God also.

Siva is called Bhola Sankara. He dons no decorations or ostentations. He keeps his body absolutely sacred and pure. His piety and purity are the source of attraction for his devotees. Parvati did intense penance to marry Lord Easwara. She meditated with total purity on the divine form of Lord Easwara who is Nitya (eternal), Shuddha (unsullied), Buddha (enlightened), Mukta (liberated), Nirmala Swarupina (embodiment of purity). Pleased with her deep devotion and total purity, Siva accepted her. At an auspicious time, they were married in a sacred manner in the presence of Parvati's parents. Some people who participated in this joyous wedding wanted to know what made Siva accept Parvati. Parvati told them that she could win the heart of Siva as she was pure and natural in body and mind. Siva and Parvati are offered worship and reverence by devotees.

Markandeya was a great devotee of Lord Siva. (Bhagavan then narrated the story of Markandeya's penance and total surrender to Lord Siva.) God does not need anything from a devotee except devotion and complete surrender. He expects from him sacred body, sacred words, sacred vision and selfless actions. When the devotee offers these things, God gives Himself to that devotee. Man's body, mind and actions should always be pure, so that God is attracted towards him. God's grace cannot be attained by different

forms of worship or other rituals. Only complete purity and total surrender can earn God's grace. But people are too much involved in mundane pursuits, and do not strive for it. I recite the following poem frequently to remind man of the futility of struggling for merely filling his belly:

*Oh! Man! You struggle hard for the sake of filling your belly. You acquire many forms of knowledge in 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)

I always sanctify My time by engaging Myself in activities that are beneficial to society. Right from My childhood, I cultivated good habits and followed strict regimen. I have already explained this in a poem on earlier occasions also:

*Get up early in the morning at the crowing of the cock,  
Have a bath after your morning ablutions,  
Wear a proper dress,  
Eat properly and moderately,  
Go to school and study diligently,  
Earn a good name,  
Don't move out when it is raining,  
And never go near the ditches,  
Take part in games,  
Run and play.  
If you abide by all these rules  
You will have both health and wealth.*

(Telugu Poem)

In those days, people were not used to tiffin or breakfast. Cooked rice was soaked in buttermilk on the previous night and taken as breakfast next morning with a little salt.

### **Pushpagiri Fair and Scout Camp**

Many boys keep their study table disorganised, with their books strewn all over. They make it clumsy and dirty. But I used to keep My books always neat and tidy. Whatever I am relating today is based on My personal experience only. In those days, very few boys were in a position to purchase new books when they were promoted to a higher class. Every four or five years, the textbooks were changed. I always used to keep My books neat. Hence, boys studying in the lower standard and promoted to the higher standard at the end of the academic year used to take My books. During a particular year, a poor Harijan boy approached Me and asked for My books. I showed My books to him. In those days, there was high syllabus for subjects like history, geography, civics, etc., even for lower classes. On seeing My books, he commented, "Raju! You do not seem to have touched Your books even once. They appear brand new." The cost of My books totalled to twelve rupees, but the poor boy was not in a position to pay even that much. Then I told him, "My dear! I am selected for the scout camp by our teacher. I have to purchase khaki dress and shoes. Besides, there are some other items of expenditure. I don't have money to meet that expenditure. Nor would I like to ask My parents. What I need at the



moment is five rupees. Therefore, pay Me five rupees and take away the books.” The boy felt very happy and paid the required amount. In those days, currency notes were very rare. Therefore, he brought the entire amount in small coins packed in a piece of cloth. It was tied in an old cloth, which gave way unable to bear the weight of the coins. The coins were strewn all over the room, making a big sound. On hearing the sound, the lady of the house came there and enquired, “Where did You get all this money? Did You steal from my trunk?” So saying, she slapped Me. The poor boy standing there explained to her, “Mother! I gave those coins to Raju towards the cost of His books which I purchased from Him.” She disbelieved him and remarked, “One thief is the witness of the other thief.” The boy ventured to say, “Raju never tells a lie. He always speaks the truth.” However, she took away the entire money.

Next day, all My classmates were going to Pushpagiri, where a big cattle fair was going to be held. I did not have the money to pay the fare. So, I pretended that I had stomach-ache and so was not able to go with them. Early next morning, I set out on My journey on foot. I walked a long distance and before I could join My classmates, they had left for their breakfast. As for Myself, I did not have even a single paisa in My pocket. What could I eat without money? I thought I would manage somehow without eating anything. I purposely avoided My classmates lest they should question Me whether I had had breakfast. They were searching for Me. There was a cement trough nearby in which water was stored for bathing the cows and buffaloes. I was feeling very tired, hungry and thirsty, having walked all the way. But I could not help. Then, I noticed that someone had left behind a packet of Beedis (country cigarettes) and a one anna coin near the trough there. The Beedis were, of course, of no use to Me. Therefore, I threw them away. I took the one anna coin and exchanged it for smaller coins. Four Botlu in those days were equivalent to one anna. As I was returning, I noticed a person sitting on the roadside and inviting passersby to participate in a game of stakes. No doubt, this was a sort of gambling, which I would advise everyone to refrain from. But I was completely helpless at that time. Every time, I was winning and getting double the amount of the stake. Thus, I played the game till I could make twelve annas. Then I thought, that was the end of the game and returned with the money already earned. Since I was feeling hungry, I bought three Dosas with one Bottu (Paisa). Thus, I managed with two Botlu a day eating Dosas. I joined the scout duty along with My friends. During night, I kept the bundle of coins under My head and slept on the sandy floor. Since I was very much tired, I was lost in sound sleep. Meanwhile, someone noticed the bundle under My head and took it away when I turned to the other side. When I woke up the next day, I noticed that the cloth bundle containing money was stolen by somebody. Now I had no money to buy even one Dosa. My classmates were very much distressed at My plight. They were in fact crying. They pleaded with Me to eat at least one Dosa, which they would buy for Me. But I flatly refused. I told them that I was not hungry, since I did not like to avail Myself of others’ help. Especially, I did not wish to touch others’ money. At the end of the camp, we all returned to Kamalapuram.

Another incident happened during My stay at Kamalapuram. At that time, Seshama Raju (Swami’s elder brother) had gone for teachers training to Uravakonda. He came back when I was at Pushpagiri. When I returned from the camp, he was furious at My absence

from the house. Seething with anger, he shouted at Me, saying, “Your sister-in-law was put to great hardship due to Your absence because she had to fetch water besides all other household chores.” At that time, he had a ruler with him. He beat Me hard with that ruler. As a result, My hand was swollen and it was giving Me a lot of pain. I did not reveal it to anybody. I tied a bandage Myself with a wet cloth. The next day, Seshama Raju’s son died. He gave a telegram to Pedda Venkama Raju (Swami’s father). Pedda Venkama Raju immediately rushed to see Seshama Raju. The Griham Abbayi (Pedda Venkama Raju) started from Puttaparthi and reached Bukkapatnam, and from there he came to Kamalapuram. When he reached Seshama Raju’s house, he found the family immersed in sorrow. I too had to pretend to be sorrowful, though I am beyond sorrow and joy. Griham Abbayi enquired from Me, why I was having a bandage on My hand. I tried to explain away very casually as if nothing had happened. I told him that there was a small blister on the palm and therefore I put a bandage. Thus, I did not reveal the fact that the pain in My hand was due to the injuries inflicted on Me by Seshama Raju. I never had the habit of complaining against elders. I always tried to protect the dignity and honour of the family. There was a lady belonging to the Vaisya community in the neighbouring house, who used to make her living by preparing Dosas and selling them. She tried to reason with Griham Abbayi, saying, “What! Venkama Raju! I know you can get Raju educated at your place. Why should you put Him to so much trouble by keeping Him under the care of His elder brother at such a distant place? You do not know how much the boy is suffering here. He has to fetch drinking water daily from a distant place carrying two big pitchers with the help of a Kavadi (a bamboo stick with pitchers on either side) on His shoulders.” Thus, she narrated several incidents about My hardship and suffering.

Griham Abbayi was deeply moved on hearing My plight. He immediately called Me and said, “My dear son! You start immediately and come along with me. Let us go back to Puttaparthi.” He loved Me very much. In fact, all the family members loved Me. He lamented, “I never beat You till date. You are undergoing so much suffering here.” When he pressed Me hard to follow him to Puttaparthi immediately, I tried to pacify him, saying, “It is not proper for Me to leave at this juncture since Seshama Raju’s family is in a sorrowful state due to the loss of their son. You please go to Puttaparthi. Later, I will join you.” Griham Abbayi shed tears of joy for My sense of responsibility and noble feelings. He said, “Dear son! I have never come across small children explaining such noble thoughts to elders. How noble and great are Your qualities! You are teaching me such great things. How sweet and wise Your words are! Your nobility alone will protect You.” Saying thus, he left for Puttaparthi. However, ever since he reached Puttaparthi, he used to send messages daily requesting Me to come to Puttaparthi. He was remembering all those complaints made to him by our Vaisya neighbour about My difficult life at Kamalapuram and was feeling very sorry for My plight.

There was a businessman by name Kotte Subbanna in the town. He had a provision shop in which some Ayurvedic medicines were also sold. Once, he brought a new Ayurvedic medicine by name Bala Bhaskara in his shop. It could fetch him a good profit if popularised. As he knew I was good at composing poetry, he requested Me to write a song describing the qualities of this medicine. I agreed to his request, but asked for some more details about the medicine. Then I composed a song about the efficacy of the

medicine. I gathered a few children of My age to go round the nearby villages with placards in their hands, singing the song composed by Me. The song ran as follows:

*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 Kotte 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)

By the time this sale campaign was over, all the stock of the medicine in Subbanna's shop was exhausted. He felt very happy. Then he called Me and expressed his joy saying, "My dear Raju! Due to Your efforts, all the stock of the medicine in my shop was sold out in no time. I am grateful to You."

### **My Body is Free from all Diseases**

Once during My stay at Uravakonda, I started behaving in an extraordinary manner. People around Me thought that I was mad or possessed by a demon. I acted like that and used to talk to Myself. Many people offered suggestions to get Me cured of this 'strange disease'. At the end, all the people unanimously decided that I should be taken to a Bhutha Vaidya (witch doctor) for curing Me of an alleged possession by a demon. The sorcerer shaved off My head and inflicted two deep cuts on My scalp in the form of an X. Then he poured lime juice on the bleeding cuts. It gave Me great pain and an unbearable burning sensation. But I did not give vent to My feelings; I silently suffered all this torture. In fact, I was laughing at his foolish treatment. The sorcerer was furious that I was smiling all the time when he was putting Me to so much torture. So, he decided to put Me to more suffering. He brought Kalikam (a sort of poisonous substance) and applied it to My eyes. Thus, he put Me to several kinds of torture. Venkamma (Swami's elder sister) who also accompanied Me to this sorcerer's place could not bear to see Me undergoing this suffering. She was always by My side and attended on Me all her life. She therefore ran to Griham Abbayi and pleaded with him, "Father! You don't put Sathya to this inhuman treatment. This cruel man is inflicting great pain and injury on the boy. Enough of torture; take Him away immediately to Puttaparthi." Thus, I was brought back to Puttaparthi. Ever since that sorcerer shaved off My head till today I did not have a haircut. Some people think that I trim My hair. No, never. My hair grows naturally. Now I am 79 years old. Till today, I have not suffered from any disease. My teeth and eyesight are intact. I will remain in good health even up to 90 years. Till a few years ago, the boys accompanying Me were, in fact, running to catch up with Me. I can still walk very fast

but the doctors put a condition that I should not, the reason being that I was operated upon sometime ago when I had a fall. They put a steel rod joining My broken hip bone. That is why I was advised against walking fast. Nevertheless, I have been attending to My daily routine. I have not given up any of My daily activities. I am giving interviews to visitors. I am moving along the Darshan lines, giving Darshan to devotees. There is absolutely no hindrance in My daily activities.

### **Classmates of Uravakonda School**

In the Uravakonda school, Ramesh, Suresh and Myself sat on the same bench in our classroom. While I sat in the middle, Ramesh and Suresh used to sit on My either side. They were not so good in studies. They became worried when examinations approached near. I told them, “I will write answers for the questions on your answer sheets. You just sit silently in the examination hall.” All three of us went into the examination hall. Our roll numbers were such that we had to sit at different places in the examination hall quite far from each other. There was no chance at all for us to communicate with each other. My friends were very unhappy and dejected. I made a plan to help them though it was not the ideal thing to do. First of all, I finished writing My answer sheets within no time. After this, I took additional sheets and wrote the answers to the questions for both Ramesh and Suresh in their handwriting. Then, I kept all the three answer sheets on the table of the examiner.

The result of our examination was announced on the third day. In those days, the examination results were announced soon after the examination; not like the present day when it takes months together to announce the results. All three of us passed in 1st class (*loud applause*). Whatever answers were there in My answer sheets, the same were found in the answer sheets of the other two boys as well. But none could accuse them of copying since our roll numbers were very different and our seats distant from each other. However, our teacher Mahboob Khan realised that I had helped the other boys to perform well in the examination. But he did not reveal it to anyone. Many teachers congratulated us for securing first class in the examination. They shed tears of joy. Thus, I made everyone including My teachers and classmates happy and returned to Puttaparthi. My friends Ramesh and Suresh expressed their wish to accompany Me to Puttaparthi. They, in fact, insisted on following Me. But I advised them not to do so. In this way, I passed My school days in a sacred way. I used to guide and help the fellow students to follow the right path. Never did I waste My time in the school. I always endeavoured to sanctify it by following the path of goodness. I spoke sweetly and softly with everyone.

Today is Durgashtami day. Tomorrow and day after are Mahanavami and Vijaya Dasami festivals. I have a lot of work to do. I have to talk to the Purohits (priests) who have to conduct the Yajna. Besides, there are other important matters to be attended to. After finishing My work, I will again talk to you. Did I not tell you that students are My property? I care so much for them. If they are happy, I will also be happy (*loud prolonged applause*). I have a piece of advice for you. Never give up Namasmarana. Do constant Namasmarana wherever you are.

(Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan, “*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin ...*”)

– From Bhagavan’s Dasara Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 21st October 2004.

Education has been grossly circumscribed and the educational system is polluting the social organism with narrowness and crookedness. So, marked changes have to be made in the system. At present, we have mere book learning. But what is learnt from books has to be confirmed and corrected by practising it in social living. Then only can the knowledge of the kinship between man and man be gained. Thereby learning is transformed into Vidya. Vidya cannot be acquired by merely mastering reading, writing and arithmetic.

- Baba

*From our Archives*

## WE HAD THE VISION

- Manchiraju Thammiraju

*Sri Manchiraju Thammiraju, the mathematics teacher of young Sathya in Uravakonda High School, was one of those blessed persons whom He chose to show His Divinity when He was still a child of 14 years. Here is the first-hand account by the fortunate teacher of what he witnessed in 1940.*

AS A BOY OF FOURTEEN, WHEN Baba was still in Uravakonda High School, every Thursday evening, between about 4 p.m. and 8 p.m., He became Shirdi Sai Baba and gave Darshan to hundreds of devotees and answered their prayers. I was a teacher in the High School then and I too took advantage of those Thursdays. ‘My student’ Sathya used to take out even then as He does now, Vibhuti by a wave of the hand! My 22-year-old daughter had died sometime previously and my wife was in great distress. Sathya used to come to my residence and give her long discourses on the problem of life and death, and, thanks to His wise ministrations, she became normal soon. His words full of Prema pacified the agitation of her mind, and restored her devotion to the Lord. On the second Thursday that she offered worship, He gave her Vibhuti and said, “Ammayi! I appreciate your Bhakti; I am pleased; next week, come, I shall give you a gift.”

That day, He asked her to rise from His Feet when she prostrated. He said, “Ammayi! I am giving you a piece of the Gerua (ochre cloth) I wore when I entered Samadhi at Shirdi for the last time”, and closing His palm for an instant, He opened it to show us a piece of cloth 4

inches square. "Take this and do Puja to My Name; come next week, I shall give you something more." He said and sent us away, in great joy, for, while we took leave, He added: "Be happy henceforth, for I shall carry all your burdens."

The next Thursday, we both went to Him and did Namaskar. That day, He closed His palm and when He opened it, there had materialised a quantity of Akshata or rice grains. "Tie this in the cloth given last week and worship it. You will get mental quiet," He blessed. "You will not have any cause for grief; I am conferring on you full Bhakti."

On the 5th Thursday, too, another miracle happened. He told my wife, "Ammayi! Keep a Peeta (low stool) in your house in the Puja room, and I shall be giving you Darshan there itself," and He made us do it immediately.

We have all read how Krishna with His brother Balarama went to the house of Arjuna and granted Darshan to him and his consort and also showered blessings on them. This Sathya Sai, too, who is the same Krishna and the same Shirdi Sai came to the house of this poor Bhakta and blessed us with a vision of His Mahima (glory); we can never forget the exquisite thrill of that experience. He came on two consecutive days, the Krishna Janmashtami and the Rohini Day. The wonderful experiences of those days have been described by my wife in a poem published in her name Kamesvaramma in the "Sai Sudha" of April 1944 printed by the All India Sai Samaj, Madras. I have also put them in verse and included them in the "Sainatha Sathakam" I published as a separate book in 1944.

He came and sat on the Peeta in the Puja room and asked us to come in and sit by His side; He then asked us whether we did not desire to see the various Leelas of previous births. When we welcomed the idea enthusiastically, He agreed to show them to us and all the family collected around. He ordered us to watch Him (Would you believe it? You may not, until you yourself experience the same or similar miracles of Baba), and we were thrilled by the Form of Narayana on the Ocean of Milk, reclining on the Vatapathra (leaf of banyan tree). We heard only word after word, announcing the next Form. The Forms changed from one surprise to another in quick succession. We were given enough time to imbibe the beauty and splendour of each Form and to be struck by the instantaneous power of Baba's Sankalpa! And where was Baba, our Sathya, all the time? He became Gajendra (elephant) raising his trunk to greet Vishnu on the horizon, Krishna the cowherd boy leaning on a tree and playing the flute, Gopala on the awe-inspiring Kaliya Serpent, Radha- Krishna, Lakshmi-Narayana, Parvati-Parameswara and Saraswati-Brahma too. Then, we saw Him as Sita-Rama and lo! we heard the name Sathyabhama and saw her; we were blessed by a vision, at Baba's invisible call, of Mohini the Form that Vishnu once assumed, of Prahlada yearning for Narayana, and immediately thereafter, of Narasimha killing Hiranyakasipu, also of Vamana, Parasurama, and Buddha too; Baba showed us the killing of Sisupala, Saindhava, and of the Rakshasas; there was scene of the Lord bringing the Parijatha (heavenly tree) flowers; the picture then changed to one of Panduranga and then Narada and his ecstatic praise of the Lord; the next one was of Navanithachora, the Balakrishna stealing butter; and after that, the killing of Abhimanyu by the wicked Kaurava chiefs and, last, there was the magnificent Murthi (Form) of Shirdi Baba Himself! How can we ever forget those shining Forms, so full of vitality and life that glowed before our eyes on those two sacred days?

## **CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM**

### **Ganesh Chaturthi Festival**

SIMPLICITY, SACREDNESS AND solemnity marked the Ganesh Chaturthi festival which was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 7th September 2005. The whole day of Ganesh Chaturthi was spent by the devotees in a most sacred manner with Divine Darshan of Bhagavan in the morning and afternoon along with singing and listening to the glories of the Lord.

On the morning of 7th September 2005, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.55 a.m. and showered the bliss of His Divine Darshan on the devotees on this auspicious day. The Hall started reverberating with Vedic chants on the arrival of Bhagavan. The Vedic chants were followed by recitation of Stotras and group songs in praise of Lord Ganesh which started at 8.40 a.m. Thereafter, Bhajans started at 9.00 a.m. which were led by the students of the Institute. The devotees followed the Bhajans with great devotional fervour filling the entire milieu with spiritual vibrations. The morning programme came to a close at 9.20 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan. In the afternoon also there were Vedic chants and Bhajans. Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.30 p.m. amidst Veda chanting which continued up to 5.00 p.m. when Bhajans started. The Bhajans concluded at 5.30 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan. Prasadam was distributed to all both in the morning and evening.

The idols of Lord Ganesh worshipped by various groups of students and staff of the Ashram in their respective departments were brought to Sai Kulwant Hall on the afternoon of 9th September 2005 before their immersion. The idols set up in vehicles of various artistic shapes presented a grand spectacle when they were neatly lined up in Sai Kulwant Hall. Bhagavan came to the Hall at 3.15 p.m. and blessed the students and staff who accompanied these idols. He also blessed the sweets and fruits which they carried in decorated trays. After Bhagavan was seated on the dais, the vehicles were brought in front of the dais one by one led by Veda chanting and Bhajan singing groups of staff and students. All of them received Bhagavan's blessings while the Mandir priest offered Arati to the idols. They circumambulated the Bhajan Mandir and slowly departed from Sai Kulwant Hall carrying the idols with them for immersion. The celebrations of Ganesh Chaturthi came to a close at 4.50 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

### **Downpour of Divine Love**

The day of 8th September 2005 will always remain unforgettable in the lives of hundreds of staff members of the Ashram and Institute when they had the rare fortune of the Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan (sight, touch, conversation) of Bhagavan. Soon after His arrival in Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.15 p.m., Bhagavan took His seat in the centre of the Hall where these staff members were sitting. Showering His Divine grace on all of them, Bhagavan invited each one of them to speak. Some of them recounted their experiences how Bhagavan protected them at certain critical moments of their life. All of them expressed deep gratitude to Bhagavan for all they had received in their life from Him. Some of them delighted all by singing Bhajans. Besides, Bhagavan collected letters from them and listened to their prayers. The devotees and students in the Hall watched with joy and amazement how

Bhagavan kept showering His unbounded grace on these workers. In the end, each one of them, both ladies and gents, received clothes and watches from the Divine Hands of Bhagavan. This downpour of Bhagavan's love and compassion which continued for more than one and a half hour inundated each heart. The beaming faces of the staff members expressed their immense delight which they would certainly treasure in the inner recesses of their heart for the whole of their life.

#### **Bhangra Programme by Institute Students**

The rich and vibrant culture of the sacred land of the Punjab came alive at Prasanthi Nilayam when the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning enthralled the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall with an excellent Bhangra dance on the afternoon of 25th September 2005. The presentation included harvest songs, prayer songs and patriotic songs which were sung along with acting and dance at the beat of the drum. The students also showed many formations and acrobatics which earned them the appreciation of the viewers who responded to their excellent performance with loud repeated applause.

Bhagavan sat through the entire performance and blessed the students at its conclusion. The programme which started at 4.00 p.m. came to a close at 4.25 p.m.

#### **Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara**

This excellent drama was enacted in Sai Kulwant Hall by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam on the afternoon of 28th September 2005 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Presented in two parts, the first part of the drama dwelt on the theme of Sathyam Vada (speak truth) and the second part, Dharmam Chara (practise righteousness). The drama commenced at 4.10 p.m. with a beautiful group song and dance. Thereafter, the students enacted the story of a Chinna Katha of Bhagavan on the efficacy of speaking truth. It depicted the story of a thief who, on the advice of a savant, took a vow to speak truth, strict adherence to which transformed his whole life, and from a thief he becomes a minister in a king's court. The second part portrayed a story how a proud Tapasvin (man of penance) was taught the lesson of true Dharma by a devout housewife and a butcher devoted to his Dharma (right conduct) in spite of his lowly profession.

It was a good drama from all accounts, be it acting of the students, choice of lofty theme or planning and direction. But what really made it a unique presentation was the flawless delivery of dialogues by the students in simple but chaste Sanskrit. The drama came to a close at 5.00 p.m. Bhagavan sat through the entire performance and blessed the students in the end. He also gave them the coveted opportunity of group photo with Him.

The root cause of all anxieties and calamities of man is envy. We can find from the Bhagavadgita that Krishna warns Arjuna off and on "Arjuna, you have to be without envy. Do not get infected by envy." Envy is invariably



accompanied by hatred. These two are twin villains. They are poisonous pests. They attack the very roots of one's personality.

— Baba

## **NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES**

### **80th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS THE WORK CONTINUES**

#### **1. Public Meetings**

##### **1. Public Meetings**

**USA:** On 11th September 2005, the Mid-Central Region of the Sathya Sai Baba Organisation of America held a public meeting in St. Louis, Missouri at the 1904 World's Fair Pavilion, a magnificent 1300-acre park, considered the crown-jewel of the city. Of the 500 attendees, nearly 350 were guests who previously knew little or nothing about Swami. Before introducing the speakers, regional president Dr. Jack Feely asked the guests to join in a silent prayer for those who lost their lives, were hurt, or lost loved ones during the tragedy of 9/11 four years earlier. He asked that they add to their prayers those who lost so much in the recent hurricane along the Gulf Coast of the USA. The first speaker, Dr. William Harvey, member of the Prasanthi Council, focused his talk on the life and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. After sharing some miracles he had witnessed, he added that Swami's biggest miracle was His ability to turn people Godward, in the sense of inspiring them to begin to recognise and accept that an all-powerful, all-knowing, all-present, and all-loving Unseen Force controls their destiny and the events that occur in the world. Concluding his talk, Dr. Harvey reflected that loving God meant loving God's creation – all people and things in this wonderful world. The second speaker was Dr. Anu Diwakaran, a paediatrician who works with children of underinsured families through SSM Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital in St. Louis. She described how her work reflected Baba's teachings to love all and serve all. She articulated Swami's philosophy that it was one's own illusion that caused one to see the diversity of the world and that when one made an attempt to fix one's attention on the divine aspect which is one, then the diverse names, forms and figures would no longer cause trouble.

At the conclusion of the public meeting in St. Louis, the following Official Proclamation issued by the Mayor of the City of St. Louis, Missouri, USA was read aloud to the attendees. At the reading of the Proclamation, unanimous applause arose from devotees and non-devotees alike.

#### **PROCLAMATION**

WHEREAS, The City of St. Louis has been apprised that Sri Sathya Sai Baba is celebrating His 80th Birthday; and

WHEREAS, Sri Sathya Sai Baba is one of the most revered spiritual teachers in the world today whose life and message are inspiring millions of people throughout the world to turn Godward and to lead a more purposeful and moral life; and

WHEREAS, Sri Sathya Sai Baba was born as Sathyanarayana Raju in Puttaparthi, a remote village in the State of Andhra Pradesh in southern India. At the age of fourteen, He proclaimed His mission to bring about the spiritual regeneration of humanity by demonstrating and teaching the highest principles of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence; and

WHEREAS, Throughout His life work, Sri Sathya Sai Baba has established an educational system which includes primary and secondary schools and an accredited university, offering undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degrees with no fees to the students. He has also established four hospitals, two of which provide advanced tertiary care and The Sri Sathya Sai Organisation; and

WHEREAS, The City of St. Louis is pleased and honoured to recognise Sri Sathya Sai Baba for all of His humanitarian work and extends best wishes to Him for good health, peace and happiness as He continues His journey along life's path.

Now, therefore, I, Francis G. Slay, Mayor of the City of St. Louis, do hereby proclaim 11th September 2005 as:

**“SRI SATHYA SAI BABA DAY”  
IN THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS**

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the seal of the City of St. Louis, this 11th day of September, A.D. 2005.

*– Mayor of the City of St. Louis*

**United Kingdom:** The Duke of Edinburgh's Award aims to provide an enjoyable, challenging and rewarding programme of personal development for young people between the ages of 14 and 25, which is of the highest quality and the widest reach. The Award is an opportunity for young people to build their self-esteem and develop confidence, to demonstrate that they are making a conscious effort to do something positive and constructive with their time, to learn new skills for the workplace or for personal development, to demonstrate and develop qualities such as initiative, reliability, adaptability, determination, enterprise, responsibility and community awareness.

On 9th August 2005, Sri Sathya Sai Organisation (UK) formalised its partnership with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme by signing the much-coveted Operating Licence Agreement. This gives the Organisation the mandate and authority to run the Award scheme within the structure of the UK Sai Organisation. Henceforth, throughout United Kingdom, every Region, Centre, and the Sathya Sai School will now come under this Licence. The Duke of Edinburgh's Office first became interested in the Sai Organisation when the work of the National UK Youth Pilgrimage was brought to their attention. The London Regional Officer of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, Wayne Wreglesworth, said: *“I have been waiting for an Organisation like this. If I can leave an Organisation like this to the Award Scheme before I retire, then I will consider myself a very happy man.”* At present, all boroughs offer the Award in over 50% of secondary schools and there are over 35,000

participants from every background and community supported by over 7,000 volunteers. At present, there are 15 independent Operating Authorities and this now includes Sri Sathya Sai Organisation (UK).

At the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Ceremony, hosted by the National Youth Coordinating Committee on Saturday, 3rd September at Savoy Place in London, 160 youth from the National UK Youth Pilgrimage received their Duke of Edinburgh's Award certificates in front of an audience of 450 people. Presiding over the ceremony was the Chief Executive of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, Peter Westgarth, and the Award Scheme's London Regional Officer, Wayne Wreglesworth. Both notables were extremely impressed with the Sai Organisation and in particular the calibre of its youth. In his address, Mr. Peter Westgarth stated that they had a lot to learn from the Sai Organisation, especially from its Founder. Furthermore, a formal invitation from the Palace will be sent later in the year for a private audience with His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh, where Sri Sathya Sai Organisation UK will personally receive the Licence Agreement from him. Subsequently, the UK National Youth Wing has been asked to act as advisers for the forthcoming 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme in 2006. This truly is a historic landmark event in the history of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of UK and a befitting tribute to our Beloved Lord Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba during His 80th year of Love in Action.

## **2. Medical Camps**

**Indonesia:** Since 2000, religious conflict has terrorised parts of Sulawesi (Poso) and claimed thousands of victims. On 28th May 2005, twin bombs exploded about 15 minutes apart in a crowded market in the town of Tentena, killing 22 people and injuring at least another 50. In response to this tragedy, on 1st June 2005, a team of 5 Sai workers, with the help of local police, distributed emergency relief supplies such as food, water, milk, medicines, medical equipment and other basic necessities at the public hospital 'Sinar Kasih – Tentena.'

On 29th May 2005, Sai Study Group – Makassar organised a medical camp at Kelurahan Tamagapa. The camp focused on polio awareness to educate the villagers about the dangers of the disease and the importance of immunisation. Dental health services were also provided at this camp which saw the loving participation of 22 doctors and dentists along with 30 volunteers. Tooth extractions and treatment were provided to 55 patients. In addition, 105 children were counselled about dental hygiene and were taught how to properly brush their teeth.

**Philippines:** On 22nd May 2005, Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Philippines launched the 'Take Better CARE' (TB CARE) project. Under the auspices of this project, 80 children of Prayer Mountain, Antipolo City will receive treatment for pulmonary tuberculosis. Each group is personally administered the daily dosage by a health worker, who also monitors the progress (X-ray and sputum tests) and other health concerns of the child. The medications are provided by the volunteers of the Sai Organisation. This project will culminate in November 2005, coinciding with Bhagavan's 80th Birthday — by which time the patients should be completely cured of tuberculosis with Swami's grace.

## **3. Community Service Programmes**

**Russia:** On 9th and 10th July 2005, a two-day volunteer camp was held in Vasil'ki village of Belarus. 9 volunteers participated in this camp which involved dismantling and reconstruction of the children's playground at the village school. The school fence was painted with bright colours and the school toilets were repaired. The Sai workers also provided clothes, shoes, hygiene items (baby shampoo, baby cream, soap, tooth paste) and food products (cereals, sunflower oil, sugar, condensed milk, caramel) to the needy families in the community. The fruit garden in the kolkhoz (collective farm) was cleared of old dried branches and trees. The chairman of the cooperative agricultural enterprise and director of the school as well as the village-folk were touched and inspired by the loving selflessness and teamwork of Sai workers.

**Canada:** From 11th to 15th July, the first ever SSEHV Holiday Camp was successfully organised and conducted by Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organisation of Canada. The Camp was one of the first initiatives that emerged from the Character Education Symposium and SSEHV Workshop held earlier this year. The request to conduct the camp came immediately after the symposium from the Principal of Brookview Middle School that is situated in a low-income area of Toronto. With its theme 'Image is Everything', the five-day camp encouraged students to explore their strengths, goals, and personal choices, and aimed to facilitate the realisation that the internal image of oneself (i.e. who we really are) overrides that of the external self-portrayal (i.e. who others want us to be or who we pretend to be). The students were grouped into four teams, and each team was presented with daily challenges designed to encourage self-confidence, initiative, courage, leadership, teamwork and problem-solving. A variety of interactive group and sporting activities increased self-awareness of the student's inherent strengths in relation to the five human values and supported a positive view of life. Twenty-four students from grades six, seven and eight participated in the camp and came from diverse ethnic backgrounds. By the end of the camp, all participants including the volunteers, the principal and the students had developed a special bond of love and friendship. In her appreciation letter to the Sai Organisation, the school principal wrote, *"Many thanks for introducing the values programme in the form of a summer camp. The young facilitators (youth volunteers) were superb and of the highest calibre. The Brookview students made incredible gains from all the activities and relationships which were forged and fostered through your magnificent programme."*

– **Prasanthi Council**

## **B H A R A T**

**Andhra Pradesh:** Vijayanagaram district carried out "Sri Sathya Sai Divya Paduka Ratha Yatra" for 80 days covering 282 villages, conducting Sri Sathya Sai Vratas, Bhajans, service activities, spiritual talks and cultural programmes. This district selected 600 very helpless persons from all over the district and gave them food provisions. It gave footwear to 61 selected persons, provided protein food and fruits to 15 pregnant women, carried out Narayana Seva to 1700 poor persons at different places in the district, distributed new clothes to 124 selected persons, gave umbrellas to 10 selected poor people, planted 80 saplings and distributed milk in the maternity centre at Vijayanagaram to the newly born babies and their mothers. This district conducted four veterinary camps at Mujeru, treating 1732 animals, Azzada, treating 600 cattle, Paradhi, treating 290 animals and Ballanki, treating 2206 animals. This district conducted four medical camps at P. Chakarapalli,

examining 130 patients, Metta Valasa, treating 65 patients, L. Kota, treating 64 patients and Tekkali, examining 202 patients. All these services were part of Bhagavan's 80th Birthday celebrations.

**Assam, Manipur and N.E. States:** The people living next to Sri Govindaji Temple in Imphal East were undergoing a lot of suffering for want of drinking water. To relieve them of this great problem, Sai devotees of Imphal East district started cleaning the unused pond of this temple in phases in June 2005. The old marshy pond covered with long-rooted water hyacinth and shrubby herbs was cleared and cleaned. The highlight of the activity was that only 15 youth and 2 elders could complete the work within an unexpected period with Bhagavan's grace. Another pond was also cleared with lime and other cleaning materials to become bacteria free.

**Karnataka:** Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Bangalore Urban District celebrated the Sahasra Chandra Darshana Divya Mahotsavam as part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan at Brindavan, Bangalore from Friday, 26th August 2005 to Monday, 29th August 2005. Brindavan Campus was tastefully decorated for the unique occasion. In the Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall, nine Homa Kundas were built. Apart from the above, 1008 Kalashas were placed below the Santhi Vedika, on either side of Lord Vinayaka idol with a special rostrum for three main Kalashas and for Padukas. Well decorated idols of Sri Sathyanarayana, Sri Mahalakshmi and Sri Krishna were consecrated.

Starting with Maha Ganapathi Homa and Sri Sai Prarthana on 26th August 2005, Raksha Bandhan was performed on the couples who were selected to perform the Homas. On the next two days, Navagraha Nakshatra Homa, Bhagavadgita Homa, Sri Sai Gayatri and Dhanvantari Homa, Sudarshan and Mrutyunjaya Homa, along with Parayanams (Veda chanting) were held. On the final day, Monday 29th instant, Poornahuti, Sahasra Kalasabhishekam to Swami's Padukas, Veda Parayanam and Mahamangalarati were performed.

More than 250 couples from Karnataka performed the Homas. Thousands of devotees from all over Bangalore and Karnataka and also from other States visited Brindavan on this occasion. There was a stirring talk by Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy after the Poornahuti. It was a thrilling experience, saturated with devotion for all the devotees who participated in this grand event.

**Kerala:** 'Sai Neethi', the forum of lawyers, is conducting workshops all over Kerala to spread the Divine Message of love and service. At Trichur, 75 lawyers and 15 judicial officers attended the one-day workshop.

Under Sri Sathya Sai Deena- janoddharana Project, the 15th centre was opened at Quilon for the mentally challenged children.

Under Sri Sathya Sai Vasthudhara Project, houses are constructed and allotted to poor and needy people. In Kannur district, five houses were given to the needy families. At Nayarambalam in Ernakulam district, a house was constructed and given to a family of three mentally challenged children. Allepey district also provided a house for a very poor family of two children studying for engineering.

The Sai Organisation is now concentrating on Mother and Child Programme. Under Ammayum Kunjum Programme, all the needs of needy mothers and children are completely taken care of.

Sai Youth members are fully involved in regular Grama Seva as per the oath taken by them during the 3rd Sadhana Camp at Prasanthi Nilayam in April 2005.

**Tamil Nadu:** A Blood Donation Day was organised by Chennai Metro and Vellore districts of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Tamil Nadu on 18th September 2005. Year after year and throughout the year, this noble Seva is carried out by Sai brothers and sisters to save precious human lives. To make this year's Blood Donation Day unique and purposeful in spreading the message of our Beloved Bhagavan, Sai volunteers all over Tamil Nadu campaigned on a door-to-door basis to gather prospective donors.

Blood donation centres were organised at various vantage points in the premises of schools as well as in the nearby hospitals. A total of 1,148 devotees of various blood group categories willingly donated "Liquid Love" with constant Namasmara. In fact, every blood donation centre was reverberating with Sai Bhajans and the entire environment was charged with love of Sai.

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Tamil Nadu has been organising a 24 hours, round the clock Liquid Love Donors Seva at Sundaram for the past seven years to cater to the needs of patients irrespective of their caste, creed and economic status.

## Chinna Katha

## COVETOUSNESS

A LANDLORD STARTED searching for land to add a hundred acres to his existing piece of land. At first, he thought of purchasing land in the region of Nagarjuna Sagar, but he felt that the price of land there was very high. Meanwhile, someone suggested to him that land in the Himalayan region was pretty cheap. The landlord immediately set out for the Himalayan region. There he met a person who wanted to sell his land. Finding the price quite cheap, the landlord became very happy. However, the person who was prepared to sell his land told him, "Sir, I will sell the land at the price of your liking. However, there is another small condition." "What is that?", enquired the landlord. The seller of land said, "Whatever area you encircle by walking from morning to evening, that much I will give you free." The next day the landlord got up early and got ready with great enthusiasm for the task without wasting time on eating anything. He ran from morning till evening in order to cover the maximum land. It became dark; he felt very weak and tired. But he did not leave hope. There were still ten yards of land left to be covered according to the goal he had set for himself. But he felt giddy and fell down on the ground as his heart failed. People all around rushed towards him and found the poor fellow dead. The land seller asked, "Now, how much land will be sufficient for him?" "Six feet is enough", interjected someone.

See! He lost even his life due to his covetousness.

### **Back Cover Matter**

#### **Sathya Sai Avatar**

On previous occasions when God incarnated on earth, the bliss of recognising Him in the incarnation was vouchsafed only after the physical embodiment had left the world, in spite of patent evidences of His grace. The loyalty and devotion they commanded from men arose through fear and awe at their superhuman powers and skills. But ponder a moment on this Sathya Sai manifestation. In this age of rampant materialism, aggressive disbelief and irreverence, what is it that brings to Him the adoration of millions from all over the world? You will be convinced that the basic reason for this is the fact that this is the supra worldly Divinity in human form.

- *Baba*

**NOVEMBER 2005**

**Special Issue on the Humanitarian Work of  
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

**EDITORIAL**

**EXPERIENCING DIVINE GLORY**

MAN has been trying to fathom the mystery of the universe and its creation since the dawn of human history. The Vedas, which are the most ancient texts of the world, also dwell on this subject in depth. According to the Vedas, the universe is as perfect and full as its Creator. The fundamental truth of the wholeness and fullness of the universe is stated in the following verse of “Isavasyopanishad”:

*Purnamada Purnamidam Purnat Purnamudachyate,  
Purnasya Purnamadaya Purnameva Avashishyate.*

(That is full; this is also full. From the perfect fullness of Brahman came the perfect fullness of this universe, leaving perfect fullness as the remainder.)

Governed as it is by divine cosmic laws, the functioning of the universe is also absolutely perfect. It maintains perfect wholeness at the cosmic level as human organism demonstrates it at the microscopic level. Just as any malfunctioning in one part of the body evokes automatic reaction from the whole body, similarly, any disturbance in any part of the universe affects the whole of it and gives rise to spontaneous reaction. The consciousness that is immanent in man permeates the entire universe also. Individual consciousness of man is therefore closely linked with cosmic consciousness. When colossal changes occur in the total consciousness of mankind on earth, there occur drastic changes in the universe which tries to restore the harmony and equilibrium affected by these changes. Thus, the cosmic law which operates in the universe comes into action to correct the errors committed by the individuals constituting the cosmos. To save the world from chaos and destruction, divine forces intervene at such junctures. Saints, sages and seers are born on earth to bring about correction in the consciousness of man and avert massive disasters. However, at certain critical periods of human history, God Himself incarnates on earth in human form. In the vocabulary of Indian spirituality, these incarnations are called Avatars. They operate on much larger scale than the saints and sages, annihilate the evil forces, protect the righteous and re-establish Dharma on firm footing in the heart of man as Dwapar Yuga Avatar, Lord Krishna declares in the Bhagavadgita:

*Paritranaya Sadhunam Vinashayacha Dushkritam,  
Dharma Samsthapanarthaya Sambhavami Yuge Yuge.*

(To protect the righteous people and to destroy the wicked ones, I incarnate from Age to Age to establish Dharma.)

Avatars promote goodness and human values and bring about large-scale transformation in the consciousness of man so as to restore Dharma to its pristine glory. The word Dharma here does not refer to a particular religion as it is understood in the present sense of the term. It is the eternal religion of man and so it is called Sanathana Dharma. Sanathana Dharma has no founder unlike other religions of the world which are based on the lives of their founders. It is rooted in the Vedas which are eternal and timeless. Explaining the divine origin of the Vedas, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba says, “The Vedas have not emanated from any human individual. They are, in fact, words and sounds that have been uttered by God”.

Bhagavan has declared that He has incarnated on earth for Dharma Rakshana and Veda Poshana (protection of Dharma and fostering of the Vedas). Bhagavan has therefore been promoting the teaching of the Vedas and exhorting mankind to adhere to truth, love,



righteousness and honesty in life which will certainly reinforce Sanathana Dharma, raise the consciousness of man and restore balance, harmony and equilibrium of the universe. Sanathana Dharma is, in fact, the most precious gift to man by the Supreme Being who is called by different names, like God, Allah, Bhagavan, Paramatma, Brahman or Ishwar by different people of the world. Bhagavan has incarnated to fulfil His Divine Mission of protection of Dharma and redemption of mankind. He has emphatically declared: "The calamity that has come upon mankind will be averted. A new Golden Age will recur. I shall not fail. It is not the nature of Avatars to fail." To further emphasise His point, Bhagavan has declared on numerous occasions that He has come with full glory of God to accomplish the mission He has undertaken. To quote His words: "In My present Avatar, I have come armed with fullness of the power of Formless God to correct mankind, raise human consciousness and put people on the path of truth, righteousness, peace and love, leading to Divinity". There are millions of people from all parts of the world who have witnessed the effulgence of Divine Glory embodied in the human form of Bhagavan and have experienced the truth of His Divinity which He has been manifesting since His childhood.

80th year of the Advent of Bhagavan is a singularly significant occasion when we should reaffirm our faith in the teachings of Bhagavan and put them into practice in our lives, lest we should lose the rare opportunity. Jesus said, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you". Fortunately, we are living in an Age when God Himself is knocking at every door of human heart and declaring emphatically: "During no previous age did man have this unique chance. No organisation of this nature was established, no conference of this character was held in the presence of the Avatar and no opportunity was given then to derive Ananda (bliss) through such close association, through conversation and singing together. Undoubtedly, you are all singularly fortunate". In earlier centuries, the cataract of disbelief did not allow a large population to recognise the Divine Beings when they came in the forms of Jesus, Nanak, Mohammad, Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Zoroastra. Let's not become one of those doubting Thomases. Let's open the door of our heart when this rare opportunity is virtually knocking at our door.

Every Avatar is unique and His way of teaching is also unique. One of the uniquenesses of this Avatar is that He keeps Himself engaged in the service of mankind constantly at all times. In fact, no Avatar or prophet has worked so tirelessly to do the greatest good of the greatest number of people as Bhagavan. He does not make any distinction between Seva (selfless service) and Sadhana (spiritual practice). In fact, He considers selfless service as the greatest spiritual practice. He declares, "Hands that Serve are Holier than the Lips that Pray". Explaining the true meaning of Seva which makes a man deserving of God's grace, Bhagavan says, "Though the service of humanity is holy, unless it is merged in the higher ideal of Madhava Seva (service to God), realising the Lord immanent in everyone, adoring the Lord in this person and that, there is no profit at all. One should have full faith in the divinity of man, and service should be offered in the uninterrupted contemplation of the Lord".

Bhagavan has given the essence of His supreme teachings in the axioms like, "Manava Seva is Madhava Seva" (service to man is service to God), "Love All, Serve All", "Help

Ever, Hurt Never”. These are not mere words or empty slogans. He has put them into practice in His own life, and so He declares, “My Life is My Message”. Bhagavan is infusing these ideals in His students and devotees. At the same time, He is affording them the practical opportunities to put them into practice in their own lives. A doctor in His hospital sees Narayana (God) in his patient and serves him in that spirit. A student going to villages for Grama Seva (village service) and offering Bhagavan’s Prasadam (offering of love) to villagers at their doorstep identifies them with God and offers the Prasadam to them with humility and love. So, any act of service to mankind is, in fact, an act of realising the unity of mankind, which leads man to purity and divinity. Millions of Sai devotees engaged in service activities in all parts of the world attain this elevating experience of expansion of their heart, elevation of their spirit and transformation of their consciousness. All this is happening at stupendously large scale through a global network of Sai volunteers and devotees. Those who want, they can see this massive exercise in the transformation of mankind happening before their eyes. No individual in human history has done this act of mass-scale transformation and redemption of mankind through selfless service as Bhagavan is doing.

Bhagavan has provided succour to suffering masses as much by His Divine Love and immortal teachings as by His humanitarian work which is incomparable both in its quality and magnitude. The last eight decades of the life of Bhagavan are a saga of success of His Divine Mission. Hundreds of millions in all parts of the world have benefited from the humanitarian work of Bhagavan. This issue of “Sanathana Sarathi” is a humble attempt to provide a glimpse of this stupendous work done by Bhagavan and Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations in Bharat and overseas countries. May we all experience the Divine Glory of Bhagavan in its fullness!

— Editor

[Dasara Discourses 2005](#)

## **HOLD ON TO THE PRINCIPLE OF ONENESS OF GOD**

*If you keep chatting all through the day without doing any work,*

*Do you think this is Sadhana?*

*If you fill your belly thrice a day,*

*Do you think this is Sadhana?*

*If you spend the day in inactivity and the night in deep sleep,*

*Do you think this is Sadhana?*

*Is this for which God has created you?*

*You while away all your time in this kind of routine,*

*But this is not Sadhana.*

*Do not waste your time in this manner.*

*From this very moment, strive to know God.*

*This alone is Sadhana.*

*Embodiments of Love!*

AIR IS PRESENT AT ALL PLACES IN the world. It is above, below and all around us. The ancients called it a form of God. God is present everywhere. Though God is omnipresent, He cannot be seen. Only human beings can realise the Cosmic Person by constant contemplation. In fact, human life is the manifestation of divine power.

### **Attain Purity of Heart**

Divinity is immanent in every living being. The same Atma Tattwa (principle of Atma) is present not only in human beings, but in every living being in the world. But one has to have a pure and peaceful heart in order to realise this truth. Our ancients therefore counselled that one should contemplate on God at least twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. By doing so, the heart will become pure and peaceful. The moment you attain the state of total purity, God will surely manifest before you. This should be your Sadhana (spiritual practice). It is not the practice of Dhyana (meditation) alone that can make God manifest before you. God is present as an indweller uniformly in human beings as well as in insects, birds and beasts. Suppose you ask, "Where is God?" the spontaneous answer would be that God is present in you. Many people undertake spiritual practices like Dhyana to find answers to such questions.

Sage Narada affirmed that God could be realised through the nine forms 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). It is therefore necessary for man to remember God and think of Him at all times to experience Him.

There is no one in this world in whose heart God does not dwell. Does it require meditation to visualise such an all-pervading and omnipresent God? There are many who teach different techniques of meditation today. However, meditation is meant merely to acquire purity of heart. Man undertakes many spiritual practices to attain purity of heart. Without attaining this purity, God cannot be realised. Hence, one has to strive to attain purity of heart. No Sadhana would help in realising God if one is devoid of purity of heart. Some people think that God gave Darshan to such and such person. But the truth is God never gives Darshan to people who have no purity of heart. Hence, if you wish to have God's Darshan, you must develop purity of heart. All kinds of spiritual practices are meant only to attain purity. Prayer to God is one of the most powerful spiritual practices to attain purity of heart. When you clean utensils repeatedly, they shine with added brilliance. Similarly, repeated prayer makes your heart shine with the brilliance of purity.

The moment you attain purity, the omnipresent God will manifest right in front of you. See God everywhere. Sitting in meditation is not enough. Unfortunately, in the world today, there is a dearth of Gurus (preceptors) who can lead the seeker on the path of purity.

People listen to others and read books about several kinds of meditation and start Sadhana that catches their imagination or kindles their interest. In fact, one does not need to undertake any complex system of meditation. One can undertake the simple Sadhana of constant contemplation on the omnipresent God. Few teach such simple methods nowadays. Purity of heart is, however, of utmost importance if you want to progress on the path of God realisation.

### **Divinity is Immanent in all**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

You refer to a certain individual and say that he is your father. But he is, in reality, the same Atma Tattwa that is present in all human beings. You marry a girl and refer to her as your wife. But she is, in fact, the embodiment of the divine Atma. Similarly, you caress a child affectionately, calling him as your son. But he is not your son in reality; he is the embodiment of divinity. Thus, all relationships in this world are Atmic relationships only. Truly speaking, real Atma Sakshatkara (self-realisation) is merging of Jiva (individual self) with Brahman (Supreme Self). Whatever you see around is nothing but the manifestation of divinity. How can there be human beings without such omnipresent divinity? Lord Krishna declared that He incarnates in every Age. He also declared that He is immanent in all, but is not attached to anyone at worldly level. The Gopikas who were aware of this truth constantly contemplated on Him chanting the Divine Name “Krishna Krishna!” The very name Krishna brought the embodiment of Divinity before their eyes. The Gopikas were highly evolved souls who had the firm conviction that the same Atma Tattwa was present in every individual, nay, every living being. That is why they could visualise Krishna in every individual and every object of the world. All that we see in the objective world is really the manifestation of Divinity in various forms. People often get deluded on seeing these external forms. The universal Atma Tattwa is present in all of them. It is only the Gopikas who realised this supreme truth naturally and spontaneously. They could visualise Krishna in all individuals and objects. We often refer to individuals as my son, my brother, my father, my mother, my wife, etc., keeping in view the worldly relationships. But the truth is that the same God is manifesting through all those individuals. Hence, one has to consider every individual as the embodiment of divinity. The entire universe is permeated by Brahma Tattwa (principle of Divinity). All the names and forms attributed to the Atma Tattwa are of our own making.

### **Man is the Reflection of Divinity**

Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to worship Mother Kali in many ways. One day, the Divine Mother appeared before him and said, “Ramakrishna! You are getting mad day by day. Why do you confine Me to this form and that form? Do not go by the forms. See Atma Tattwa immanent in all of them. If you want to experience divinity, visualise all as the manifestations of divinity. Whomsoever you come across consider him as the

embodiment of divinity. One may be a farmer, another may be a businessman, but these are merely the names of their professions. The Atma Tattwa present in them is the same. God is formless and attributeless. This attributeless and formless Divinity is present in every human being.” All human beings are, in fact, the reflections of omnipresent Divinity. Hence, consider every human being as Divine and worthy of highest respect. Though God is omnipresent, He assumes a particular form and serves human beings in many ways. Right from now onwards, realise this truth like the Gopikas that God is present in every being. When you develop such an attitude, you can see God anywhere and everywhere.

Radha had a sister named Chandrika. Once Radha told Chandrika, “You are not my sister. You are my Krishna. Krishna has assumed your form.” In fact her devotion to Krishna was so deep that she saw Krishna in the form of Chandrika. She was not deluded by worldly relationships as she attained the realisation of the omnipresence of Krishna. She considered all names and forms as the reflections of Krishna only. This truth was experienced by other Gopikas also. We should also adopt the path of the Gopikas to reach God. Like them, we should try to experience the all-pervasiveness of the Cosmic Person. We should perform all spiritual practices to please God, because when God is pleased, all are pleased.

People go to Mathura and Dwaraka, the places sanctified by Krishna’s presence. You see how people are still worshipping Him as God though He dwelt there in human form long ago in Dwapar Yuga. We should never consider God as human, even though He may have assumed human form. Those who consider God as any other individual can never realise divinity. In fact, there is no individual in the world; all are the embodiments of divinity. I often reiterate that I am God. But I also remind you that you are also God. You should not give scope for any confusion and difference of opinion in this regard. You are all the children of God. Every one of you is the embodiment of divinity in reality. When you develop such a firm conviction, you can visualise God. All depends on your thinking. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as is the feeling, so is the result). If you think you are God, then you become God.

### **Experience the Bliss of Oneness**

Since we do not understand the real nature of divinity, we refer to certain individuals as father, mother, uncle, etc., keeping in view their physical forms and their relationship with us. If people are so deluded on the basis of physical relationships, they are bound to get confused about the real nature of divinity. Revealing His Divinity, Lord Krishna declared that He is Parabrahman (Transcendental Divinity); there is none other than Him in the entire universe. The same truth is contained in the declaration *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). For example, the number 1 is only 1. When you add three numbers to it, it becomes 4. Thus, we go on adding numbers to 1 and arrive at different numbers. However, the first number remains the same, namely, 1. So, 1 is the reality. This is what the profound declaration, *Ekoham Bahusyam* (the One willed to become many) states.

People often use two terms, Deva (Supreme Self) and Jiva (individual self). In fact, there is no Jiva at all! All are the embodiments of divinity only. Since people are not able to

realise the immortal nature of the Atma residing in the physical body, they use the term death for the disintegration of their body. Atma has no death at all! It is immortal. Those who realise this truth, merge in God. For those who cannot realise the truth, Jiva remains as Jiva and Deva as Deva. The feeling of duality persists in them. What is the underlying meaning of the Vedic declaration, *Ekameva Adviteeyam Brahma* (God is one without a second)? Since there is no entity other than Brahman in this universe, it is declared thus. The Upanishads explain our true nature in Mahavakya (profound statement) *Tattwamasi* (That Thou Art). In another Mahavakya, they declare *Prajnanam Brahma* (Brahman is Supreme Consciousness). To whom does this refer? It refers to God only. Thus, all the Vedas and the Upanishads proclaim the non-duality of Jiva and Deva. But people do not make any effort to realise this truth; they think God is separate from them.

God incarnates on earth in different forms like Rama, Krishna, etc. Some aspirants observe differences between various forms of God. Since they try to identify God with a particular form, they entertain feelings of difference. By doing so, they make themselves distant from God and remain at the level of Jivas (bound souls) only. All such differences exist in the individuals only. God is only one. In fact, He is not different from you. He is in you. You are verily God! If it is not so, why should the Vedas declare *Tattwamasi*? You should develop the firm conviction that God and you are only one. When you attain such a firm conviction, you become one with God and experience the bliss of oneness within you. This oneness is most essential. So, develop intense yearning for oneness in your heart. This will enable you to experience your oneness with God. With number 1, you can make any number. Zero has no value, but when it is associated with 1, it gets value. This 1 is the hero. It is God. When you develop yearning for God, you will never have duality. For example, you keep a number of photos of Sai Baba in your Puja room. But in all the photos, you will find that the same God is photographed in different poses. When you realise the underlying unity of divinity, there will be no room for any confusion. Only then will you be able to realise the truth. Whatever I speak is the supreme truth (*loud applause*). Since you are not aware of this truth, you are unable to develop faith in it. This truth of oneness of God is propounded in all the scriptures. Develop faith in this truth. Do not get confused by those who doubt this truth. When you develop firm faith in the oneness of God, you will be able to realise the truth. One who is able to realise this truth will have no doubt. Therefore, make every effort to know the truth. Do not criticise anyone. Do not use harsh words against others. Praise and blame are of your own making; they are the creation of your mind. Do not consider anyone as your enemy. One who is your opponent today may become your friend tomorrow. Do not consider anyone separate from you. All are friends.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

You are worshipping God and praying to Him with great love. Continue to love God and develop faith in Him. Then all your doubts will be cleared and you will be able to understand the nature of divinity in full. Never entertain doubts. Doubts imply duality, that is, the feeling of separation from God. In fact, God and you are one, not two. Everything is “I”, “I”, “I”. Hold on to the truth *Ekameva Adviteeyam Brahma*. For example, how many hours does the clock show? Twelve hours. But in reality there is no twelve. When the hour’s hand crosses twelve it again moves to one. Similarly, there is

nothing that can be called second; everything is one. Develop firm faith in the principle of unity.

God is one. Develop firm faith in this principle. Do not observe differences between one form of God and another. Hold on to the principle of oneness of God. This oneness is the ultimate truth. Adhere to this supreme truth. Only then will you have the supreme experience of the oneness of God. If you are not able to develop faith in this principle, do not make it a matter of dispute and differences with others. Do not ever attribute duality to God. God is one, and only one. *Ekatwam Samajivatwam* (oneness is the fundamental principle of life). Therefore, develop firm faith in the oneness of God.

### **There is Bliss in Unity and Harmony**

(Holding a bunch of flowers in front of the audience, Bhagavan enquired): What is this? It is a bunch of flowers. There are a number of flowers strung together with the help of a thread, with the result that it has assumed the form of a bunch. Though the flowers are of different variety, the thread that holds them together is only one. The same principle has been explained in the Vedas as *Ekameva Adviteeyam Brahma*. This example demonstrates unity in diversity. When you refer to a single person, you say he is an individual. When you refer to a number of persons, you call them a group. Though there is a vast difference in the terms we use while referring to a single person and a group of persons, there is a fundamental unity underlying this group. That unity is divinity, which should never be forgotten. Unfortunately, people today tend to look at the apparent diversity, ignoring the underlying principle. Take, for example, the Pandavas. Who were they? The five Pandava brothers were the sons of Kunti. In the worldly sense, they are five in number. But on the level of spirituality, they are one. Atma Tattwa in all is the same. You may not be able to understand this principle of oneness of divinity now. But if you keep thinking about it constantly and deeply, one day this truth will become manifest before you. (Bhagavan showing a handkerchief to the audience) This is a handkerchief. There are many threads woven together in it. Since the threads are woven into warp and woof, it has assumed the form of a handkerchief. Cloth is one though the threads are many. So, one should recognise the principle of unity in diversity. We find many students gathered in this hall. Each one appears to be different. But they are all the students of Sri Sathya Sai College. In this way, we should see unity in diversity.

(Bhagavan sang the Bhajan, “*Govinda Krishna Jai...*”, and continued the Discourse)

*Dear Students!*

When you all join together and sing in one voice, you attain bliss. You should develop this unity and oneness in every aspect of your life to experience bliss. I am extremely happy to see all of you here (*loud applause*). I attend to a number of tasks and participate in a number of programmes right from early morning till evening. But I remain happy and cheerful all the time. Is it possible for anyone to be blissful all the time? Praise and blame are mere vocal expressions of others’ feelings. I have nothing to do with them. I do not entertain any feelings of difference at all.

*All are one, be alike to everyone.*

- **From Bhagavan's Dasara Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 9th October 2005.**

## **GRAND DASARA CELEBRATIONS**

WORSHIP OF DEVI (Divine Mother) during Navaratri (nine sacred nights) in the form of Durga (embodiment of energy), Saraswati (embodiment of wisdom) and Lakshmi (embodiment of spiritual wealth) is one of the most important celebrations of Prasanthi Nilayam. Performance of Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna during this period adds immense spiritual significance to the celebrations. The culmination of the nine-day-long worship of Devi comes on Vijaya Dasami, the day on which Poornahuti (final oblations) is also offered at the completion of the seven-day-long Yajna. Another important feature of the celebrations is Grama Seva, a Yajna of service to mankind which is performed during this period. Soul-uplifting Vedic chants, study of sacred scriptures, talks of erudite scholars on spiritual subjects and above all Divine Discourses of Bhagavan fill the entire milieu with divine vibrations. Dasara was celebrated in this sacred manner at Prasanthi Nilayam during this year also.

### **Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna**

On the morning of 4th October 2005, Veda Purusha Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba came to Bhajan Mandir of Sai Kulwant Hall and blessed the sacred Kalasha for commencing worship of Devi for the next nine days. Mandir priest started the Puja after the blessings of Bhagavan. On the morning of 6th October, the Kalasha was taken from the Bhajan Mandir to Poornachandra Auditorium in a grand procession of Veda chanting Ritwiks (priests) who were led by richly bedecked Sai Geeta and Nadaswaram musicians. Veda chanting Institute students formed the rear of this procession. All the devotees and students thereafter flocked to Poornachandra Auditorium to witness the grand spectacle of the commencement of the Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna.

As soon as Bhagavan was seated on the Yajnasala, two priests started the process of producing sacred fire in the traditional way by rubbing one piece of wood over the other. Soon the fire was produced. Bhagavan blessed the sacred fire, after which it was placed in the Yajna Kunda. Soon after that, the priests started offering oblations in the Yajna Kunda along with chanting of Vedic Mantras. Another group of priests started chanting Krishna Yajur Veda. Veda students sitting on the rear of the Yajnasala also started Veda chanting while three elders on their right started Parayanam (devout study) of the sacred texts such as the Ramayana, Bhagavata and Devi Bhagavata. Another group of students also started the Parayanam of Devi Mahatmya. Simultaneously, chief priest and his wife started the worship of Devi, while another priest commenced Sahasralingarchana and another the Parayanam of Durga Saptashati. Besides, one priest started the performance of Surya Namaskar (worship of sun god). Thus, the whole atmosphere was filled with the sacred sound of Vedic Mantras and other sacred chants. The Yajna which started at 8.30 a.m. continued till 9.30 a.m., when Arati was offered to Bhagavan. Bhagavan then



showered His blessings on all the priests. Starting from 6th October 2005, the performance of the Yajna and Parayanam of sacred texts continued for seven days.

On Vijaya Dasami, 12th October 2005, Poornahuti was offered by Bhagavan in Yajna Kunda to mark the completion of Veda Purusha Sapthaha Jnana Yajna. After Poornahuti, Tirtha (sacred Kalasha water) was sprinkled by Bhagavan on priests, students and devotees. In the end, Bhagavan blessed all the priests. One of the priests was fortunate to receive a gold ring which Bhagavan materialised for him.

### **Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha**

The proceedings of the Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha (assembly of scholars) commenced on the afternoon of 6th October 2005 with the introductory speech of Sri Sanjay Sahni, Principal, Brindavan Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, who introduced the speakers blessed by Bhagavan to share their views with the devotees.

*First Session:* Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak, Vice Chancellor of the Institute was the first speaker. Sri Gokak dwelt on the importance of Navaratri and explained the inner meaning of Devi worship. He lucidly dwelt on how we could attain victory over our mundane desires and inculcate virtues and knowledge of God. Thereafter, Dr. Deepak Anand, a faculty member of the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute, shared his views with the devotees. Dr. Anand observed that our life itself could become a Yajna when the fire of pure love was lit in our hearts. Sharing some of his personal experiences, he emphasised that Bhagavan was pleased with us when we made our life a loving offering to Him. The last speaker of this day was Dr. T. Ravikumar, a faculty member of Brindavan Campus of the Institute. Dr. Ravikumar narrated some personal incidents to explain how Bhagavan granted him opportunities to experience His Divinity. After these speeches, Bhagavan showered His blessings on the devotees and declared that he would make all of them happy the next day by His Divine Discourse. Bhagavan then sang the Bhajan “*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho ...*”, which all the devotees followed with great devotion. The programme came to a close at 6.15 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

*Second Session:* The second day’s proceedings of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha commenced with a talk of Sri G.Srinivas Srirangarajan, a faculty member of the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute. Sri Srirangarajan quoted the Vedic axiom *Advaita Darshanam Jnanam* and said that seeing unity in the diversity of the universe was the main principle of Sanathana Dharma. The second speaker of the afternoon was Sri Shashank Shah, an M.Phil student of the Institute. Sri Shah observed that Bhagavan Himself is the Divine Mother who in the form of Saraswati is presiding over the Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha and in the form of Durga is presiding over the Yajna and in the form of Lakshmi He is distributing food and clothes to the needy people through Grama Seva. After these two speeches, Bhagavan blessed the devotees with His Divine Discourse. After a brief session of Bhajans, the programme came to an end at 6.05 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

*Third Session:* Sri Sanjay Sahni, Principal, Brindavan Campus of the Institute was the first speaker of the third day’s proceedings of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha which started on the afternoon of 8th October 2005. Stressing the need for purity for progress on the path of spirituality, Sri Sahni observed that purity could lead an aspirant to imbibe Sattwa Guna (quality of serenity), which was the stepping stone to Nirguna Brahman (formless

God). The next speaker, Sri Karthik Ramesh, a first year MBA student of the Institute, referred to Swami as Divine Mother and observed that godhood of mother and motherhood of God go together. The third speaker, Sri Sai Giridhar, a student of M.Sc. (chemistry), narrated the story of Nachiketa and remarked that we should take the path of Sreyas (goodness) in preference to Preyas (pleasure) to attain self-realisation as shown by Nachiketa. The last speaker of the programme was Sri Ajit Popat of the UK who narrated a few incidents to show how Bhagavan's Divinity became manifest when devotees prayed with total devotion. After these speeches, Bhagavan showered His benedictions on the devotees by giving His Divine Discourse. After a brief session of Bhajans, the session came to an end at 7.00 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

*Fourth Session:* Prof. V.E. Ramamoorthy, a faculty member of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute was the first speaker of the fourth session held on 9th October 2005. Prof. Ramamoorthy gave an illustration from his personal life and narrated some incidents from the life of some devotees to tell how Bhagavan gave him the experience that He is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent God. The second speaker Sri Sanjay Mahalingam, a research scholar of the Institute, said that it was through self-effort of eradication of vices and inculcation of virtues like Vairagya (detachment), Viveka (discrimination), Mumukshutwa (yearning for liberation) that man could raise himself. This, he said, was the real meaning of worshipping Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. Thereafter, Bhagavan blessed the devotees with His Divine Discourse (full text given elsewhere in this issue). The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.50 p.m.

*Fifth Session:* Fifth session of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha started on the afternoon of 10th October 2005 with the talk of Dr. Rajeshwari Patel, a faculty member of Anantapur Campus of the Institute. The speaker quoted the words of Bhagavan and said that Namasmarana (reciting the Name of the Lord) was like a lamp placed on the threshold of the house which illuminated both its inside and outside parts. Similarly, constant repetition of the Divine Name would illuminate our path in the world and also our inner being, she added. The second speaker, Kumari Dipali Verma, a student of Anantapur Campus, referred to Bhagavan as the most compassionate and loving Divine Mother who had guided her at every step of her life since she came to Bhagavan with her father when she was just a child. In the end, Bhagavan blessed the devotees with yet another Divine Discourse in which He declared that there would be unity in the world and all the differences would disappear. Bhagavan exhorted the devotees not to give up the Name of Rama in any circumstances. He brought His Divine Discourse to a close with the Bhajan, "Rama Rama Rama Sita ..." The proceedings concluded with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.30 p.m.

*Sixth Session:* Three learned speakers deliberated on the spiritual topics in the sixth session of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha. The first speaker was Dr. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor of the Institute. The learned speaker described the glory of Bhagavan's omnipotence and omnipresence through a few incidents. Referring to an incident of Bhagavan's presence at two places experienced by a devotee, Dr. Venkataraman quoted the words of Bhagavan's reply and said that the Creator of the universe can manifest in every part of it. The second speaker was Sri S.V. Giri, former

Vice Chancellor of the Institute. Sri Giri referred to a Discourse of Bhagavan and explained the meaning of educate which helped a student to manifest his innate divinity. Dwelling on the importance of controlling the senses and the mind for spiritual progress, the learned speaker observed that man should receive illumination from the light of the soul. The last speaker of this session was Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy, Warden of the Brindavan Campus of the Institute. Referring to Bhagavan as Divine Mother, the learned speaker narrated how Bhagavan showered His love and compassion on him when he suffered from backache in the year 2000. Bhagavan, he said, had incarnated for the redemption of mankind but man should have yearning for it. At the end of these talks, Bhagavan delighted one and all by blessing them with His Divine Discourse. The session came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.45 p.m.

*Seventh Session:* The first speaker of the last session of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha on 12th October 2005 was Sri Ruchir Desai, a faculty member of Brindavan Campus of the Institute. Comparing Bhagavan with an affectionate mother who felt happy and satisfied when feeding and helping her children, Sri Ruchir Desai narrated an incident of Narayana Seva in Kodaikanal when after performing Narayana Seva in Sai Sruti, Bhagavan went out to distribute clothes and blankets to the needy. He exhorted all to follow the example of Bhagavan who has been making millions of His children happy day in and day out all His life by His various acts of giving. The second speaker was Dr. M. Sainath, a faculty member of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus. Dr. Sainath observed that man was the maker of his own heaven and his own hell. Quoting a Sloka (verse) of the Bhagavadgita, Dr. Sainath said that a man who imbibed virtues like desirelessness, purity, efficiency, detachment and renounced the feeling of doership in all his undertakings achieved success here and hereafter. Giving symbolic meaning of the divine pranks of stealing of butter by Lord Krishna, the last speaker, Sri Jagdish Chandra, a student of M.Phil. programme of the Institute, said, “When God enters our life, He breaks the pot of our ego, tramples over it and then leaves His footprints for us to follow Him.” Bhagavan, he said, was showing the path of redemption to mankind in a similar way. The proceedings of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha came to a close with this talk.

#### **Bhakta Surdas: A Drama**

At the end of the deliberations of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha, the drama “Bhakta Surdas” was presented by the students of the Brindavan Campus of the Institute on the evening of 12th October 2005, the sacred day of Vijaya Dasami. Embellished with soul-uplifting lyrics of this great poet saint of India, the drama picturised the main events of his life. Lively acting of the students, sweet music and magnificent sets made it a superb presentation, and a grand finale of Dasara celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam which concluded with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.25 p.m.

## **SRI SATHYA SAI GRAMA SEVA 2005**

THE LIFE OF BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA is a saga of divine love and selfless service to mankind. It is therefore most appropriate to say that 80 years of His Advent are, in fact, “80 Years of Love in Action”. Grama Seva is one of the shining examples of His love in action. It also affords a practical opportunity to His students and staff to see God in man and attain the experience of unity and divinity through selfless service by offering Bhagavan’s Prasadam with love and humility to villagers at their doorstep.

This year also, Grama Seva was performed with the same spirit of love and selflessness like previous years. From the 4th to 12th of October 2005, thousands of students of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam and the students of the three campuses of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning fanned out to 145 villages, carrying the love of Bhagavan in the form of food, sweets and clothes to every household. Nearly 47,000 households with a population of over 2.7 lakh was thus served in the three Mandals of Puttaparthi, Kothacheruvu and Bukkapatnam.

On 4th October 2005, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.40 a.m. and blessed the Prasadam for distribution to villagers. Thereafter, Veda chanting and Bhajan singing groups of students and staff circumambulated the Bhajan Mandir, received Bhagavan’s blessings and departed from the Hall on their noble mission of Grama Seva. A group of 15 youth from the U.K. was also blessed by Bhagavan to participate in Grama Seva. It is appreciable that all of them came all the way from the U.K. specially to take part in Grama Seva with the blessings of Bhagavan. It was a heartening sight to see the enthusiastic students, bearing all difficulties with a smile. Travelling in fifty specially arranged vehicles and chanting from the Vedas and singing Bhajans all the way to the villages, they made the atmosphere saturated with sacredness and serenity. Bhagavan Baba had blessed all those participating in this sacred Yajna with special dress including caps and T-shirts and it was a great sight to see them serving with utter humility with folded hands and “Sai Ram” on their lips. Later, it was experienced by them that on no day did they encounter shortage of any kind during the distribution process, even though, depending upon the rain and other conditions, the population of villages was subject to a quick change. Even those living under trees were not left out and were served Bhagavan’s Prasadam. On the last day, i.e., 12th October 2005, the students and staff of Anantapur Campus distributed Prasadam to the residents of Prasanthi Nilayam. It should be mentioned here that the students of Anantapur Women’s College played a commendable role in preparing and packaging Prasadam overnight that made the distribution possible, so that the villagers received freshly prepared Pulihora (spiced rice) and Laddus before their lunch time the next day.

Grama Seva performed by Bhagavan’s students and staff each year is an example to show to the world that if one truly loves God, one has to be sensitive to the needs of God in man and serve Him in the weak, the forlorn, the poor and the sick. Though the spirit of work is of utmost importance, through the example of Grama Seva Bhagavan is also conveying the important message that service should be imbued with an intelligent thought process and meticulous planning so that maximum benefit can be derived by the recipients from the resources utilised.

## Sathyam Sivam Sundaram

As devotees gather from far and near  
To hail the Avatar's 80th year –  
For the Avatar's supreme sacrifice for mankind,  
Thoughts of deep gratitude well up in the mind.

Attributeless and formless He defies all description,  
Far beyond the ken of any poetic imagination,  
Can words ever capture His beauty sublime –  
*Sathyam Sivam Sundaram* – His personality Divine?

His crown of black hair and orange robe aflame,  
Yes, He has come as SAI once again,  
To save mankind which has gone astray,  
To guide, to protect and to show us the way.

His gaze, a downpour of compassion and kindness,  
His smile of love, warmth and motherly tenderness,  
His hand raised in Abhayahasta above –  
A constant assurance of His grace and love.

In this Kali Yuga to achieve victory in life's game,  
The solution is simple – it lies in His sweet name,  
'Sai Ram, Sai Ram' – this sacred refrain,  
Must sanctify the tongue again and again.

His form should be ever in our mind's eye,  
So that our thoughts are always centred on Sai;  
For remembering Him with each and every breath,  
Is the way to end this cycle of birth and death.

Ushaina & Sashaina Fanibunda

## TWIN TOWERS OF HEALING

- Dr. A.N. Safaya

DESIRE TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE about the Divine and its manifestations including the phenomenon of life in the living has been in the human mind since the beginning of human intellectual evolution. Along side it, there has been the urge for the practice of the art of healing the afflictions and injuries of the human form. The two have been together since eternity. The Vedas, which present the most ancient documentation on spirituality, amply exemplify the togetherness of thoughts on Divinity and the art of healing.

**The Principles of Arogya**

It is therefore but natural that Bhagavan Baba emphasised the importance of human body and mind remaining in a state of good health to achieve the desired results when He initiated the Sai Seva Mission for the service of mankind. Advocating the importance of the awareness of Divinity and the practice of the principles of spirituality, He emphasises the need for the prevention of bad health and avoiding unhealthy personal hygiene and unhealthy lifestyle. Every now and then, Bhagavan keeps on laying stress on the observance of good and healthy principles of personal hygiene, food, nutrition, and healthy lifestyle.

Bhagavan advocates the golden principles of Arogya (absence of ill health). Seva Dal volunteers of Sri Sathya Sai Samithis all over the country are spreading the awareness of these principles effectively and diligently. Under this programme of awareness, society is going on a steady march, at grass root level, towards a state of positive health for its members. This is how Sai Health Mission took its first step towards Arogya with the message that it was the foremost duty of man to keep his body healthy.

### **Sri Sathya Sai General Hospitals**

The second step in the direction of treatment of disease, once it had occurred, was the establishment of two Sri Sathya Sai General Hospitals, one at Prasanthi Nilayam and other at Whitefield, Bangalore. These two general hospitals look after the patients of all general ailments, conduct tests, give treatment, drugs and do surgical interventions completely free of charge. Nearly one crore patients have been benefited by the services of these two hospitals since their inception years ago.

### **Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Prasanthi Nilayam**

The third step was to establish the twin towers of Sai Health Mission in the form of two Sri Sathya Sai Institutes of Higher Medical Sciences – one in Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh and the other at Whitefield, Karnataka.

On the occasion of His Birthday on 23rd November 1990, Bhagavan made a momentous declaration of establishing a Super Speciality Hospital in Puttaparthi for highly specialised treatment of diseases of heart, kidney and eyes. As a consequence of this Divine Sankalpa of Bhagavan, Institute of Higher Medical Sciences was conceptualised, planned and built in a record time of six months. It was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister of India, Sri P.V. Narasimha Rao on 22nd November 1991 and started functioning fully from that day. It has never looked back. Established in an architecturally and aesthetically beautiful building, which sits majestically in the centre of its sprawling lush green lawns, it lodges the specialities of cardiology, cardio- thoracic surgery, urology, ophthalmology, anaesthesiology, laboratory medicine, blood bank, bio-medical and general engineering services. The staff working in these departments is hand picked, well chosen with care and dedicated to the service of ailing patients. The equipment used in diagnosis and treatment of the patients is the latest and state of the art. All the parameters of functioning of the Super Speciality Hospital in all its branches are highly satisfactory and of international standard. It is highly popular, well renowned and well known all over the world, and is open for treatment to all, irrespective of the distinction of caste, creed, colour, religion or country. All the diagnostic investigations,

laboratory tests and the treatment including surgery are done completely free of cost to one and all, rich and poor!

### **Service with Love and Humility**

All this workload is shouldered by the hospital creditably and completely free of cost to the enormous number of patients it has served so far. All the treatment is given by the dedicated staff of doctors, nurses and technicians to each and every patient with humility and love, amidst spiritual environment, with the name of God on their lips. The hospital maintains very high standard of cleanliness, purity and discipline with the help of nearly 100 Seva Dal volunteers working round the clock.

Seva Dal volunteers are the dedicated devotees of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and come by turn from every State of the country under a laid down scheduled programme. They dedicate their Seva at the Divine Feet of Bhagavan Baba and work in the hospital in honorary capacity for varied intervals of time of few days to few weeks or months. This is an excellent example of community participation in the healthcare programme. Middle level management and the care of the equipment including its preventive maintenance is done by a group of Technical Officers who are highly skilled graduates and postgraduates from Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, a deemed university. Their dedication and diligence is responsible for nearly 100 per cent uptime of all the equipment of the Institute. This Institute of excellence has developed within typical rural environment and has been functioning in a purely rural setting since its inception. Of course, now an airport and a railway station have come up in close proximity, a great boon for the patients and their attendants. Patients of concerned specialities come from all over the country and are examined fully. Urgent cases are given prompt medical attention and those who can wait are put on waiting list and are called when their turn comes. Attendants of patients have a dormitory facility with a canteen attached.

### **Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Whitefield**

Bhagavan's infinite love and compassion for the suffering masses concretised in the establishment of yet another Super Speciality Hospital at Whitefield, Bangalore. It is, in fact, a second Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences. The Institute was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister of India, Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee on 19th January 2001. It is functional since then. The Institute is situated in a fully developed urban-cum-industrial setting, in fact, next door neighbour being the world famous International Technology Park. The palace-like architecture of the huge hospital building is breathtakingly impressive. This white brilliant jewel of a building sits pretty in the emerald green lawns surrounding it. It lodges the super specialities of cardiac sciences and neurosciences with all of their necessary support services. It has a bed strength of 333 which is looked after by highly dedicated, well qualified and experienced staff. Like the Institute of Higher Medical Sciences at Prasanthi Nilayam, this Institute also gives international standard treatment to its patients for the diseases of heart and brain completely free of charge. Patients are served by the staff, doctors, nurses and technicians with love, understanding and sympathy in keeping with Bhagavan's principles of loving selfless service.

The hospital is equipped with latest, state-of-the-art equipment; some of the systems for diagnosis and treatment are made available to patients for the first time in the country. A bigger team of Technical Officers keeps the equipment of the hospital in a state of perfect functioning at all times with practically no down time. They are supported by the Biomedical and General Engineering Departments. Though not connected directly with the treatment of patients, the workers of the support departments have thorough technical experience and knowledge to keep the hospital infrastructure and support services in ideal state of functioning in a manner which should serve as a model to other hospitals of the country.

The data and the indices of patient care are comparable to the data available from any other hospital at international level.

### **Patient Counselling Service**

A unique feature in the patient care process of the two Institutes is the Patient Counselling Service. This service has been introduced as a model project in Super Speciality Hospital at Whitefield. The consultants of the treating department of the Institute keep the patient under health surveillance after he is discharged from the hospital with the help of the volunteers of Sai Organisation.

The counselling activities cover all the three phases of the hospital-patient contact period, that is, the pre-hospital phase, the hospital phase for which the patient is admitted for surgery or treatment and the post-hospital phase after discharge of the patient from the hospital. This arrangement ensures that the counselling continues at the locality of the patient's residence also. Counselling to every patient also includes spiritual counseling and offering suggestions on issues like faith, prayer, meditation and control of emotional stress, etc. Such a comprehensive counselling care is not only disease and person specific but is also holistic, and amounts to almost emotional adoption of the patient with a firm promise of help for his ailment. This is a distinct feature of the functioning of Sai Health Mission. The system is in operation in the State of Karnataka at present and is in the process of being extended to all other States of the country.

Our country has incomparably large population and has equally huge incidence of disease and ill health. We have no illusion that these Twin Towers of Healing will treat all the patients of the diseases of heart, brain, kidney and eyes and will wipe the tears of all suffering patient population. No, it will help only a few – a drop in a big ocean! But, these two Towers of Healing will serve as models for establishing such Institutes all over the country and all over the world. Such centres will provide state-of-the-art medical treatment through dedicated staff with love, understanding and compassion, free of cost and without any restriction of caste, creed, colour and country, like these two Institutes provide to every patient everyday.

## **SATHYA SAI EDUCATION IN OVERSEAS COUNTRIES**



*Dr. Pal Dhall*

THE FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM developed over the last two hundred years in the West and now universally adopted is flawed. It fails to meet the real needs of the children, the family, the community or the nation. It was developed in the industrial age and its main objective was to secure economic well-being of nations. It promotes inequality and competition and divides the world into rich and poor nations. Such an education with its emphasis on technical and academic achievements does not promote holistic development of the child. Crime, drug addiction, depression, anxiety, family tensions, violence, delinquency and suicides are on the increase in all the countries of the world. The natural resources are being freely exploited and the planet is reaching non-sustainability. Educationists agree that most of these problems could be solved if we reform education to meet its two goals – development of character and academic excellence. But they have not been successful in reforming education to attain both these goals.

### **Philosophy of Sathya Sai Education**

Sathya Sai educational institutions are based on the philosophy of education propounded by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He gives equal importance to educational achievements and spirituality. He emphasises that education must give technical knowledge as well as skills to lead a balanced life. The children must develop insight and understanding into their own life's purpose. They must develop a lively social conscience and serve society, and develop a strong identity with their family and culture, nation and humanity. Sathya Sai Schools are based on these central features of Bhagavan's philosophy. They aim at human excellence through developing all personality domains – physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual, and not just the intellectual. These schools do not charge any fees. They follow the mainstream government curriculum. In these schools, the culture is suffused with human values of peace, love, truth, right conduct and non-violence. There are now dozens of Sathya Sai Schools in overseas countries. Many of these schools were started in the 90's, and more and more are being established all the time. They are models of how human values can be integrated with the school curriculum to achieve the real aims of education – character development and academic excellence.

Institutes of Sathya Sai Education were established to manage and oversee standards in the Sathya Sai Schools, to train teachers in Education in Human Values (EHV) and to form professional links (or partnerships) with government or private schools for EHV. They have the task of developing EHV programmes appropriate to their local culture, to create awareness and guide government schools to establish such programmes. The question arises as to what extent the Sathya Sai Schools and Institutes have succeeded in their avowed aims and objectives. What is the impact of Sathya Sai Education?

### **Impact of EHV on Children**

There is a global trend towards a materialistic culture based on technology and commerce. In this culture, television, rapid communication, mobile phones, internet, computers and CD players are important elements. Children's main entertainment is from watching TV, and a significant part of their time is spent with the computer, isolated from others. A lot of values, language and role models are based on what they watch on the TV. The programmes often glorify violence and are sensual. Children are, in general, more lonely now because the size of the family is smaller (with fewer children), and

neighbourhood where the children can play with others is less safe. Moreover, both the parents work away from home and the time spent with the family has decreased. As a result of all these trends, children now have less well-developed social and emotional skills. Their language is not anchored in values and their morality is weak. Many children have problems with concentration because they have become passive from watching too much television. The violence that they see on the television makes them fearful and indifferent to pain and suffering. In fact, they see war and violence as a part of everyday life from watching world events.

Sathya Sai Schools counteract these by giving children capacity of focus through silent sitting. Their discrimination is nurtured as also their problem-solving skills. Many techniques used in Sathya Sai Education give children good social and emotional skills and enhance their understanding of morality. Transformation of children is the main purpose of these schools.

People observe that when children from many schools are gathered together, those from Sathya Sai Schools are identifiably different. They are more disciplined, gentle, kind, friendly, and in general have better social skills. Parents are the first to notice their children's transformation. Their children become more respectful, assume greater responsibilities, go to bed and rise early, do not watch as much television, are more attentive and focused, more interested in their studies, and more diligent with the tasks assigned to them. Several parents have commented that their children have become aware of wastage and are conscious of the need to recycle toys, clothes, paper and water. They say their prayers before eating and show respect for food. In a number of Sathya Sai Schools – Australia, Thailand, Africa, Latin American countries, Taiwan, parents have expressed delight to notice how their children are fresh and content when they come home from the school and believe that silent sitting, daily prayers, and vegetarianism promoted by the schools contribute to this. Some parents remark on the peace and harmony in the classrooms and have observed that the school atmosphere is conducive to learning; the teachers are dedicated, caring and good role models. Many parents move from other areas specifically to be close to a Sathya Sai School in order to enrol their children.

Experienced teachers who come to Sathya Sai Schools from government schools have noted that the children are eager to learn. They are loving, more friendly, caring and helpful to others. In the Australian Sathya Sai School, children were friendly even to a violent child, regarding him with affection. They are keen to look after the school, attending to cleanliness and tidiness and their honesty is obvious. In the Australian School when a newly enrolled child could not find his pencil, he said, "Someone has stolen my pencil". The other children looked with amazement at him and one replied, "But no one steals in this school". They take care not to damage books and computers. They are respectful towards the teacher. They trust the teachers more and are open in their communication, regarding the teacher as part of the family.

Similar results have also been seen in the government schools which have had EHV programmes introduced by the Sathya Sai Institutes. The Australian experience is a good example. In Australia, indigenous (Aboriginal) education has been a challenge to the government. Pouring in more and more money and creating better educational facilities did not provide a solution to the poor achievement levels, high dropout rates, and high educational failure in this community.

In one such school, a teacher noted that the attendance was poor, often only 5 or 6 children in a class of 30, and the children in the afternoon were not the same as the ones in the morning. There was hardly any discipline – the playground was a place of fights. The school had litter all over and the windows were broken. The children had poor social skills, and educationally the school was a failure.

A new principal appointed in the school invited the Australian Sathya Sai Institute to establish a partnership in EHV in this school. The teachers were enthusiastic about the programme and implemented it diligently. The results are nothing short of miraculous. Two years later, research by one of the teachers at the school for a thesis tracked the progress of the children and the school culture. He found that the school was a clean and tidy campus. The children were focused and interested in their studies. They had developed good social skills and were now able to resolve their own differences; school fights were rare. To solve their differences they either negotiated with each other peacefully or took their problem to a teacher rather than resort to fights. Academic levels are now at par with other comparable schools.

Education Queensland (the Government Department of Education) has located a research unit in this school. The school principal was “The Queenslander of the Year” and the teacher who had acted as the human values education coordinator in this school, recognised for her work, was chosen as one of the seven teachers in the State to receive “Teacher of the Year” award. This school is now regarded as a model for Aboriginal education.

Another success story is the Sathya Sai U-Turn Training School in Australia. This school runs programmes for adolescents, boys and girls in grades 7, 8 and 9 who are identified as ‘at risk’ of educational failure by their own Government High School. The High School refers ‘at risk’ adolescents to the Sathya Sai U-Turn Training School. Here they are exposed to human values through a programme based on the teaching of Bhagavan through the word “WATCH”: watch your words, actions, thoughts, character and heart. The programme gives these adolescents social, emotional and moral skills, while the adolescents are engaged in blacksmithing, woodwork, leatherwork, sewing, painting and knitting. They work closely with the teachers. This builds their self-confidence and trust and they are transformed. To date almost all of the 43 ‘at risk’ adolescents who have attended the Sathya Sai U-Turn Training School in Australia have improved their educational performance. The local High School, the local Museum and the Municipal Council are now partners in this programme. Both the parents and the teachers recognise the U-Turn Training School as an institution to reclaim ‘at risk’ adolescents. Schools in Zambia, Thailand, Kenya, Nigeria, Malaysia and several Latin American countries have had similar experiences with EHV for adolescents ‘at risk’. There seems little doubt that EHV is an excellent method for reclaiming adolescents who are heading towards educational failure.

### **Impact on Education System**

Because of the benefits both to normal and educationally challenged children, it is not surprising that EHV is being introduced or being contemplated for introduction into mainstream education in a number of countries. For example, in Kazakhstan, an Islamic country, EHV is being introduced widely into the government schools. In fact, it seems wherever there are favourable circumstances — open and receptive society, belief in God, general awareness of the need for values in education, generous donors (for Sai

Schools) and good leadership in the Sai Organisation and Institutes — EHV is taking root and is being accepted by the government schools. Latin America is a good example. 40% of all Sathya Sai Schools are within Latin American countries. Eleven Sathya Sai Institutes are active in training teachers from government schools. In Chihuahua, with a population 1,25,000, EHV programme is being run in 35 schools. The Ministry of Education has set up its own Human Values Committee and is running its own courses in ethics and values. However, surveys by the local Sathya Sai Institute show that the teachers prefer the courses of the Institute as these are transformational.

In Thailand, the government regards the Sathya Sai School as a model of education for wide adoption. Following a seminar on Human Values in Education and Family in 2003 in Malaysia, almost 60 schools expressed interest in EHV programmes in their schools. In China, the government acknowledges the need for education reform to include an emphasis on values. Apparently, the widespread single child family there is producing a generation of self-centred children with poor social skills. These effects are being compounded by the rapid economic progress, which is heightening materialistic trends in that society. A Professor of Education in Guanzao is working on a phased introduction of EHV programmes into the public school system – 6 schools at a time. He has had good results and is enthusiastic about the future of EHV in China.

In Sri Lanka, the Sathya Sai Organisation and the Institute held a seminar with the educators from the local universities and officials from the Ministry of Education in 2004. The Institute regards EHV as the programme that would spearhead education reform in the country.

### **Impact on Parents**

Parents become aware of Human Values through the newsletters and the parent link material that requests them to support their child by practising values at home. The community service that the children undertake through the school also influences the parents as also do the courses in human values for the parents that many Sathya Sai Schools run. In many Sathya Sai Schools, the children stage an annual event, a human values school play or a musical that the parents are invited to attend. In the Sathya Sai School in Australia, parents are actively involved in service to the school. Some take classes in art, yoga and music. The impact of all these activities is enormous. The parents become aware of their role in the values education of their child. Their relationships in the family improve and are spiritualised. In some cases, the children become values activists in the family, many times correcting even their parents.

### **Impact on the Community**

Sathya Sai Schools are acting as the nuclei for creating better understanding in communities divided by ethnic, political and religious differences. In Fiji, the division between the Pacific Islanders and the Fijians of Indian descent has been deep for generations resulting in serious political turmoil including an attempted coup. The Sathya Sai School in Fiji is located near a local village; 40% of the children at the school are of Islander descent and the rest are of Indian origin. The children learn both Hindi and Fijian and the parents from both ethnic groups have reached levels of understanding never seen before. The Prime Minister observed in the Parliament that if politicians could follow the example of the children and parents in the Sathya Sai School, then all their problems would be solved!

In the Kesaju Sathya Sai School in Kenya, the local Imams, suspicious of the “free education” objected to their children praying with children from other religions. The Imams were invited to hold prayers in the school. Now the Muslims are accepting prayers of other religions. This has been deeply unifying for the community. Similar experiences are reported from some of the Latin American countries where Catholic nuns have run EHV in Catholic Schools. They have been able to convince Mother Superior and the Bishops that they do not see conflict between Bhagavan’s and Christ’s teachings.

Sathya Sai Schools in some instances have become useful resources for the local communities. Kesaju Sathya Sai School is located in a semi-desert area with poor water supply, and in conditions of drought the community used to lose some of its cattle due to lack of water. Bhagavan gave instructions where a borehole should be dug for water. The result is abundant sweet water for the school to grow its own food, and enough to establish a farm. The school has built a trough so that the cattle can have water even in drought. Imagine the gratitude of the local community. The African Institute in Zambia has developed a partnership with other agencies to bring water both to the school and to the local community in Ndola.

Almost all the Sathya Sai Institutes around the world are involved in training the local teachers in Human Values Education. The teachers who go through such programmes of the Institute realise that human values cannot be taught, but only demonstrated by the teachers by their own example. They have to practise the values and transform themselves, their schools and their communities.

Sathya Sai Schools and Institutes have not been long established. They are already having significant positive impact on their communities, governments and education systems. It seems highly likely that their impact will go on increasing and in another decade or so they will transform education and herald a new era in which human values will permeate all institutions and all human enterprises.

## Books - New Releases

**Tribute:** A Souvenir in 80 gsm natural shade maplitho paper with spot lamination of front cover page with matt finish wrapper in 300 gsm art card to commemorate the 80th year of the Advent of the Avatar, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, containing five multicoloured photos of Bhagavan in 130 gsm art paper, with quotations of Bhagavan on the reverse side, six messages and 49 articles from Bhagavan’s distinguished devotees from all over the world, narrating their personal experiences studded with mind-boggling miracles that reveal the shining facets of that Divine Phenomenon.

Pages 254 Size 20x28cms Price Rs.70/- (packing and postage extra).

**The Mission of Sathya Sai at a glance:** It is a fully illustrated pictorial book in 130 gsm art paper with full page multicolour pictures on the global mission of Bhagavan’s Dharmasthapana (establishment of righteousness) now in operation in every field of human activity, especially under Education, Medical, Social Service and other humanitarian activities such as Drinking Water Supply, etc., aiming at the happiness, peace and prosperity of the whole world, supported by facts and figures relating to His unique institutions.

Pages 108 Size 20x28cms Price Rs.70/- (packing and postage extra).

**Nivedana (Telugu):** A garland of 32 articles from Bhagavan's distinguished devotees narrating their personal experiences and the transformation brought about in their lives by Bhagavan, printed in 80 gsm natural shade maplitho paper with cover in 230 gsm art card. Bhagavan's photos are printed in multicolour on the inner side of the wrapper as well as on two pages in 130 gsm art paper. It also contains six messages from eminent national leaders.

Pages 120 Size 20x28cms Price Rs.36/- (packing and postage extra).

#### Deenabandhu 2006 - Diary on Sale

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## **BHAGAVAN BABA'S PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY OF EDUCATION WITH A FOCUS ON WATER EDUCATION FOR AFRICAN CITIES**

**Victor Krishna Kanu**

IN THE RECENTLY PUBLISHED book "Water – the Elixir of Life", documenting many drinking water projects of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba during the last decade, we read: "Next to air, water is the element most essential to sustain human life. It is therefore no wonder that in ancient times, people in all societies revered water as a wonderful gift of God. Almost all major religions have an important place for water in their rituals; these involve cleansing, blessing, ablutions of various kinds and offerings accompanied by the pouring of water."

**Water as a Basic Element**

According to the story of creation in the Bible (Genesis 1: V1-2), we are told: “In the beginning God created heaven and earth ..... the earth was without form ..... And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters”. This shows the part played by water in the beginning and sustenance of life as perceived by Bible believers.

Truly, water is sacred and must be treated as such by all its users. Yet, there are billions of people on this planet to whom good drinking water is not available or accessible.

### **Sri Sathya Sai Water Supply Project India**

Responding to the dire needs of the people of the scarcity affected regions of Andhra Pradesh, Bhagavan declared in March 1995 that He was going to provide drinking water to the villagers who had been the victims of acute drinking water shortages for more than a century. Sri Sathya Sai Water Supply Project was thus started which has provided water to millions of villagers of Anantapur, Medak, Mahboobnagar, East Godavari and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh during the last 10 years. It has also met the acute drinking water shortage of the city of Chennai in Tamil Nadu. All this was possible through the unlimited love and grace of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba to all mankind. As He Himself says: “I am always ready to help you and serve you. You may belong to any village or any district ..... I do not have any feelings of difference – religious, regional or national. I do not go by the position of the people or the place to which they belong. All are the same to Me and I serve all equally”. Bhagavan’s example of His concern for the supply of water is being replicated by many countries of the world.

### **Water in African Cities Project**

There exist many dissimilarities in African countries in terms of size, water resources, water management styles, economic differentials, social and environmental norms related to water, etc. Yet their national goals and objectives are basically similar. They all have, as their main goal, the provision of adequate cost-effective and good water supply for all (the economic and social dimensions of water). In cognizance of the fact that these goals cannot be achieved in isolation, these countries have, as complementary goals, the maintenance of a good environment, avoidance of water wastage and pollution, prevention of vandalism and illegal connections; discouraging late or non-payment of water bills, non-tampering of water meters, prevention of water riots and water wars, eradication of corruption and enhancement of adequate sanitation and better hygiene practices through technical and regulatory measures.

In pursuit of their goals and objectives, the African cities have been using different strategies as leverages towards the realisation of their national goals. Overall, these strategies have not produced the desired results of reaching national goals and objectives. This is because of the absence of second tower that lays emphasis on the transformation of attitudes and behavioural patterns of water users and providers. UN-HABITAT have for a long time been searching for a tool or mechanism that will enrich and strengthen Water Education strategies in Africa.

### **Human Values Approach to Water Education in Africa**

The introduction of the water education initiative was preceded by an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) convened by UN-HABITAT in collaboration with United Nations Environment

Programme (UNEP) and the Swedish International Water Institute (SIWI) in Johannesburg, South Africa from 30th April to 2nd May 2001. The meeting brought together international and regional experts on education, curriculum development, urban development, water resources management and NGOs active in water education. The objectives of the meeting were to share information on the ongoing water problem in Africa, develop a broad consensus among all stakeholders with regards to the most effective strategy for introducing Water Education in African cities, agree on sharing of responsibility for project implementation by different partners and develop an action plan for the project implementation.

An important outcome of the Expert Group Meeting was the consensus acceptance of the paper presented by the Director of the African Institute of Sathya Sai Education (TAISSE) with the title “Water Education: A Human Values Approach” which was, in fact, a reproduction of Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s philosophy and methodology of Human Values Education in its pristine form. The recommendation arising therefrom was the pursuance of a Human Values Approach to introducing Water Education for African children and communities.

### **Understanding Water Education**

What is Water Education? From the point of view of the Human Values approach, Water Education is not just about water literacy (knowledge of the science of water, types, sources, uses, treatment, management and its associated problems, etc). These are, of course, important tangibles. However, Water Education is also about intangible things that are equally important. These include people’s perceptions of water, the level of their consciousness towards water usage, awareness of their civic responsibilities towards water, cultural beliefs and practices in relation to water. In short, it is about Human Values – about the country’s sense of duty, the obligations members have to each other, to the use of water itself and to future generations.

A country’s sense of duty ought to be strengthened through Human Values Education towards the management of water and other resources which took billions of years to develop and yet, which would be diminished or exhausted within a relatively short period of time.

There is, thus, a compelling need for the introduction of Human Values in Water Education as a complimentary to the existing technical and regulatory measures in water demand management. In this manner, Water Education will stand firmly on the twin towers of water literacy and Human Values – their understanding, commitment and practice.

The Expert Group noted that Water Education should aim at promoting a better understanding of water as a key social, economic and environmental resource and should facilitate the emergence of a new water management ethic on the continent. It is observed that the introduction and implementation of Value-based Water Education (VBWE) through formal, non-formal and informal channels of learning, especially through the use of the curriculum is a promising strategy to bring about a positive and lasting change in attitude and behaviour towards water at all levels of society.

### **Value-based Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education (VBWSHE)**



Having been inspired by the successful implementation of Bhagavan's Values Education programme at the African Institute of Sathya Sai Education (TAISSE), Ndola, Zambia, many countries in Africa today are involved in Value-based Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education (VBWSHE) programme.

In 2002, TAISSE was contracted for two years by UN-HABITAT to implement the first phase of Value-based Water Education (VBWE) in six African countries. By the grace of Bhagavan, this was successfully completed in 2004. Impressed with the effectiveness of the values programme in the six African countries, the UN-HABITAT again asked TAISSE in 2005 to implement the second phase of the Value-based Water Education programme to include Sanitation and Hygiene Education, known as Value-based Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education (VBWSHE) in twelve African countries. This Cooperation Agreement will end in 2007. This is indeed a major contribution of Bhagavan's education programme, which is essentially philanthropic in its nature, to the upliftment of the African continent.

### **Sri Sathya Sai Drinking Water Project Zambia**

Bhagavan's water projects in India have inspired Sai Education Trust (SET) of Zambia to follow Sathya Sai Baba's example in the provision of drinking water to the poor. In a small way, the Trust, in May 2005, embarked on the task of providing free clean drinking water to disadvantaged townships surrounding Sri Sathya Sai School, Ndola, Zambia. Ten bore-holes ranging between 60 and 97 metres deep with submersible and hand pumps were drilled in five townships where people had been greatly disadvantaged for centuries past in terms of good drinking water. The sprouting out of water and the simultaneous response of many children as expressed in their shouting and clapping was a moving experience.

There is no doubt that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba will forever remain a powerful role model in the provision of water to the less-privileged people of the world.

Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust's

Official Website: [www.srisathyasai.org.in](http://www.srisathyasai.org.in)

Sri Sathya Sai Books & Publications Trust's Official Website: [www.sssbpt.org](http://www.sssbpt.org)

### **BHAGAVAN'S INAUGURAL DISCOURSE:** **SAI CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL OF JOY**

## **EAT GOOD FOOD, HAVE GOOD COMPANY, FOSTER GOOD THOUGHTS**

*In childhood, one develops absorbing interest in play and enjoys the company of one's playmates. In youth and middle age, one is engrossed in cultivating worldly relations and earning money. In old age, one repents for not having this and that; one still craves for money without contemplating on God even at that ripe age. In this way, man wastes his precious human birth.*

(Telugu Poem)

*Why waste your time in idleness?  
Time that is lost cannot be regained.  
Be aware before it is too late,  
Nobody knows what lies in the womb of future.*

(Telugu Poem)

*Embodiments of Love! Students – Boys and Girls!*

IF YOU FRITTER AWAY YOUR TIME IN vain pursuits, what for is your human birth? Have you ever pondered over what is going to be your fate? Time is the fundamental factor of human life. Man should realise its importance in his life. Don't waste time. *Time waste is life waste*. So, you should seriously enquire within yourself if there is any sense in wasting time. If you waste your precious time in young age, when will you work for your redemption? Having been born as human being, you should think about your redemption. You should therefore make proper use of your time right from your childhood.

#### **Perform Good Actions**

Man has to perform Karma (action) in this Karmabhumi (field of action) from birth to death. In fact, human birth has been given to us to perform Karma. We are therefore engaged in performing various actions all our life. But very few make any effort to enquire whether the actions performed by them are good or not. We should undertake only those actions which are noble and worthwhile. Only then does human life become purposeful. In fact, the goal of life can be achieved only when we undertake good actions, foster good thoughts and adhere to good conduct. The Bhagavadgita teaches us that we have right only to perform action and not to the fruit thereof.

*Man is born out of Karma,  
He lives and dies in Karma.  
Karma is eternal and everlasting,  
It has neither a beginning nor an end.*

(Telugu Poem)

Every action performed by man has a result. There will be a good result for a good action and a bad result for a bad action. This is the eternal law. When you partake of a mango, you will have the belch of that fruit only and not that of a lime. In the same manner, your thoughts will be conditioned by the type of food you consume. *As is the food, so is the head. As is the head, so is God*. Thus, food, head and God are closely interrelated. Bad thoughts are not conducive to realisation of God. Hence, one should always cultivate good and noble thoughts. If you eat Sattwic (pure) food and cultivate Sattwic thoughts right from your childhood, your entire life will run smoothly. Hence, you have to be careful about your food and head. If you wish to sanctify your human birth, you should not live like a bird, beast or animal. Having taken birth as a human being, one has to perform actions worthy of a human being. One has to conduct oneself as a human being. For this, one should foster human values. What are the human values? The human values are: Sathya (truth), Dharma (righteousness), Santhi (peace), Prema (love) and Ahimsa

(non-violence). It is only when we cultivate and practise these five human values in our daily life that we will be entitled to be called human beings. A combination of Trigunas (three qualities), namely, Sattwa Guna (quality of purity and serenity), Rajo Guna (quality of passionate activity) and Thamo Guna (quality of sloth) constitutes the nature of man. Unfortunately, there is wide prevalence of Rajo Guna and Thamo Guna in human beings today. Sattwa Guna has become a rare commodity. Hence, it is of utmost importance today that people are taught to cultivate Sattwa Guna, perform Sattwic actions so that they can attain the state of Sattwa (purity).

### **Sattwic Food Fosters Sattwic Thoughts**

*Embodiments of Love!*

You are now at the stage of childhood. This is the right age to cultivate Sattwa Guna. The quality of your life at later stages will depend upon the qualities you cultivate now. What is the use of trying to cultivate Sattwa Guna at the fag end of your life when your body refuses to co-operate with you in your Sadhana? Hence, you must cultivate Sattwa Guna in your childhood itself. If man wishes to experience Manavatwa (humanness) and reach Daivatwa (divinity), Sattwa Guna is very essential. It is only when you consciously cultivate Sattwa Guna that you will be able to attain Sattwic state. You can never attain Sattwic state by indulging in Rajasic and Thamasic acts. Therefore, you should cultivate Sattwic qualities right from your young age. All our ancient sages and seers did their Sadhana when they were young and strong.

*Embodiments of Love!*

We eat a variety of items as food to sustain the body. But no one is making an enquiry whether the food he eats is proper or not; whether it is beneficial for him or not. You should always eat Sattwic food. By having Sattwic food, you will be able to cultivate Sattwic thoughts. And, by cultivating Sattwic thoughts, you will be able to undertake Sattwic actions.

Hence, you should partake of Sattwic food only. You may at times have a doubt that you may not get such Sattwic food. I do not at all agree with this view. Don't you get vegetables and edible green leaves in plenty? In fact, the moment you are born out of your mother's womb, you are surviving and thriving on your mother's milk or cow's milk. Is this not Sattwic food? Can you not live on a vegetarian diet consisting of vegetables, green leaves and cow's milk? Never eat the food which promotes Rajo Guna or Thamo Guna. Why should you cater to the dictates of your palate and add condiments and spices to your food? It is only when you gradually reduce these ingredients for taste that you will be able to cultivate Sattwa Guna. Parents have a great responsibility in teaching the children about the efficacy of Sattwic food and getting them accustomed to it right from their childhood. On the other hand, if the parents themselves prepare and serve Rajasic and Thamasic food consisting of meat, fish, etc., in their homes, how can they expect the children to develop Sattwa Guna? I am of the view that the children should abstain from Rajasic and Thamasic food and demand from their parents only Sattwic food. One has to consciously cultivate the habit of eating only Sattwic food. When we lead our life in this Sattwic way, we will be able to cultivate Sattwa Guna. So, progress on the spiritual path is possible only when we eat Sattwic food.

### **Good Company Develops Good Qualities**

### *Embodiments of Love!*

All our senses are conditioned by the Trigunas (three qualities) which, in turn, are conditioned by the food we consume. Hence, if you start eating Sattwic food, undertake Sattwic actions and move about in the company of Sattwic friends, I am sure, you can transform yourselves into Sattwic individuals. It is the bad company and wrong food that are responsible for all your evil qualities. If you want to cultivate good qualities, you have to eat Sattwic food and keep good company. It is absolutely necessary that you should have Sattwic friends in youth and constantly move about in their company. It has been said, when you are in the company of good friends, you will have good thoughts.

*Good company leads to detachment;*

*Detachment makes one free from delusion;*

*Freedom from delusion leads to steadiness of mind;*

*Steadiness of mind confers liberation.*

(Sanskrit Sloka)

### *Dear Students!*

If you develop bad qualities like anger, passion, envy, jealousy, etc., right from early age, your entire life will be spoiled. You are poisoning your minds with these evil qualities. My advice to the youngsters and students is: eat Sattwic food, cultivate Sattwic behaviour and keep the company of Sattwic people right from early age. I often observe that youngsters today join bad company the moment they enter school or college and continue to move about in bad company. As a result, they cultivate bad qualities, resulting in bad behaviour. *Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are.* Many times, students are not even aware of the subtle changes taking place in their behaviour towards elders, parents, teachers and society. They think that they are on the right track since they are pursuing education in a good educational institution. The education they are pursuing may be good, but the core of their heart is polluted due to bad company. Several bad thoughts arise in their mind even at young age. People often think that it is a natural phenomenon due to young age. I do not at all subscribe to this view. It is not a natural phenomenon at all. It is most unnatural. Since you are consuming bad food, you are having bad thoughts. Hence, first and foremost, give up bad food. Those who are devoted to Me must join good company. But you are joining bad company and, as a result, are developing bad thoughts. Once bad thoughts enter your mind, none can drive them away. Hence, you have to cultivate good thoughts before bad thoughts enter your mind.

### *Dear Children!*

Some parents are not so conscious about the future of their children. Either they are too busy pursuing their vocations or they are helpless in supervising their children's behaviour. But if you tread the right path, they will be most happy. On the other hand, if you are moving about in bad company, cultivating bad habits resulting in bad behaviour, they will be very sad. At the same time, they will be unable to share their distress and anguish with anybody. Hence, it is your foremost duty to keep your parents happy. If you want to make your parents happy, you should tread the right path. There are three aspects

in human life which are interlinked –thoughts, behaviour and result. As are the thoughts, so will be the behaviour and as is the behaviour, so will be the result. It is not possible to have good company if you entertain bad thoughts. Teachers expect good character from their pupils. How is it possible when the students move about in bad company, eat wrong kind of food and entertain bad thoughts? The end result is always bad in such a situation. While taking bitter food, how can you experience sweetness? Wrong food is the cause of bad thoughts.

### **Never Read Bad Books**

*Students – Boys and Girls!*

All of you should tread the right path. Even if your parents for any reason offer you Rajasic or Tamasic food prepared in the house, you should explain and convince them of the ill effects of such food, saying, “Mother! If you serve Rajasic and Tamasic food to me, I will only get bad thoughts. This is not conducive to good behaviour also.” You should also convince them of the need to prepare and serve Sattvic food to all the members of the family. Not only should you eat Sattvic food, you should also read good books. Never read bad books. Bad books generate bad thoughts. Your entire life is dependent upon good food, good thoughts and good company. Associate yourself with good and pious people. All noble souls read good books and cultivated noble thoughts.

*Dear Students!*

You should not read all sorts of trash like cheap novels, stories, etc. Such trash will generate bad thoughts in you and pollute your mind. When you go to a library, you should read the biographies of great and noble people which will help you to cultivate good qualities and good thoughts. One reason for the pollution of young minds and proliferation of bad thoughts in them is reading all sorts of cheap literature. In fact, it is only the mind that is responsible for good or bad thoughts. That is why it is said, *Manah Eva Manushyanam Karanam Bandhamokshayo* (mind is the cause for bondage and liberation of man). Unfortunately, in these days it is only bad books that have become popular. They hold great temptation for young people. Good books have become a rare commodity. A question may arise as to where one would get such good books. You go to good libraries of institutions committed to the moral and spiritual uplift of humanity. Many people are resorting to evil practice of writing bad books just for the sake of earning money. Bad books are spoiling the life of children. Therefore, you should read only those books which develop your character. Frequently, we come across people travelling in trains and buses purchasing worthless books available on the railway platforms and bus stands and reading them with absorbing interest. They may say that they are reading them for passing their time. They do not realise how harmful those books are in generating bad thoughts and polluting their minds. Hence, you must always select books that foster good thoughts and good character. Character is most important.

*Embodiments of Love!*

If you wish to cultivate good thoughts and good behaviour, you must read good books. Many students today consider it a fashion to read cheap literature that is available at a low price, with the result that cheap thoughts and cheap behaviour are generated in them. They run after books and trash distributed free of cost. They woefully lack the sense of

discrimination to judge whether such books are good or bad. They will, however, realise the consequences of their action after their minds are totally polluted. Then it will be too late for them to retrace their steps. It is only through good books that good thoughts and good behaviour can be cultivated.

*Dear Students!*

There are many other important things to be taught to you in these three days which will enable you to cultivate noble thoughts and tread the right path.

(Bhagavan brought His Divine Discourse to a close with the Bhajan, “*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin ...*”)

- **From Bhagavan’s Divine Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the occasion of the inauguration of Bal Vikas children’s Festival of Joy on 22nd October 2005.**

## AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE OF BAL VIKAS MOVEMENT

*A glorious chapter was added to the Bal Vikas movement of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba when thousands of Bal Vikas students, Bal Vikas Gurus and former Bal Vikas students came to Prasanthi Nilayam to meet together and seek guidance and blessings of Bhagavan for its further expansion and qualitative refinement.*

ORGANISED BY SRI SATHYA SAI Seva Organisation of India as part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan, the programme was held on three separate dates for administrative convenience. First of all, the function entitled “Festival of Joy” was held from 22nd to 24th October 2005 in which more than 3,000 Bal Vikas children from all parts of India took part. On 25th and 26th October 2005, an All India Conference of Bal Vikas Gurus was organised in which more than 2,500 Bal Vikas Gurus from all the States of India were participants. Finally, an All India Conference of former Bal Vikas students was held on 28th October 2005 in which nearly 2,000 former Bal Vikas students took part.

### **The Festival of Joy**

The inaugural function of the “Festival of Joy” was held in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the morning of 22nd October 2005. On this occasion, Sai Kulwant Hall was beautifully decorated with buntings, festoons, banners and flowers. Special decorations were made on the dais with fresh roses of various colours which looked very attractive.

*Inaugural Function:* After coming to the dais amidst chanting of Vedic hymns and sweet welcome songs by Bal Vikas children, Bhagavan graciously inaugurated the function by lighting the sacred lamp. At the outset, Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation gave an introductory speech. Sri Srinivasan observed that this was

a unique event being held at Prasanthi Nilayam in which thousands of Bal Vikas children were taking part, some of them having come from such distant places as Sikkim, Assam and other north-eastern States. This was followed by brilliant speeches by three Bal Vikas children. The first speaker was Kumari Shweta of Karnataka who expressed gratitude to Bhagavan for giving this great movement of Bal Vikas to children for their all-round development and total transformation. The next speaker was Master Pranav Shyam Bhat of Maharashtra, who made a fervent plea for spreading the message of love, service, truth and kindness to the entire world as part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan. The last speaker was Master Arithro of West Bengal who reminded the students and devotees that the main message of Bhagavan was love, which all should imbibe in their heart.

In the end, Bhagavan blessed the children with His illuminating Discourse (full text given elsewhere) and exhorted them to eat good food, foster good thoughts and keep good company. The inaugural function of the “Festival of Joy” which started after the arrival of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall at 9.00 a.m. came to a close at 11.15 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

*The Glory of Sathya Sai:* On the afternoon of 22nd October 2005, a grand musical offering was made by the Bal Vikas children to their Beloved Bhagavan. More than 300 children, both boys and girls, from 18 States of India made this grand presentation which portrayed the life, message and glory of Bhagavan in 24 selected songs in Hindi, Telugu and English. The children gave a superb performance by their brilliant dances set to sweet musical tunes of melodious devotional songs. Perfect choreography and flawless direction made it a grand offering of a musical tribute to Bhagavan by the Bal Vikas children representing the whole of India. As a grand finale to this presentation, a replica of the spaceship descended in Sai Kulwant Hall, which added joy and liveliness to this programme. The extra-terrestrial beings from the spaceship told that God had descended on the planet earth, and they had come to pay their homage to Him. They exhorted the residents of earth to utilise this golden opportunity by putting His teachings into practice. The residents of earth then assured them that they would follow Bhagavan’s teachings. At the end of this programme, there was a brief session of Bhajans which were led by Bal Vikas children. Then there was distribution of Prasadam. The programme came to a close at 6.15 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

*Religions and Rituals:* A very educative and illuminating programme about the tenets, rituals and customs of five major religions of the world, viz., Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Islam was presented by the Bal Vikas children of Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Kerala, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh respectively on the morning of 23rd October 2005. The programme portrayed the underlying unity of all religions in spite of their different customs and rituals and conveyed the central message of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s teachings: “There is only one religion, the religion of love”. The programme which started after the arrival of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall at 8.25 a.m. came to a close at 10.40 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

*Sai Prema Dhara:* A stream of divine love flowed to its brim in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the evening of 23rd October 2005 when the students of Sri Sathya

Sai Primary School presented a magnificent cultural programme entitled “Sai Prema Dhara” in the Divine Presence of their Beloved Bhagavan.

Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 4.45 p.m. amidst chanting of sacred Vedic hymns and a beautiful welcome song by the students. The programme began with the theme song and dance by the children at 5.10 p.m. Thereafter unfolded the saga of unbounded love and grace of Bhagavan through depiction of various episodes related to His childhood days, which kept the audience spellbound for next one hour or so. The presentation was made interesting through a dialogue between two students dressed as Prof. Kasturi and Dr. Hislop, two old devotees of Bhagavan. Excellent acting of the children, perfect choreography, well chosen devotional songs, appropriate dialogues, brilliant costumes and make-up, thrilling music and scintillating dances by children were the hallmarks of this wonderful presentation. Fast movement of the scenes and excellent video support on the screen spoke volumes about the superb direction of the programme. Bhagavan sat through the entire presentation, blessed the children in the end and posed for photographs with them. This most enchanting programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.30 p.m.

*Heritage Sports and Games of Rural India:* Rural India came alive in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam when Bal Vikas children of West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Maharashtra presented an absorbing display of some rural sports and games, namely, Daria Bandha, Dariya, Top and Karra Samu, Puchhi and Atya-Patya, respectively. The programme which commenced at 9.30 a.m. on 24th October 2005 kept the viewers spellbound for nearly half an hour as all the teams demonstrated exceptional skill in the performance of these games and sports which form a rich cultural heritage of Bharat.

*Talks by Bal Vikas Children:* This programme was followed by talks of three Bal Vikas children, Master Shivadeep Hans of Haryana, Master K. Mukund of Andhra Pradesh and Kumari Chandani of Gujarat. Showing an exceptional grip on his subject of talk, Shivadeep explained the teachings of Bhagavan. Thereafter, Kumari Chandani gave an absorbing narration of some of the childhood Leelas (divine play) of Bhagavan. In the end, K. Mukund explained how Bhagavan is inculcating values in children like a doting mother and guiding their path like a caring father.

*Children's Expression of Love for Bhagavan through Devotional Songs:* The morning programme on 24th October 2005 concluded with three devotional songs by the Bal Vikas children. Brilliant dance performance of the children coupled with sweet songs full of devotion and set to divine music made a befitting devotional offering of the children representing all parts of India to their Beloved Bhagavan. The songs and dances were followed by Bhajans which were also led by Bal Vikas children. The morning programme came to a close at 10.45 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

This unique gathering of thousands of Bal Vikas children from all parts of India was an important milestone in the history of Bal Vikas movement. It was an excellent opportunity for the students to live with their peers from other parts of India and get acquainted with the rich culture of Bharat.



*Drama on Tulsidas and Kanakadas:* The Bal Vikas children of Tamil Nadu presented a drama on the life of two great poet saints of India, Sant Tulsidas and Bhakta Kanakadas in the evening on 24th October 2005. The programme commenced with a devotional song in prayer to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the universal teacher of mankind. The first part of the drama portrayed the life of Tulsidas and the second, the life of Kanakadas. Beautiful dances and acting of the children supported by appropriate commentary and sweet devotional songs effectively depicted the life stories of these two poet saints and brought forth the teachings of Bhagavan on the efficacy of Nama Sankirtan (singing the glories of God) as the primary means of man's redemption in Kali Yuga. The programme which began at 5.45 p.m. came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.40 p.m.

### **All India Bal Vikas Gurus Conference 2005**

The All India Conference of Bal Vikas Gurus was held at Prasanthi Nilayam on 25th and 26th October 2005, in which more than 2,500 Bal Vikas Gurus from all the States of India participated. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba inaugurated the Conference and blessed the participants with His Divine Discourse in the Inaugural Session.

*Inaugural Session:* The Inaugural Session of the Conference was held on the morning of 25th October 2005. Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue of the Inaugural Session, at 8.00 a.m. amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras. After coming to the dais, Bhagavan graciously inaugurated the Conference by lighting the sacred lamp at 8.10 a.m. The proceedings of the Conference after its inauguration by Bhagavan began with Veda chanting and a song on the theme of Bal Vikas by Bal Vikas Gurus.

Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, two speakers addressed the participants. The first speaker was Smt. Sarla Shah, All India Education Coordinator. Smt. Shah informed the audience that Bal Vikas, started by Bhagavan in a small way in 1969, had now become a big movement with 11,000 Bal Vikas classes with 2 lakh 18 thousand Bal Vikas children in India. Smt. Shah added that it had also achieved qualitative advancement by adopting the concept of educare which was bringing about total transformation in children. The next speaker was Sri Nimish Pandya, Member, Sri Sathya Sai Trust, Maharashtra. Sri Pandya observed that Bal Vikas was a precious divine gift of Bhagavan to Bal Vikas Gurus, through which they could communicate their divine love in a most beautiful way to Bal Vikas children. Quoting an axiom of Bhagavan, Sri Pandya stated that it was love which could bring peace and happiness in the home, society, nation and world.

Thereafter, Bhagavan blessed the participants with His Divine Message which provided valuable guidelines for the deliberations of the Conference. Bhagavan exhorted the Bal Vikas Gurus to understand and practise educare which was concerned with the knowledge of the soul. Bhagavan observed further that instead of gathering information from books, one should know one's true identity by asking oneself, "Who am I?" This, Bhagavan said, was true knowledge. After Bhagavan's Discourse, there was chanting of Vedic Mantras for about half an hour. The Inaugural Session of the Conference came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.45 a.m. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end.

**Plenary Sessions:** After this, Plenary Session of the Conference was held in Poornachandra Auditorium. Bhagavan graced the occasion by His Divine Presence

during the deliberations of the Plenary Session on 25th October 2005. The venue of Plenary Sessions on 26th October 2005 was also the same. In the Plenary Sessions, the participants deliberated on various subjects concerning the concept and practice of Bal Vikas, which included: Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas as a Milestone in the Divine Mission; Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas – a Way of Life; Unity of Thought, Word and Deed; Unity, Purity and Divinity; Importance of Thought Management; Character and Habits; Integration of Five Techniques (silent sitting, story telling, group singing, group activities, prayer); Guiding Posts of Bal Vikas; Role of Bal Vikas Gurus; Role of Parents in Bal Vikas; Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas as the Core of Divine Mission of Bhagavan.

*Valedictory Session:* The Valedictory Session of the Conference commenced in Sai Kulwant Hall after the arrival of Bhagavan at 3.50 p.m. on 26th October 2005. At the outset, Sri Nimish Pandya presented the summary of proceedings of the morning session held in Poornachandra Auditorium. Thereafter, he introduced the speakers who were blessed by Bhagavan to speak in this session.

The first speaker was Dr. Usha Nair, a Bal Vikas Guru from Madhya Pradesh. Dr. Nair dwelt on the effect of Bal Vikas on rural children and gave instances how Bal Vikas had brought about transformation in them. The next speaker was Smt. Nimmi Kanwar, All India Joint Education Coordinator. Smt. Kanwar paid tributes to Mother Easwaramma and expressed gratitude to Bhagavan who is the guiding spirit of the Bal Vikas movement. She then placed the recommendations of the Conference at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan for His blessings.

The next speaker was Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak, Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning who observed that Bal Vikas was a very important component of educare which helped the child to manifest his divine potential. The last speaker was Smt. Jayashree Bajaj who observed that it was expansion of love that could give us the realisation of divinity in the entire creation and make us realise our innate divinity and unity of all mankind. At the end of her speech, Bhagavan showered His blessings on the speaker and materialised a gold chain and a ring for her. This brought a spontaneous applause from the participants and devotees. The deliberations of the Conference ended with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.30 p.m.

### **First National Conference of former Bal Vikas Students**

The First National Conference of former Bal Vikas students was held at Prasanthi Nilayam on 28th October 2005 after the conclusion of the Bal Vikas children's meet and Bal Vikas Gurus Conference held on earlier dates.

On the morning of 28th October 2005, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 9.15 a.m. and blessed the participants and devotees with His Divine Darshan. After coming to the dais, Bhagavan graciously inaugurated the Conference by lighting the sacred lamp at 9.25 a.m. Thereafter, Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation made an introductory speech. At the outset, Sri Srinivasan welcomed all the participants to Prasanthi Nilayam, which, he said, was verily their home. The speaker outlined the steps for extending the scope of Bal Vikas programme which could usher in an era of peace and harmony in the world afflicted by violence and conflict. Stressing the need for improvement in the quality of this programme, Sri Srinivasan however informed the

audience about its phenomenal expansion by telling that there were at present 30,000 Samithis, Mandalis, centres of Sai Organisation in India with one million members. Sri Srinivasan then introduced the speakers who were blessed by Bhagavan to narrate their experiences how Bal Vikas had influenced their life.

The first speaker was Sri Sathyanarayana R. Kumar of Karnataka who narrated how Bhagavan came into his life at an early age when He visited their house. He said that he was lucky to be born in a Sai family, and later in life he had always felt the presence of Bhagavan in all the places of worship visited by him. The second speaker Smt. Meenakshi Dey of West Bengal narrated how the teachings of Duty, Devotion, Discrimination and Determination learnt by her in Bal Vikas classes had saved her at many critical periods of her life. The third speaker was Dr. Sumit Thakar of Andhra Pradesh, who narrated how nine years of Bal Vikas course influenced his thinking so that he could discriminate between good and bad in life. It was the impact of Bal Vikas which prompted him, he said, to consider all his patients as divine. The last speaker was Smt. Krishna Priya Mohanty who said that Bal Vikas revealed to the students their inner strength and it was a strong foundation of their life. The morning programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 10.55 a.m.

In the afternoon, the programme commenced after the arrival of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.55 p.m. At the outset, Sri Nimish Pandya gave a summary of the proceedings of the Conference sessions held in Poornachandra Auditorium and presented the recommendations made by the participants. Sri Pandya stated that Bal Vikas students felt beholden to Bhagavan forever for all that He had done to transform their life. They had full confidence that omnipresent Bhagavan was always with them in all difficult periods of life, Sri Pandya stated. Thereafter, Bhagavan blessed the participants and devotees with His Divine Discourse in which He exhorted them to follow Sathya and Dharma in life and develop firm faith in God to make their life noble and ideal. The programme came to a close with Arati at 5.45 p.m.

### **FLIGHT SERVICES TO PUTTAPARTHI (PRASANTHI NILAYAM)**

<u>Chennai</u>		<u>Puttaparthi</u>		<u>Hyderabad</u>		<u>Puttaparthi</u>
12.20	→	13.20		15.05	→	16.15
17.30	←	16.30		14.45	←	13.35

**Air Deccan w.e.f. 12th November 2005**

<u>Bangalore</u>		<u>Puttaparthi</u>
10.30	→	11.00
12.05	←	11.35

**\*Indian Airlines w.e.f. 14th November 2005 (Monday, Thursday, Saturday)**

**\*Enquiries: Ph: 08555-287444, 287484**

## **BABA: THE RESERVOIR OF GENEROSITY**

## **AND DRINKING WATER PROJECTS**

***R. Kondal Rao***

A unique feature of the Divine Mission of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is massive humanitarian work which has benefited millions of people in all parts of the world. As part of this Mission, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust under the benign guidance of Bhagavan established educational institutions and medical institutions and hospitals for the service of mankind. As an extension of this, Bhagavan desired to provide pure drinking water, which is important for the survival of mankind. The emphasis was on providing pure drinking water to the needy poor, who suffer due to chemical impurities in water such as excess fluoride.

As a first step in this direction, a National Fluorosis Seminar was held in Puttaparthi in 1994 under Bhagavan's guidance. Administrators, scientists, engineers and voluntary organisations representing different fields attended this seminar and discussed measures to be taken to provide pure drinking water to the people. Bhagavan gave the message that provision of pure drinking water was to be taken up as a mission as many parts of the State of Andhra Pradesh suffered from scarcity of water and excess fluoride in ground water. Anantapur is one of the districts affected by excess fluoride in ground water.

Bhagavan suggested to the then Prime Minister of India, late Sri P.V. Narasimha Rao during his visit to Prasanthi Nilayam on 22nd November 1994 at the time of the Convocation of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning about the need to take measures for providing pure drinking water to the areas in Rayalaseema region which suffered from scarcity of water. Bhagavan also suggested that rivers like Krishna, Tungabhadra should be harnessed to quench the thirst of Rayalaseema people and that major rivers should be interlinked. Bhagavan declared, "If there is constraint of funds, I will provide the funds, even up to 200 crore rupees for fulfilling the needs of the people".

### **Sri Sathya Sai Drinking Water Supply Project, Anantapur District**

It is in this context that Bhagavan Baba initiated a massive drinking water supply project in Anantapur district in 1995. This is now known as Sri Sathya Sai Drinking Water Supply Project. I feel blessed for having had the great privilege of being closely associated with this project.

It was Bhagavan's direction that schemes with reliable sources of water should be taken up even if the cost is substantial. It was a challenging task to provide drinking water to about 730 villages suffering from scarcity and excess fluoride. Pipelines were laid to a length of about 2500 km within a span of about one year.

The project was taken up in right earnest. Bhagavan created a special team for its efficient and quick execution. The work was entrusted to Larsen & Toubro Limited, a company which had the expertise in construction and project management and most importantly, devotion to Bhagavan.

It is the good fortune of the people of Anantapur district that Bhagavan Baba provided sufficient funds for the execution of such a massive drinking water project which was completed in record time by His grace.

Bhagavan was keen that the quality of work should be of a high order and that details like sand bedding under the pipes should be taken care of. Bhagavan's generosity knows no bounds and His love is as vast as His creation. Bhagavan makes no distinction between rich and poor, urban and rural. During the execution of the schemes, many representations were made to Swami for providing drinking water to additional towns and villages. In response to such representations, Swami directed that towns like Anantapur, Dharmavaram should be included. The scope of Bhagavan's project got extended and the cost of the project was about 300 crore rupees.

Sri Sathya Sai Drinking Water Supply Project started in March 1995 on war footing and became a reality when Bhagavan inaugurated the first phase of the project covering about 150 villages. The drinking water scheme to Anantapur town was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister on 18th November 1995 and pumping main to the Peddakotla - Puttaparthi line by the then President of India on 23rd November 1995 (70th Birthday of Bhagavan). The entire scheme was commissioned after stabilisation period and pure drinking water was supplied to about 730 villages from November 1996. By Bhagavan's grace, drinking water is now being supplied to all these places without any dislocation. The magnitude of the project can be gauged from the following figures: No. of villages covered 731, population benefited 9 lakh (ultimate design 12 lakh), project cost about 300 crore rupees, length of pipes 2500 km, overhead reservoirs 268, ground-level reservoirs 149, summer storage tanks 8, infiltration wells 20, booster stations 56, borewells 280.

Out of the 731 villages, 451 are covered by comprehensive schemes and the balance 280 villages by individual borewells as sources. Water is taken from assured sources like Tungabhadra canals, Penna Ahobilam balancing reservoir, Chitravathi river and infiltration wells in Penna and Hagari rivers.

To ensure proper maintenance of the completed schemes, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has formed an autonomous board, namely, Sri Sathya Sai Drinking Water Supply Board. Bhagavan's grace continued even during the maintenance phase of the project. Bhagavan allowed the use of materials from the Central Trust for maintenance, which helped in the supply of drinking water to all the villages.

### **Sri Sathya Sai Drinking Water Project for Mahaboobnagar and Medak Districts**

After completion of the project taken up in Anantapur district, Bhagavan desired to provide drinking water to the people of two drought-stricken districts in Telangana region. The result is the implementation of drinking water projects in Mahaboobnagar and Medak districts at a total cost of about 60 crore rupees covering nearly 150 villages in Mahaboobnagar district and 179 villages in Medak district.

### **Sri Sathya Sai Ganga Canal Project for Chennai**

During the year 2002, Bhagavan announced that He would provide drinking water to Chennai, which had been suffering from acute shortage of drinking water with continuous droughts. The city's population is about 5 million now and the projected population for the year 2021 is 6.75 million. The water supply is presently maintained at

about 250 mld (million litres per day) for the city. Various alternatives to provide drinking water to Chennai were examined and it was finally decided to facilitate provision of drinking water from Krishna river at a cost of about 200 crore rupees by improving Telugu Ganga Canal.

Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, under the benign guidance of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, took up the scheme of improving the existing infrastructure of Kandaleru Poondi canal system through which the agreed quantum of 12 tmc of water at Tamil Nadu border could be conveyed. This scheme was not only to ensure full quantum of water being conveyed to Chennai city but also help irrigation of 3 lakh acres of land in Nellore and Chittoor districts of Andhra Pradesh. This was one of the most important schemes taken up on humanitarian grounds, which enabled supply of adequate drinking water to Chennai city, significant sections of its population being under the category of urban poor. The entire scheme was taken up at the request of Government of Andhra Pradesh to improve Kandaleru Poondi canal, which is now renamed as 'Sri Sathya Sai Ganga Canal' by the Government of Andhra Pradesh as a mark of respect to Bhagavan.

#### **Sri Sathya Sai Drinking Water Supply Project for East and West Godavari Districts**

Bhagavan's mission to provide water to the poor continues and as a result, a major project covering about 500 habitations in tribal areas and uplands of East Godavari and West Godavari districts has been taken up at a cost of nearly 100 crore rupees.

The upland and backward areas of East Godavari, which are mainly inhabited by tribals and poor people, depend mostly on borewells and streams for their drinking water needs. The borewells are getting dry and water levels are going down year after year due to excessive usage of ground water. Further, the natural stream waters are bacteriologically unsafe and require treatment. Further, borewell water contains excess iron in some pockets.

It is proposed to provide drinking water to about 220 habitations covering a population of about 2.30 lakh, with provision for expansion for another 1 lakh population in East Godavari district. In West Godavari district, it is proposed to provide drinking water to its 220 habitations covering a population of 4.70 lakh. The surface water will be filtered through treatment plants and supplied to various habitations through pipelines. Two sources have been selected for drinking water. One is the Godavari river and the second Pamuluru, which is a tributary of Godavari and flows throughout the year.

The details given above concerning different projects convey the range and scope of work relating to drinking water supply by Bhagavan. There has been no parallel effort of this nature by any other charitable organisation. Bhagavan's is indeed a unique effort.

It is a great blessing of Bhagavan that I have had the opportunity of being associated with these projects as a designer and also as part of the execution team.

## **GLOBAL SAI HEALTH MISSION**

*Dr. Narendranath Reddy*

In a historic letter dated 25th May 1947, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, at the tender age of twenty, stated: “I have a task: To foster all mankind and ensure for all of them lives full of bliss. I have a vow: To lead all who stray away from the straight path again into goodness and save them. I am attached to a work that I love: To remove the sufferings of the poor and grant them what they lack.”

Putting this resolute declaration into practice, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has been working incessantly to bring about the joyous experience of compassion and love to all mankind all over the world. While the work of Bhagavan has spanned social upliftment, education, healthcare and spirituality, it is the immeasurable impact He has had in each of these fields that sets His work apart. What follows is a small description of the expanse of His Healthcare Mission over the last fifty years.

### **Sai Ideal Healthcare**

While there can be many hospitals for the poor, Bhagavan believed that free healthcare, like free education and water, is an inalienable right of every individual. The public healthcare projects began when Mother Easwaramma suggested to Bhagavan to start a hospital for the poor. Thus began the mission. Baba laid the foundation stone of the first free Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital in Puttaparthi on 23rd November 1954. The five-room hospital with 8 beds was inaugurated on 4th October 1956. Soon this hospital began treating as many as 200 patients daily. Bhagavan visited the hospital often and even looked after the patients Himself. In nearly 50 years since, Bhagavan’s Healthcare Mission has blossomed into a vast global system delivering free healthcare in several countries practising the principles of Sai Ideal Healthcare as taught by Bhagavan.

Healthcare implemented by Bhagavan has always been universally accessible, state-of-the-art modern medicine and delivered with immense love, patience, altruistic care and compassion. His Healthcare Mission involves thousands of healthcare professionals in the world who espouse His philosophy and work under His direction so that:

1. State-of-the-art healthcare is made available to all people.
2. Economic considerations do not prevent anyone from receiving the highest benefits of healthcare.
3. Healthcare is delivered with love and compassion.
4. Healthcare includes treatment of the body, mind, and spirit.
5. Prevention is a primary focus.

What began in 1956 as 8-bed Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital, Puttaparthi is now a 100-bed hospital. Today the hospital serves people from distant villages. Specialists from the world over come here for an experience of selfless service and love. To the villagers it is state-of-the-art healthcare next door. Besides the hospital in Puttaparthi, Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital, Whitefield near Bangalore was started in 1976. This hospital has in its three-decade history treated over 2.20 million cases from as many as 2,100 villages.

In addition, Bhagavan has built two major Super Speciality Hospitals, one each in Puttaparthi and Bangalore, delivering tertiary healthcare. The hospitals of Bhagavan are a shining example of how ideal healthcare should be provided even to the poorest of poor patient with love and compassion without any charge whatsoever.

Inspired by Bhagavan and with His blessings, Sri Sathya Sai Heart Hospital, Rajkot, Gujarat was set up by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Gujarat in 1998. This is the only hospital of its kind in Gujarat and the surrounding States offering quality healthcare services absolutely free to the weaker sections of society.

Besides, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations have conducted 39,500 medical camps all over India from 2003-2005 in which 5.2 million patients have been seen. The Organisation also runs 24-hour blood donation services which have received 28,625 donors in the last two years. In several cities 387 dental camps have been conducted in which 53,256 patients have been seen and treated. Bhagavan has also inspired 1983 eye camps serving 146,780 patients, leprosy camps which served 1060 patients and multispecialty camps including polio, diabetes and school health camps.

Veterinary camps are also held regularly, and to date a total of 388 veterinary camps have been conducted in which 34,811 animals have been treated.

### **International Delivery of Sai Ideal Healthcare**

From its humble beginnings in India, Bhagavan's Healthcare Mission has now achieved global proportions. In order to facilitate international activities with sustained energy and enthusiasm, an International Medical Committee was set up with Bhagavan's blessings. These international activities can be broadly classified under Ongoing Healthcare Delivery, Disaster Relief, Medical Camps and Healthcare Services, Disease Prevention and Health Education.

### **Ongoing Healthcare Delivery**

**Sri Lanka:** A hospice built by the Sathya Sai Organisation of Sri Lanka has been in operation since 2002 to provide loving, compassionate care for terminally ill cancer patients. As one enters the hospice precincts one sees the gleaming white dome of the attractive Sarva Dharma shrine. Since its inauguration, 65 patients have been looked after in the hospice.

**Philippines:** A periodic monthly clinic is run in the Philippines where about 100 patients are seen each month. In addition to general medical care and health screening, acute cases are referred to local hospitals and the expenses for some of the cases treated in the local hospitals are paid for by the Sai Organisation.

**Indonesia:** For the last five years, a continuing effort to provide free surgeries to the poor has been undertaken in Indonesia. As of September 2005, 313 free surgeries have been performed for hernia, lymphoma, cancer and heart disease. The Sathya Sai Organisation has provided free vaccination for hepatitis-B since 1997 for 11337 children. Free clinics are conducted in Jakarta and Medan on a daily basis providing treatment to 150 patients everyday.

**El Salvador:** For the last 13 years, a regular free medical clinic is operated by the Sathya Sai Organisation in El Salvador, where nearly 12,000 patients have so far been treated.

**Mexico:** Since January 2001, the Sathya Sai Baba Organisation of Mexico has been running a medical dispensary, entirely free of charge in one of the poorest and most populated neighbourhoods of Iztapalapa district in Mexico City. To date, it has provided healthcare to more than 20,000 patients

**Guatemala:** For the past 8 years, a free medical clinic is conducted 4 times a week in the premises of the Sai Centre in Guatemala. 140 patients are seen each month for diagnosis and treatment.

**Ghana:** Since 1978, the Sathya Sai Baba Organisation has been organising a medical camp every Friday in Ghana and has treated about 5,000 patients since its inception.

**Zimbabwe:** For the last 14 years, a home is voluntarily run to help the HIV victims by a Danish couple who have been Sai devotees for many years. Many orphans who are the victims of the HIV epidemic are served with Sai love in this home.



**South Africa:** In 1984, a blood donation programme was initiated by Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of South Africa. After 21 years, they are still actively conducting the blood donation drive and on an average 10,000 pints of blood are donated each year. Between 2003 and 2005, 30 medical camps were held and 1,620 eye glasses were distributed after screening 2,700 patients.

**Africa:** With the blessings of Bhagavan, 3,244 cataract surgeries had been performed until September 2005 in Nigeria, Mombasa, Ghana, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

**Abu Dhabi:** A free Sai medical clinic is operational on all Sundays and alternate Fridays offering services like medicines, annual physical check-up and laboratory tests. There are also regular medical camps every month serving approximately 100 patients.

**New Zealand:** In New Zealand, 8 medical camps were organised from March 2004 to July 2005 focusing on disease prevention, education and health screening.

**USA:** In Northern California, USA, a free medical clinic was opened on 8th January 2005. This is called the Ashland Free Medical Clinic and is entirely run by volunteer staff. About 12-15 patients are seen every Saturday for a variety of ailments and treatment is provided to the patients free of charge.

### **Disaster Relief**

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has been organising effective worldwide emergency relief from natural disasters occurring in several countries. Relief has been organised for victims of earthquakes in South America, tsunami in Asia, hurricanes in the USA and conflict-torn regions of the world.

In December 2004, the world was shaken by the devastation caused by the Asian tsunami. Soon after, the damage was assessed through personal visits by Dr. Reddy, Dr. Goldstein and scout teams. Relief was delivered within a few weeks. Support was delivered to deep and secluded areas of countries that were not readily accessible to several non-governmental organisations. Several teams from the USA, Canada, Argentina, Australia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and the UK worked in places that were worst hit by the disaster to provide immediate and follow-up relief. About 30,000 consultations in various specialties, 800 cataract surgeries, grief counselling to thousands of people and 7000 pairs of eye glasses were provided.

The Overseas Sathya Sai Organisation had also provided quick response and medical help after the earthquakes of Talpetate, El Salvador in 2001 and the February, 2004 earthquake in Karangasem village of East Bali.

In the USA, the recent hurricanes Katrina and Rita had swept the States of Louisiana and Texas in a rage of one of the worst natural disasters in American history. The two States had several million people displaced and turned into refugees overnight. The Sathya Sai Organisation of the USA responded swiftly and organised medical and emergency relief.

### **Medical Camps and Healthcare Services**

In addition to disaster relief, the Overseas Sathya Sai Organisation has conducted free medical camps and charitable healthcare services in several countries. The global reach and magnitude of this effort has drawn wide support and appreciation from local media and dignitaries.

A total of 336 medical camps were conducted in the last 12 months when 77,000 patients were seen spanning the world from Argentina to Zambia, in 30 countries and 6 continents. The camps provide primary care, internal medicine, paediatrics, obstetrics-

gynaecology and specialties like cardiology, endocrinology, gastroenterology and ophthalmology. Patient education is offered for heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, asthma and smoking cessation. Thus, the medical camps serve an essential role in the Global Sai Health Mission by providing easily accessible healthcare to the poor and needy.

In order to combat the spread of malaria, Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organisation of Kenya has embarked on a remarkable mission called “Sainet Project” to provide mosquito nets to the high-risk people such as pregnant women and children below 5 years of age.

### **Health Education and Dissemination of Sai Ideal Healthcare**

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has said that the duty of the physician is not only to treat with love and compassion but to educate patients in healthy living and thus prevent frequent visits to the physician and hospitals. Besides this, a task was undertaken to educate healthcare professionals in the principles and significance of Sai Ideal Healthcare. The first step in this task was the International Medical Conference organised in September 2005. This conference was unique and the first of its kind in the world to focus on delivering medical care with love, compassion and empathy.

Bhagavan’s message to the healthcare profession is clear. Healthcare delivery must be patient-centered and suffused with compassion, love and genuine concern for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the patient. It is remarkable that this holistic approach to healthcare delivery was mirrored in the Medical Conference from its initial conceptualisation to the final valedictory closing. The delegates took this message and experience to their homeland and, through their own example, will serve as beacons and examples of Bhagavan’s teachings.

Healthcare Mission of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has blossomed from a free hospital in India to span several continents actively delivering free state-of-the-art medical care and primary prevention with love, compassion and a patient-centred approach.

## **80 WAYS TO SERVE MANKIND**

### **Helping the Less-privileged Sections of Society**

1. Organising Narayana Seva by distributing food and clothes to needy people.
2. Organising free food centres for needy people.
3. Providing Amruta Kalasham (bag of food items) to needy families.
4. Providing rugs and blankets during winter season to poor people.
5. Providing Sai Protein to meet the nutritional needs of poor people.
6. Organising systematic poverty alleviation schemes for the most needy sections of society by adopting needy families.
7. Organising Grama Seva in villages for conducting programmes of total village uplift.
8. Providing training and means of self-employment to needy people.
9. Providing training and efficient tool kits to plumbers, electricians, carpenters and other trained professional workers to make them self-reliant.

10. Organising self-help groups in villages for maintaining sanitation and for constructing public utility conveniences like approach roads, water storage tanks, bus shelters, etc.
11. Constructing houses / shelters for those who are without shelter.
12. Providing help in repairing of houses for those who live in dilapidated or unsafe houses.
13. Setting up orphanages to take care of destitute children.
14. Setting up old age homes for old people.
15. Organising visits to old age homes to help aged people.
16. Providing drinking water to people in scarcity affected areas by digging wells and setting up water supply schemes in rural and remote areas.
17. Providing electric supply to remote areas which are still without electricity.
18. Organising cleanliness drives in villages.
19. Adopting villages for village uplift programmes.
20. Providing the services of agricultural scientists to farmers at their doorstep to improve the agricultural yield.
21. Conducting mass marriages to save on wasteful expenditure on marriages.
22. Organising rehabilitation programmes for homeless street children.
23. Providing tricycles to physically challenged persons to make them mobile.
24. Conducting Seva camps during religious fairs for providing sanitation, medical aid and guidance to pilgrims.
25. Conducting youth camps to guide the youth on the path of Seva and spirituality.
26. Conducting youth camps to provide training in disaster management.
27. Organising disaster management during calamities like floods, earthquakes, etc., for saving lives of people.
28. Organising relief measures for the rehabilitation of victims of disasters.
29. Setting up small-scale village industries for providing employment to villagers, especially the housewives to utilise their spare time and increase the income of the family.
30. Providing electronic devices like iCARE developed by Sathya Sai Organisation of Arizona (U.S.A.) to help the visually challenged persons to read books and to identify people.
31. Helping the villagers to make water safe for drinking by chlorination of wells and water tanks.
32. Setting up agricultural institutes for training the children of farmers in better techniques of farming.
33. Providing value-based education to students for proper use of water and other natural resources so as to avoid wastage.
34. Organising tree plantation drives for planting more trees to combat deforestation.
35. Conducting surveys in villages for providing need-based services to the villagers.

36. Organising Bhajans, meditation and lectures in jails for the reformation of the inmates.

### **Healthcare for all**

37. Conducting health check-up camps and organising health education meets to prevent the spread of diseases.
38. Putting up health education exhibitions to provide guidance to people on health education.
39. Organising medical camps for providing free medicare to underprivileged sections of society in villages, urban slums and remote areas.
40. Setting up free homoeopathic, ayurvedic and allopathic dispensaries to dispense medicines to needy people.
41. Setting up hospitals for providing free medical treatment to less privileged sections of society.
42. Setting up hospices for terminally ill patients like the one set up by the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Sri Lanka.
43. Organising malaria eradication programmes like the Sainet Project started by the Sai Organisation in Kenya.
44. Organising visits to spastic homes to help spastic children.
45. Setting up leprosy home for rehabilitating lepers and providing treatment to them.
46. Setting up schools for deaf and dumb children for their rehabilitation.
47. Providing hearing aids and spectacles to needy people.
48. Providing artificial limbs to needy physically challenged people.
49. Organising medical help and counselling to mentally challenged people.
50. Setting up schools for the visually challenged.
51. Monitoring and improving the health and nutritional needs of expecting mothers.
52. Providing health check-ups in schools and colleges for students.
53. Organising special medical camps for drug de-addiction and freedom from bad habits like smoking.
54. Visiting hospitals and distributing gifts with humility and love to patients on various festive occasions.
55. Conducting free veterinary camps for treating domestic animals in rural areas.
56. Providing the services of livestock experts to villagers at their doorstep for improving the health of the livestock, and for the eradication of diseases of the livestock.

### **Education for all**

57. Setting up schools, colleges and other educational institutions for providing free value-based education to students.
58. Conducting literacy classes to eradicate illiteracy in rural areas, urban slums and other backward areas.
59. Providing scholarships, books and other teaching and reading material to needy school children.

60. Conducting free coaching classes for helping needy students.
61. Constructing buildings for schools in villages with the help and cooperation of villagers.

### **Moral and Spiritual Regeneration of Mankind**

62. Conducting Bal Vikas classes for providing education in human values to children.
63. Conducting seminars to provide value-orientation to school and college teachers.
64. Conducting interfaith meetings to foster love and harmony between followers of different religions.
65. Conducting summer courses on Indian Culture and Spirituality to spread awareness about Bharat's cultural and spiritual heritage.
66. Setting up forums of professionals like lawyers, professors, businessmen, doctors to provide value-orientation to professionals.
67. Setting up exhibitions to spread the teachings of Bhagavan on social service, village uplift and for spreading the values like Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema, Ahimsa in society.
68. Conducting Pallaki Seva (palanquin processions) and Nagar Sankirtan in villages, towns and cities for the spiritual regeneration of people.
69. Spreading awareness about the need of values in society through Ratha Yatra, seminars, conferences, etc.
70. Organising cultural activities like dramas, Burra Katha to spread values among people.
71. Holding exhibitions and seminars on Sathya Sai Parenting to educate the parents how to inculcate values in children.
72. Setting up Sathya Sai Human Values Institutes to train human values teachers.
73. Conducting Bhajan classes and Bhajan centres.
  74. Conducting spiritual retreats and Sadhana camps for the spiritual advancement of people.
75. Conducting functions like Mass Upanayanam to initiate children on spiritual path.
76. Conducting Yajnas for the welfare of the world and promoting the teaching and learning of Vedas by setting up Vedic schools and honouring Vedic scholars.
77. Publishing books and magazines and producing films to make people aware of the humanitarian work of Bhagavan.
78. Producing serials on the Life and Message of Bhagavan for broadcasting to educate people about the ideals of Bhagavan like "Love All Serve All".
79. Producing ACD's VCD's, DVD's on the teachings of Bhagavan to spread values in society.
80. Holding meetings at local, national and international levels to propagate the ideals of morality, ethics, spirituality taught by Bhagavan.

## **Chinna Katha**

## **DO NOT FORGET THE KING OF KINGS**

ONCE THERE WAS A KING WHO ruled over his kingdom with great prudence. All his subjects enjoyed peace and happiness. However, he became proud, and thought that he was a great ruler, and peace and happiness that prevailed in his kingdom were the result of his power and capability.

Once a great man came to the capital city of his kingdom. For quite some time, this noble soul immersed the entire populace in bliss and thrill with his sermons. The people also expressed their gratitude to him by honouring him in a proper manner. Gradually, his name and fame reached the ears of the ministers of the kingdom. They thought of taking him to the king's court to honour him. They placed their proposal before the king who gave his consent. The ministers went to this noble man and invited him to the king's court with great reverence and humility. The noble man said to the ministers, "I have nothing to do with the king. I do not need anybody's charity. I have no desire to go the king's palace either." But the ministers prayed to him with great supplication and took him to the king's palace with proper honour.

They made him sit on a befitting seat in the king's court. After some time, the king entered the court amidst welcome hails of minstrels. All the ministers, army commanders, poets and singers stood up and offered their salutations to the king. But this great man kept sitting on his seat with eyes closed. Then the court dancer entered and performed her dance. Thereafter, the court singers sang songs. Applauding the performance of the dancer and the singers, everybody was immersed in joy and thrill. Only this great man remained still with his closed eyes. The indifference shown by this man enraged the king. Perceiving it as an act of dishonour to the king, he ordered that he should be arrested and beheaded before sunrise the next morning.

Soon this shocking news spread in the entire kingdom. Gripped by surprise, fear and awe, people exclaimed in anguish, "What has happened to the king that he has awarded this terrible punishment to a noble man! Surely, one's intellect becomes perverted when the time of his destruction approaches." The noble man was the only one who remained unperturbed by this news. He had the same smile on his face as before; no trace of agitation or anger was visible on it. Even when you cut a fragrant tree with an axe, it will give fragrance only.

The king however had no sleep after awarding this punishment to the noble man. He therefore thought of talking to him to set his doubts at rest. So, he sent his guards to bring him. When the noble man came, the king asked him, "What was the reason for you to keep sitting without showing even a little respect to the king? Does not this act of yours show dishonour towards me?" The noble man replied with due serenity, "Oh king! You have awarded the punishment of beheading me for showing indifference towards you for a minute or so. But, do you realise that you have been showing indifference to God, who is the king of kings, for such a long time? Didn't you think that only you were responsible for the peace and happiness in your kingdom? Is this not your pride? Is this the way to show respect to God? Have you ever thought what type of punishment God may have decided to award you?"

This was an eye-opener for the king. He realised his mistake and shed tears of repentance that due to his pride he had forgotten God who is the basis of everything. He expressed his gratitude to the noble man and honoured him in a most befitting manner.

### *Value-based Education in Practice*

## **SRI SATHYA SAI LOKASEVA EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

*B.N. Narasimha Murthy*

Among the educational institutions which have religiously put into practice the ideals of value-based system of education set forth by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, two institutions of Karnataka State can be ranked as most outstanding. These are: Sathya Sai Vihar, Alike and Sathya Sai Grama, Muddenahalli. Founded by a great visionary and selfless Tapasvin (man of penance), late Sri Madiyal Narayan Bhat, these two institutions became a part of the Divine Mission of Bhagavan when He accepted them by a deed of registration during His visit to Sathya Sai Grama, Muddenahalli on 14th August 1978.

Under the umbrella of Bhagavan's divine grace and direct guidance, the two centres flourished very rapidly, and now they impart value-based education to over two thousand students from all over India. The centres, which also have hospitals, agricultural farms, dairies, a publication division and an orphanage, are manned by a group of 60 Tyagajeevis (men of sacrifice) who were inspired by the ideals of self-sacrifice and selfless service to mankind by their mentor, Sri Narayan Bhat whom they lovingly called Anna (elder brother). They accepted the vow of lifelong celibacy and dedicated their life to Lokaseva (service to mankind). When these institutions were accepted by Bhagavan Baba, all of them rededicated themselves to the Divine Mission of Bhagavan. They are bound by a sense of brotherhood and they live together in the Ashram named Prem Kutir on the campus. Their oath-cum-prayer given to them by their illustrious mentor runs thus: "Oh Lord Sathya Sayeeshwara, grant us the divine strength to build up a mighty organisation of dedicated missionaries who offer themselves completely as messengers in Your great mission of establishing Dharma in the world. This life of ours filled with Your love is dedicated at Your Lotus Feet for achieving this glorious ideal!"

### **Sathya Sai Vihar, Alike – the Little Garden of the Lord**

Sathya Sai Vihar in Alike is situated in a valley surrounded by hills. The location is breathtakingly picturesque and the campus reminds you of the Gurukulas of ancient India. The beauty of the place and the goodness of the people living there reflect God's grandeur and munificence. The sky above reveals the infinity and eternity of truth. In their unifying experience, you can see the face of God in the trinity of Truth, Goodness and Beauty. Once a saint who was living in the Himalayan mountains was brought to Sathya Sai Vihar by his disciples. After staying for a day there, he exclaimed, "Men go to the Himalayas in search of God, but your Anna has brought Himalayas down to this place!" God in the form of Bhagavan Baba has graced these institutions in Alike with His

visits twice – in 1979 and 2001. During His first visit Bhagavan stayed on the campus for one day in the beautiful Mandir specially built for Him with great love and devotion.

Sri Sathya Sai Lokaseva Junior College, which was started in 1972, with science, commerce and arts sections is one of the premier institutions in the State. It is affiliated to the Board for Pre-University Education in Karnataka. In recent years, the college has garnered limelight by securing 100% results in the State-level public examinations and very high ranks in the Common Entrance Tests conducted by the State Government for selecting students to engineering and medical colleges. The principles of Sri Sathya Sai Educare are integrated into the process of education here and 'integral education for total development of the student' is the motto. Most of the students reside in the hostel attached to the college and a few day scholars from the local villages also attend the college. Needy students are provided free food by the institution.

A fully residential boy's school affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi was started in 1984. The school admits boys to sixth standard and imparts education till tenth standard.

An orphanage located in Sathya Sai Vihar houses about 100 destitute children drawn from very poor families and orphans with the objective of educating them and moulding them into cultured citizens of the country. These children also attend the educational institutions run by the Trust.

Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital which provides free medical care to all those who come to its portals from the surrounding villages was inaugurated in 2002. During His divine visit to Sathya Sai Vihar in 2001, Swami declared that He would establish a 'Superior Hospital' there. A spacious building which looks more like a temple than a hospital was built on the top of a hill overlooking the campus within a year. Baba Himself arranged for the construction of the building and provided all the equipment and instruments required for the hospital.

Sri Sathya Sai Vocational Training Centre provides training in computer processing and printing to the needy villagers free of cost. The Kannada Monthly – "Sanathana Sarathi" – is printed here. The publications division of the Trust has also published more than thirty books in Kannada on the life, work and teachings of Baba.

Shiva Nilaya, a spacious and well-furnished guest house, serves the needs of the visitors to the centre. A very well-maintained and vast agricultural farm and a dairy form an important part of the centre.

### **Sathya Sai Grama – a Land of Penance**

The centre at Muddenahalli which is located at a distance of seven kilometres from the main road between Puttaparthi and Whitefield was christened by Swami Himself as 'Sathya Sai Grama' in 1973. It nestles in the sylvan surroundings at the foot of the reputed hill station – the Nandi Hills.

Sathya Sai Grama is a sprawling campus of over a hundred acres filled with thousands of trees and plants, dotted with majestic buildings. The centre has the proud privilege of receiving Swami on its hallowed grounds 27 times in the last three decades. When He stepped on this land for the first time on 14th August 1978, Swami looked around admiringly and said, "This is a Tapobhumi – a land of penance!" Anyone who visits the



campus experiences the powerful spiritual vibrations pervading the place. Prema Deepa – the light of love – was the name given by Bhagavan to the Mandir here; it is an exquisite piece of Indian temple architecture situated almost on the highest spot in the campus. It was inaugurated by Bhagavan on 15th August 1994. Encircled by an ornamental garden, it has now become a place of pilgrimage for devotees.

More than eight hundred students study in the educational institutions in Sathya Sai Grama. Out of them, 700 boys drawn from all over India reside in the hostels, and others come from eight villages around the campus. These villages have been adopted by the centre for their all-round development. The alumni association of the educational institutions at Sathya Sai Grama – the ‘Children of Sathya Sai’ – are doing commendable work in these villages with the objective of transforming them into model villages worthy of emulation.

Sri Sathya Sai Lokaseva Composite Pre-University College, which was started as a high school in 1973, was upgraded in 1982 with the addition of Pre-University section in commerce. A science section will also be added from the next academic year. The magnificent building of the college was declared open by Swami in February 1987. The college is reputed for its excellent results in the S.S.L.C. and P.U.C. Public Examinations and effective education in human values on the basis of the Sathya Sai ideals.

Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Kendra is a Central School with classes from sixth to tenth standard. It is a fully residential school started in 1998.

A beautiful auditorium and a modern dining hall adorned with sculptural embellishments are an added attraction in the campus. Sprawling playgrounds and good sports facilities are another important feature of these educational institutions. The students have won accolades in sports, games and athletics in State level competitions. The vast agricultural farms and a modern dairy which occupy the western side of the campus lend a heavenly charm to the place.

One important and very encouraging development in Sathya Sai Grama is that some of the alumni have joined the centre as Tyagajeevis. It augurs well for the fulfilment of the grand vision of the founder of the institutions, Sri Narayan Bhat, regarding their contribution to the divine mission of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

### **Role Models of Integral Education**

If one wants to see how values are integrated with studies in schools and colleges, one should see the functioning of these two institutions because seeing is believing. The entire environment in both the institutions is saturated with values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa as taught by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Both the students and teachers are shining examples of morality, ethics and spirituality in practice. In fact, these two institutions present a model which all educational institutions of the country can emulate to give value-based direction to our system of education.

Let me complete this article on these very unique institutions of Bhagavan by recalling a revealing incident that happened in July 2003 at Brindavan. Bhagavan had called for interview, a group of students and teachers from Sri Sathya Sai Lokaseva Junior College at Sathya Sai Vihar. Those were the students who had secured the highest ranks in the engineering and medical entrance examinations in the State. For the first time in the

history of the State, students from the same college had secured first rank in both the engineering and medical entrance examinations. When I submitted this good news to Bhagavan, He said joyfully, “It is not history; it is His story!” We can look forward to His story unfolding with each passing day bringing peace and joy to mankind!

*Meeting the Fundamental Needs of Women*

## **EASWARAMMA WOMEN’S WELFARE PROJECT**

*Chethana Raju*

Recognising women’s central role in society, the Easwaramma Women’s Welfare Project seeks to help in the development of women in a holistic manner by understanding and supporting the different roles which they play in life, be it daughter, mother or breadwinner. It is a well-known saying, “Give a man bread and you feed him for a day, teach him to farm, and you feed him for life.” Along these lines, we felt our sisters in the villages would be better served by the acquisition of skills; the goal being self-support and independence. Powered by the idea of sustainable development, this philosophy motivated the adoption of a Welfare Project to first address the need for a woman’s financial security. Before the Project launch, a survey was conducted in the surrounding villages, identifying the most deprived and impoverished women in the area. Their economic condition and whether they had some basic or no skills were all points taken into consideration before selection for the Project.

### **A Step towards Making Women Self-reliant**

On 19th November 2004, on Ladies Day, Bhagavan officially inaugurated the Easwaramma Women’s Welfare Project by unveiling a plaque. On 19th July 2005, the Project facility for these women was graciously inaugurated by Bhagavan within Prasanthi Nilayam. The Project is already producing a large number of products and has started marketing them initially through local outlets in the Ashram. The proceeds of the sales will be spent on remuneration for the women and will also go towards charitable projects in the villages.

Once the products are identified, trainers are engaged to teach the women how to make these items. When they are proficient at their tasks, one or two women in the group are trained to interact with suppliers and customers. In addition to providing women with a skill that is a lifelong source of income, this Project will also have socially beneficial effects. As an income earner, a woman’s self-esteem and her respect in society increases. Speaking on women, Swami has said, “All women should be provided with opportunities to become self-reliant”. The Project seeks to translate this into reality. A major step was taken to expand and organise the work of Easwaramma Women’s Project when Bhagavan graciously established Easwaramma Women’s Welfare Trust on 18th February 2005.

## **Mother and Child Project**

Recently, another dimension has been added to the Easwaramma Women's Welfare Project by initiating Mother and Child Project. This project was started after conducting thorough research at grass root level by visiting a large number of villages as well as by assessing the needs of expecting mothers from Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital, Puttaparthi. As a result of this, two requirements have been recognised as vital. One is for maternal and infant care, which has given rise to the Mother and Child Project. The central role that the mother plays as "the Guru of the children ... and the upholder of spiritual values" has been emphasised by Swami many a time. Recognising the importance of her health and well-being for society, the Mother and Child Project strives to support her during this crucial stage in her life.

Visits to the General Hospital, Puttaparthi showed that the general health condition of some of the pregnant women coming in for care is a cause for concern. Many come in for deliveries with extremely low haemoglobin levels, far below the international recommended level for delivery. Lack of proper nutrition is one of the main causes for this deficiency. They often come to the hospital at a very late stage, which significantly increases the chances of complications. Regrettably, some are unable to come because of the considerable journeying distance and / or monetary constraints. Therefore, the Mother and Child Project aims to provide medical care for pregnant mothers and infants in the villages. Bhagavan, in His infinite grace, has provided a fully-equipped ambulance which can be utilised for on-the-spot medical treatment. The two objectives of the Project, medical and educational, are pursued side by side. The medical care is dispensed in a regular manner, over a significant period of time, in keeping with the Project's goal of sustainability. The voluntary team of doctors, nurses and Seva Dal members visit each village throughout the year. Records of all mothers and children are maintained systematically so that their health condition can be monitored on a continuous, long-term basis. These records prove to be invaluable resource for the next team of doctors to assess the follow-up care.

Each mother-to-be receives a Sari and a special kit for mother and baby as a token of Bhagavan's love and blessings. The kit provides the mothers with important supplements such as iron and folic acid. High protein nutritional supplements are also distributed regularly. As for the delivery itself, only emergencies are advised to go to the hospital. The traditional practice of home-deliveries with the central role of Dhais (midwives) is encouraged and made increasingly hygienic with the training of these Dhais and the supply of sterilised kits that assist in safe deliveries.

Once the baby is born, it is welcomed into the world with a fresh set of clothes, regular health check-ups and full immunisation. Immunisation is done for major locally-prevalent diseases including polio, measles, mumps, hepatitis-B and tuberculosis. Nutritional supplements are also regularly given to the infants. In conjunction with the treatment, the doctors conduct educational talks for mothers. Advice is given on a variety of practical matters, i.e., available good foods for pregnancy, post-natal and infant care, and handling of emergency cases.

We envisage a world where women have equal privileges in every sphere of life, a world in which women have opportunities to support themselves, a world in which they are

self-reliant and not dependent on others. We believe that Easwaramma Women's Welfare Project is a step in this noble direction. One of the Mission statements of Bhagavan Baba is: "I am attached to the work that I love: To remove the sufferings of the poor and grant them what they lack". We pray that we all become humble instruments in His Divine Mission!

The first lesson in Seva has to be learnt in the family circle itself. In this limited group, which is well-knit, one must engage in loving service and prepare for the wider Seva that awaits outside the home.

- **Baba**

*Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning*

## **A BEACON LIGHT OF INTEGRAL EDUCATION**

*Sanjay Sahni*

SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF Higher Learning is the visible manifestation of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's vision of education which is not only an important means for the transformation of mankind, but also a panacea for the ills that are afflicting it today. More particularly, it is a precious gift of Bhagavan to the youth whom He is moulding to become shining examples of ethical and spiritual awareness to make them the torchbearers of moral regeneration and spiritual reawakening of the world. The Institute has evolved the integral system of education which lays as much emphasis on inculcation of values as on achieving academic excellence. Come 2006, the Institute, a deemed university, will be celebrating its silver jubilee. The birth of the university represented a significant milestone in the glorious unfolding of the Divine Mission of Bhagavan whose watchword, "the end of education is character" forms the main objective of all its activities. From a humble beginning in improvised premises to be acclaimed today 'as the crest-jewel of higher education in India', the Institute has come a long way. On 22nd November 1981 this deemed university was inaugurated by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Justice Y.V. Chandrachud at Prasanthi Nilayam, and Bhagavan bestowed on it a unique honour by accepting to become its Chancellor.

### **Divine Vision of the Revered Chancellor**

The spirit behind all its achievements is the Revered Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who from the very beginning chartered its course by His Divine vision. While laying the foundation stone of the Sri Sathya Sai College for Women at Anantapur in 1969, Bhagavan declared: "It is indeed deplorable that education of the spirit has been totally neglected while attention is devoted to the training of skills and for gleaning and garnering information... My Sankalpa is to provide the youth with an education which, while cultivating their intelligence, will also purify their impulses and emotions and equip them with the physical and mental disciplines needed for drawing upon the springs of calmness and joy that lie in their own hearts."

In another Discourse to the students and staff of this college in August 1974, Bhagavan observed, “This college has not been established just to prepare you for earning degrees. The main purpose is to help you to cultivate self-knowledge and self-confidence, so that each one of you can learn self-sacrifice and earn self-realisation. The teaching of university curricula and the preparation for presenting you for the university examinations and the award of university degrees – these are only the means employed for the end, namely, spiritual uplift, self-discovery and social service through love and detachment.”

Again, while speaking at the Brindavan College on 31st March 1974, Bhagavan revealed, “Do not be under the impression that you and I have come together only now, since you study in this college; you have come to Me for the sake of far higher triumphs, as a consequence of merit acquired in many previous lives. You and your teachers are destined to achieve tremendous tasks under My guidance, in the execution of the Mission on which I have come.”

Another milestone was reached in the history of the Institute when on Vijaya Dasami day after the Poornahuti of the Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna on 8th October 1981, Bhagavan announced that from that day the colleges at Prasanthi Nilayam and Anantapur would be raised to the status of the campuses of the new university.

### **Evolution and Growth**

It was Prof. V.K. Gokak, the first Vice Chancellor of the university, who gave a concrete shape to the vision of Bhagavan. In 1982, the Institute launched its Five Year Integrated courses and PG courses in the sciences and humanities. The same year, the Brindavan College became the third campus of the university. I recall how Prof. Gokak outlined before us, first year UG students then, the grand vision of the academic education in the Institute. To inculcate in students a wide and liberal mental outlook, education in the university was envisaged as a pyramidal structure. The pyramid has a wide base and accordingly the students in the undergraduate courses would begin with the study of languages and awareness courses along with their respective courses in core areas. At the end of the second year, the languages would drop off and the science students would start specialising in their area of interest. This would continue into the PG, after which the student would choose a narrow niche for undertaking research. In 1984, Bhagavan started the Ph.D. programme with the intention of preparing His future teachers. Many doctorates have now joined the university as faculty.

In 1986, the MBA and B.Ed. programmes were launched. Many MBA and PG alumni have gone on to man Bhagavan’s institutions in the Ashrams, hospitals, schools and colleges. Others have made their mark in the wide world. Other courses got added in subsequent years: B.Sc. (Hons.) 1992; B.Com. (Hons.), M.Tech. (1993); M.A. (Economics) (2001); M.Phil (2004).

Many academic reforms and innovations were adopted by the Institute right from its inception. It has a merit-based open admission policy enabling students from all over the country to seek admission to various courses, irrespective of income, class, creed, religion or region, making it truly national in character. Education is provided to students

free without any fees whatsoever, in sharp contrast to the rapid commercialisation of education elsewhere.

### **Sri Sathya Sai Integral Education**

The Revered Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has given the Institute its philosophy of integral education and has been inspiring and guiding the administrators, teachers and students of the Institute since its inception in the practice of this philosophy. According to Bhagavan, “One should have the head of Sankara, the heart of Buddha and the hands of Janaka”. An integrated personality is a harmonious synthesis of a discerning intellect, a compassionate heart and efficient hands; it is a beautiful combination of nobility and ability. Nobility without ability is useless to society and ability without nobility is dangerous to it. Spiritual education is the basis of integral education. This is what Bhagavan calls educate. Ultimately, all education should converge into educate.

Integral education aims at the all-round development of the human personality – the physical, the intellectual, the emotional and the spiritual. Acquisition of knowledge when supported by its proper utilisation leads to skill; the harmony of knowledge and skill leads to balance of mind which is the basis for spiritual insight. The surest sign of spiritual insight is the blossoming of true love in the heart, springing out of recognition of the oneness of all existence.

The university is a modern Gurukula combining the best of the past and the present. All the campuses of the Institute are wholly residential. The students reside in the hostels along with the Warden and a band of resident teachers carefully hand-picked by Bhagavan. Character moulding is a twenty-four hour endeavour and the Institute could not be otherwise. The key to success in community living in the hostels, which represent a mini-India, is understanding and adjustment. Mutual tolerance and courtesy, sacrifice and service to fellowmen, civic sense and social sensitivity – the blessings of community living under the watchful eyes of committed teachers are immense. The daily routine in the campus is designed with the guidance of Bhagavan and has multifarious activities to foster the development of integrated personalities.

Prayers before sunrise and at bedtime, before meals and at the commencement of classes in the Institute help the students to still their minds and periodically reconnect to the Divine who is the source of all succour and energy. Spiritual talks in the college and hostel, the value-based Awareness Course, the spiritual study circle sessions and above all exposure to the divine influence of Bhagavan strengthen the moral and spiritual fibre in the student’s personality. Since 1990, a number of summer courses in Indian Culture and Spirituality were organised for the benefit of all students.

Physical culture is encouraged through participation in jogging, games, sports and yoga in the mornings. The objective of physical culture is physical fitness, though annual competitions are organised to spot and nurture sporting talent. The Annual Sports and Cultural Meet on 11th January is an important event in the academic calendar of the Institute and represents the expression of students’ love for Bhagavan manifesting in the form of breathtaking sporting feats and aesthetically delightful programmes, charming one and all.

While co-curricular activities in literature, music, dance, drama and other fine arts along with harmonious community living foster emotional balance and self-reliance in students, social service activities instil in them self-confidence, humility, dignity of labour and helpful nature apart from nurturing their talents. Service in the kitchen and dining hall, cooperative stores, dispensary, maintenance, audiovisual department, garden and myriad other areas is undertaken by the students under the guidance of their teachers. The annual Sri Sathya Sai Grama Seva in the villages around Puttaparthi during Dasara celebrations and initiated by Bhagavan in 2000 is a great educational experience for the students and staff of the university.

### **The Crest-jewel of Higher Education**

At the first Convocation of the Institute on 22nd November 1982, the late legal luminary Sri Nani Palkhiwala observed, “This Institute is a tribute to the great organising genius of its founder, Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Without His initiative and inspiration it would have been impossible to found an institution of this character. We are witnesses to a great event in the history of our country. This deemed university is a memorable experiment in the moral and spiritual regeneration of India. It stands for nothing less ... This Institute aims at becoming a nation-builder.”

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, President of India declared at the Institute’s Convocation in 2002, “The purpose of real education is to initiate a learning process that transforms students into good human beings with knowledge and value systems. Is value education possible? Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning has given an answer in the affirmative.”

In December 2002, the Peer Team of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), which is set up by the University Grants Commission to assess and accredit higher education institutions, visited the Institute and reported, “The Peer Team puts on record its appreciation for providing the members of the Team the opportunity to spend time with the Institute faculty and the students so as to develop a thorough insight into the higher education process of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, particularly the integral higher education interwoven in the blueprint and design of higher education products. This made us realise that there is a way to correct our already degrading university education system in India, if we decide to do so.

The Peer Team feels that this Institute stands out as a crest-jewel among the university education system in the country and this model is worthy of emulation by the institutions of higher learning in the country and elsewhere, so that these benefits would be reaped fast and on the widest possible scale.”

NAAC granted accreditation at the A++ level to the Institute for five years in 2002-03 placing the Institute in the highest bracket of Indian universities.

I would like to conclude with the following experience of an alumnus of the Institute. He was facing a job interview and the Managing Director of the company, who was on the interview panel, enquired, ‘I understand that you are a student of Sai Baba’s college. I have heard that Sai Baba creates and gives rings, necklaces, etc., to his devotees. What has He given you?’ Spontaneously, the boy replied, “Sir, I am a village boy. Today, this

village boy is sitting and talking with so much confidence to the M.D. of one of India's most prestigious research based companies. The confidence that you see in me is Sai Baba's gift to me."

Faith in oneself and faith in Divinity is truly the quintessence of education at the Lotus Feet of our Beloved Bhagavan.

Desire breeds wishes. Wishes cause birth and also death. When man is devoid of desire, he need not go through birth and death. The next birth is the result of unfulfilled desires in this life and is determined by them. Those who have no trace of desire for material objects can achieve the awareness of the Atmic reality.

- Baba

## **NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES**

### **80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

### **THE WORK CONTINUES**

#### **Community Service**

##### **Indonesia**

The world's second largest earthquake since year 1964 (8.7 Richter scale) struck Indonesia on 28th March 2005. Responding to the massive disaster at Nias Island, North Sumatra, the Sai Study Groups of Jakarta and Medan despatched a total of 14 cartons consisting of 25 items of medicines and medical equipments to the victims in April, 2005. One of the cartons containing 202 boxes of Vaccine ATS was delivered urgently to the general hospital in Gunung Sitoli (capital city of Nias Island). Many schools were badly damaged and children were left with no books or stationery to resume their study. Responding to this situation, Sai groups organised distribution of stationery and books on 18th June 2005 to Primary and Junior High School in Yayasan Budi Bhakti at Gunung Sitoli. Large quantities of writing pads, books, pencils, pens, rulers and erasers were supplied to the school children. On 3rd July 2005, food and other items were distributed to 320 families. Each family received 5 kg of rice, 8 packs of instant noodle, 1 piece of bath soap and 2 pieces of cloth.

#### **Medical Camp**

##### **Nepal**

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's 80th Birthday is being celebrated in Nepal with grandeur and devotion. Sai centres in Nepal are organising various programmes to mark this important event. In order to facilitate dissemination of Swami's message, Sri Sathya Sai



Baba Organisation of Nepal has been conducting outreach activities in rural areas devoid of any Sai centre or Sai group. As part of this, a medical camp along with Sai Darshan Exhibition and a talk programme was organised in Trishuli, a remote hilly town on 27th August 2005. Altogether 12 doctors and 10 paramedics rendered services to 500 patients. Two of those patients who were seriously ill were transported to a better equipped hospital in Kathmandu and their treatment was sponsored by the Sai devotees. This was first such combination of avenues in Nepal for spreading Bhagavan's message of love through medical camp, exhibition and talks.

### **Public Meeting**

#### **Germany**

A regional Sai Public Meeting for the *Rhine-Main-Aerea* in Germany was held in Wiesbaden on Saturday, 18th June 2005 at Velvets, Black & Light Theatre. The attendance was approximately 160 people with 25% non-Sai devotees.

The first speaker Gabriele Göbel, National Coordinator of Germany, highlighted five of the main teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, viz., unity of all religions, divinity of man, five human values, the programme of ceiling on desires and service to mankind (Seva). The speaker also described the grand service projects of Bhagavan and elaborated on the declaration of Bhagavan "My Life is My Message" in detail. The next speaker Petra von Kalinowski, described how the social values of the past 100 years in Germany underwent some radical changes in course of time. She emphasised how the practice of the five eternal human values is essential for all cultures and religions of all nations.

Finally, Prof. Dr. Martin Mittwede, University of Frankfurt, an eminent scientist in the field of Comparative Religion spoke about "Spirituality in Times of Change". He emphasised that great religious leaders of all ages expressed spirituality in the unique way of their century and fulfilled the spiritual desire of mankind of their age. In this sense, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba gives expression to the spiritual aspiration of our time which generally accepts a multiplicity of creeds and religions. This multiplicity is nothing but natural, and so Sai Baba's main teaching deals with the unity of different faiths. At the end of the programme, the film "His Work" was greatly appreciated by all present and copies were available at the book display in the hall.

– **Prasanthi Council**

### **BHARAT**

**Andhra Pradesh:** A newly-built Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Seva Sadan was inaugurated at Vijayawada on 16th September 2005 for helpless old women and orphans.

Mahaboobnagar district constructed a mini water tank at Venkatamma Banda Thanda village which was inaugurated on 9th September 2005 to facilitate the drinking water supply to the Girijanas of the village.

**Bihar and Jharkhand:** Baidyanath Dham sacred pilgrimage is performed during the entire month of Shravan (July – August) by lakhs of devotees from all over India and Nepal. They undertake a very arduous barefoot 108 km long trek through a rough terrain to carry the holy Ganga water from Sultanganj to Lord Siva Temple at Baidyanath Dham.

As the devotees carry the holy Ganga water in pots slung through a bamboo over the shoulders and walk barefoot, they suffer sole and toe injuries and straining of feet and legs. The shoulders also develop problems. The tired pilgrims called Kawarias come to the camp set up by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Bihar and Jharkhand where Seva Dal volunteers massage their legs and shoulders, provide first aid and medicines, give hot foot bath in saline water and offer hot tea to them. They are served by specially trained Sai Youth who provide this service for 30 days every year. About 2,000 pilgrims are served daily. The camp is running since 1981. Its 25th anniversary was celebrated this year.

**Jammu and Kashmir:** For the first time in the history of the State, keeping in view the prevailing disturbed conditions, Sai Youth conducted Narayana Seva on 7th September 2005 at the Ziyarat of Hazrat Sultan-Ul-Arifeen R.A. Sahib, Nowhatta, Srinagar where 150 food packets were served to needy persons. Similar Narayana Seva was conducted near Baba Reshi Ziyarat at Gulmarg on 25th September 2005 where 250 food packets were distributed among needy persons. In the month of August 2005, food and fruits were served to about 1550 pilgrims who were due to proceed for Amarnath Yatra.

**Rajasthan:** Autorickshaw drivers generally suffer from respiratory ailments and eye sight problems. 23 Seva Dal volunteers and 6 medical experts of Bikaner Samithi organised a medical camp on 21st August 2005 at Bikaner. 205 drivers and their 15 family members were administered medical check-up and free medicines. One sticker with photos of Shirdi Sai and Sathya Sai and their divine messages was pasted on each autorickshaw for the benefit of travellers.

### **Showering Ananda is My Task**

**Do not count and calculate what Puttaparthi Sai Baba gives. I do not give in order to attract you to Me; I give only to fill you with Ananda (bliss). Showering Ananda is My task. I do not want you to extol Me; I shall be satisfied if you rely on Me. The mysterious and indescribable superpower has come within reach. It will never engage itself in any task without fruit.**

**- Baba**

**DECEMBER 2005**

**BHAGAVAN'S BIRTHDAY MESSAGE**

## **TRUTH AND LOVE FORM THE QUINTESSENCE OF MY MESSAGE**

*Bereft of truth, righteousness, love and peace*

*The value of all your education is zero;*

*Bereft of truth, righteousness, love and peace*

*The sanctity of all your acts of charity and kindness is zero;*

*Bereft of truth, righteousness, love and peace*

*The utility of all your positions of power is zero;*

*Bereft of truth, righteousness, love and peace*

*The result of all your good deeds is zero.*

**(Telugu Poem)**

*Embodiments of Love!*

HUMAN birth is meant to attain peace and not to occupy positions of authority. One may have all types of wealth and comforts, but life has no meaning without peace.

### **Equality is the Basis of Society**

There are many people in this world who are fabulously rich, highly educated and occupy positions of great authority. But, in what way is the world benefited by them? They turn away the beggar who comes to their doorstep for alms. They have no time to help the suffering humanity. Nobody seems to bother about the condition of the poor and the downtrodden. Samanatwa (equality) is very essential for Samaja (society). How can society exist without equality? Many people today are engaged in so-called social work. But this, in fact, is show work, and not social work in the real sense of the term. Having been born as a human being, you should strive for the welfare of society. You are a member of society and your welfare depends on the welfare of society. Hence, undertake activities which are beneficial to society. Adhere to the principles of truth and righteousness in life. Only then will your conduct become ideal for others in society.

You should understand the import of the term Manava in the first instance. What is the goal of a human being? Is it to strive for the fulfilment of one's desires? Is it to amass

worldly gains? Is it to enjoy sensual pleasures? Human life is a mixture of happiness and sorrow. It is not possible to experience one to the exclusion of the other. How can you expect to attain happiness and peace if you are not prepared to help your fellow human beings? Everyone has to experience ups and downs in life. Difficulties are a part of life. None can escape from them. Hence, one should treat happiness and sorrow with equanimity. There is pleasure in pain and vice versa. One should not be elated by pleasure nor depressed by pain. We have to develop the spirit of equanimity in order to progress in life. *Sukhadukhe Samekruthwa Labhalabhau Jayajayau* (one should maintain equipoise in happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat). But man, in spite of enjoying all comforts and pleasures, is unable to bear even a small difficulty.

### **Realise your Innate Divinity**

Ask a wealthy person whether he is happy in life. What will he say? He will say, “Sir, I have no dearth of money. My sons are well settled in life. My home is full of all types of comforts and conveniences. I have everything in life except peace of mind.” How can one attain peace of mind? Why are we not able to experience peace? Where does the mistake lie? We go on asking others, “Who are you”? But we do not ask ourselves, “Who am I”? There lies the mistake. Once we realise who we really are, we will be free from sorrows and difficulties. Hence, first and foremost we should make efforts to realise our true identity. We should realise our innate divinity. What is the use of knowing everything without knowing the Self? *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings), *Isavasyam Idam Sarvam* (the entire universe is permeated by God). We must realise that we are born to experience our innate divinity and not merely to enjoy worldly pleasures. We have to take to the path of spirituality to experience our innate divinity. If we lack spiritual outlook, we do not deserve to be called human beings. In fact, it amounts to betrayal of God. God does not expect you to worship Him. He expects you to lead an ideal and purposeful life. Is it not a futile exercise to sow seeds when there is no rain? Even when there is rain, can you reap a harvest unless you have sown seeds? In the same manner, both self-effort and divine grace are essential to achieve success in your endeavours.

Once Sage Narada asked Lord Vishnu as to what the royal path to immortality was. Then Lord Vishnu replied, “One should realise that God is present in all beings. The spark of divinity is present in all. Man is not a mere mortal. He is essentially divine. Jiva (individual soul) is negative and Deva (God) is positive. Both the positive and negative are required for the electric current to flow. Oh Narada! I assume the form of a human in order to move among men and protect the world. I am present in everyone in the form of the Atma. When man constantly contemplates on the principle of the Atma, I manifest Myself.” The same divine principle of the Atma is present in all. One who realises this truth experiences all-pervasive divinity. God is in you, with you, around you, above you and below you. However, you cannot realise this truth unless you give up negative feelings. God is everywhere. You have not to search for Him. Develop firm faith that He is in you. God has no specific form. He transcends all names and forms.

### **Develop Firm Faith in the Oneness of God**

*Embodiments of Love!*

Do not identify yourself with the body. You are the embodiments of the 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.* (Telugu Poem)

Can anyone say, “My Atma is dead”? The physical body perishes with the passage of time but the Atma is eternal. So long as there exists in the body the divine principle of the Atma, it remains alive and functional. One can see a reflection when there is an object. For example, one can see the reflection of the sun in a well, in a tank, in a river and also in an ocean. Similarly, the reflection of the same Atma is seen in all human beings. The sun is one, but it appears as though there exists a separate sun for each country. When it is daytime in India, it is night in America and vice versa. The sun may appear at different times in different countries, but it is one and the same. We cannot call it as Indian sun, American sun, so on and so forth. Similarly, God is one. Truth is one. Love is one. Live in love. When you adhere to the twin principles of truth and love, you will experience the manifestation of divinity in everything.

Who is God? In fact, you yourself are God. Hence, everyone should develop the firm conviction, “I am God”. But the basis of this firm conviction should not be your ego. Develop firm faith that you are God and your fellow human beings are also the embodiments of divinity. Develop such principle of oneness and equality. When you harm others, you actually harm yourself. Victory and defeat are a part of the game of life. When someone meets with failure in his endeavour, empathise with him. Do not criticise or blame others. Differences occur when you do not identify yourself with others.

Who are you? You think you are the body. But you are neither the body nor the mind. The body is like a water bubble. How can you identify yourself with such an ephemeral body? You may say, “I am the mind”. Mind is nothing but a bundle of desires. It has no form of its own; it takes the form of various desires of man. One day or the other, you have to give up all desires. Hence, do not identify yourself with the mind. Man’s mind wavers from moment to moment like a monkey. You belong to mankind. So, you have to conduct yourself as a human being. Do not allow your mind to behave like a monkey. Constantly remind yourself that you are a human being. *Daivam Manusha Rupena* (God incarnates in the form of a human being). Give up body consciousness and live in the constant awareness that you are God.

We construct temples to consecrate idols and worship them. Where does the idol come from? It is your own creation. You offer worship to the man-made idols but you are not prepared to worship the God in man. There is no point in merely worshipping idols if you do not realise your innate divinity. Everyone must respect and revere the principle of the Atma within. Consider Atma Viswasa (faith in the Self) as your Swasa (life-breath). Faith in the idols is temporary. When you go to Tirupati, you worship God in the form of Lord Venkateswara. You extol Him saying, “Lord Venkateswara is our family deity”. When you make a pilgrimage to Brindavan, you worship God in the form of Lord Krishna. In Ayodhya, you worship Him in the form of Lord Rama. Depending on the place and circumstances, different names and forms have been attributed to God. But in reality Venkateswara, Krishna, Rama, Sai Baba, all are one and the same. You should not be

deluded by differences in name and form. Develop firm faith in the oneness of the Atma. Religions are many but the goal is one.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Having come here after spending a lot of money and putting up with many inconveniences, you should make proper use of your stay here. Ask yourself whether you have spent your time in a purposeful manner. What is the use of coming here if you do not put Swami's teachings into practice? Develop unwavering faith in the oneness of divinity. Only then can you experience peace. So long as you do not contemplate on the oneness of God, you will remain unsteady and restless.

### **Desires are the Cause of Man's Delusion**

There are two words, good and bad. Though these are articulated differently, the sound that constitutes them is the same. You criticise someone as a bad person today and extol him as a good person tomorrow. Good and bad are related to your own thinking. Your mind is the cause for both. In reality, man is always good. Human life is highly sacred. Do not belittle yourself by thinking that you are a mere mortal. You are verily God Himself. The very fact that you portray God in a human form and worship Him proves that human being is essentially divine. Do not attach undue importance to names and forms. Understand your inherent principle of divinity.

Born as a human being, you should imbibe human qualities. Have a human mind, not a monkey mind. What is the use of taking birth as a human being if you conduct yourself like an animal? However, you need not give up everything and become a Sannyasi (renunciant). A Sannyasi is also a human being. See God in everyone. God is all-pervasive. You cannot say that God is confined to a particular place. There is no place where God does not exist. *Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Sruthimalloke Sarvamavruthya Tishthati* (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, God permeates the entire universe).

We cultivate paddy. However, we do not consume it in its raw form. We remove the husk covering the grain and refine it into rice. Our desires are like the husk covering the rice grain. We will be free from the cycle of birth and death once we give up all desires. Paddy becomes suitable for consumption only after it undergoes the process of refinement and becomes rice. Rice is used for making various preparations such as Pulihora, Chitrannam, Chakkeram Pongali, Payasam, etc. Rice flour is used for preparing Idli and Dosa. The names of these food items may vary, but the essential ingredient of rice is the same in all. Just as paddy is transformed into rice, our mind should also be purified through the process of Samskara (refinement). Everything needs Samskara. Samskara in the process of cooking makes food fit for consumption. The shape of an object may change but the fundamental principle remains changeless.

*Embodiments of Love!*

You have a pure and sacred heart but it gets covered by the clouds of your desires. Just as the sun and the moon are not visible to us when they are covered by clouds, we are unable to visualise our reality because of delusion. Man passes his childhood in play with his playmates. In youth, he is deluded by ego as he feels proud of his youth. As the end

approaches, he regrets for not having attained peace of mind because he kept hankering after worldly pleasures. Man passes through various stages in life such as childhood, youth, middle age and old age. However, there is no transformation in him with the advancement of age. Instead of trying to change the Srishti (creation), man should change his Drishti (outlook). We can see the reality only when we change our Drishti. There is nothing wrong with Srishti. God's creation is perfect and none has the power to change it. In the creation, everything happens by the Will of God. You are deluded because of your materialistic outlook. You have to change your outlook. Do not expect God to change the creation. He has given you everything in its pristine form. But you are polluting it because of your selfish desires. The mind is the root cause for all this. Hence, annihilate the mind and everything will be clear to you.

So long as one is endowed with physical strength and vigour, one may enjoy Atalu, Patalu (playing and singing). As the age advances, the physical body undergoes certain changes. All of you are aware what a great singer M.S. Subbulakshmi was. However, she could not sing when she grew old. When she mentioned this to Me, I told her that she had overused her faculty of singing and thereby damaged her throat, and that was the reason for her predicament. One should not put one's faculties to too much strain. Your voice and vision are bound to change with the passage of time. You suffer from unrest and anxiety because you rely on your physical body that is subject to change. Instead, rely on the changeless and eternal principle of the Atma.

Man invites troubles in life by his own defects. If we improve our conduct, our life will become free from troubles. So, first and foremost we should take to the path of righteousness. It is not food and drink that is important in life. Character is most important. If you lack character, you will have to face innumerable difficulties.

Divinity is referred to as Sath, which means changeless and eternal principle. People of different religions call it by different names. The Muslims extol God, saying, *Allah Ho Akbar* (God is great). They consider God as their sole refuge. Whether one is a Muslim or a Hindu, God is the only refuge for all! So, you should say emphatically, "I want God". Get immersed in the Divine, not in deep wine! Once you start chanting the Divine Name of Rama, you should continue it for the rest of your life. But these days man has become fickle-minded. One day he keeps the picture of Rama in his altar and starts worshipping Him, but the very next day he replaces Rama's picture with that of Krishna if his wishes are not fulfilled.

### **Develop One-pointed Devotion**

Once there lived a devotee who used to worship Lord Siva and chanted "*Om Namah Sivaya*". But after some time, he felt that worship of Lord Siva had not benefited him in any way. Hence, he put Siva's picture in the almirah and kept Rama's picture in the altar. Initially, he could experience some peace. However, his desires remained unfulfilled and he became restless. He kept Rama's picture also in the same almirah and started worshipping Krishna on the advice of his Guru. He kept on chanting "Gopala Krishna" incessantly. After some time, he felt that even Krishna had not done him any good. One day, a lady devotee came to him and said, "What is the use of worshipping Rama and Krishna? Better you do Devi Puja (worship of Divine Mother)." As per her advice, he

kept a picture of Devi in the altar and started worshipping it. As the Puja was in progress, he noticed that the fragrance from the incense sticks was wafting towards the almirah where the pictures of other deities were kept. He therefore decided to remove those pictures from the almirah, thinking that the incense sticks were meant for the goddess and that the other deities had no right to enjoy the fragrance. Immediately, the Divine Mother manifested before him and said, "Oh simpleton! You worshipped Siva for a few days, and then you switched over to Rama and later on to Krishna. What is the guarantee that you will not discard my picture also tomorrow? This is not true devotion. You should contemplate on one name and one form till your last breath."

You should remain unperturbed by difficulties and lead a spiritual life. Fill your heart with sacred feelings. Only then will your life be redeemed. If you want to progress in life, never forget the name of God. Do not divert your mind from one name to another. Let your mind be focused on one name and one form. *Manah Eva Manushyanam Karanam Bandhamokshayo* (mind is the cause for bondage and liberation of man). The mind wavers because of the desires you entertain. Hence, you will attain peace only when you give up desires. Mere performance of acts of charity will not confer peace on you. Offer yourself to God with single-minded devotion. Only then can you attain peace and happiness. Control your desires. Control your thoughts. Once you control your thoughts, then everything will come under your control. You are endowed with the eternal principles of truth and love. *Sathyannasti Paro Dharma* (There is no Dharma greater than adherence to truth). Considering truth as the basis of your life, follow the path of righteousness. Then the principle of love will manifest in you. When you have love, you will be successful in all your endeavours.

#### *Embodiments of Atma!*

You are all Atmaswarupa (embodiment of the Self). You are not the body which is bound to perish. You are the Atma which has neither birth nor death. It has no attachment whatsoever. You will attain immortality once you realise your true identity. You will be free from all worries and desires. You may ask, "Is there anyone without worries and desires"? I am Myself the ideal in this regard. I have absolutely no desires whatsoever. Everything is in My hand. I can give you whatever you ask for. However, do not desire materialistic things from Me. They are transient like passing clouds. Ask for that which is eternal. The entire world is sustained by the twin principles of truth and love. They are present in everyone. I am the truth that is present in all. I am the love that is present in all. Truth and love are all-pervasive. However, you are not making efforts to experience truth and love. Therefore, develop truth and love more and more.

#### **Make Love the Basis of your Life**

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Today you may be occupying positions of power, but how long can you remain in power? It is only temporary. Only divinity is everlasting. You have chosen the path of truth. Never deviate from it. Never forget the principle of truth you have experienced. You may forget anything in life but never forget truth and love. Truth is Bahirvahini (external flow) and love is Antarahini (internal flow). Both of them have to be protected and



sustained. That is the duty of a human being. Bereft of truth and love, one does not deserve to be called a human being at all.

*Embodiments of Love!*

Let your life be filled with love. Do not confine your love to your family and friends. Share it with one and all. Whomsoever you come across, consider him as the embodiment of divinity. Share your love with your fellow human beings and become the recipient of their love. Follow the path of truth. I always teach the principles of truth and love. Congregations like this are meant only to exhort you to adhere to the path of truth and love. All of you have gathered here out of your love for Me. I am happy that all of you have come here to listen to My Message, the quintessence of which is truth and love. If you practise truth and love in your daily life, that will make Me very happy. Do not allow your love to be tainted with worldly feelings. Let it flow incessantly towards God. This was the ideal demonstrated by Radha. She was always immersed in the thoughts of Krishna and her name itself conveys her greatness and sacredness. If you change the order of the letters of the name of Radha, you get Dhara (Prakriti or Nature). Radha symbolised Dhara. Krishna is Paramatma (God). Prakriti is a part of Paramatma; they are inseparable. Radha knew only Krishna and none else. She was totally immersed in the love of Krishna. Krishna was the Adhar (basis) of her life. It is because of such one-pointed devotion that she could attain liberation. One who aspires to attain liberation should follow the path of love as demonstrated by Radha.

*Embodiments of Love!*

I do not want to cause inconvenience to you by speaking at length. Hence, I bring My Discourse to a close. Consider whatever work you do as God's work. See God everywhere. I will be happy when you develop such divine feelings. So many people have assembled here. I confer on you the sacred wealth of My love and bliss. May all of you lead a long, happy, healthy and peaceful life!

– **From Bhagavan's Birthday Message in Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium, Prasanthi Nilayam on 23rd November 2005.**

All rivers finally merge in the ocean. So too all branches of knowledge culminate in the ocean of spiritual wisdom (Adhyatma Vidya).

– *Baba*

**SRI SATHYA SAI AVATAR  
80TH  
YEAR OF ADVENT**

PRASANTHI NILAYAM is a witness to many glorious events in the past. But the grand function on 23rd November 2005, the day of 80th year of the Advent of Kali Yuga Avatar Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, was unparalleled and unique both for its magnificence and magnitude. Lakhs of people of all cultures and nationalities from as many as 180 countries of the world congregated at Prasanthi Nilayam to offer their homage to Bhagavan and to pray for unity, peace and harmony in the world. It was, in fact, a rare spectacle of unity of mankind brought about by the Divine Love of Bhagavan. The entire Prasanthi Nilayam and Puttaparthi bore a festive look on this great and historic occasion. Huge portraits of Bhagavan, grand welcome arches and charming decorations with flowers and plantain leaves turned it into a dreamland of exquisite beauty and splendour. The abode of Bhagavan in Poornachandra was specially decorated with beautiful garlands and floral patterns. The entire route of Bhagavan from His abode in Poornachandra to Hill View Stadium was lined with welcome arches and series of beautiful lights.

The most glorious event of all times to come was witnessed on the morning of 23rd November 2005. The venue of this grand celebration was Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium. Much before Bhagavan's arrival, all its galleries were full to their capacity with devotees eager to have a glimpse of their Beloved Bhagavan on this auspicious morning. The entire Hill View Stadium was majestically decorated to offer a befitting welcome to Bhagavan. The flags of all countries of the world and garlands of white and pink balloons decorated the entire railings on top of stadium galleries. The passage from the stadium to Hanuman hilltop was similarly decorated with pillars of pink and white balloons. A beautiful stage was specially made for cultural programmes on the western side of the stadium, which displayed "Sri Sathya Sai Avatar: 80th Year of Advent" with a beautiful lotus in the centre. Two giant screens, one on the top of the cricket pavilion and the other on the ladies galleries side, were set up to provide live projection of the proceedings to the devotees. Santhi Vedika, from where Bhagavan was to shower the bliss of His Divine Darshan to devotees, was profusely and artistically decorated with garlands of flowers.

### **Scintillating Morning Function and Bhagavan's Birthday Message**

On the morning of 23rd November 2005, the sky was overcast with clouds and rain god was offering its tribute to Bhagavan in the form of a light drizzle. All eyes were on the northern end of the stadium from where Bhagavan was to come in a grand procession. At 7.45 a.m., there was bustle in the air as Bhagavan's procession entered the stadium. The procession was led by Bhagavan's beloved elephant Sai Geeta in its rich finery. It was followed by a group of Veda chanting students and a dance troupe. Then came Bhagavan in an open car in His sparkling white robe showering the bliss of His Divine Darshan on the mammoth gathering in the Hill View Stadium. A melodious song on the public address system "*Ananda Barasao Hey Mangal Dayee ...*" (Oh Lord of auspiciousness! Shower bliss on all), colourful balloons released in the sky, flower rockets filling the entire stadium and sound of crackers fired in the sky from the adjoining college ground offered joyous welcome to Bhagavan. On reaching Santhi Vedika, Bhagavan sat on a beautiful silver throne placed in the centre of the exquisitely decorated Santhi Vedika.

The cultural programme started on the magnificent stage put up in the western end of the stadium. At the outset, a group of girls offered obeisance to Bhagavan in their artistic dance to the tune of a melodious song. Thereafter, Telugu movie star Sai Kumar and cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar offered their tributes to Bhagavan and started compering the programme. Simultaneously, contingents of many nations of the world marched on the road in front of Santhi Vedika and offered their salutations to Bhagavan and performed a cultural item each of their country.

Sunil Gavaskar introduced the cricketers of the Indian team and Lt. Col. Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, silver medallist in 2004 Olympics, to Bhagavan at Santhi Vedika. After seeking blessings from Bhagavan, Lt. Col. Rathore took the global peace insignia towards Hanuman hill. As the insignia went up on the hilltop, a giant screen rolled down along the hill slope with the message: “May there be Peace, Unity and Love in the World”. After this, many top artistes came on the stage and made their presentations. Beautiful songs: “Swagatam Suswagatam ...”, “Narayan Roop Namoh Namah ...”, “Sai Ram Sathya Sai Ram” reverberated the entire Hill View Stadium.

After these musical tributes to Bhagavan, two eminent speakers addressed the huge gathering and paid their homage to Bhagavan. The first speaker was Sri Indulal Shah, International Advisor to Prasanthi Council. Sri Shah offered salutations to Bhagavan on his behalf and on behalf of millions of devotees in all parts of the world who, he said, were pouring out their hearts filled with love on this historic moment of 80th Birthday of Bhagavan. Bhagavan, the learned speaker said, had ushered in an era of love, peace and unity and had made Prasanthi Nilayam the spiritual capital of the world. The second speaker was Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman, Prasanthi Council. Referring to Bhagavan as fathomless, never-ending divine love, Dr. Goldstein observed that it was our great good fortune to be here on earth when God has incarnated in human form to transform mankind. Stressing the need for spiritual growth of man, the learned speaker said that man should follow the teachings of Bhagavan and redeem his life by making the light of selfless love shine in his heart.

After this, Bhagavan gave His Divine Message, exhorting all to serve their fellowmen and redeem their life. (Full text of Bhagavan’s Discourse has been given elsewhere in this issue.) At the end of His Discourse, Bhagavan graciously cut the cake and lighted a candle on it. While the fireworks were fired in the sky, a beautiful song in celebration of Bhagavan’s Birthday “*Shubha Janam Din ...*” was played on the P.A. system.

The dignitaries who came to offer their tributes to Bhagavan on this sacred occasion included Governor of Karnataka, Sri T.N. Chaturvedi, Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Sri Sushilkumar Shinde, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Sri Vilasrao Deshmukh, former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Sri N. Chandrababu Naidu, Finance Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Sri K. Rosaiah, Minister of Tourism and Sugar, Andhra Pradesh, Smt. J. Geeta Reddy and cricketers V.V.S. Laxman, Murali Karthik, R.P. Singh, J.P. Yadav, Yuvraj Singh, Suresh Raina, Sreesanth and Sachin Tendulkar. After the conclusion of the function, Bhagavan blessed the Laddu Prasadam for distribution to all devotees and gave Prasadam to cricketers, Lt. Col. Rathore and a few other devotees with His Divine Hands. This glorious function came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 10.10 a.m.

### **Cultural Programmes and Fireworks in the Evening**

The grand celebration of Bhagavan's 80th Birthday continued on the evening of 23rd November 2005. Bhagavan came to Hill View Stadium at 4.40 p.m. in a colourful procession which included performing artistes of different States of India and several band troupes. The dance troupes that formed part of this magnificent procession were folk dancers of Tamil Nadu, Garba dancers of Gujarat, folk dancers of Orissa, folk dancers of Maharashtra and Kavadi dancers of Kerala. After the folk dancers came the Nadaswaram and band troupes of Anantapur Campus, band troupes of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School followed by brass band of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prasanthi Nilayam. In the rear of this procession were Primary School students performing Bhangra dance. While this colourful procession with vibrant dance and music moved towards Santhi Vedika, a sweet Telugu song, "*Puttina Roju Sai Puttina Roju, Sathyam Dharmam, Santhi Premalaku Panduga Roju, Happy Birthday to You Bhagavan Sri Sai Ram*" (Bhagavan's Birthday is the day of grand festivity to glorify Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema) was played on the P.A. system to the delight of the mammoth gathering. Bhagavan arrived at the Santhi Vedika in this grand procession at 5.00 p.m. and sat in a beautiful chair with a grand silver canopy overhead. Words fail to describe the glory and majesty of Bhagavan when He showered the bliss of His Darshan on the mammoth gathering of devotees from Santhi Vedika in His sparkling yellow robe.

Soon after this, cultural programme began on the brightly lit giant stage. The first to offer their musical tribute were Santoor maestro Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma and his son Rahul Sharma. They presented two items. The first item was "Celebrations", a joyous composition to celebrate this auspicious occasion. After this, they presented a fascinating composition "Baba We Love You", paying their homage to Bhagavan. After this scintillating performance, famous Sarod maestro Amjad Ali Khan made a captivating presentation along with his sons Amaan Ali Bangash, Ayaan Ali Bangash and his wife Subhalakshmi. The first composition presented by them was entitled "Truth" which had been specially composed for Bhagavan's Birthday. The second composition "Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram" was also very well received by the audience. The next artiste was famous Hindustani classical vocalist Begum Parveen Sultana, who rejoiced the audience with three devotional songs in her mellifluous voice.

As this magnificent presentation concluded, stadium lights became dim and all decorative lights were switched on. Most spectacular sight was on the Hanuman hilltop where beautiful coconut trees made of light started shining. Administrative building of the Institute and Museum on the adjoining hill were illuminated with colours that kept changing creating a fascinating spectacle. Then at 6.10 p.m. began the dazzling laser light show. Green laser beams of light emanated from the top of the giant stage and stretched out up to the sky creating beautiful patterns and shapes. The laser show was accompanied by high decibel music, enchanting and captivating one and all.

After this laser show, cultural programmes commenced again on the stage. It was now the turn of renowned singer Smt. Kavita Krishnamurthy and her husband Dr. L. Subramaniam to enthral the devotees with their presentation. The first item of the presentation was "Vatapi Ganapatim Bhajeham" on the violin by Dr. Subramaniam. This

was followed by a song specially composed for the 80th Birthday of Bhagavan in which 80 Institute students took part along with Smt. Kavita Krishnamurthy who led the song: “We Seek Your Blessings Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, You are the Guiding Light”. Next to perform was renowned western classical vocalist Dana Gillespie who presented two songs in her inimitable style. They were: “*What can I give to the One who has everything, who holds the whole world in the palm of His hand? ...*” and “*With the lamp of love you’ll never be in darkness if you hold it near, it’ll take you far ...*”

This musical presentation concluded at about 7.00 p.m. and laser light show began once again. But this time, it synchronised with another grand show of spectacular fireworks in the sky. The dazzle of the streaks of laser lights, the clusters of colourful sparks of the fireworks coupled with loud music turned the Hill View Stadium into an enchanting land. This marvellous show lasted nearly 15 minutes, gripping the attention of one and all. The last item of the cultural programme was presented by Ms. Richa Sharma who sang a Bhajan in her unique style. This unique display of lights, music, dances and fireworks concluded at 7.20 p.m. when Bhagavan was offered Mangalarati. As Bhagavan’s car left Santhi Vedita, another beautiful song was played on the P.A. system “*Aashayen Mile Dil Ki, Ummeeden Haseen Dil Ki ...*” (All the hopes and desires of my heart are fulfilled), which concurred with the feelings of the masses who had had all their life’s wishes fulfilled on this sacred and auspicious day.

**BHAGAVAN’S BENEDICTORY ADDRESS:**  
**24th CONVOCATION OF SSSIHL**

## TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS ARE THE FOUNDATION OF TRUE EDUCATION

*Students – Boys and Girls!*

THERE is nothing much to be said about education. But education has a goal. That is truth. If it does not give the knowledge of truth, then it is not true education. There are crores (hundreds of millions) of so-called educated people in the world today. But, what is it that they are doing? They have no spirit of Paropakara (doing good to others) in them.

### **Modern Education Develops Selfishness**

Nevertheless, students are engaged in acquiring education. The education that they acquire is only secular education and not spiritual education. In fact, only spiritual education is true education. One should acquire spiritual education since it gives the knowledge of God. Secular education merely enables a person to eke out a living and thereby maintain himself and his family. *The end of education is character.* Devoid of character, everything else is useless. Unfortunately, today we have distanced ourselves from this sacred goal of education. Of what use is it to acquire such an education which

does not help one to attain its goal? Modern education enables one to acquire merely worldly gains. But fulfilling one's physical requirements is not the be-all and end-all of education. Besides catering to one's worldly progress, it should help one to attain inner growth. Education should enable one to cultivate good qualities, character and devotion. There should be balance between worldly progress and inner growth. There should be unity between one's thoughts and actions. Only when there is unity can one realise divinity.

Modern education develops selfishness and selfishness alone. True education is that which fosters selflessness. True education does not limit one to serve only one's selfish ends; it elevates one to serve others. *Paropakara Punyaya, Papaya Parapeedanam* (one attains merit by serving others and commits sin by harming them). Wherever you see today, you find only selfishness. The foremost concern of man is self-interest. But he forgets his real Self. That is the Atma which is present in everyone. It is Chaitanya Shakti (power of consciousness). This Chaitanya Shakti is present in every being. That is why, the Vedas declare: *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings). One should give up one's self-interest and strive to realise the Atma Tattwa (principle of the Self). Modern education is steeped in utter selfishness. It is only when man transcends his self-interest can he acquire true education and purity of heart. Only man can practise selflessness and realise the Atma Tattwa; birds, beasts and animals cannot do so. One who helps others selflessly, develops a spirit of sacrifice and realises the Self can be called a human being in the true sense of the term; not merely by acquiring secular education.

### **Acquire Education which Develops Character**

Man has value only when he is endowed with character. One without character cannot be called a human being. Hence, acquire that education which develops character. Education is not meant to fill our pockets with money. After all, what can money do? In what way can it help us? It may perhaps help us to acquire name and fame and build palatial buildings. But without character, all this amounts to zero. Unfortunately, such people are flourishing in the world today. In fact, a person without character is unfit to be called a human being. He is verily an animal. Even an animal is better than such a person, for it has a reason and a season. But man today has no reason and no season! He moves about everywhere as an epitome of selfishness.

Once selfishness enters man's life, his degeneration starts immediately. Character is most important in the life of man. Truth and righteousness are the foundation of character. *Sathyannasti Paro Dharma* (There is no Dharma greater than adherence to truth). The mansion of righteousness rests on the foundation of truth. If the very foundation of truth collapses, there can be no righteousness. Hence, truth and righteousness are the two most important limbs of a human being. Where there are truth and righteousness, there love manifests. Without truth, righteousness and love, there can be no peace. And there is little use of your positions of power and authority if you are without truth, righteousness, love and peace.

Many people complain, "I have everything in life, but I have no peace of mind". A person without peace of mind is confronted with troubles from all sides. If only he has

peace of mind, he can be happy in the world. He will have no difficulties at all! In fact, man has great accumulated merits. It is because of these merits earned by him in his previous lives through the observance of truth and righteousness that he gets human birth. Without truth and righteousness, man loses his humanness. He degenerates himself to the level of a demon or an animal. The word 'Manava' (man) consists of three letters: 'ma', 'na', 'va'. 'Ma' means attachment, 'na' means without and 'va' means to conduct oneself. One who conducts himself in the world without attachment is Manava. Only such a person can be called a real human being. How does man develop attachment? He marries, begets children, develops a family; all these relationships become the cause of his attachment. He loses peace on account of attachment.

Man today has everything – good food to eat, various means of enjoyment, facility of comfortable travel, but he has no peace. Man should attain freedom from the bondage of attachment to have peace of mind. Develop Ekatma Bhava (feeling of oneness with God). If man develops Ekatma Bhava, he can move about freely in the world without any attachment whatsoever. He loses his freedom and becomes bound when he develops desires, lust, etc. Where there is lust, love cannot exist there. Man should spread the fragrance of love and goodness like a rose flower which spreads fragrance. When man develops good thoughts and good behaviour, he will become a symbol of goodness. Without love and goodness, man develops attachment. Happiness lies in detachment. Detachment however does not mean that you become indifferent to the difficulties of others. Help everybody; be compassionate towards the poor. If you have love and compassion, you are a true human being.

### **What is True Renunciation?**

During his debating tour of north India, Adi Sankara met a great scholar named Mandana Mishra. He had a wife by name Ubhayabharati. She was selected to be the arbitrator and judge to decide the winner in the debate between Sankara and Mandana Mishra. In fact, Sankara himself suggested her name as he considered her most truthful and impartial despite being the wife of his competitor, Mandana Mishra. She considered truth as God and was therefore eminently suited for the assignment. The debate between Sankara and Mandana Mishra commenced in the presence of Ubhayabharati. She listened to the arguments and counter arguments with rapt attention. Finally, Sankara defeated Mandana Mishra in the debate and he was declared the winner by Ubhayabharati. As per the conditions of the debate, Mandana Mishra had to take to Sannyas (renunciation), and he did accordingly. As a dutiful wife, Ubhayabharati followed suit and she also became a renunciant. A question may arise here as to what is Sannyas in the real sense of the term. It is renouncing of all desires. As long as a person entertains desires, he will only be a Samsari (worldly person). He will develop worldly relationships. He will desire to have a son in the first instance. Thereafter, the whole retinue of daughter-in-law, grandsons, granddaughters, etc., will follow.

One day, Ubhayabharati was going along with her disciples to the river Ganga for taking bath in the river. On the way, she observed a Sannyasi who was relaxing, keeping a dried bottle gourd under his head. He was using this for storing drinking water, and hence he was preserving it carefully. Ubhayabharati saw this Sannyasi's attachment to the bottle gourd and said to her disciples, "Look! This man calls himself a Sannyasi, but he is

attached to a bottle gourd which he is keeping under his head as a pillow.” The Sannyasi heard this comment, but did not utter anything then. While Ubhayabharati and her disciples were returning from the river, he threw away the bottle gourd in front of them in order to demonstrate that he was not attached to it. Observing his action, Ubhayabharati aptly 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 Abhimana and Ahamkara become a Jnani and Sannyasi?” Her comment was an eye-opener for the Sannyasi. He expressed gratitude to Ubhayabharati for imparting true knowledge of renunciation to him.

### **Your Company Influences your Thoughts and Conduct**

People today put up a show as though they have renounced everything. In fact, it is they who crave for worldly possessions. Students should have only one desire. That is Brahmacharya (celibacy, purity). That is real renunciation. When you come here, you pray, “Swami! We don’t want anything. We have no desires like marriage, setting up a family or building a house, etc. Please lead us on the path of devotion and liberation.” But the moment you cross the boundary of the Institute, umpteen number of desires swarm around you like honey bees.

Man’s behaviour is influenced by many factors, like Sthanabala (power of place), Bhujabala (power of physical body), Dhanabala (power of wealth) and Daivabala (power of divinity). The Ramayana illustrates how Sthanabala influences the thinking of man. While going in the forest, Rama and Lakshmana sat under a tree. Immediately afterwards, Lakshmana told Rama that he was tired of living in the forest and would like to go back to Ayodhya as quickly as possible to have a more comfortable living. Rama smiled at him and said, “Let us proceed further, I shall explain everything later.” How did Lakshmana who previously had declared that Rama was everything to him and that he would not live without Rama even for a moment suddenly develop this attitude? How did this concern for bodily comfort arise in him suddenly? After they walked some distance, Lakshmana felt the pangs of repentance for his impertinent behaviour. He realised his mistake, caught hold of Rama’s feet and said, “Rama! Forgive me for what I had said. I cannot understand how these evil thoughts entered me. What could be the reason?” Rama explained, “Lakshmana! The region through which we passed just now was the haunt of a demoness. She used to rest under that tree. Hence, the place is infected with all her devilish qualities. The vibrations of those evil qualities aroused bad thoughts in you. The moment you came out of that place, you became your normal self again. Your inherent good nature asserted itself.” Thus, one’s association with a particular place also has its effect on one’s behaviour. Thereafter, Rama was cautious about the place of their stay in the forest.

Similarly, the type of people you associate with also influence your thoughts and behaviour. Youngsters often move in bad company and cultivate bad qualities. This is not correct. They should always make friendship with good people and emulate their qualities. Never have anything to do with a person of evil qualities. Keep yourself at a distance from such people. The great epic Ramayana is replete with examples how association with good people results in developing noble qualities. Adi Sankara in “Bhaja



Govindam” very graphically describes how Satsanga (good company) can ultimately lead one to liberation:

*Satsangatwe Nissangatwam,  
Nissangatwe Nirmohatwam,  
Nirmohatwe Nischalatattwam,  
Nischalatattwe Jivanmukti.*

(Sanskrit Sloka)

(Good company leads to detachment; detachment makes one free from delusion; freedom from delusion leads to steadiness of mind; steadiness of mind confers liberation.)

Today, people move about in bad company and ultimately ruin themselves. This is the effect of Kali Yuga, which is often referred to as the Kalaha Yuga (the Age of conflict). Man by nature is divine; but turns evil on account of Dussanga (evil company). That is the reason why sages and seers in ancient times constantly strove to cultivate noble qualities by Satsanga.

Today, bad books are found everywhere. Wherever you see, you will find people, especially youngsters, reading bad books that pollute their minds. You might have observed youngsters visiting libraries invariably on Sundays and holidays. You often find them engaged in deep study. What sort of books do they read? They read bad books camouflaged in a good cover. Once you remove the cover and look into the book, everything is trash including the pictures. You will have to be very strict with such students. No one can be taken for granted. They speak sweet words outwardly as though they are very innocent. But they surreptitiously engage themselves in bad activities. They search for bad books and read them with absorbing interest. Those bad books are very exciting to the young minds. People who write bad books and tempt youngsters to read them do not think about the bad effect they will have on their minds. Thus, youngsters spoil themselves on account of bad books. No force on earth can change such boys; not even God.

Unless one introspects into one’s behaviour and strives for transformation, one continues to move about in bad company. One is a true devotee if one recognises one’s faults. One’s character and conduct are of paramount importance. If they are taken care of, one is sure of treading the right path. There is no use acquiring high academic degrees with a view to earn high salary and position. How long will they last? On the other hand, it is possible that they may land one in trouble. Money earned by bad means will be spent for bad purposes. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as is the feeling, so is the result). So, one should cultivate noble thoughts and feelings.

### **Students should Inculcate Good Qualities**

One has to read good books that transform the heart and uplift the soul. Unlike the students in the Gurukula system of ancient times, modern students indulge in bad behaviour. In spite of great efforts on the part of teachers to bring about a transformation in them, they continue with their bad qualities. It is not surprising to see students assaulting their teachers in educational institutions today. There are students who even betray those who actually provide for their living. There are also students who do not

hesitate to harm those who help them. Such are the qualities of the present-day students. They do not appreciate the role played by their teachers in their uplift.

What are the qualities expected of a student? A student should have good intellect, good character, adherence to truth, devotion, discipline and duty. Only those students who cultivate such qualities are eligible to be called students in the real sense. One who acts against these principles is not a student, but a stupid. You should not associate with such a person nor should you call him a stupid. Do not have any relationship with such persons. You should hold on to your own good qualities which can earn you appreciation in the world.

Love all. In fact, love is the most important aspect of education. One who teaches the method by which man can cultivate selfless love is the real Guru. There are, of course, many such teachers. I have established Sri Sathya Sai educational institutions only with a view to inculcate love and good qualities in students. It is not an exaggeration to say that there is not a single bad book in our library. Our students are very good. They do not at all move in bad company. Even when they go home during vacation, they do not like to stay there for long. Sometimes, their mothers may say, “My dear! You stayed for one full year in Brindavan or Puttaparthi. You never had an opportunity to eat tasty and spicy food. I shall now prepare such food that you will relish.” Our students will then reply, “Mother! You should also not eat such Rajasic food. It is not good for health.” As is the food, so is the head (thoughts). Wrong food and bad thoughts make people forget God. Hence, do not change your food habits. Continue to stick to Sattwic diet. Take plenty of green leafy vegetables. It is only when you maintain good habits with regard to food and head will you become good.

You are aware that people outside have high expectations of the students studying in Sri Sathya Sai educational institutions. They will reprimand you if they see you acting in a perverted manner, saying, “You are a student of Sri Sathya Sai institution. How can you behave in this bad manner?” Therefore, our students should never give such an opportunity to others. Rather, they should teach others by setting an ideal to them. Some students, show good behaviour and devotion as long as they remain in our hostels. Once they go out of the portals of the institution, they turn bad. This should not happen. Wherever you are, whether in the hostel here or when you go out, you must continue to have good behaviour. Of course, I have no doubt at all about the behaviour of our students. The students in our hostel and college are very good. With the hope that our students will continue to be good and become worthy of emulation by others, I conclude My Discourse with blessings to all.

- **From Bhagavan’s Benedictory Address on 22nd November 2005 in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the occasion of the 24th Convocation of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.**

*24th Convocation of SSSIHL*

# SELFLESSNESS IS THE MARK OF TRUE EDUCATION

*“Modern education develops selfishness and selfishness alone. True education is that which fosters selflessness. True education does not limit one to serve only one’s selfish ends; it elevates one to serve others”, said Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Revered Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning while delivering His Benedictory Address on the occasion of the 24th Convocation of the Institute held on 22nd November 2005 in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam.*

IT was one of the most glorious convocation functions of the Institute marked by grandeur and splendour as it was being held on the eve of the historic event of 80th Birthday of its Revered Chancellor, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue of the function, was virtually turned into heavenly garden overnight with most beautiful flowers, creepers and even a lawn with fresh grass. The front wall behind the dais right up to the top was aesthetically decorated with creepers and flowers. Floral gates and arches made on the dais were simply marvellous. The entire Hall was glittering with the light of the chandeliers. The light from the decorative festoons added to its brilliance.

The Hall was full to its seams with eager devotees waiting for the function to start. At 2.40 p.m., the ceremonial procession started from Poornachandra. As it entered Sai Kulwant Hall, the mammoth gathering of devotees and students welcomed it with a thunderous applause. The procession was led by the Institute brass band, after which came the Registrar holding the silver mace flanked by two students carrying the Institute emblems. They were followed by the Revered Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Chief Guest, Sri T.N. Chaturvedi, the Governor of Karnataka, distinguished guests, members of the Institute Trust, Governing Body and Academic Council.

After the procession reached the dais, the Chief Guest was welcomed by the Vice Chancellor with a beautiful garland. The programme began with chanting of customary Vedic hymns appropriate for the occasion followed by formal declaration of the opening of the Convocation by the Revered Chancellor.

## **Vice Chancellor’s Introductory Speech**

The Vice Chancellor, Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak then welcomed all and offered special welcome to the Chief Guest of the Convocation, Sri T.N. Chaturvedi. Outlining the main achievements of the Institute during the last one year, Sri Gokak said that the Department of Biosciences of the Institute had been held eligible for the Special Assistance Programme of the University Grants Commission. Sri Gokak added that the Institute had hosted many seminars and workshops on subjects of national importance, and made a special mention of the International Conference of eminent educationists on “Education for the 21st Century: From Education to Educare” held in August 2005.

Sri Gokak quoted from the Discourses of the Revered Chancellor to define educate and added that educate was the need of the hour so as to inculcate values in students and help them realise their innate divinity. Elaborating upon the Sathya Sai System of Education evolved under the guidance of the Revered Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba, Sri Gokak observed that it was this unique system of education of the Institute which was responsible for bringing about all-round development of its students – physical, intellectual and spiritual. Congratulating the graduands, Sri Gokak remarked that they were extremely fortunate to receive their degrees on the eve of the 80th year of the Advent of their Divine Chancellor who was, in fact, the Chancellor of the universe. He added that this was a unique moment in the history of mankind, when they were witnessing the spiritual revolution embarked upon by Bhagavan besides the technological revolution of this age. In conclusion, he exhorted the students to become the torchbearers of this spiritual revolution.

After the introductory speech of the Vice Chancellor, the successful candidates were administered the customary oath and awarded degrees; meritorious among them were awarded gold medals by the Revered Chancellor.

#### **Convocation Address by the Chief Guest**

At the outset, the Chief Guest, Sri T.N. Chaturvedi expressed his gratitude to Bhagavan for providing him the opportunity to come to Prasanthi Nilayam and participate as Chief Guest in the 24th Convocation of the Institute on the eve of His 80th Birthday which, he said, was indeed an auspicious day of prayerfulness and thankfulness as Bhagavan represents that eternal effulgence of the Divine spark that enlivens and enlightens humanity through ages. Referring to the motto of the Institute, the learned speaker said, “The motto of the Institute enshrines the Vedic ideals and injunctions: Sathyam Vada (speak truth) and Dharmam Chara (conduct must be guided by righteousness). They briefly spell eternal verities of a better future for man. What better guidance can one have for one’s thoughts and actions in society?” he asked. Sri Chaturvedi referred to the integral system of education developed by the Institute under the guidance of its Revered Chancellor and said that this remarkable concept of education was integral to Bharat’s cultural and spiritual heritage and signified total development of man – intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual. The Institute’s academic atmosphere, he added, was pervaded by spiritual vibrations and Bhagavan’s love for students that moulded their character and inculcated in them the qualities of truth, righteousness, peace, love, service, compassion, amity and fellowship which formed the highest philosophy of man’s life. Reminding the students that society today was characterised by social, sectarian and regional disparities, urban-rural divide and ignorance and backwardness, he exhorted them to do their best to cure these ills of society since the type of education they were receiving in this Institute was capable of equipping them with vast capabilities for transforming society.

Extending his best wishes to the graduating students leaving the portals of the Institute, the learned speaker hoped, “As you are no doubt proud of the Institute as its alumni, the Institute will be equally proud of you when in this wide world whoever you be, you acquit yourself in work and conduct with credit as expected of you.” Sri Chaturvedi

concluded his Convocation Address with the prayer: “May Bhagavan’s grace abide with each and every one of us and illumine our lives!”

### **Revered Chancellor’s Benedictory Address**

In His Benedictory Address, the Revered Chancellor Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba said that true education was that which could lead man to realise his divinity. Secular education, He said, was merely for providing the means of living while spiritual education was for life. Modern education, He said, did not equip man to realise the goal of his life and added that education that did not inculcate virtues and spirit of service in students was useless. (Full text of Bhagavan’s Benedictory Address has been given elsewhere in this issue.) The grand and solemn function of the Convocation came to a close at 4.45 p.m. with singing of the national anthem by all.

### **Prem Ki Jyoti: Convocation Drama 2005**

The students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning presented the drama entitled “Prem Ki Jyoti” (light of love) on the evening of 22nd November 2005 in Poornachandra Auditorium on the occasion of the 24th Convocation of the Institute. Dedicated at the Lotus Feet of the Revered Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the eve of His 80th Birthday, the drama showed how sincere prayer and adherence to righteousness could make seemingly impossible tasks possible and illumine human heart with the light of love and bliss. Presenting a realistic depiction of modern-day construction business, the drama showed a new direction for success in business enterprises on the basis of values without compromising on principles of ethics and morality.

The drama presented the success story of Praneet, a creative architect in a construction company, whose firm faith in God and noble ideals and beliefs ultimately surmounted all hurdles, earned success and renown for the company and created a marvellous piece of architecture dedicated to the unity of all religions. The success achieved through noble means and miraculous cure of Praneet by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba transformed the managers of the company and created in them firm faith in God, and the principles of nobility, truth and love.

Realistic story, powerful dialogues, superb acting of the students and brilliant direction of the drama made it a powerful presentation and earned the appreciation of one and all and blessings of Bhagavan. In the end, Bhagavan went up on the stage, blessed the cast and posed for photographs with them. The drama which began at 6.15 p.m. came to a close at 7.30 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan. Besides other dignitaries, the Chief Guest of the Convocation, Sri T.N. Chaturvedi, Governor of Karnataka also witnessed the drama. This magnificent piece of dramatic art, was in fact, a befitting tribute to the Divine Chancellor of the Institute on the eve of His 80th Birthday.

## **BHAGAVAN’S 80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

## **A GALAXY OF MAGNIFICENT PROGRAMMES**

A RICH variety of cultural, musical and social welfare programmes formed part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba at Prasanthi Nilayam.

### **GUJARATI NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS**

Gujarati New Year was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 2nd November 2005 with the benign benedictions of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Sai Youth and Bal Vikas children of Gujarat presented magnificent cultural programmes on this auspicious occasion in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan.

The devotees of Gujarat sang sweet welcome songs when Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall on the morning of 2nd November 2005 to shower the bliss of His Divine Darshan on the devotees on this auspicious day. On reaching the dais, Bhagavan was offered traditional welcome with Poornakumbham. He then graciously inaugurated the programme by lighting the sacred lamp at 9.30 a.m. The first item of the programme featured “Sri Sathya Sai Avatar Darshan”, a pilgrimage performed by 166 selected Sai Youth of Gujarat from Dakor (famous pilgrim centre of Gujarat) to Parthi (Puttaparthi) serving over 45,000 people on their way and spreading the Divine Message of Bhagavan in 126 villages of Gujarat. The beautiful chariot which was carried in this great pilgrimage was brought by its participants to Sai Kulwant Hall where Bhagavan blessed the participants.

The second item of the programme was a drama entitled “Bhagavan’s Mission” presented by the Bal Vikas children and youth of Gujarat. The drama beautifully depicted how Bhagavan’s love and teachings were bringing about transformation in mankind and ushering in a new golden era in the world. Beautiful dances, sweet songs, a thrilling Qawali, all portraying the Glory of Bhagavan and His Divine Mission of unity of all mankind made this an appreciable presentation. Specially the lotus dance presented by the Bal Vikas children was very much appreciated. Bhagavan sat through the entire performance and blessed the cast at the end of the drama. He also materialised a gold chain for one of the children. The drama was followed by Bhajans led by the Sai Youth of Gujarat. The morning programme came to a close at 10.40 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end.

The programme in the afternoon commenced with an exhilarating tribal dance by the Sai Youth of Gujarat in their colourful traditional dresses. Dancing to the beat of drum and to the tune of simple musical instruments, the dancers made many marvellous formations to the delight of all and thus offered a delectable presentation. This was followed by a beautiful dance by Bal Vikas girls students to the accompaniment of a very sweet and melodious devotional song sung by playback singers in praise of Lord Ganesh. The next item of the programme was a very absorbing and realistic drama entitled “The Way of Life” presented by the Bal Vikas children. The drama showed how advancements in medical science had become the monopoly of only the rich and costly treatment had become out of the reach of poor people. In the end, the drama showed how Bhagavan’s free hospitals and His teachings of love and service were showing the light at the end of

the tunnel to the suffering humanity. The grand finale of these magnificent celebrations was the song “Sai Ke Hum Bachche Hain ...” depicting the glory of Sai – presented by Bal Vikas children with total perfection. Simultaneously, the audience in the Hall waved the flags, bearing a beautiful photo of Bhagavan. The joyous celebrations of Gujarati New Year came to a close with this beautiful song. Bhagavan showered His blessings on the children at the end of the programme which concluded at 5.45 p.m. with offer of Arati to Bhagavan.

### **GLOBAL AKHANDA BHAJAN**

Right from His childhood, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has been emphasising the significance of Bhajans as an effective means of experiencing the Divine. He says, “Once you take the Name of the Lord which is sweetness itself, it will awaken all the sweetness in you.” Devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall were immersed in the sweetness of God’s Name when soul-elevating Bhajans to the accompaniment of divine music were sung in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan during the Akhanda Bhajan held at Prasanthi Nilayam on 12th and 13th November 2005.

On the afternoon of 12th November 2005, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 5.45 p.m. At 6.00 p.m. sharp, Bhagavan lighted the sacred lamp in the Bhajan Mandir to inaugurate the Akhanda Bhajan. The entire Sai Kulwant Hall then started reverberating with the chanting of the Divine Name as the boys and girls students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning led the Bhajans alternately, and the entire congregation in the Hall followed them with deep devotional fervour. The Bhajans continued throughout the night of 12th November 2005. Besides the students, some groups of Ashram staff and devotees also led the Bhajans. At 5.00 a.m. on the morning of 13th November 2005, Suprabhatam (morning invocation of the Lord) was sung in the Bhajan Mandir, after which Bhajans continued. Bhagavan came to the Bhajan Mandir at 7.30 a.m. on 13th November 2005 and showered His Divine blessings on the singers and devotees. Bhagavan’s Divine Presence enthused one and all, and Bhajans continued with great devotion and enthusiasm. In the afternoon, Bhagavan came to the Bhajan Mandir at 3.15 p.m. Bhagavan’s Presence added to the bliss of singing and filled each heart with divine bliss. After 24 hours of continuous singing, the Akhanda Bhajan came to a happy conclusion in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan at 6.00 p.m. with offer of Arati to Bhagavan. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end. Sai Organisations and devotees organised Akhanda Bhajan for 24 hours on these two days in all parts of the world surcharging the environment of the world with the vibrations of the Divine Name.

### **MASS MARRIAGES FUNCTION**

As part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 80 mass marriages were performed in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 17th November 2005. A grand function was held in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan to celebrate this joyous event of immense social significance. Not only were the marriages performed in a sacred and traditional manner with chanting of Vedic Mantras, it also conveyed a valuable message of avoiding wasteful expenditure on marriages. Throughout the performance of the function, Bhagavan kept showering His unbounded grace on the



couples. No less was the shower of gifts which Bhagavan distributed to them with His Divine Hands.

The venue of this function was Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam which was aesthetically decorated for this sacred and joyous occasion. The central part of the Hall, where the couples were to sit along with their parents and relatives, was so beautifully decorated with flowers and plantain leaves that it looked like a big wedding Pandal. Closed circuit T.V.s were set up at vantage points for easy viewing of this grand event by the huge concourse of devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall.

On 17th November 2005, Bhagavan arrived in Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.30 a.m. amidst sacred chants of Vedic Mantras. Soon after this, the marriage procession of the brides and bridegrooms in their wedding dresses, given to them by Bhagavan on the previous evening entered Sai Kulwant Hall. They were led by Nadaswaram musicians and a vibrant group of dancers, and were accompanied by their parents and close relatives. The organisers promptly led them to their allotted seats in Sai Kulwant Hall. As soon as they were seated in the Hall, Bhagavan went into their rows and showered His blessings on them. The entire environment was surcharged with sacredness and gaiety by the continuous Vedic chants by Institute students and sweet notes of Nadaswaram musicians. While Vedic Mantras and Nadaswaram music continued, Bhagavan went into the rows of the couples and distributed Mangal Sutas (necklace of auspiciousness) to each bridegroom with His Divine Hands. After Bhagavan returned to the dais, He called the brides one by one and gave them gifts with His blessings.

The rituals of marriage began at 8.50 a.m. with chanting of sacred Mantras by the priests. As the priests gave instructions, the brides and bridegrooms performed the rituals. The volunteers who were seated with the couples helped them to perform all the rituals of the wedding in the prescribed manner. Commencing with worship of Lord Ganesh, the couples performed the rituals culminating in the important ritual of tying of Mangal Suta by the bridegroom around the neck of the bride. This was performed at 9.05 a.m. amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras, sweet and joyous notes of Nadaswaram and loud applause of viewers. Finally, the bride and bridegroom performed the ritual of putting yellow rice on each other's head, garlanded each other, and tied the nuptial knot. After the performance of these rituals, Bhagavan again went into rows of the couples and sprinkled sacred rice on them and showered His grace on them. This joyous and sacred function came to a close at 10.05 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan. The couples and their parents were then offered a sumptuous wedding feast.

### **RATHOTSAVAM**

Throughout the last one year, various programmes of far reaching social, ethical and spiritual significance have continued in all the countries of the world as part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. However, at Prasanthi Nilayam these celebrations had a traditional start with Rathotsavam which was held on 18th November 2005.

On the morning of 18th November 2005, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.40 a.m. amidst the chants of sacred Vedic Mantras and sweet notes of Nadaswaram music.



As Bhagavan reached the centre of the Hall, Bhagavan's beloved elephant Sai Geeta came forward to pay its homage to its Divine Master. Bhagavan lovingly caressed it and fed it with fruits. After showering the bliss of His Divine Darshan on the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall, Bhagavan came to the Bhajan Mandir and blessed the commencement of Rathotsavam. Soon after this, idols for the procession were brought out in two palanquins, one having the idols of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman and the other having the idol of Venugopal Swami. At the Gopuram gate, the idol of Venugopal Swami was placed on a beautifully decorated chariot. Bhagavan came out up to the Gopuram gate to bless the commencement of this grand procession. The procession was led by Sai Geeta and Nadaswaram musicians, followed by Veda chanting and Bhajan singing groups of Institute students. As it meandered its way to Sri Pedda Venkama Raju Kalyana Mandapam, large number of people came out of their homes to witness it. Some of them broke coconuts before the chariot, others performed Puja and Arati to the idols. After the procession reached the Kalyana Mandapam, Arati was offered to the idols and the procession slowly moved back to Sai Kulwant Hall, after placing the chariot in the Kalyana Mandapam. The procession returned to Sai Kulwant Hall at 9.30 a.m. and the idols of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman were brought back to the Bhajan Mandir. This grand function came to a close at 9.35 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

### **LADIES DAY CELEBRATIONS**

Ladies Day is one of the important functions of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Birthday celebrations. It is the day to recognise the importance of the role played by woman as builders of home, society and nation. Like previous years, Ladies Day was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam in a befitting manner, and all the programmes on this day were conducted by the ladies.

The programmes began with early morning Suprabhatam in which a large number of ladies took part. After this, there was Veda Parayanam which was also conducted by the ladies as they went round the Mandir premises chanting Vedic Mantras. Later, the ladies conducted Nagar Sankirtan with great devotion. Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue of these celebrations, was beautifully decorated on this day. Besides floral and other decorations, the Hall was shining with colourful portraits of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on canvas which contained Bhagavan's teachings also. A big portrait of Mother Easwaramma was prominently displayed. There were special decorations on the dais, where a beautiful picture of Mother Easwaramma was placed amidst a cluster of flowers. Sweet notes of Nadaswaram reverberated in the Hall as a mark of welcome to Bhagavan. Two bands of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School led Bhagavan to Sai Kulwant Hall. Bhagavan was offered a grand welcome when He came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 8.25 a.m. Girls with lighted lamps, Poornakumbham and colourful umbrellas stood along the passage of Bhagavan to usher Him into the Hall.

A melodious song offered heartfelt welcome to Bhagavan as soon as He entered the Hall. After showering the bliss of His Divine Darshan on the mammoth gathering of devotees in the Hall, Bhagavan came to the dais where He lighted the sacred lamp at 8.35 a.m. amidst a thunderous applause of devotees to mark the inauguration of the programme.

The first item of the programme was a grand band display by the girls students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Prasanthi Nilayam which delighted one and all. After this, Bhagavan released a book entitled “Bhagavan’s Divine Upadesh” containing a compilation of 80 teachings of Bhagavan and also the first issue of the magazine “Mother Sathya Sai” started by Easwaramma Women’s Welfare Trust.

Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan on this important occasion, three ladies addressed the gathering. The first speaker was Smt. Mallika Srinivasan, Trustee, Easwaramma Women’s Welfare Trust. Smt. Srinivasan expressed gratitude to Bhagavan for giving to women the opportunity to serve mankind through such great endeavours as Bal Vikas, Women’s Colleges, Easwaramma Women’s Welfare Project and Mother and Child Project. The second speaker was Smt. Gita Mohan Ram of the USA who narrated a few incidents from her life to tell how Bhagavan gave her opportunities to experience His omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. The last speaker of the programme was Smt. Chethana Raju, Trustee, Easwaramma Women’s Welfare Trust who earlier introduced the speakers also. Referring to the 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan, Smt. Raju said that it was difficult for man to understand Bhagavan, who, in fact, is ageless, without birth and death and beyond the limitations of time. But, she added, it was possible for all to see Bhagavan’s love in action which comprised numerous service projects for the welfare of mankind. She also paid rich tributes to Mother Easwaramma whose humble wishes for the welfare of others fructified into stupendous welfare projects started by Bhagavan.

After these speeches, Bhagavan gave His Divine Message and exhorted one and all to realise the goal of life by recognising their divine reality. As all the desires of Mother Easwaramma, Bhagavan said, were for the welfare of others, they assumed the form of such huge projects like super speciality hospitals, water supply projects and big educational institutions. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan, “*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho ...*” which the entire congregation followed with great devotional fervour. The morning programme of Ladies Day came to a happy conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 10.10 a.m.

Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall in the afternoon at 4.15 p.m. He was led by the two bands of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School. Girls standing along the passage waved colourful ribbons as a mark of welcome to Bhagavan. The programme started at 4.30 p.m. after Bhagavan occupied His chair on the dais. The first item of the programme on the afternoon of 19th November 2005 was a soul-elevating presentation of devotional songs by renowned singer Smt. Kavita Krishnamurthy.

She commenced her presentation with a beautiful song in praise of Mother Easwaramma. What followed was a rare treat of melodious songs saturated with devotion which kept the audience spellbound for nearly an hour and a half. Thereafter, the students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School presented beautiful dances to the tune of sweet music with accompanying songs describing the glory of Mother Easwaramma and Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Equally enthralling was this programme of the students, who received Bhagavan’s profuse blessings and the coveted opportunity of group photo with Him at

the end of their magnificent presentation. Ladies Day celebrations came to a close at 6.30 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end.

### **A RICH VARIETY OF MUSIC PROGRAMMES**

#### **Bhagavan's 80th Birthday Celebration in Chinese Tradition**

On the afternoon of 18th November 2005, a group of overseas devotees presented a music programme to celebrate 80th year of the Divine Advent of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. This was a unique celebration in accordance with Chinese custom. The celebration commenced with a brief reference to the historical ties between India and China through a dialogue which depicted that contacts between the people of these two great countries went back to as early as 400 B.C. Cultural relations, trade and commerce flourished via the silk route. It was through these ancient contacts that the sacred teachings of Buddha came to China. About 1,400 years ago, Chinese monk and scholar Hieun Tsang travelled to India to study Buddhist scriptures. He made this pilgrimage in search of truth. He was the forerunner of many Chinese worldwide who today are making the same pilgrimage for truth to India. They converge at Prasanthi Nilayam because here resides the Living Truth in the form of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

At the outset, heartfelt gratitude was offered to Bhagavan for His loving permission to celebrate this auspicious occasion in accordance with Chinese tradition. A Chinese family on behalf of all present offered tea to Bhagavan in a symbolic gesture of filial piety and gratitude for His boundless love. Presentations were made of the longevity peach, longevity noodles and Chinese scrolls which symbolise traditional wishes for good health and longevity.

A musical presentation followed with the introduction of seven instrumentalists from the People's Republic of China. These accomplished musicians played Bhajans on these traditional musical instruments. The instruments were: erhu, pipa, yangqin, guzheng, dizi and sheng. Besides this soulful instrumental music including tunes of some popular Sai Bhajans by the instrumentalists, some ladies devotees presented sweet devotional songs and Bhajans. The entire musical programme was very well received by the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall who applauded enthusiastically. This, together with Bhagavan's gestures of approbation, energised the musicians who responded by playing with ever greater vigour and zest.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Bhagavan showered His blessings on the group and gave them the opportunity of group photographs with Him including the photographs in which they posed with Bhagavan along with their musical instruments. The programme which began at 3.30 p.m. came to a happy conclusion at 4.30 p.m.

#### **Musical Presentation by Sai International Choir**

The Sai International Choir consisting of 175 members from 45 countries of the world offered a grand musical tribute to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the afternoon of 20th November 2005 on the eve of 80th Birthday of Bhagavan. It was a soul-stirring presentation consisting of ten English devotional songs sung to the accompaniment of sweet divine music which sent the entire congregation into raptures. Not only was the wording of the songs full of sweetness and rhythm, those who sang them had also had

their hearts full of sweet feelings of devotion. Bhagavan sat through the entire presentation which started at 4.00 p.m. and came to a close at 5.15 p.m. After a brief session of Bhajans, Arati was offered to Bhagavan to mark the conclusion of this beautiful musical afternoon.

### **Concert by Sai Symphony Orchestra**

Music lovers had a magnificent treat when Sai Symphony Orchestra comprising about 60 artistes from 20 countries of the world made a soul-stirring musical presentation in Sai Kulwant Hall on the afternoon of 21st November 2005 as their love offering to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the eve of His 80th Birthday. The programme commenced at 5.05 p.m. in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. The orchestra made a marvellous presentation of classic compositions of world-renowned composers which included Johannes Brahmas of Germany, Gioacchino Rossini of Italy, Franz Liszt of Hungary, Georges Bizet of France, Charles Gounod of France, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart of Austria, George Enescu of Romania and Franz von Suppe of Austria. The instruments used were: violin, viola, cello, bass, clarinet, oboe, bassoons, flute, trumpet, trombone, french horn, keyboard-harp, percussions and timpani. The entire presentation was made with devotion and dedication and kept the audience spellbound for one hour. It came to a close at 6.05 p.m. At its conclusion, Bhagavan blessed the artistes and posed for photographs with them.

### **Devotional Music by Russian Choir**

On the afternoon of 25th November 2005, 292 members of the Russian choir presented a programme of devotional music to pay their tribute to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan. The programme commenced after the arrival of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall at 4.45 p.m. The choir comprising both ladies and gents from Russian speaking countries presented devotional songs with great devotional fervour to the accompaniment of various musical instruments. Perfect melody and rhythm of the songs sung with devotion and love for Bhagavan overwhelmed the mammoth gathering of devotees who responded to the magnificent performance by applauding with great delight. The Bhajan "*Bolo Narayana Jai Jai Vitthala ...*" led by a member of the choir was marked by amazing accuracy of pronunciation and tune. The choir had selected famous melodies and they practised for more than seven months to bring about perfection in their performance. During the performance in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan, many participants of the choir experienced Swami's love and were moved to tears. All of them felt great joy and unlimited love of Bhagavan. Obviously delighted by the performance, Bhagavan showered His blessings on the members of the choir and posed for group photos with them at the end of the programme at 5.15 p.m.

### **NARAYANA SEVA**

Narayana Seva was performed on a very large scale during the 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan at Prasanthi Nilayam. From 18th November to 24th November, free quality food was offered to all, which included tea / coffee / milk and breakfast in the morning, lunch at noon, tea / coffee / milk and snacks in the evening and dinner at night.

According to a modest estimate, more than 8 lakh people were served food during this period.

Paramatma alone is real. Paramatma is truth. Paramatma is love. Meditate on Him as truth, as love. It is possible to realise Him in whatever form you meditate upon. Be always in the company of His devotees. Through this Satsanga, Viveka (discrimination) and Vairagya (detachment) will be implanted and increased. These will strengthen the spirit and endow you with inner peace. Your mind will then merge in Paramatma.–

– Baba

## 8TH WORLD CONFERENCE OF SRI SATHYA SAI ORGANISATIONS

IT WAS A HISTORIC MOMENT FOR Sri Sathya Sai Organisations when Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba graciously inaugurated their 8th World Conference on the morning of 20th November 2005 in a glittering function held in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the eve of His 80th Birthday. The theme of the Conference was unity, purity, divinity. The agenda was to consider the profound spiritual significance and practical worldwide applications of unity, purity and divinity in relation to the individual and the family, the Sai Organisations and its members, and society and nations at large. Nearly 15,000 delegates from over 180 countries came to Prasanthi Nilayam to take part in this historic Conference.

### Inaugural Session

On 20th November 2005, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 8.05 a.m. which was beautifully decorated for this important occasion. Besides floral and other decorations, there were many display boards which depicted the theme of the Conference in beautiful writing. After showering the bliss of His Divine Darshan on the delegates and devotees in the Hall, Bhagavan came to the dais and lighted the sacred lamp at 8.10 a.m. amidst a thunderous applause of the huge gathering to inaugurate the Conference. Four eminent speakers addressed the gathering and elaborated on the theme of the Conference, its significance in relation to mankind and the Divine Mission of Bhagavan.

The first speaker was Sri Indulal Shah, International Advisor, Sri Sathya Sai Organisations. Sri Shah said that it was a momentous occasion for Sri Sathya Sai Organisations as this Conference was being held in the 80th year of the Advent of the Avatar of Kali Yuga in His Divine Presence. Referring to the First World Conference which was held in 1968 in Mumbai, Sri Shah observed that the Sai Organisations had made stupendous progress, and there were at present 2200 Sai Centres in all parts of the world. This Conference, he said, unfolded a golden chapter of Sai Organisation's history and provided an opportunity to mankind to attain the goal of life through three W's, viz., work, worship and wisdom. The second speaker was Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Organisations. Unity, purity and divinity, Sri Srinivasan said,

were like three Mahavakyas (profound statements) which could lead man to the goal of his life. Unless man observed unity in his thoughts, words and deeds, he could not achieve purity and divinity, added the learned speaker. Referring to the Grama Seva, Sri Srinivasan observed that Bhagavan had set the ideal to reach out to the individual through this great movement. Following this ideal, the Sai Organisations should start from the individual and reach out to family, organisation, society and nation, said Sri Srinivasan.

The next speaker, Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman, Prasanthi Council observed that unity, purity, divinity were, in fact, three stages of spiritual progress in man's journey of life. Human life, he said, was worth living if man achieved spiritual progress through unity and purity to attain divinity. The last speaker was Sri Leonardo Gutter, Zonal Chairman of Sai Organisation in Latin America who informed the delegates that there were as many as 300 Sai Centres in Latin America. Sri Gutter then narrated several incidents how Bhagavan brought about his transformation through His Divine love and teachings, and gave him the stupendous experience of His omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience. The greatest Sadhana, Sri Gutter observed, was to realise the love of Bhagavan and to think of Him at all times. The Inaugural Session of the Conference came to a conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.35 a.m.

### **Plenary Sessions**

After the Inaugural Session in Sai Kulwant Hall, there were separate sessions for Indian and overseas delegates. Indian delegates had three plenary sessions, one of which was held on 20th November 2005 and the remaining two on 21st November 2005. The venue for all the three sessions was Sai Kulwant Hall. The first session was held from 12.40 p.m. to 2.30 p.m. to discuss the inner significance of unity, purity and divinity for the individual and the family. The learned speakers who delivered talks in this session were two former Vice Chancellors of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Sri S.V. Giri and Dr. G. Venkataraman, and Warden, Brindavan Campus of the Institute, Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy. The second session was held on the morning of 21st November 2005 from 10.00 a.m. to 12.35 p.m. which was addressed by Sri Anil Kumar, a faculty member of the Institute, Dr. N. Anjanaiah, State President of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Andhra Pradesh and Sri Nimish Pandya, Member, Sri Sathya Sai Trust, Maharashtra and Goa. The topics deliberated upon in the talks of these learned speakers were "Importance of Unity for the Organisation", "Importance of Purity for the Organisation", and "Inner Significance of Divinity for the Organisation". The third session was held in the afternoon from 1.45 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. The first talk in this session was delivered by Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Member, Prasanthi Council who spoke on the topic "Importance of Unity for Society and Nations". The next speaker Dr. Keki M. Mistry, Member, Sri Sathya Sai Trust, Maharashtra and Goa spoke on the topic "Importance of Purity for Society and Nations". The last speaker Sri Ajit Popat of the U.K. elaborated upon the topic "Objective of Divinity for Society and Nations". At the end of each session, there was a lively discussion in which the questions and queries of the delegates were answered.

The Plenary Sessions for the overseas delegates were held in a specially made magnificent large Pandal (temporary shelter) in the western corner of Prasanthi Nilayam.

In the first session held on 20th November 2005, there were three speakers. The first speaker was Dr. Narendranath Reddy, who spoke on “Unity, Purity, Divinity in the Realm of Spirituality”. The second speaker, Sri Anil Kumar gave his talk on the topic “Unity, Purity and Divinity in the Realm of Education”. The last speaker of the session was Air Chief Marshal (Retd.) N.C. Suri and the subject of his talk was “Unity, Purity, Divinity in the Realm of Seva”. At the end of these talks, there was an interactive session in which a group of panelists answered the queries of the delegates. The second and third sessions were held on 21st November 2005. The second session held from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon, opened with a talk by Sri Shitu Chudasma, Youth Coordinator, U.K. on the topic “Spiritual Significance of Unity, Purity, Divinity for Youth”. Thereafter, Dr. Michael Goldstein shared his views on the theme of the Conference and summed up the proceedings of the Conference. After this, there was an open discussion on various aspects of the theme of the Conference in which the delegates participated enthusiastically.

The Conference provided a valuable forum for exchange of views on issues of common concern between various units / centres of the Sai Organisation. In the interactive sessions both the Indian as well as the overseas delegates held discussions on the various aspects of the theme of the Conference. After thorough discussion, future plans were drawn up to foster unity, purity, divinity in the individual, in the family, in the Organisation, in society and the nations. Befittingly, the deliberations of Indian and overseas wings of the Conference came to a happy conclusion with prayer to Bhagavan for the welfare of the entire mankind.

*If a drop of water isolates itself from the ocean, it not only forfeits the benefit of being a part of the vast ocean but also dries up in no time, losing its very existence. Likewise, a man asserting his separate individuality apart from Divinity becomes finite and mortal, whereas if he remains as a part of the Divine, he regains his innate nature of being infinite and immortal. Egos are different and numerous like bubbles. The Self is one like the ocean.*

— Baba

## NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

### 80th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS THE WORK CONTINUES

#### Public Meetings

*I want publicity for the teachings and the message. I want Tattwa Prachara (publicity for the philosophy), not Vyakti Prachara (publicity for the person). That is more important. About Me there is no need to talk.*

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1966

## **Argentina**

Nestled between the serene and majestic Andes and the Atlantic Ocean in the province of Buenos Aires is the capital city of La Plata on the Rio Plata. This idyllic setting was the home to a well-attended public meeting to spread the message of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Nearly 700 people attended this meeting on 30th August 2005.

The meeting began with a welcome speech by Ms. Miriam Cardoso. After this, live music was featured by the popular Vaikunta group and an introductory message by renowned national actor Salo Pasik about service activities undertaken by the Sathya Sai Organisation. This was followed by a speech by Sri Leonardo Gutter, Zonal Chairman of Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organisation of Latin America. He described the worldwide impact of the work carried out by Bhagavan Baba and the impact on individual lives by His teachings. The meeting concluded with screening of the film 'His Work' and closing remarks by Ms. Sara Levita.

After the meeting, Ms. Miriam Cardoso was interviewed for a radio programme, and Sri Leonardo Gutter was interviewed by television, and the entire event was declared to be of cultural interest by the Municipal Council of La Plata City.

## **Australia**

The city of Adelaide is the capital of South Australia and is regarded as one of the most important cities in Australia. On 1st May 2005, the Advent of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and His Work was announced through a well-attended public meeting. This was the third public meeting in Australia. The meeting was held at the Norwood Concert Hall in Adelaide where 350 people attended. Among the attendees were the local Member of Parliament and a Member of the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission.

A traditional welcome by an Aboriginal elder was followed by the Australian National Anthem. Two notable speakers addressed the audience. The first was Neville Fredericks, Central Coordinator of Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organisation for Australia and PNG. He was followed by Krishnan Nair, Deputy Central Coordinator of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation. Both speakers shared their understanding of the teachings of Bhagavan and its central importance in securing personal, community and global harmony. The event concluded with the screening of the film 'His Work'. Participants were deeply touched by the presentations and the magnanimity of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

## **Mexico**

Tijuana City in Baja California, Mexico, stands between two mighty nations: the USA and Mexico. In one of the largest public meetings, over 1,100 people congregated to hear about Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on 13th August 2005. Many heard the message of love of Sri Sathya Sai Baba for the first time during this meeting.

Dr. Sam Sandweiss and John Behner electrified the audience with descriptions of the spiritual, social, educational and healthcare work of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Then Laura Elisa Leon, President of the Sai Organisation in Mexico, read a letter from Bhagavan regarding loving social service. There were many in the audience who were moved to tears by the work of Bhagavan and by His unending stream of love and compassion for all mankind.



## **Singapore**

The thriving City State is a juggernaut economy and a trend-setter in Asia. It is in this sparkling country that a large public meeting was held to talk of the glory of Bhagavan to the world.

About 150 guests were welcomed on 27th August 2005 by the Sathya Sai Central Organisation of Singapore. The event consisted of two keynote speakers and screening of the film 'His Work'. The first speaker was Sri Victor Krishna Kanu, Director, The African Institute of Sathya Sai Education (TAISSE), Ndola, Zambia. He reiterated Bhagavan's teachings on human values and the importance of practising them in order to develop pure hearts. The second speaker, Dr. Yeoh Kian Hian spoke of the large-scale service projects of Swami in the field of healthcare, educare and sociocare with specific reference to Sri Sathya Sai Water Projects, educational Institutes and hospitals.

This was a memorable public meeting for every participant and for Singapore. The attendees left the meeting with great appreciation of Bhagavan's Divine Message.

### **Community Service**

*In order to deserve the sacred name "Seva", the activity must be freed from all attachment to the self and based on firm faith in the divine resident in every being. Seva has to be considered as worshipping the form that God has assumed to give the Sevak the chance to worship.*

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1986

## **Netherlands**

Sai devotees in the Netherlands have undertaken a result-oriented community project "Sai Challenge". The devotees adopt a social problem and within seven days find a solution and implement it. On 19th August 2005, the Sai Challenge participants turned their attention to the home of an elderly disabled gentleman. He was living in a dilapidated building and was not able to take care of his house for 9 years. The devotees cleaned up his home and restored acceptable living conditions to him. Once again, his home and his garden were sparkling and were a reminder of the power of loving service.

## **Brazil**

Sai Centres in Brazil have been adopting local communities and providing needed social and physical support. One of the communities adopted is the city of Goiania in the State of Goias.

This ongoing service project focuses mainly on educare and community service. The goal is human excellence through devotional practices, selfless service and education in human values. Service is held every Saturday from 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. and begins with devotional chants, reading of Sai literature and meditation. The devotees then begin Seva which consists of food preparation and distribution, visits to community homes, local school cleaning and maintenance and several craft workshops. A community vegetable gardening project was started in the beginning of 2004 for the production of organic food. About 15 volunteers selflessly run the soup kitchen that serves 35 children, 10 teenagers and 25 adults every week. These services complement the education in human values

programme taught by the Sai School of Goias. Such efforts have been much appreciated by the citizens and local governments.

### **Medical Camps**

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

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba, 1995

### **U.A.E.**

The United Arab Emirates is a federation of seven States in the Persian Gulf, and Abu Dhabi is the capital city with a population of over a million. A medical camp was held in Mussafa, an industrial centre within Abu Dhabi on 14th October 2005. A total of 25 volunteers and four doctors examined 117 patients. Apart from medical treatment that was administered free of charge, patients were counselled on the importance of good diet, hygiene, stress management and avoidance of vices like smoking and consumption of alcohol. They were also given medications and transportation free of charge.

A second medical camp was held in the premises of the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi where 90 patients were seen and the film 'His Work' was screened. The Indian Ambassador came down from his residence on a holiday to greet the doctors and volunteers. These camps were landmark events in the history of the State where free medical care was given with love and compassion to patients under the Sarva Dharma rubric of the Sathya Sai Organisation.

### **Argentina**

A large medical camp was conducted in the city of Grand Bourg, in the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina on 15th October 2005. In the camp, 297 patients were seen for varying medical conditions by physicians from various specialities. Ten consulting rooms were fashioned with adequate separators and all patients were offered not only free medications but also a hot meal. In addition, the team made several home visits for medical consultations when the patient was unable to travel to the medical camp site.

This labour of love was so much appreciated by the local people that one physician and one builder made a commitment to build a consulting room and run a free medical clinic at the same site on a regular basis.

### **U.S.A.**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organisation conducted a medical camp on 8th October 2005 in Washington D.C. A total of 41 patients were seen in one day. Patients were assessed and screened for glaucoma, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, vision and dental diseases. In addition, counselling was provided for nutrition, diabetes, heart disease, smoking, stress management, mental illnesses and common cancers. Many patients commented that they had never felt such love and compassion pouring forth from healthcare professionals.

- **Prasanthi Council**

## B H A R A T

**Jammu and Kashmir:** On 23rd November 2005, Birthday of Bhagavan was celebrated at Jammu with enthusiasm and devotional fervour. The celebrations started in the morning with 21 Omkars followed by Suprabhatam and Nagar Sankirtan at 5.20 a.m. Other programmes started at 2 p.m. with Veda recitation followed by devotional songs by Bal Vikas children. A presentation was also made on the Sri Sathya Sai Educare followed by Sarva Dharma Bhajan. The function was well attended by devotees and a wide coverage was also given by the local media. On this occasion, an exhibition was also held displaying the life and mission of Bhagavan Baba.

**Karnataka:** On the eve of 80th Birthday of Bhagavan, an 80-day Maha Yajna was performed at Bagepally, Kolar district for the welfare of the world from 1st September to 20th November 2005. Poornahuti of the Yajna was performed on 20th November 2005 along with Bheema Ratha Shanti for 80 couples who had attained 80 years and above.

On 23rd November 2005, the students and their parents, along with devotees and staff of Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Niketan, Bagepally celebrated Bhagavan's Birthday with great zeal and enthusiasm. More than 5,000 devotees congregated and performed Laksha Deepotsava (lighting of one lakh lamps). Bhagavan's Prasadam was distributed to all on this occasion.

**Kerala:** 80-hour Akhanda Bhajan was conducted in all the 14 districts of the State from 10 a.m. on 3rd November to 6 p.m. on 6th November 2005 as part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Around 9,000 devotees attended the Bhajan all over the State with great devotional fervour.

Global Akhanda Bhajan was conducted in all the 163 Samithis of the State from 6 p.m. on 12th November 2005 to 6 p.m. on 13th November 2005. About 5,000 Sai family members attended the Bhajan as part of their Sadhana.

Special Grama Seva was one of the other major activities that the State undertook in connection with the 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan. Nine Adivasi settlement colonies were covered for the benefit of 950 families. Kits containing rice, pulses, tea powder, sugar, toilet soap, new clothes, etc., were distributed.

Palghat district constructed and distributed 41 houses for the tribals. In Thiruvananthapuram two pucca houses having 600 sft. each were constructed and given to deserving families.

**Tamil Nadu:** Global Akhanda Bhajan was performed in all the Samithis and Bhajan Mandalis of all the 23 districts of Tamil Nadu with great spiritual fervour and with utmost dedication, devotion and involvement. The uniqueness of this year's Akhanda Bhajan was the participation of a large number of devotees throughout 24 hours of the chanting of the Divine Name of the Lord. At district level, Akhanda Bhajan was arranged at various Sai Community Centres and Sri Sathya Sai Mandirs and at Samithi premises. At Sundaram, Chennai, which is celebrating its silver jubilee year, this year's Global Akhanda Bhajan was of special significance and formed part of 80 days of Sri Sathya Sai Yajna.

The auspicious celebrations of the 80th Birthday of our Beloved Bhagavan commenced at Sundaram with Veda chanting and Nagar Sankirtan in which a large number of devotees

drawn from every part of Chennai participated. Sundaram premises was shining resplendently as it was beautifully illuminated with electric lights. Colourful festoons and aesthetic flower arrangements both inside and outside the Bhajan Hall added to its beauty. The Vedic rites of Homa commenced with Ganapati Homa followed by Ayush, Mrityunjaya and Sundarshan Homas. Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees after the Poornahuti. This was followed by Abhishekam of the idol of Shirdi Sai Baba. While the Abhishekam was performed, the devotees joined in the chanting of Rudram.

### Notice

The stock of all types of calendars is exhausted. Therefore, we are unable to accept any further orders.

- Convener

### Sadhana and Sankalpa

**I always say, “Sadhana first, Sankalpa later”. That is the correct order. My Sankalpa confers bliss only after assessing the depth of the yearning in the devotee. Sadhana (discipline, spiritual striving and steady practice) is the essential prerequisite. A teacher evaluates the written answers of his students and assigns them marks only after careful scrutiny of what they have written; Isn't it so? I, too, measure and weigh the sincerity and steadiness of the Sadhana you have imposed on yourselves and then frame My Sankalpa (Will) accordingly. Of course, many are not aware that the misery in which they find themselves can be negated by Sadhana.**

**- Baba**