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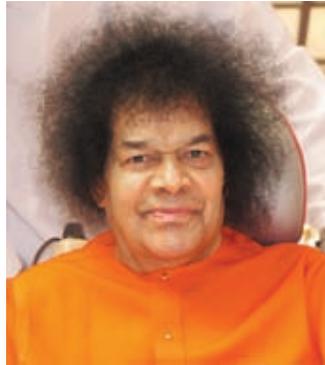
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"God is your only real and selfless friend. There may be some element of selfishness in the love of your mother, father and wife. But God's love is without any selfishness and self-interest. He gives himself to you with unconditional and total love. Therefore, you should develop friendship with God."

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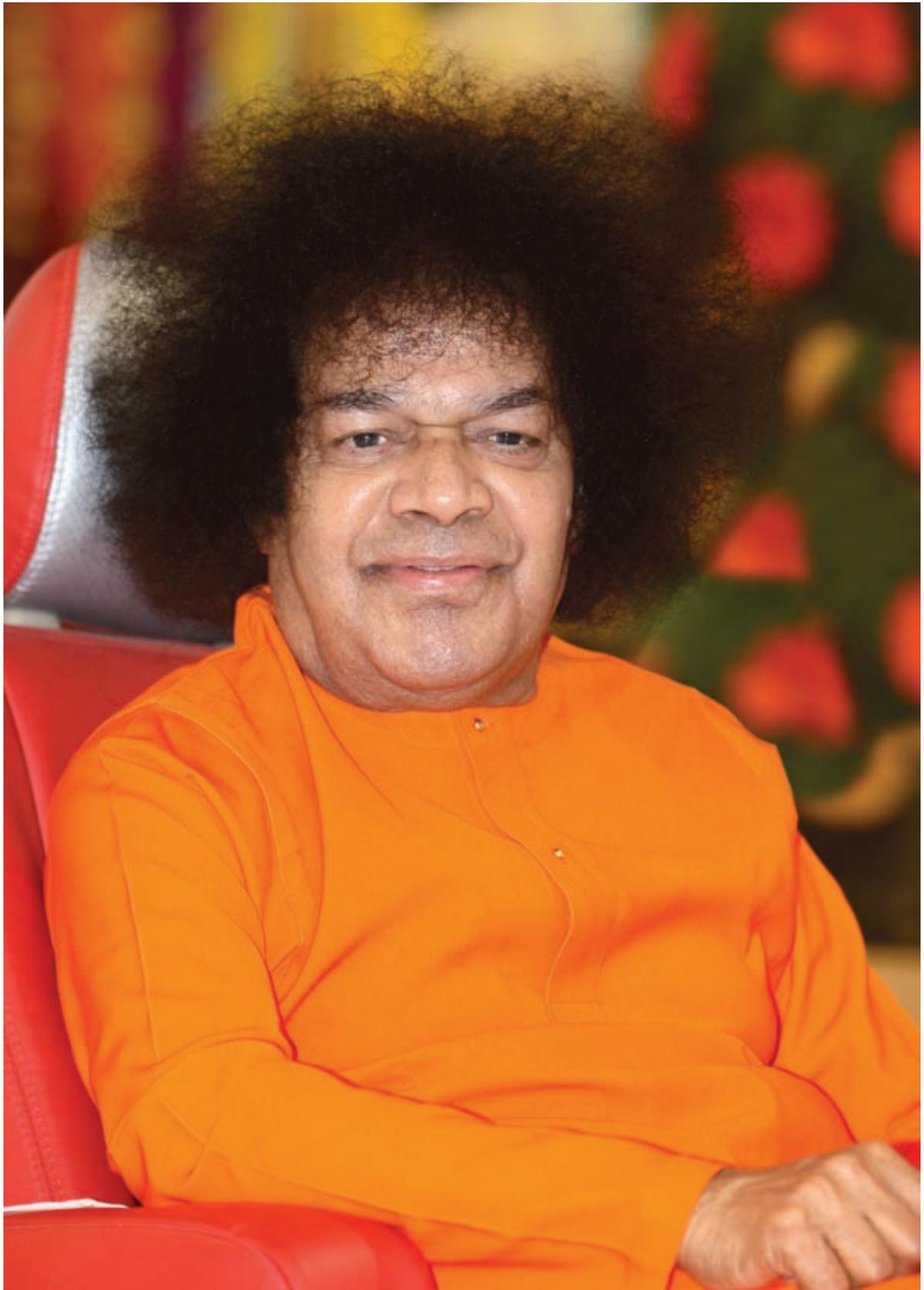
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Cover Page Photograph: Mahabharata scene as portrayed in Bhajan Mandir, Prasanthi Nilayam.



DEVELOP FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

The path of Karma (action) is like travelling on foot while the path of Bhakti (devotion) is like travelling by a vehicle. However, the path of Jnana (knowledge) is like travelling by an aeroplane. Sai's word is the word of truth.

(Telugu Poem)

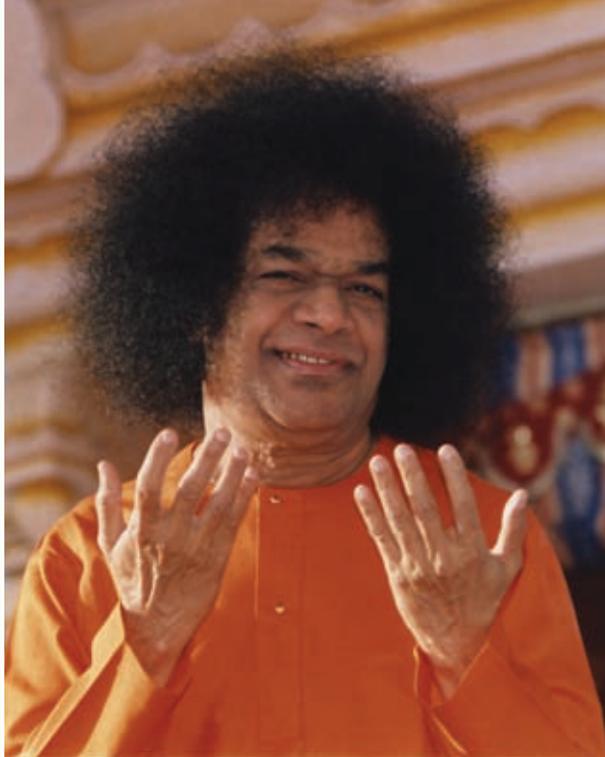
REALISATION OF ONENESS IS TRUE KNOWLEDGE

Students!



INCE ANCIENT TIMES, PEOPLE have been discussing and debating about the merits of the three

main paths for man's redemption, namely, Karma (action), Bhakti (devotion) and Jnana (knowledge). But it is just a waste of time to discuss which path is greater than the other. When you enquire with a broad outlook, you



You call yourselves the devotees of Krishna. But, do you follow the teachings of Krishna? No. Then, how can you call yourselves the devotees of Krishna? Likewise, you say you are the devotees of Sai. But, do you follow the command of Sai? You have been coming here for so many years and listening to Swami's Discourses. There are some who are living here permanently. But, how much are they following the teachings of Swami? You do not put into practice even 1/4th of 1/4th of what is being taught. Then, how can you become deserving of Swami's grace? Mere thinking or listening or saying is not important; putting into practice is important.



will know that there is difference only in names but all the paths lead to the same goal.

Karma, Bhakti and Jnana Lead to the Same Truth

Our ancients considered Karma, Bhakti and Jnana as Triveni Sangam (the holy confluence of three rivers – Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati). Karma symbolises Ganga. All the actions that you perform with your body should be sacred. Such sacred actions will endow you with true knowledge. Bhakti stands for Yamuna which signifies purity, steadfastness and selflessness. Just as the Ganga and Yamuna flow on the surface of the earth and the river Saraswati is like an undercurrent, similarly, Karma and Bhakti are externally visible but Jnana cannot be seen. Karma and Bhakti can be clearly seen in the Achara and Vichara (thoughts and actions) of people. Jnana has no form. It remains unmanifest as the undercurrent of Karma and Bhakti and comes only from within and not outside. Once it manifests from within, its influence is felt in all actions of man.

Karma, Bhakti and Jnana lead to the same truth and the same goal. They are like flowers, raw fruits and ripe fruits of a tree. Without flowers, there can be no raw fruits and without raw fruits, there can be no ripe fruits. Their names and forms are different but they are essentially one and the same. Without Karma, you cannot have Bhakti and without Bhakti you cannot have Jnana. What for do you perform actions? You perform all actions for the purity of your heart. *Chittasya Shuddhaye Karmah* (good deeds give mental purity). All the sacred actions that you perform with your body purify your heart and lead to Bhakti. When your Bhakti attains the highest state of purity, it results in Jnana. This is the truth that

has been propounded in Vedanta. The unity of thoughts, words and actions is called Trikarana Shuddhi (unity of thought, word and deed). One who is endowed with Trikarana Shuddhi is a human being in true sense. *The proper study of mankind is man*. True humanness lies in the unity of thoughts, words and actions. Your words are based on your thoughts and your actions are based on your words. To experience the unity of these three signifies true humanness. Without understanding the true principle of humanness, people today are unnecessarily wasting their time in discussing the superiority and inferiority of Karma, Bhakti and Jnana.

Due to the absence of fear of sin and love for God, humanness has declined in human beings. This is detrimental to world peace.
(Telugu Poem)

Always Speak Truth

Man today has no control over his speech and thoughts. He has no awareness of *Daiva Preeti, Papa Bheeti and Sangha Neeti* (love for God, fear of sin and morality in society). If you want morality in society, you should develop love for God. If you love God, you will have fear of sin. Every word that man utters should be the word of truth.

Oh tongue, the knower of taste! You are very sacred. Speak truth in the most pleasing manner. Chant the Divine Names of Govinda, Madhava and Damodara incessantly. This is your foremost duty.
(Sanskrit Verse)

God has given you tongue to speak sweetly and softly and utter only those words which are true. If man observes this principle, he can attain divinity by the sacred use of tongue. The Bhagavadgita also propounds the same truth. *Anudvegakaram Vakyam Sathyam*



Priya-hitham Cha Yat (one should speak only truthful and pleasing words, which are beneficial to others). You should not speak even a single word that hurts the feelings of others. Every word that you speak should be suffused with truth and should do good to others. It should not be unpalatable to others and should not be the cause of their dissatisfaction. This is how truth should be spoken: *Sathyam Bruyath, Priyam Bruyath, Na Bruyath Sathyamapriyam* (speak truth, speak pleasantly and do not speak unpalatable truth). Always speak truth. You should not utter falsehood just because the truth spoken by you may displease others. In a situation where you are unable to speak truth, it is better to remain silent than resorting to untruth.

Karma is the Basis of All Sadhana

People do not understand that the goal of Karma, Bhakti and Jnana is the same. They are, in fact, the stepping stones to purity and divinity. Karma is the basis for the performance of Dharma. *Sareeramadyam Khalu Dharma Sadhanam* (body is meant to undertake righteous actions). Here is a small example. It may not be there now, but there used to be first, second and third class compartments in trains in earlier times. Journey in the third class compartment was not at all comfortable and convenient. It was a troublesome and tedious journey because the compartment was overcrowded. In the second class compartment, you could sit comfortably but not lie down and sleep. However, in the first class compartment, you could lie down and sleep comfortably. Nevertheless, all the three compartments would take you to the same destination. There is another example to illustrate this. Suppose you have to go to Hyderabad from Dharmavaram. If your mode

Divine proximity is of no use if you are unable to derive benefit out of it.

Frog is near the lotus in water, but what is the use? Bees come from far off places and drink the nectar from the lotus. It is very important to be near as well as dear to God.

You have only nearness to God but not dearness. People from far off places are not near but they are very dear. If you want to experience divinity, you have to be both near and dear to God.



of journey is ordinary train travel, then you will have to get down at Guntakal along with your luggage and catch another train to reach your destination. This mode of journey is a bit inconvenient. The second mode of journey is 'through carriage', wherein you need not get down at Guntakal from your compartment. The railway authorities themselves will attach your compartment to another train which will take you to your destination. The third mode of journey is 'through train' which will directly take you to your destination. The paths of Karma, Bhakti and Jnana are like these three modes of travel by train.

In the path of Karma, you have to face some inconvenience and discomfort. In the path of Bhakti, there are some comforts as well as difficulties. But the path of Jnana is without any problems. What is the reason? This is the path of unity. *Advaita Darshanam Jnanam* (experience of non-dualism is true knowledge). The path of action signifies diversity. The path of devotion signifies duality. Jnana symbolises oneness, Bhakti, duality and Karma, multiplicity. However, Karma is the fundamental basis



of all Sadhana. It is only through Karma that you can develop devotion. Without Karma, no worship is possible. Therefore, Karma is most important. At the same time, you cannot attain Jnana without devotion. Hence, the unity of all these three signifies true Atmic principle. If you observe differences between Karma, Bhakti and Jnana, you will lose your way and become the victim of all sorts of doubts. The body is bound by action. Karma is the root cause of Janma (birth). Therefore, first and foremost, you should offer your salutations to Karma. *Thasmai Namah Karmane* (salutations to action). This is the teaching of the Upanishads. Why should you offer your salutations to Karma? You should offer your salutation to the presiding deity of Karma and pray, "Oh Karma! Make me perform only sacred actions with this body and all its organs".

The body is meant to perform actions. *Karmanubandheeni Manushya Loke* (man in the world is bound by action). The entire mankind is under the influence of Karma and is bound by it. What actually Karma means? You think whatever action you do with your hands is Karma. It is not so. Even your inhalation and exhalation which go on without any effort on your part are Karma. You keep breathing even in your sleep. Similarly, you do not require any effort to make your heart beat. It is a natural process. What effort do you make for blood circulation in your body? No effort at all. All these actions take place without any effort from your side. You cannot live even for one moment without air. Similarly, you cannot live if your heart stops beating. You cannot safeguard your body if there is no blood circulation in it. Karma is the basis of all these functions. You are protected and sustained by Karma. Therefore, you should give utmost importance to Karma. You should not consider Karma as something insignificant.

Real Meaning of Integrated Rural Development

Karma is most noble and sublime. It is the fundamental cause and basis of everything. Karma is the fundamental basis of even the subtle process of rise of energy from Mooladhara Chakra (coccygeal plexus) to Sahasrara Chakra (thousand-petalled lotus in the head). Prajnana (constant integrated awareness) manifests from Sahasrara Chakra. Prajnana is nothing but supreme knowledge. That is why the Vedas declare, *Prajnanam Brahma* (Brahman is Supreme Consciousness). Who is Brahman? He is the self-manifesting divine principle. It is not created or sustained by any other power. It is eternal, true and unparalleled divine principle. Today students are interested in awareness, but they do not know anything about constant integrated awareness.

Our MBA students study integrated rural development. What does rural development really mean? If you say, it is the development of villages, then what does a village mean? It is not merely a group of houses. Even human body is like a village and all its limbs such as hands, feet, head are like various houses. The various limbs of the body function harmoniously on the direction of the mind. It is only when the mind directs that feet move, hands work, eyes see and ears hear. Hence, the mind is the master of all senses. Above the physical body are the senses, above the senses is the mind, above the mind is Buddhi (intelligence) and above Buddhi is the Atma. Therefore, Buddhi is closest to the Atma. That is why the Gita declares, *Buddhigrahyamatheendriyam* (the Atma is beyond the ken of senses and can be understood only by the intellect). *Mana Eva Manushyanam Karanam Bandha-mokshayoh* (mind is the cause of bondage and liberation



of man). Mind is the cause of everything. Mind is the driving force of all functions of the body. And it is the mind that experiences happiness and sorrow as a result of good or bad actions of man. Jiva (individual soul) has nothing to do with this. Karma, Bhakti and Jnana are related to the physical body; they are temporary because the body is temporary. *Anityam Asukham Lokam Imam Prapya Bhajasva Maam* (as the world is temporary and full of misery, contemplate on Me constantly),

Karma is most noble and sublime. It is the fundamental cause and basis of everything. Karma is the fundamental basis of even the subtle process of rise of energy from Mooladhara Chakra (coccygeal plexus) to Sahasrara Chakra (thousand-petalled lotus in the head). Prajnana (constant integrated awareness) manifests from Sahasrara Chakra. Prajnana is nothing but supreme knowledge. That is why the Vedas declare, Prajnanam Brahma (Brahman is Supreme Consciousness).

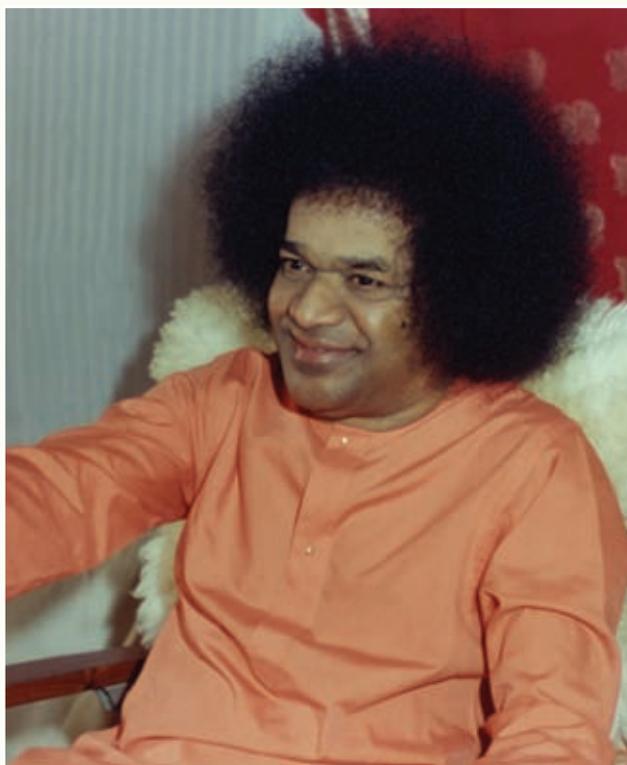


said Lord Krishna. Therefore, you should contemplate on the eternal divine principle. However, Karma is most important because it is the basis of devotion which leads ultimately to Jnana.

The Vedas Teach the Principle of Oneness

At the time of birth, one is called a child. After ten years, he is a boy. At the age of thirty years, he is a man. At 75, he is a grandfather.

However, child, boy, man and grandfather are the various names and forms of the same individual. I have told you earlier also that Aham is born out of the Atma, mind from Aham and speech from mind. Therefore, Aham is the son of Atma, mind, grandson and speech, great grandson. Aham is what you refer to as I, I, I. This 'I' is the primordial name of God. He has no other name. This precedes even Om. Aham, mind and speech emerged from the



Atma. All the three belong to the family of the Atma. Therefore, Atmic principle is reflected in all the three. It is a mistake to consider the members of the same Atmic family as different from each other. It is due to the effect of modern age that man considers them different from each other. There should be unity and harmony in a joint family. When the family disintegrates and loses its unity, it becomes



weak. So many threads join to make cloth. It is not easy to tear it because it becomes very strong. But if the threads are separated, then these can be easily broken even with a finger. Likewise, you have become the victims of so many difficulties because of the break up of the joint family of Atma, Aham, mind and speech. They have a common property. What is it? It is constant integrated awareness or Prajnana. This Prajnana is present in Aham, in the mind and also in the speech.

The same truth is propounded in the four supreme and profound statements of the Vedas, namely, *Prajnanam Brahma* (Brahman is Supreme Consciousness), *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman), *Tattwamasi* (That Thou Art), *Ayam Atma Brahma* (This Self is Brahman). In this manner, the Vedas teach the principle of oneness. People today talk about Brotherhood of Man, but what is the use? Even brothers are fighting with each other and going to Supreme Court. There can be differences of opinion among brothers which may give rise to hatred. Therefore, you should realise the oneness of mankind instead of merely talking about Brotherhood of Man. The same Atma indwells all beings. When you develop faith in this, then there will be no scope for hatred. Man is the victim of his own delusion but he keeps on blaming Maya (illusion). In fact, Maya has no existence. It is your own imagination. You don't have faith in your own Self and in your own truth. What is the reason? Lack of self-confidence has given rise to lack of faith. Apart from this, you are developing worldly and physical relationships due to your body attachment. As you are bound by attachment, you say, "my mother, my father, my brother and my sister". When Yashoda came to know that Krishna had put a lump of clay in His mouth, she asked Him, "What have You eaten? Open

Your mouth". When Krishna opened His mouth, she could see all the fourteen worlds in it. As she was a very simple and innocent lady, she could not believe what she had seen with her own eyes. She thought:

This may be a dream or Lord Vishnu might have cast His veil of Maya; may be this is real or may be this is just a figment of my imagination. May be I am not Yashoda who is seeing all this. (Telugu Poem)

Only God's Love is Totally Selfless

Man today has neither faith in himself nor in others. Then how can he have faith in God? Therefore, it is necessary that man should develop self-confidence. That which develops self-confidence in you is real Karma. Every action has a reaction and every sound has a resound. There is a reality which is the basis of all these three – reaction, reflection and resound. Without reality there can neither be reaction nor reflection nor resound. That reality is changeless and eternal. That is divinity and that is Prajnana. It can be attained through only Upasana (devotion).

What is devotion? There are nine paths of devotion. *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). You can follow any of these nine paths. But out of all these, friendship is most important and fundamental. God is your only real and selfless friend. There may be some element of selfishness in the love of your mother, father and wife. But God's love is without any selfishness and self-interest. He gives Himself to you with unconditional and total love. Therefore, you should develop



friendship with God. Total surrender to God is possible only after friendship. Only after cultivating friendship with Rama with total faith, Sugriva could be successful in his endeavour. Without developing friendship with Rama, Sugriva could not have attained the desired result. That is why Rama said, "People think we are four brothers – Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna. But it is not so. We are six brothers. Four of us are from Ayodhya, one is Sugriva from Kishkindha and the other is Vibhishana from Lanka. In total, we are six". Whereabouts of Sita could not be known without the help of Sugriva. Likewise, without the help of Vibhishana, Ravana could not be killed.

Put into Practice What you Study

Divine power is immanent in all. All are the embodiments of divinity. Everything and everybody is useful and valuable in this world. Even a small twig is useful and can be used to clean teeth. Then, how useful and valuable can be man who is endowed with life! You should not hate anybody. "*Advshtha Sarva Bhutanam, Maitra Karuna Eva Cha...*" (one who bears no hatred against anyone and is friendly and compassionate towards all...) You should not create disunity among individuals; develop unity among them. The principle of unity is most sacred. That is why I keep on exhorting the students to see unity in diversity. The same divinity is immanent in all human beings. Karma, Upasana and Jnana are meant to realise this divinity. Bhajan, meditation and Japa (chanting of God's Name) are some of the sacred activities which help one to achieve this goal. But today you are unable to achieve what you want to. What is the reason? You are unable to put into practice what you speak out of devotion.

You say, you are the devotees of Rama, but do you follow His ideals? Rama upheld the word of His father. Do you practise it? He demonstrated the unity of brothers. Do you follow His example? He even gave up His kingdom and went to the forest to uphold the word of His father. Is there anyone who can emulate Him? Do you adhere to truth? Do you keep up your word? No. Then, what sort of devotees of Rama you are! You are devotees of Rama only in name, but you have no partnership in the wealth of His values. When can you develop partnership with Rama? It is only when you follow His ideals and His command can you have the right over His wealth. Similarly, you call yourselves the devotees of Krishna. But, do you follow the teachings of Krishna? No. Then, how can you call yourselves the devotees of Krishna? Likewise, you say you are the devotees of Sai. But, do you follow the command of Sai? You have been coming here for so many years and listening to Swami's Discourses. There are some who are living here permanently. But, how much are they following the teachings of Swami? You do not put into practice even ¼th of ¼th of what is being taught. Then, how can you become deserving of Swami's grace? Mere thinking or listening or saying is not important; putting into practice is important.

People study the Ramayana, the Bhagavata and the Bhagavadgita. They do their Parayana (reverential reading) also. They also recite Vishnu Sahasranama (one thousand and eight Names of Lord Vishnu). But what is the use? This is mere bookish knowledge. What is required is practical knowledge. In fact, you should put into practice what you study. If you put into practice even one teaching, that is

Continued on page 248...



GRAND GURU PURNIMA CELEBRATIONS

A VAST MULTITUDE OF DEVOTEES came to Prasanthi Nilayam from all parts of the world to pay their reverential tribute to their Sadguru Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the holy occasion of Guru Purnima. Large groups of devotees came from many overseas countries, basked in the ambience of the Divine Glory of Bhagavan and received His benedictions and grace. Many cultural and music programmes were organised on this occasion by devotees from India as well as overseas countries, extending over a period of one month.

PILGRIMAGE OF FIRST GROUP OF U.S.A. DEVOTEES

A group of about 700 devotees came to Prasanthi Nilayam from various parts of U.S.A. from 23rd June to 2nd July 2010 to seek the grace and blessings of Bhagavan.

Our Journey Back to You

On 29th June 2010, a group of these devotees presented a music programme entitled "Our Journey Back to You", comprising Christian prayers, Jewish songs and devotional songs on the themes of unity of mankind and glory of Kali Yuga Avatar Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The programme started at 6.50 p.m. after Bhagavan's Darshan in Sai Kulwant Hall. At the outset, the singers, both ladies and gents, sang prayer songs in Sanskrit. This was followed by excellent rendering of devotional songs which enthralled the devotees for nearly 40 minutes. Sung with devout feelings with excellent musical support, the songs saturated the entire milieu with piety, unity and spirituality.



U.S.A. devotees presented a soul-stirring devotional music programme "Our Journey Back to You" in Sai Kulwant Hall on 29th June 2010.

This soul-elevating devotional programme was followed by Bhajans which were also led by U.S.A. devotees. Meanwhile, Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan was distributed to all. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 7.50 p.m.

PILGRIMAGE OF SECOND GROUP OF U.S.A. DEVOTEES

About 900 devotees including more than 200 Bal Vikas children came to Prasanthi Nilayam from various parts of U.S.A. and basked in the ambience of Bhagavan's Divine Glory from 5th to 14th July 2010. This was the second group of U.S.A. devotees, the first group of about 700 devotees having left for U.S.A. on 2nd July 2010. During their stay at Prasanthi Nilayam, the second group presented two excellent programmes. The first programme was an offering of devotional music by Sathya Sai National Choir and Orchestra, U.S.A. on 10th July 2010 and the second was a cultural programme by Bal Vikas students of U.S.A. on 11th July 2010.



Sathya Sai National Choir and Orchestra

The programme on 10th July 2010 began at 5.20 p.m. after Bhagavan's Divine Darshan in Sai Kulwant Hall, wherein Sathya Sai National Choir and Orchestra of U.S.A. comprising both ladies and gents presented nine devotional songs, the sublime synergy of rhythm and melody of which combined perfectly with the loftiness of feelings of the singers to fill the hearts of the listeners with piety, devotion and divinity. This soul-elevating musical presentation was followed by Bhajans which



Sathya Sai National Choir and Orchestra gave a scintillating performance of devotional music in Sai Kulwant Hall on 10th July 2010.

were also led by U.S.A. singers, both ladies and gents. During the course of Bhajans, Bhagavan called a devotee of this group to the dais and materialised a gold chain for her amidst a spontaneous applause of devotees. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.45 p.m. after distribution of Prasadam to all.

All our Relations: A Dance Drama

The second programme of the U.S.A. devotees was a drama entitled "All our Relations" which was presented by Sai Spiritual Education students of U.S.A. on 11th July 2010. Based on the spiritual traditions of Native Americans who inhabited the land



The drama "All our Relations" enacted by Sai Spiritual Education students of U.S.A. on 11th July 2010 showcased the essential unity of all creation.

before the arrival of the immigrants, the drama highlighted the essential unity of all creation and exhorted man to live in harmony with all creation, be it earth, mountains, rivers, birds, animals or plants. Depicting four stages of man's life which correspond to four directions, the drama emphasised the importance of values at every stage. This was conveyed through dances of the children representing eagle for east, deer for south, bear for west and buffalo for north. Melodious songs, thrilling music and scintillating dances of children made the drama a memorable presentation on the unity of God's creation. Excellent costumes and appropriate make-up added to the value of this well-directed and well-rehearsed drama. Bhagavan sat through the entire presentation, blessed the children at the conclusion of the drama and posed for group photos with them. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 7.05 p.m.

CULTURAL PROGRAMMES BY DEVOTEES OF RUSSIAN- SPEAKING COUNTRIES

About 400 devotees from eight Russian-speaking countries, viz., Russia, Belarus,



Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan came to Prasanthi Nilayam and basked in the ambience of the Divine Glory of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. As part of 85th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan, these devotees presented two cultural programmes in Sai Kulwant Hall which was aesthetically decorated with beautiful cloth hangings, colourful ribbons, animal figures and flowers of various hues for this joyous occasion.

Devotional Music Programme

The first programme comprising choir singing, devotional songs and Bhajans was presented by them on 12th July 2010. At the outset, the choir consisting of about 300 ladies



Devotees from eight Russian-speaking countries presented a soul-stirring programme of choir singing, devotional songs and Bhajans on 12th July 2010.

and gents sang ten songs in Russian on the themes of beauty of Nature, spiritual awakening and glory of God. Set to scintillating music, the songs were, in fact, an ocean of rhythm and feast of melody which enraptured one and all. This was followed by devotional songs and Bhajans which were also led by Russian singers, both ladies and gents. Most of the Bhajans were in Hindi and were marked by perfection of tune, rhythm, intonation and pronunciation to the

delight of one and all. During the course of the Bhajans, Bhagavan called the conductor of the choir to the dais and materialised a gold chain for her, sending a wave of ecstasy in the entire hall. The programme which started after Bhagavan's Darshan in Sai Kulwant Hall at 5.45 p.m. came to a close at 6.50 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan. Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan was distributed to the entire assembly of devotees in the end.

Hallowed be Thy Name: A Drama

On 13th July 2010, devotees of Russian-speaking countries presented another programme which comprised a drama entitled "Hallowed be Thy Name", devotional songs and Bhajans. The drama highlighted the



Devotees of Russian-speaking countries presented a drama "Hallowed be Thy Name" on 13th July 2010 which focused on the oneness of mankind.

oneness of mankind and emphasised the importance of singing the glory of God through the story of a young seeker of truth who travels to different countries, collects songs about the glory of God and realises the divine glory of the Avatar of Kali Yuga, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Interspersed with melodious songs and beautiful dances of children, the drama depicted the teaching of Bhagavan: There is only one religion, the religion of love; there is



only one caste, the caste of humanity; there is only one language, the language of the heart; there is only one God, He is omnipresent.

This was followed by devotional songs which were presented by children from Russian-speaking countries. Most of these were Hindi songs, glorifying the Name of God. During the course of this programme of devotional songs, Bhagavan called a singer to the dais and materialised a gold ring for him amidst a thunderous applause of devotees. Bhajans followed this, which were also led by Russian singers. Meanwhile Bhagavan gave mementoes to children who sang devotional songs with His Divine Hands. He also gave clothes to them and other singers and devotees who enacted the drama. They all came to the dais one by one, took Padanamaskar and received the clothes from Bhagavan. The programme which started after Bhagavan's Darshan at 6.05 p.m. came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 7.15 p.m.

ALWAR BHAKTI MAHOTSAVAM

A grand function was held at Prasanthi Nilayam from 14th to 18th July 2010 to propitiate 12 Alwars who started a powerful Bhakti movement and showed the path of devotion to mankind as the means of God-realisation. The Alwars were great devotees of Lord Vishnu and lived between 5th and 9th century A.D. in South India. The venue of these celebrations was Sai Kulwant Hall which was decorated in a grand manner with big banners, colourful buntings, beautiful festoons and fresh flowers. Large size portraits of 12 Alwars along with their biographical details were set up on the boundary wall of the hall to enable the devotees to know about their life and teachings. The dais was specially decorated with beautiful floral designs amidst which a large size idol of Lord Vishnu and idols of Alwars were installed.

The programme comprised daily worship of the idols by the priests, talks on the life and teachings of the 12 Alwars from 14th to 17th July 2010, Sudarshana Homa (Yajna) on 17th July 2010 and Sri Sathya Sai Sathya Narayana Vrata by 1,008 couples on 18th July 2010.

Bhagavan inaugurated the celebrations on 14th July 2010 by lighting the sacred lamp on the dais at 5.25 p.m. amidst auspicious notes of Nadaswaram and Veda chanting by the students. This was followed by a talk by Sri N. Srikanta Rao of Bengaluru. At the end of this illuminating talk of the distinguished scholar, Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan was distributed to all. The programme on the first day came to a close at 6.55 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

Talks on the Life and Teachings of Alwars

Sri Srikanta Rao in his talk on 14th July 2010 described the glorious Bhakti movement started by Alwars who gave their message to mankind to redeem their life by following the path of Bhakti. Sri Rao also gave an outline of the celebrations to be held for five days at Prasanthi Nilayam. Deliberating on the life and teachings of the three Alwars, namely, Sri Poigai Alwar, Sri Bhoodattalwar and Sri Peyalwar who formed the subject of his talk, the distinguished speaker not only quoted various incidents from the lives of these great devotees of the Lord but also narrated some interesting episodes from the Ramayana illustrating how Bhakti could unite a devotee with the Lord.

The second talk was given on 15th July 2010 by Sri Medasani Mohan of Tirupati who dwelt on the life and teachings of Sri Thirumalishai Alwar, Sri Kulasekhara Alwar and Sri Periyalwar and illustrated his talk with beautiful



poetry. The distinguished speaker referred to the teachings of these three illustrious devotees of the Lord, and provided valuable insights for man's liberation through Bhakti and Namasmarana which were exemplified by these Alwars. Bhagavan blessed the speaker at the end of his talk and also materialised a gold chain for him.

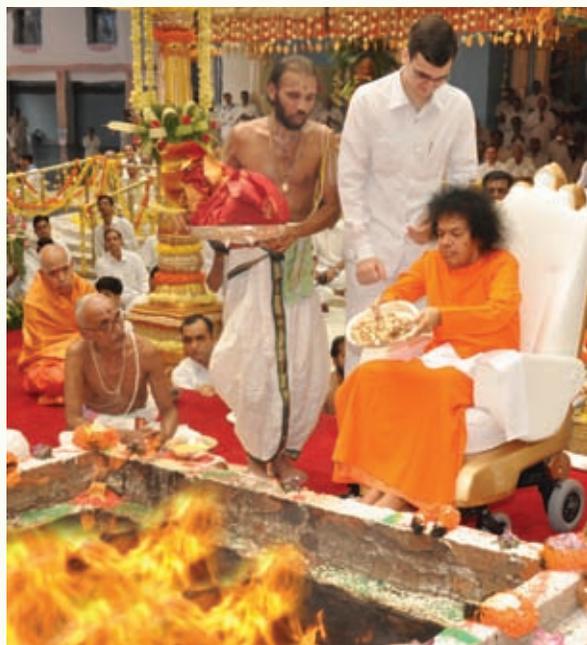
The speaker of the third day's talk was Dr. Samudrala Lakshmanaiah of Tirupati who spoke about the following three Alwars: Sri Andal, Sri Thondaradipodi Alwar and Sri Thiruppani Alwar. Narrating the life story of Sri Andal, Dr. Lakshmanaiah observed that she perfected Bhakti and realised God. Quoting from the Gita, the learned speaker said that Lord Krishna Himself propounded the path of Bhakti and its supremacy.

The last talk on Sri Thirumangai Alwar, Sri Nammalwar and Sri Madhurakavialwar was given on 17th July 2010 by Sri Srikanta Rao, who gave the first talk also. Interspersing his illuminating talk with excellent poetry, the distinguished speaker narrated how all Alwars led their life suffused with total devotion to Lord Narayana which made them shine as the torch-bearers of the path of devotion. He also referred to the nine paths of devotion and observed that any of these paths could lead man to redemption. The programme of talks concluded with this illuminating talk.

Consecration of 18 Kalashas and Sudarshana Homa

Consecration of 18 Kalashas (sacred vessels) was done ceremonially by offering worship along with chanting of Vedic Mantras by the priests on the morning of 16th July 2010. A raised platform was specially constructed in front of the dais for this Puja and for the performance of Sudarshana Homa (Yajna) scheduled for the following morning.

On the morning of 17th July 2010, fire was lit in the Yajna Kunda on the raised platform with chanting of Vedic Mantras by the priest. The performance of Yajna started at 8.30 a.m. wherein priests offered oblations into the sacred fire with chanting of sacred Vedic Mantras. Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 10.00 a.m. After showering blessings on the devotees in the hall, Bhagavan came to the dais and watched the performance of the Yajna by the priests. At 10.40 a.m., Bhagavan went on the Yajna Vedi (platform) and blessed the offerings which the priests offered in the Yajna fire. At 10.45 a.m., Bhagavan offered



Bhagavan offering Poornahuti in the Yajna Kunda in Sai Kulwant Hall on 17th July 2010.

Poornahuti (final oblations) with His Divine Hands into the Yajna Kunda amidst joyous notes of Nadaswaram music and loud chants of Vedic Mantras. This sacred programme of Sudarshana Homa came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 11.10 a.m. Sumptuous Prasadam was served to the entire congregation in the hall in the end.



Sri Sathya Sai Sathya Narayana Vrata

The final day of the celebrations of Sri Alwar Bhakti Mahotsavam witnessed the grand spectacle of Sri Sathya Sai Sathya Narayana Vrata by 1,008 couples in Sai Kulwant Hall. The proceedings began at 4.00 p.m. with Sri Srikanta Rao, the master of ceremonies, explaining step by step the instructions for the performance of the Vrata by designated 1,008 couples who were seated in the hall.



Sai Kulwant Hall presented a grand spectacle when 1,008 couples performed Sri Sathya Sai Sathya Narayana Vrata on 18th July 2010.

Following the instructions of Sri Srikanta Rao, the couples conducted the worship of Lord Narayana and Bhagavan Baba. The entire ritual was performed in nearly one hour, after which the entire congregation in the hall chanted Sai Gayatri.

Bhagavan was offered ceremonial welcome by the priests with Poornakumbham at His residence before He was led into Sai Kulwant Hall at 5.50 p.m. by a Nadaswaram troupe and Veda chanting priests. On entering the hall, Bhagavan went into the rows of the couples seated in the hall and showered His blessings on them. After Bhagavan was seated on the dais, the entire story of Bhagavan's life was narrated by a young speaker. The grand

function of Sri Alwar Bhakti Mahotsavam came to a conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.55 p.m. It was a grand spectacle of Arati when all the 1,008 couples also offered Arati to Bhagavan with lighted lamps. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end.

VAMOS CON SAI: A BOUQUET OF BHAJANS

More than 200 devotees came on a pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam from 12 countries of Latin America, viz., Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, Guadeloupe, Mexico, El Salvador, Ecuador, Brazil and Guatemala from 14th to 24th July 2010 and offered their loving tributes to Bhagavan on the eve of Guru Purnima. On 23rd July 2010, a group of these devotees presented a programme of Bhajans "Vamos Con Sai" (Let's go with Sai) in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. The programme began with chanting of Om three times followed by Sanskrit prayer to Lord Ganesh which the entire group of singers sang with perfect rhythm, intonation and pronunciation. Thereafter, they poured out their hearts in soul-elevating Bhajans in Spanish and Portuguese.



Devotees from 12 countries of Latin America presented a soul-elevating programme of Bhajans in Spanish and Portuguese on 23rd July 2010.



Rendered melodiously with excellent support of music, the Bhajans filled the entire milieu with sacred vibrations. The programme which started at 6.30 p.m. after Bhagavan's Darshan in Sai Kulwant Hall came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 7.20 p.m. Bhagavan sat through the entire presentation and blessed the singers at the conclusion of the programme. Prasadam was distributed to the entire gathering in the hall in the end.

SAI YUGAM - PREMA YUGAM: A DRAMA

On the eve of the holy festival of Guru Purnima, Bal Vikas children and youth of Tamil Nadu performed a drama entitled "Sai Yugam – Prema Yugam" (era of Sai is era of love) in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan on 24th July 2010. The drama began at 5.35 p.m. with a song which introduced the theme of the



A scene from the drama "Sai Yugam – Prema Yugam" presented by the Bal Vikas children and youth of Tamil Nadu.

drama, viz., Sai is the incarnation of divine love and the era of Sai is the era of love. Tracing the beginning of the universe and depicting the incarnations of Lord Vishnu, the story of the drama beautifully synthesised Bhagavan's movements like Bal Vikas, Educare and Grama Seva with mythological stories of

Lord Vishnu and four sons of Brahma, Lord Narasimha and Prahlada, Lord Dattatreya and King Kartaveeryarjuna. Fabulous sets, excellent costumes and make-up, thematic songs, appropriate commentary and good video support made the drama lively and absorbing. At the end of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the cast and posed for group photos with them. He also materialised a gold chain for one of them. After distribution of Prasadam, the programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.45 p.m.

GURU PURNIMA FUNCTION

Piety, solemnity and grandeur marked the holy festival of Guru Purnima which was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 25th July 2010. The venue of the function was Sai Kulwant Hall which was aesthetically decorated with colourful bunting, beautiful cloth hangings, festoons of various colours and designs and flowers of many hues. Since early morning, vast multitudes of devotees occupied every inch of space in Sai Kulwant Hall. As the space in Sai Kulwant Hall was not sufficient to accommodate the large number of devotees, they were accommodated in adjoining Poornachandra Auditorium. Large screens were set up in Sai Kulwant Hall as well as Poornachandra Auditorium for easy viewing of the celebrations by devotees.

Before coming to Sai Kulwant Hall, Bhagavan showered the bliss of His Divine Darshan on the yearning devotees in Poornachandra Auditorium on the afternoon of 25th July 2010. A Nadaswaram troupe and a Panchavadyam group of students offered welcome to Bhagavan when He came to Sai Kulwant Hall in His sparkling maroon robe at 4.30 p.m. amidst Veda chanting. Simultaneously, Bhajan singer students of Sri Sathya





Bhagavan showering His benedictions on the vast multitude of devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall on the auspicious day of Guru Purnima.

Sai University sang welcome and devotional songs as Bhagavan slowly proceeded towards the verandah of the hall after filling the hearts of huge gathering of devotees in the hall with bliss by His Divine Darshan on this sacred day. On reaching the verandah at 4.45 p.m., Bhagavan lighted candles on the cakes placed there and performed cake cutting ceremony.

Musical Tribute by Malladi Brothers

After Bhagavan was seated on the dais, Sri Sriram Prasad and Sri Ravi Kumar, better known as Malladi Brothers, paid their musical tribute to Bhagavan, offering a bouquet of devotional songs at His Divine Lotus Feet in their shimmering voice. Beginning their concert with a song dedicated to the Divine Glory of the Lord of Puttaparthi, Bhagavan Baba at 4.55 p.m., the singers cast a spell on the audience by their soul-elevating compositions sung in heightened mood of devotion and dedication. Bhagavan sat through the entire rendition and blessed the singers at the end of their concert. The programme came to a close

with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.30 p.m. Meanwhile, Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan was distributed to the entire assembly of devotees.

Malladi Brothers offered another musical tribute to Bhagavan on the morning of 26th July 2010. Starting their concert at 9.15 a.m. with a composition dedicated to Bhagavan, the talented singers kept the audience spellbound for more than one hour by their sterling performance. Earlier, Bhagavan honoured them with shawls and gave them clothes. Bhagavan also gave clothes to the artistes who provided musical support to them. After distribution of Prasadam to all, the programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 10.25 a.m.

A Unique Music Concert

Another musical tribute was paid to Bhagavan on the afternoon of 26th July 2010 by Sri Siva Prasad who has the unique distinction of rendering musical compositions by whistling. The programme began at 5.20 p.m. after Bhagavan's Divine Darshan in Sai Kulwant Hall. The musician weaved magic into the air by his masterly rendering of Thyagaraja Kirtans and Sai Bhajans and garnered spontaneous applause of the audience. Obviously pleased with his performance, Bhagavan called the musician near Him and materialised a gold chain for him. Bhagavan also gave him clothes and to the artistes who provided musical support to him. After another Thyagaraja Kirtan and the Bhajan, "Pibare Rama Rasam...", the concert came to a close at 6.45 p.m. with offer of Arati to Bhagavan.



SATHYA SAI SEVA



This Divine Discourse given by Bhagavan at the First All India Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations at Chennai in 1967 reveals the spiritual treasures of Bharat and Bharatiya culture. It also provides valuable guidelines for the working of the Sai Organisations and their office bearers which are very much relevant even today.

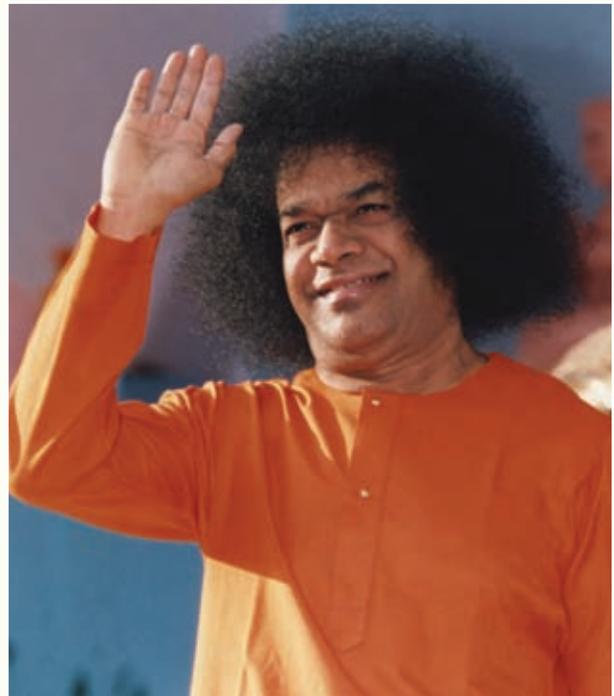
FOLLOWING MY INSTRUCTIONS IS THE BEST PLAN

THE VEDAS ARE DIVINELY inspired scriptures; they seek to transmit to humanity the secrets of a happy life here and of liberation hereafter. They reveal to man the essence of God's glory. They have been a source of spiritual knowledge over the millennia for all mankind. The intellect, which man is endowed with as a gift from God to separate good from evil,

is the means by which the culture of this land is to be preserved and promoted. When the Vedic treasure house is explored with intelligence, the Atma Tattwa (essential nature of the Self) becomes manifest, and when that is recognised, man becomes eternally happy and full of peace. This treasure was slighted and neglected as a result of the fascination for

Food is the medicine for the illness of hunger; drink, for the illness of thirst; for the disease of desire, Jnana is the specific.

For the disease of doubt, despair and hesitation, which are the occupational diseases of Sadhakas, the most effective remedy is Paropakara (doing good to others). For the major infection of Asanthi (anxiety), the course of treatment is Bhajan. And for Bhava Roga (disease of worldliness), Bhagavan is the medicine.



outlandish ways of life. However, since some years, the feeling of reverence for this culture and the readiness to repent for past mistakes has appeared among people.

This conference is itself a sign of revival. You are allotted the task of bringing once again to the homes of the people the message of Atmic strength and Atmic unity. Transmuting 'man' into 'God' and experiencing that Ananda (bliss) is the one and only achievement for which life is to be devoted. The efforts you make in your own places are directed to bring this goal into the awareness of each person. Of course, there are in existence many organisations and societies which are engaged in distributing various cures for the 'spiritual ills' of their constituents, and therefore, a question may arise about the need for this additional institution. The need has arisen to emphasise the basic and essential discipline, which is practical and universal, as prescribed since ages for the revelation of the Divine in man.

Foster Bharatiya Culture

The entire universe is pictured as the body of Vishnu by the Vedas. And, Bharat is like the eye of the universe, the reason being that she has the most correct vision of the cosmos in the context of time. The mother desires that the son should uphold the honour of the family; he should uphold the fair name of his mother and father. So, every Indian has to learn and practise the spiritual science that the sages of this land have explored and discovered. However, due to hostile forces, evil company, ignorant fascination, Indians have neglected this foremost duty. The infection has come; it is well settled in the organism. Now, it has to be cast out. This conference and the organisations you represent are attempts to cure that illness. The purpose is the same,

For the influence available from positions of authority, for acquiring and accumulating power, individuals talk ill of others and breed hatred.

From dawn till dusk and dusk till dawn, the chief occupation of people today is finding fault with others, trying to publicise the faults of others. This state of things is an insult cast in the face of our hoary culture. It springs from craving for cheap popularity and temporary fame.



whatever the name – Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha, Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Sathya Sai Seva Dal or Sathya Sai Bhakta Mandali.

The first aim is to foster and cultivate Bharatiya culture. Let its validity be examined through actual living, and one's own discovery of its values; and communicated to others by those who have experienced the peace and joy derivable from it. I do not want the extolling of the drug by persons who have not been themselves cured by it. Today immorality and corruption have destroyed happiness and contentment in the very land where Bharatiya culture grew and flourished. There are many who condemn these things, but those are the very persons who commit the wrongs they deplore. Those who profess to lead the people are themselves led astray by the temptation to fall. So, the very first ideal you must keep in mind, when you start and run these organisations is: Do not crave for status or authority or position; do not allow any pomp or show; do not compete for publicity or recognition or praise.

Duty is God. Do it and be content. You may have desires for self-aggrandisement and plans



to fulfil them. I know that some people have already devised plans for getting into official positions, but you must subdue and destroy those desires. Following My instructions without demur is the best plan. While engaged in service, it is wrong to yield to lower cravings or to follow one's own impetuosity. The Vedas declare that it is only by Thyaga –renunciation, surrender, submission – that immortality can be attained.

In the history of India, you must have noticed that all the great movements and empires were motivated by spiritual undercurrents, not by political or economic stresses. It is only after the advent of the East India Company that politics and the struggle for political power predominated. You must make politics subservient to the need of promoting and perfecting the fundamentals of Bharatiya culture.

The universe is the body of God; in the body, the Unity Consciousness is Bharat, the Eka Bhava (feeling of oneness). Ekam Sath (truth is one), the Vedas declared aeons ago. That is the heart-beat of Bharat today. This is the reason why sages, saints, divine personages and incarnations of God appear here and proclaim their message to mankind from this land. The precious message is now being exported, but very little is used inside the country. That is the tragedy.

Sai Organisations must Promote Faith in God

For the influence available from positions of authority, for acquiring and accumulating power, individuals talk ill of others and breed hatred. From dawn till dusk and dusk till dawn, the chief occupation of people today is finding fault with others, trying to publicise the faults of others. This state of things is an

insult cast in the face of our hoary culture. It springs from craving for cheap popularity and temporary fame.

Your organisations must endeavour to promote faith in God. If that base is absent, worship, Bhajan, good works – all become meaningless rituals, done under social compulsion. Inner transformation, which is the fruit, can be acquired only when these are done with faith. Faith can grow only from the root of enquiry. Faith is made firmer by enquiry. You must encourage enquiry by the members whom you contact and welcome their efforts to gain first-hand experience.

Man strives to provide himself with food, clothing and housing for the sake of the body; he must also provide himself with something to keep the mind healthy and happy. It is the mind that conditions the body. The mind is the instrument, the fly-wheel, the thickest comrade of man. Through it, one can either ruin oneself or save oneself. Regulated and controlled, channelised properly, it can liberate; wayward and let loose, it can entangle, and bind fast. Try to find out when exactly man is having peace, full undisturbed peace. You will see that he is at peace only during Sushupti (deep sleep). For, at that time, the senses are inactive, the mind is inert and unattached to the senses or their objects. So, when senses are made ineffective to drag the mind out, man can attain peace. That is the real Sadhana, the basic Sadhana: the withdrawal of the senses from the objective world. It is Nivritti Marga (the path of detachment).

Two Fangs that Make the Individual Poisonous

Train the mind to dwell on the inner instrument rather than the outer attractions. Use the mind to cleanse the feelings, impulses, attitudes,



tendencies and levels of consciousness. Let it not accumulate dirt from the outer world and deposit it within itself. If it is attached to actions you perform, the consequences of actions get attached to it. This is Pravritti Marga (the path of attachment). Unattached action is the purest; it does not encumber the mind with elation or disappointment. 'I did it', 'This is mine': these are the two fangs that make the individual poisonous. Pull out the fangs of the snake, then the snake can be handled and played with as a pet. These organisations must be vigilant to see that egoism, sense of personal possession, pride or achievement do not invade them. That is the goal to be kept in view.

When an organisation is started, it has to lay down for itself certain rules and regulations. But our rules are of a different nature altogether. Our rules emphasise that members must first practise what they stand for. Whatever you desire others to do, you must first put into daily practice sincerely and with steadfastness. You must do Bhajan regularly and systematically before you advise others about the efficacy of Bhajans. When you want to be honoured by others, you must learn to honour them first.

Bhagavan is the Medicine for Bhava Roga

Service has become a word of common currency, but its value is very much reduced by the hypocrisy of the users. Really speaking, only those who are afflicted with agony, equal agony at the sight of pain and suffering, distress or disease, have the right to offer service; for, they are not serving others, they are serving themselves, serving to remove as fast and as intelligently as they can, their own agony. Service to others is the medicine one needs to alleviate the distress which fills one at the sight

of distress in another being. Feel that you are serving yourself, that you are curbing your own ego. Otherwise, service heightens your self-esteem and develops a sense of superiority, which are both harmful spiritually.

Food is the medicine for the illness of hunger; drink, for the illness of thirst; for the disease of desire, Jnana is the specific. For the disease of doubt, despair and hesitation, which are the occupational diseases of Sadhakas, the most effective remedy is Paropakara (doing good to others). For the major infection of Asanthi (anxiety), the course of treatment is Bhajan. And for Bhava Roga (disease of worldliness), Bhagavan is the medicine. It is to provide these remedies to the sufferers that the organisation has to dedicate itself.

A spiritual organisation is really above all rules and regulations; the realm of the Atma is beyond the limits of regulations. In this sense, rules are either meaningless or superfluous in Sathya Sai Organisations. But at least, to satisfy the law of the land dealing with associations of this kind, some rules have to be adopted.

For example, who can be members of these organisations, and what are their qualifications?

(1) Of course, they must be eager aspirants for spiritual progress.

(2) They must have full faith in the Name that the organisation bears and in spreading that Name, in the manner suited to its message and majesty.

(3) Besides, the members must have won recognition as good persons. That is all the qualification needed; nothing else counts. There is no need to have money or lands or scholarship, influence or authority or official position.



Oath must be Taken from the very Depth of the Heart

If you have these three qualifications, I assure you, even if you have no place in any organisation bearing My Name, you will have a place here (Baba indicated His heart as the place where they will be accepted). The organisations must be such that members find them congenial places to deepen their Sadhana, to cultivate their virtues and to overcome their ego, by contact with workers



who are free from the least trace of that deadly poison. If this is achieved, their success is certain.

Secondly, what are the duties of members and office bearers? You know that the State requires you to take a solemn oath, when you take up an office or enter upon an assignment. Similarly, each member and office bearer must take an oath, from the very depth of his heart, before engaging himself in the activities:

“Swami! Save me from any act of commission or omission which will affect adversely the three qualifications You have laid down. Bless me with the skill, intelligence and enthusiasm necessary for the task I am dedicating myself to carry out for my own uplift. Guide me along the correct path; shower on me Your Grace so that I may earn a fair name in this attempt; guard me from temptation and wrong steps.” When you rise from bed at dawn, pray thus. At night, when you go to bed, ponder over

Today immorality and corruption have destroyed happiness and contentment in the very land where Bharatiya culture grew and flourished. There are many who condemn these things, but those are the very persons who commit the wrongs they deplore. Those who profess to lead the people are themselves led astray by the temptation to fall. So, the very first ideal you must keep in mind, when you start and run these organisations is: Do not crave for status or authority or position; do not allow any pomp or show; do not compete for publicity or recognition or praise.

your activities during the day, examining them, whether you went against any of the conditions of membership, and if any wrong had been committed unconsciously, pray that it may not happen again. Decide to dedicate yourself in this manner, with these ideals for the work ahead.

Do not Develop Fanaticism in Sai Activities

Another point I want to emphasise is this: There are many other organisations with



spiritual objectives in this land, run under different names, attached to other names and forms of God, like Rama, Krishna. You know that Indian culture insists that you should offer reverence to all the names and forms of One Godhead. In your organisations, there may be some who insist that only Sai Bhajan should be sung, only the name and form of Sathya Sai be used. This is a great mistake. You are thereby dishonouring Sai. If you attach yourself to Sai and detach yourself from Krishna, you get a plus there and a minus here; the resultant gain is zero. In this matter, do not develop fanaticism or sectarianism. Others may have these, but that is no reason why you should meet them with the same failings. Try your best to avoid such infection. When the other organisations require help, go and help them. This will make them realise the loving universal nature of your attitude.

Again, do not encourage differences based on region, language, religion or any such flimsy grounds. For example, people who exaggerate these differences may argue that only Tamil songs should be sung in Madras or only Telugu songs should be sung in Andhra Pradesh. If such ideas are entertained, they will undermine the Adhyatmic (spiritual) outlook, the attitude of unity and oneness which is the keynote of the spirit. This is a field where inner joy, inner satisfaction, internal purity are more important than outer expression.

A Word of Warning on Collecting and Spending Funds

I do not like collection of funds. But, since some expense has to be incurred, I have to allow it under very stringent conditions. Each organisation has as Members (of the Samithi) about ten or fifteen persons. Whatever expense they decide to incur for the work of the Samithi (organisation), they have to collect

among themselves, without seeking help from those outside the circle. They have, of course, to contribute according to their capacity and limit the work to the resources they can pool among themselves.

Do not plan beyond your capacity and move about with lists from person to person to get funds. By this, the institution gets a bad name and you too will not be spared. You may say, "But, when Swami comes to our place, we must spend a lot on reception arrangements". No, I do not need grand decorations, huge pandals, arches, flags and such paraphernalia. I require only a mike to communicate My advice to the people. Even a chair is superfluous! I can talk standing. Spend sparingly for the minimum needs; do not involve yourselves in expensive luxury. I would like you to spend any extra money that you have for the feeding of the poor or for any similar beneficial objective.

Attempts are being made in many places to build Sathya Sai Mandirs (halls of worship). But Sathya Sai will be happy if He is installed in your hearts; that is the Mandir I like, not those. When you seek to build that other Mandir, you have to go about seeking donations. Religion has declined in this land due to this donation-seeking and donation-granting. Really speaking, the most precious donation is a pure mind; give that to the organisation and it will shine.

I shall tell you a method by which the extra funds you may need for any undertaking the Samithi has in view are to be collected. Estimate beforehand what the expense will be. Suppose it comes to a thousand rupees, give that information to the fifteen members, and fix a day when they shall all meet. That day, keep a locked box with a slit on the lid, in an inner room; let everyone go in alone into the room and deposit in the box whatever he feels



he can. He can come away without depositing anything; he has the freedom to do so, there is no compulsion.

If funds are collected with the knowledge of the rest, a person who is unable to give as much as another may feel humiliated. So, this is the best method. When all have finished their turn, let the box be opened and the amount counted. If it falls short of the estimate, divide the shortfall among all members equally and collect the share from each. If there is some surplus, keep it for the next occasion.

Do not have lists, appeals, receipt books and all the cumbersome complex of fund collection campaigns. That way will lead you to stratagems and falsehoods, competition and calumny. Do it in sacred manner, suited to the holy objectives you have.

Some delegates suggested that sub-committees be formed and recognised. But that will increase the number and so give room for more mistakes. Let the responsibility be on a few dedicated persons. The District President must see that small associations in the villages are given proper guidance and help to carry out the task undertaken by them, and send to those villages exponents of Vedic culture in order to instruct and inspire them. Attempts should also be made to spread spiritual knowledge and instil yearning for spiritual Sadhana in students and youth.

Do not Set Limits to Celebration of Holy Days

Sathya Sai Seva Samithis have to bear in mind the word 'Seva', and take up Seva work enthusiastically. Seva must be directed towards the removal of physical distress, the alleviation of mental agony, and the fulfilment of spiritual yearning. Some regions are affected by floods, some by drought; the Samithi must

make efforts to bring relief to the sufferers from these and other natural calamities.

The Bhajan Mandalis, Satsangs, Bhakta Mandalis that are now established must spread the message of Namasmarana, Bhajan and Nama Sankirtan at all times and in all places. Jayadeva, Gauranga, Thyagaraja – all of them moved through bazaars and streets, singing Bhajans and songs about the glory of God and their ecstasy filled lakhs and lakhs of people with divine fervour.

Yesterday, someone read out a list of holy days which the associations were to celebrate. That list mentioned Sivarathri, Navarathri, Swami's Birthday and Guru Purnima. But you must also celebrate the Birthdays of the Mahatmas (sages) who led man to the God within him, and also all days held holy by your brothers. Do not set limits to these celebrations and these days. Make every day a holy day and fill it with the recollection of God and His Messengers.

Establish unity among yourselves first; do not seek faults in others or excellences in your own selves. Have full faith in the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man and fill every act of yours with that reverence and love. Meet together once a week or once a fortnight or at least once a month; have someone to discourse to you, or engage in Bhajan or study or Dhyana; experience the thrill of spiritual comradeship. Every member of the association must have some item of work allotted to him and he must be present whenever such meetings are held, unless of course it becomes physically difficult.

I must tell you about another point also. Wherever you are, whatever work you do, do it as an act of worship, an act of dedication, an act for the glorification of God who is the



inspirer, the witness, the Master. Do not divide your activities as, “these are for my sake” and “these are for the sake of God”.

When you work, there should be no remainder, nothing should be left unfinished. See all work as one. You should not, say the Sastras (scriptures), leave any remainder or balance in debts, in disease, in vengeance against enemies, in the cycle of birth-death. Finish all, down to the last; they should not

...Continued from page 232

enough. When you do not put anything into practice, then it is sheer disgrace to call yourselves as devotees.

Perform All Actions to Please God

Divine proximity is of no use if you are unable to derive benefit out of it. Frog is near the lotus in water, but what is the use? Bees come from far off places and drink the nectar from the lotus. It is very important to be near as well as dear to God. You have only nearness to God but not dearness. People from far off places are not near but they are very dear. If you want to experience divinity, you have to be both near and dear to God. If you recite the sacred texts and don't practise anything, you are no better than a tape recorder. Put into practice at least one teaching. Merely by looking at the tape of a cassette, you will not know what is there in it. Even if you cut the tape into pieces, you cannot see what is there in it. When you put the cassette in a tape recorder and switch on the power or put cells in it, you can listen to the entire text contained in it. Connect your heart with God through the current of love. Only then can you listen to the voice of God.

recur again. If you offer all activities at the feet of the Lord and free them from any trace of egoistic attachment, the consequences will not bind you: you are free, you are liberated, you have Moksha (liberation).

– From Bhagavan's Discourse at the First All India Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, Madras (Chennai) on 21st April 1967.

Surrender your will to the Will of God. Only then will you be able to develop Ichchha Shakti (will power). It is this Ichchha Shakti that takes the form of Kriya Shakti (power of action), and ultimately leads to Jnana Shakti (power of knowledge). Ichchha Shakti, Kriya Shakti and Jnana Shakti symbolise Karma, Bhakti and Jnana respectively. Whatever action you perform, you should do it with purity of heart. Do every work with the faith that it is the work of God. Perform all actions to please God. It is the easiest path for God-realisation. Karma, Bhakti and Jnana are equally important. Do not think that one is superior or inferior to the other. All the three are essentially one and the same. They are not at all different from each other.

Names and forms may be different but the Atmic principle is one only. Developing faith in this principle of oneness, pursuing the divine path and experiencing divinity is the right and deservedness of every human being.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, “*Govinda Hare Gopala Hare...*”)

– From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 29th June 1996.



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

PILGRIMAGE OF HYDERABAD DEVOTEES

A group of devotees from Saroor Nagar Samithi of Hyderabad came on a pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam from 17th to 19th June 2010 to seek the grace and blessings of Bhagavan.

Dorakuna Ituvanti Seva: A Dance Ballet

On 19th June 2010, Bal Vikas children and Sai Youth of this Samithi staged a musical dance ballet entitled "Dorakuna Ituvanti Seva" (can one get Seva like this?) The drama which started at 7.00 p.m. with an exhilarating dance number by Bal Vikas children after Bhagavan's Divine Darshan in Sai Kulwant Hall depicted how the Sai Organisation of Hyderabad,



A scene from the dance ballet presented by the Bal Vikas children and Sai Youth of Saroor Nagar Samithi, Hyderabad on 19th June 2010.

Andhra Pradesh was empowering rural youth by providing training to them in various professions to make them self-dependent and enable them to earn their livelihood. Excellent

music, sweet songs, beautiful dances of Bal Vikas children and Sai Youth coupled with perfect choreography made the dance ballet an absorbing presentation. At the conclusion of the ballet, Bhagavan blessed the cast and posed for group photos with them. In the end, Bal Vikas children and Sai Youth recited beautifully "Aditya Hridayam", a Sanskrit hymn devoted to sun god, which delighted one and all. Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan was then distributed to the entire assembly of devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 8.05 p.m.

PILGRIMAGE OF EAST GODAVARI DISTRICT DEVOTEES

More than 1,300 devotees of East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh came to Prasanthi Nilayam on 3rd and 4th June 2010 to express their gratitude to Bhagavan for providing drinking water to them through Sri Sathya Sai Water Project and for all-round development of villages through Sri Sathya Sai Village Integrated Programme.

Navavidha Bhakti Sumanjali: A Dance Drama

On 3rd June, a group of these devotees presented a musical dance drama entitled "Navavidha Bhakti Sumanjali" (bouquet of nine-fold devotion) in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. Based on the life and teachings of Bhagavan, the drama unfolded the nine-fold path of devotion, namely, 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) through appropriate dialogues, thrilling songs and exhilarating dances of children, besides presenting the teachings of Bhagavan on the theme of devotion. Another unique feature of the drama was that all the children and youth who enacted the drama were from the tribal villages of East Godavari district, in which the Sai Organisation was carrying out all-round rural development programmes. Bhagavan sat through the entire presentation, blessed the children at the end of the drama and gave them the coveted opportunity of group photos with Him. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 7.45 p.m. after distribution of Prasadam to all.

Girijana Sambaralu: Tribal Folk Dances

Bal Vikas children and youth of East Godavari district made their second presentation entitled "Girijana Sambaralu" (tribal celebrations) on 4th July 2010, which comprised folk dances of tribals inhabiting this district. The children and youth performed these dances to the



Bal Vikas children of East Godavari district performing a traditional tribal dance on 4th July 2010.

accompaniment of devotional songs set to thrilling music which enraptured one and all for nearly 45 minutes. At the conclusion of the programme, Bhagavan blessed the children, youth and organisers, posed for group photos with them and distributed Vibhuti Prasadam to them. This was followed by Bhajans which were led by Bal Vikas girls singers of this district. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 7.05 p.m.

YOUTH CAMP OF RAJASTHAN

As part of 85th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Rajasthan organised a youth camp at Prasanthi Nilayam and presented two dramas in Sai Kulwant Hall on 8th and 9th July 2010.

Maharana Pratap: A Patriotic Drama

The first drama entitled "Maharana Pratap" presented on 8th July 2010 highlighted how Maharana Pratap set great ideals in bravery, patriotism and self-sacrifice and maintained freedom, honour and dignity of his motherland Mewar in the face of the onslaughts of the mighty Mughal empire. Excellent direction, good acting, powerful dialogues, appropriate



A scene from the drama "Maharana Pratap" presented by Sai Youth of Rajasthan on 8th July 2010.



costumes and make-up and good sets portrayed the various scenes of this historical play vividly and realistically. The drama which commenced at 5.15 p.m. after Bhagavan's Darshan in Sai Kulwant Hall came to a close at 6.00 p.m. At the conclusion of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the cast and posed for group photos with them. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.05 p.m. after distribution of Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan.

Khwaja Garib Nawaz: A Drama

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Rajasthan presented their second drama "Khwaja Garib Nawaz" on 9th July 2010 which depicted the life and teachings of the famous Sufi saint Khwaja Moin-ud-din Chisty of Ajmer, popularly known



The drama "Khwaja Garib Nawaz" presented by the Sai Youth of Rajasthan in Sai Kulwant Hall on 9th July 2010 depicted the life story of famous Sufi saint Moin-ud-din Chisty of Ajmer and highlighted his teachings.

as Khwaja Garib Nawaz (lover of poor people) because he loved the poor dearly. The drama which began at 6.25 p.m. after Bhagavan's Divine Darshan in Sai Kulwant Hall outlined the entire life story of this great saint of India from his birth in 1142 A.D. to his merger with the Divine in 1236 A.D., highlighting his simplicity, piety and devotion which have been a source

of inspiration for the entire mankind without any difference of faith, country and nationality. Bhagavan sat through the entire presentation, blessed the participants at the conclusion of the drama, posed for group photos with them and distributed clothes to them. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 7.15 p.m.

2ND NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS OF SANATHANA SARATHI

The Second National Conference of Editors and Publishers of Sanathana Sarathi was held in the Multimedia Room of Publications Division of Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam on 20th July 2010. The proceedings of the conference began at 10.30 a.m. with lighting of sacred lamp by Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, which was followed by Veda chanting. Sri Srinivasan addressed the delegates both in the morning and afternoon sessions and exhorted them to improve the quality of the contents and get-up of all editions of Sanathana Sarathi. He stressed the need for associating youth with the editorial committees of the magazines and introducing new features in them without compromising with their culture and core values. Sri K.S. Rajan, Convener, Publications Division, Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust welcomed the delegates and expressed deep gratitude to Sri Srinivasan for inaugurating the conference and providing valuable insights for quality improvement of Sanathana Sarathi editions. He also offered some incentives to the State Organisations to enhance their financial resources which they could utilise to improve the quality of their Sanathana Sarathi

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God Gives you What you Ask for

A RICH MAN USED TO GO TO various places on business trips. He had four wives. One of them was always sick, the second had a craze for costly clothes, jewels and articles of worldly pleasure and the third had great interest in reading spiritual books. His fourth wife was however always engaged in the performance of her



The rich man's four wives represented four types of devotees of God – afflicted, avaricious, seeker and wise.

duties and serving her husband. Whenever she found time in between the performance of her duties, she spent it in chanting the Name of God.

Once the rich man went to a foreign country. After finishing his business engagements, he decided to come back. Before returning, he wrote a letter to his wives: "I am coming back soon. If you write to me what each one of you wants, I will bring that".

The first wife described the details of her ailments and asked for effective medicines to cure them. The second wife wrote to him to bring clothes of the latest model. The third wife asked him to buy for her some good books on

spirituality. The fourth wife wrote thus: "Swami, I do not want anything. My only desire is that you should come back safe and sound. I am waiting for you".

The rich man came back after a week or so. He sent to his three wives the articles they had asked for to their respective residences, and himself went to the residence of his fourth wife to stay there. At this, his three wives came to him and protested, "Oh dear one! Is that what you have done good? You have returned after spending so much time in a foreign country. Should you not spend some time with us"? The husband replied, "Look! I have given to



"I have given to each one of you what you desired, but she desired only me. So, I am staying with her", said the rich man to his other three wives.

each one of you what you desired from me, but she desired only me. So, I am staying with her".

What is the inner meaning of this story? The rich man in the story stands for God. The four wives represent the four types of devotees of God – Arta, Artharthi, Jijnasu and Jnani (afflicted, avaricious, seeker and wise). God gives to each what he wants.



JOYOUS ASHADI EKADASI CELEBRATIONS



LIKE PREVIOUS YEARS, ASHADI Ekadasi was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam with great piety and gaiety.

Many music, cultural and social welfare programmes organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Maharashtra and Goa formed part of these celebrations held on the eve of the holy festival of Guru Purnima.

Bhagavan Blesses Social Welfare Projects of Maharashtra and Goa

The festivities started on 19th July 2010 when Bhagavan blessed two social welfare projects undertaken by the Sai Organisation of Maharashtra and Goa. The first project related to healthcare, wherein 29 ambulances provided medical services in as many districts of these States. These ambulances were parked in Poornachandra Auditorium for Bhagavan's blessings. Before coming to Sai Kulwant Hall, Bhagavan first went to Poornachandra Auditorium at 5.00 p.m. on 19th July 2010. A video presentation on the medical services being provided to needy people through this project was shown to Bhagavan who spent nearly half an hour inside the auditorium watching the video and blessing hundreds of medical professionals engaged in this service.

After this, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall in a procession led by a Veda chanting group of Sai Youth of Maharashtra and Goa carrying Poornakumbham. After blessing the devotees in the hall, Bhagavan came to the dais and lighted the sacred lamp at 5.50 p.m. to inaugurate Ashadi Ekadasi celebrations. This was followed by a brief speech by Sri Nimish Pandya who expressed gratitude to Bhagavan for His love and guidance on the auspicious occasion of Ashadi Ekadasi and



Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Maharashtra and Goa organised a camp at Prasanthi Nilayam and provided artificial limbs to 229 physically challenged persons on the eve of Ashadi Ekadasi. Bhagavan blessed these beneficiaries in Sai Kulwant Hall.

prayed for His blessings on 229 physically challenged persons who were seated in the centre of the hall after receiving artificial limbs in a camp organised by the Sai Organisation of Maharashtra and Goa at Prasanthi Nilayam from 14th to 18th July 2010 as part of 85th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan. These beneficiaries thereafter were brought in front of the dais where Bhagavan blessed them all. To the pleasant surprise of devotees in the hall, two of these beneficiaries came on crutches before Bhagavan and walked back in a normal way without crutches after an artificial limb was attached to one of their legs. This was followed by Bhajans, at the conclusion of which Arati was offered to Bhagavan. With this, the first day's programme of Ashadi Ekadasi concluded at 6.40 p.m.

Gayatri Veda Mata: A Dance Drama

Two programmes were organised on Ashadi Ekadasi day on 21st July 2010 by the Sai Organisation of Maharashtra and Goa. The first programme was a dance drama entitled "Gayatri – Veda Mata" performed on the



morning of 21st July 2010 in Sai Kulwant Hall which was befittingly bedecked for the festive occasion. There were special decorations on the dais, in the centre of which a beautiful idol of Lord Vitthala was installed. As Bhagavan entered Sai Kulwant Hall at 9.30 a.m., singers of Maharashtra and Goa, both ladies and gents, chanted Gayatri Mantra. After arriving at the dais, Bhagavan lighted the sacred lamp to mark the inauguration of the celebrations.

At the outset, a traditional Dindi (palanquin) procession came in the performing area along with a group of dancers who offered salutations to Bhagavan and danced to the tune of a song, hailing Lord Vitthala. The drama commenced with a dance and prayer to Lord Ganesh at 10.00 a.m. What followed this was a magnificent presentation explaining the significance and inner meaning of the Gayatri Mantra, the chanting of which illumines the intellect of man and dispels the darkness of ignorance and evil tendencies. The episodes of Krishna and Arjuna, Vasishtha and Viswamitra and

watched the entire drama and blessed the children at its conclusion. Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan was then distributed to all. The programme came to a close at 11.00 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

Natya Veda: A Musical Dance Drama

This drama was presented by the Bal Vikas children of Thane, Mumbai on the afternoon of 21st July 2010 after Bhagavan's Divine Darshan in Sai Kulwant Hall. Based on the subtle theme of the creation of the universe, the drama had a brilliant start with a scintillating dance of Purusha (Supreme Being) accompanied by chanting of appropriate Sanskrit verses from scriptures on the beginning of the creation. The next scene showed how the primordial sound Om was received by the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. The scenes that followed included a dance by Siva and Parvati which was simply superb. Well-researched script, excellent choice of appropriate Sanskrit verses set to scintillating music, outstanding performance of the actors, thrilling dances of



The drama "Gayatri – Veda Mata" performed by the Bal Vikas children of Maharashtra and Goa brought forth the significance and inner meaning of the Gayatri Mantra.

King Trishanku illustrated the theme in a very illuminating way. Fabulous sets, illuminating dialogues, well-rendered songs and beautiful dances of children made the drama a superb presentation, illustrating the teachings of Bhagavan on this sacred Mantra. Bhagavan



The drama "Natya Veda" presented by the Bal Vikas children of Thane, Mumbai was embellished with beautiful dances of children.

children, fabulous sets and brilliant direction made the drama a fine piece of dramatic art. At the end of the drama, Bhagavan showered His blessings on the cast and provided them the coveted opportunity of a photo session with Him. The programme came to a close at 7.20



p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan after distribution of Prasadam to the entire gathering of devotees in the hall.

Samartha Ramdas: A Dance Drama

This drama was presented by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Mandir, Dharmakshetra, Mumbai on the afternoon of 22nd July 2010. The drama which began with a thrilling dance of children after Bhagavan's Divine Darshan in Sai Kulwant Hall portrayed the life story of this great saint of Maharashtra who renounced worldly life in childhood itself, performed intense penance for 12 years and attained the vision of Lord Rama. Shivaji who ruled parts of Maharashtra at that time offered his kingdom to Samartha Ramdas and beseeched him to accept him as his disciple, upon which Ramdas initiated him as his disciple and commanded him to rule the kingdom as a trustee of God considering Manava Seva as Madhava Seva (service of mankind is service of God) and Grama Seva as Rama Seva

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editions. Dwelling on the items of the Agenda, Sri G.L. Anand, Editor, Sanathana Sarathi (English) observed that there could be no greater blessedness than to be associated with the task of disseminating the Divine Message of Bhagavan to mankind through Sanathana Sarathi which was started by Bhagavan Himself for this sacred objective. He also stressed the need for collecting and preserving all materials regarding Bhagavan's tours to different places. Speaking on this occasion, Prof. M. Veerabhadraiah, Editor, Sanathana Sarathi (Telugu) explained how Telugu edition was introducing new features in the magazine to improve the quality of its contents.

After the inaugural session, the delegates were divided into two groups for group



Shivaji offering his kingdom to Samartha Ramdas in the drama "Samartha Ramdas" presented by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Mandir, Dharmakshetra on 22nd July 2010.

(service of villages is service of Lord Rama). At the end of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the children and distributed clothes to them. He also materialised a gold ring for one of the organisers. The drama which began at 5.50 p.m. came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 7.00 p.m. Ashadi Ekadasi celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam came to a happy conclusion with this excellently performed drama.

discussions on the Agenda items. The group discussions continued in the afternoon session also, at the end of which the group leaders read out the recommendations of their group in the joint session, which were unanimously adopted for implementation. The recommendations comprised quality improvement of all editions of Sanathana Sarathi and wider dissemination of Bhagavan's Message through them.

At the conclusion of the conference, Sri V.N. Prahlad thanked the Chief Guest and the delegates for their participation. He had a special word of thanks for Bhagavan's students working in the Publications Division who worked hard to make the conference a success. The conference concluded with Arati to Bhagavan by Sri Suresh Rao at 4.00 p.m.



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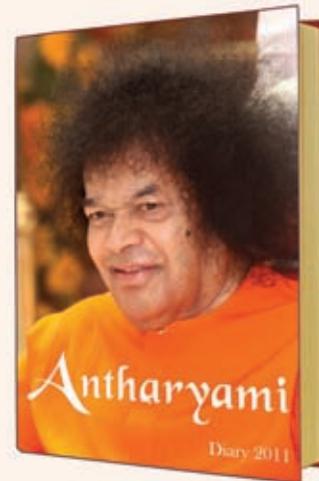
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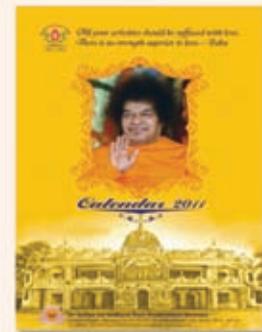


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– Baba

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